

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

Ayes	14
Noes	26
Majority against	12

Ayes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. W. Manning
Mr. Bovell	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Court	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. I. Manning

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Brady	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Evans	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Molr
Mr. Hall	Mr. Norton
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Heal	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Heatman	Mr. Potter
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Toms
Mr. Kelly	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.

Noes.

Mr. Graham	Mr. Owen
Mr. Tonkin	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Rhatigan	Mr. Mann
Mr. O'Brien	Mr. Crommelin

Question thus negatived.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam): To enable the member for Nedlands to make an early start on the member for Moore, I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 29th August, 1957.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Assent to Bills	1125
Members' speeches, release of Hansard transcripts	1126
Questions : Railways, (a) freights, Margaret River-Flinders Bay road service	1127
(b) suppliers of sleepers affected by rail closures	1127
(c) inspection of sleepers at mill	1128
(d) difference in freights charged and amount advised by Transport Board	1128
(e) conference between Minister for Railways and Minister for Transport	1128
Cement, increased freight, Spearwood to Margaret River	1128
Cattle, (a) comparative purchase prices	1128
(b) committee of investigation	1129
Firearms, increased licence fees	1129
Traffic, (a) truck licence fees	1129
(b) number of motor-vehicles licensed	1130
(c) result of Causeway checks	1130
Uniform tax legislation, (a) effect of High Court judgment	1130
(b) Commonwealth-State financial relations	1130
Welshbridge, provision at Bunbury	1130
State Housing Commission, house construction for 1956, 1957 and 1958	1130
Loan money, approved raisings and allocations	1131
Education, commencing and leaving ages	1131
Roleystone-Brookton road, alteration of route	1131
Parliamentary privileges, Perth City Council's pamphlet	1131
Fisheries, establishment of trawling industry, Albany	1132
Chamberlain Industries Ltd., parliamentary committee meeting	1132
Prime Minister of England, invitation to visit Western Australia	1133
Bills : Betting Control Act Continuance, Message, 2r.	1133
Companies Act Amendment, 2r.	1133
State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r.	1135
Nurses Registration Act Amendment, 2r.	1154

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

1. Interpretation Act Amendment (No. 1).
2. Justices Act Amendment.
3. Local Courts Act Amendment.
4. Legal Practitioners Act Amendment (No. 1).

MEMBERS' SPEECHES.

Release of Hansard Transcripts.

The **SPEAKER**: Before proceeding with the business of the day, I would point out that on Tuesday last the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked me this question—

Will you give consideration to amending the instructions to Hansard regarding the withholding of transcripts until corrected copies are returned by the hon. member making the speech, so that transcripts can be released not later than 24 hours after a speech is made?

I have given consideration to this matter and have discussed it fully with the Chief Hansard Reporter. I find that it bristles with difficulties. It is known that there are precedents when considerable disputation has arisen in this Assembly between members as a result of there being a difference between the certified copy of a member's speech and the draft copy.

For many years it was the practice for Hansard reporters to take their notes in the House and proceed to make a transcript of them. That was sent to the Chief Hansard Reporter who edited it and returned a copy to the hon. member who made the speech for any corrections to be made by him. Three copies were made. One was sent to the Hon. member who made the speech, the original was kept as the printer's copy and the third was also retained but was made available on request to any hon. member who secured the adjournment of the debate.

However, considerable disputation took place among members of this House because of the variation that occurred in some instances between the transcript copy that was approved by the hon. member who made the speech and returned by him to the Chief Hansard Reporter with any necessary corrections and the transcript copy that was often given to another hon. member before corrections had been made. As a result, three years ago, my predecessor gave a ruling on this matter. Strangely enough, on both occasions when a discussion of this nature has taken place, I was sitting on the Government side of the House. As I have said, my predecessor dealt with the matter and he gave the following ruling:—

This brings up the matter of a member getting a transcript of another member's speech before that member has had a chance to correct it. So I have advised the Chief Hansard Reporter not to allow this practice to be continued. Henceforth, no member will receive the transcript of the speech of another member or a Minister until it has been corrected. These mistakes will not, therefore, occur in the future, nor will a member be able to make a speech based on an uncorrected report. If members who

are interested in a particular subject take their own notes, they will not have to rely on the transcript.

That was the ruling given by my predecessor and that practice has continued. The request of the member for Nedlands does not appear to be unreasonable, but when I discussed this matter with the Chief Hansard Reporter, it was pointed out to me that it would be difficult to lay down axiomatically that that should apply because there could be occasions on which it would possibly be vitiated.

I might also point out that in 1936 the same type of question arose when a member received a copy of a speech made on the third reading of a Bill, and the allegation made was that the Minister concerned had altered portion of it. Considerable debate ensued on that issue and finally the Speaker, who was then the late Mr. Panton, on being asked by the member concerned to suspend the sitting to enable him to have a draft of the speech made, had this to say—

No, I cannot hold up the debate for that. But it is a very serious accusation that a material matter has been altered in Hansard. It is distinctly against the rules of the House and, indeed, the Chief Hansard Reporter has a letter over my name to the effect that no material matter must be altered without my authority.

That was the ruling that he gave. It does not, of course, necessarily deal with the supply of transcript notes, but it has a material bearing inasmuch as a member received a copy of the speech which was subsequently held by that member to be at variance with the corrected copy possessed by the Minister.

I take into consideration the fact that on Thursday afternoon sittings when speeches are made late in the evening, up till about 6 o'clock, a member making a speech would not receive his transcript copy that afternoon. The practice is for those copies to be sent to the Ministers' offices. In the case of a country member returning home shortly after the adjournment, he certainly would not see a copy of his speech until he returned to Perth on Tuesday.

Therefore, if it were to be laid down that members who secure the adjournments of debates, or any member, could sight a transcript 24 hours after the speech was made, the practice could break down. I propose to allow the status quo to remain. It is, however, up to the members themselves. For the most part, I am informed, members and Ministers generally attend to this matter immediately, and if any corrections are to be made, the Chief Hansard Reporter is given the opportunity to make them. Occasions may arise, however, when the Minister concerned may not be able to give immediate attention to the copy of his speech and

the matter is allowed to drift. As an example, I would point out that if the corrections were not carried out in the case of speeches made in this afternoon's debate—for instance, those speeches sent to the Ministers' offices—and returned, then those corrections could not be incorporated until after 12 noon on Monday. Any corrections received after that could be made only in the bound volumes for the session.

As I have said, I propose to allow the status quo to remain. Members know that when they receive a transcript copy of their speeches they are generally enclosed in a wrapper which reads as follows:—

Hansard Duplicate Copy of Speech.

Members will greatly oblige by returning all reports of speeches to the Chief Hansard Reporter, not later than NOON of the day following the date of delivery.

Note—Alterations made in reports must be confined to the correction of errors only.

Members have the remedy in their own hands, and it is up to them to give early attention to the corrections which they want to make in their speeches, so that the member securing the adjournment of the debate may be able to get any information he requires. I know one member who secured the adjournment of the debate on a Bill the other evening. It was an important Bill, but unfortunately he was not able to get a copy of the transcript notes because there were corrections to be made, and accordingly the Chief Hansard Reporter was not able to supply him with a copy of that speech.

The member concerned sought the copy in the possession of a second member who had made a speech but found that the latter had taken it home in his pocket, and it was therefore not possible for him to obtain a copy. Accordingly, the whole position is bristling with difficulties, but as I have said, the remedy is in the hands of members themselves to check their speeches and, to ensure efficiency, to return them without delay to the Chief Hansard Reporter.

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

(a) *Freights, Margaret River-Flinders Bay Road Service.*

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is he aware that all goods transported by railway road service to Margaret River-Flinders Bay are being charged at "B" class rate, whereas correspondence between the Transport Board and the Augusta-Margaret River Road Board stated goods would be freighted in their appropriate freight class?

(2) Why have departmental assurances been waived?

(3) Will he ensure that written undertakings already given will be enforced forthwith?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The scale of charges adopted by the railways for transport by rail to Busselton and thence by the Busselton-Flinders Bay road service provides for rates according to railway freight classifications with a minimum of "B" class. Thus, goods which would normally be transported by rail as "M" class or "A" class would be charged as for "B" class.

This does not prevent a consignee arranging for delivery to Busselton by rail at "A" class rates (where it applied) and then having the road haulage effected by one of the several carriers operating—which would be the cheaper method.

The railway road service is provided primarily for regular traffic of the smaller consignments as several local carriers are available for cartage of the larger items to and from rail.

(2) The example quoted by the Transport Board overlooked the fact that a "B" class minimum had been specified by the Railways Commission. There has been no alteration of the scale.

(3) As the scale of charges referred to is laid down by the Railways Commission, I cannot agree that examples quoted by the Transport Board can be regarded as an amendment of the scale itself.

(b) *Suppliers of Sleepers Affected by Rail Closures.*

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) How many suppliers of sleepers to the W.A.G.R. have had to meet additional costs as a result of rail closures?

(2) What representations have been made to the Railways Commission by sawmillers supplying sleepers to the W.A.G.R. for alleviation of the difficulties created by rail closures?

(3) What benefits have been gained by sawmillers as a result of these representations?

(4) What, in general terms, are the arrangements made by the W.A.G.R. for the supply of sleepers?

(5) Is it the intention of the Government to take any action to alleviate the position of sawmillers who supply sleepers to the W.A.G.R. and who have been adversely affected by rail closures?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Twelve.

(2) (a) A request was made for sleepers to be inspected at the mill;

(b) a request for the continuation of delivery to the closed sidings.

(3) Nil.

(4) Sleepers are procured—

- (a) from the Railway Department mill, Banksiadale;
- (b) by allocation of orders to the associated sawmillers and timber merchants who apportion the orders to individual sawmillers;
- (c) some small allocations to small sawmillers.

(5) No.

(c) Inspection of Sleepers at Mill.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Forests:

Further to my question regarding representations to the Railways Commission by sawmillers supplying sleepers, the Minister replied—

- (a) A request was made for sleepers to be inspected at the mill.

Has the Forests Department any objection to passing sleepers at the mill rather than upon delivery?

The MINISTER replied:

I will ask the Deputy Conservator of Forests and inform the hon. member.

(d) Difference in Freight Charged and Amount Advised by Transport Board.

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Minister for Transport:

In view of his replies, am I to take it that the freights charged to Margaret River are at variance with the written advice of the Transport Board?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

It appears that the information the Transport Board conveyed was correct up to a point; but there were certain limitations imposed by the members of the Railways Commission who, after all, are the people operating the service. Apparently the Transport Board was not aware of that fact.

(e) Conference between Minister for Railways and Minister for Transport.

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Minister for Transport:

In view of the conflicting advices and operations of the Transport Board and the Railway Department, and the breach of faith with the residents south of Busseton, will the Minister agree to confer with the Minister for Railways with a view to the railways honouring the undertaking given by the Transport Board?

The MINISTER replied:

I have no objection, of course, to conferring with the Minister for Railways in connection with this matter, but I think in all fairness it should be recognised that, perhaps apart from the member for Vasse, all being human, we are inclined on occasions—sometimes rare and sometimes often—to make mistakes.

Mr. Bovell: Unfortunately, the people are suffering through it.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: As a matter of fact, it is making no difference whatsoever. If the railways are going to charge a certain amount, that much, no more and no less, will be payable by the people and therefore they are suffering nothing. The fact that they may have been informed of a different figure and are being charged something else, is something that becomes operative from when it is imposed. The earlier advice, I repeat, has imposed no hardship whatsoever. As I indicated earlier, I will discuss the matter with the Minister for Railways.

CEMENT.

Increased Freight, Spearwood to Margaret River.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Transport:

Why has freight on cement from Spearwood to Margaret River been increased to approximately 127s. per ton, when a letter dated the 25th June, 1957, from the Transport Board to Augusta-Margaret River Road Board specifies freight at 81s. 11d. per ton?

The MINISTER replied:

The figure of 127s. per ton cannot be reconciled with railway charges. Assuming the quantity is at least two tons, the correct freight charge from Spearwood to Margaret River would be 102s. 2d. per ton. The Transport Board's advice of 81s. 11d. per ton related to quantities of five tons or more but ignored the fact that the scale of the Railways Commission specified a "B" class minimum. The figures quoted are subject to any of the usual charges for handling (6s. 3d. per ton) and sheetage (2s. 6d. per ton).

CATTLE.

(a) Comparative Purchase Prices.

Mr. LAWRENCE asked the Minister for Agriculture:

What are the comparative purchase prices in Western Australia and the Eastern States of the following beasts per lb. weight:—

- (a) calves;
- (b) baby beef;
- (c) steers;

- (d) bullocks;
(e) heifers;
(f) cow beef;
(g) bulls?

The MINISTER replied:

The following are the average prices for the month of June in metropolitan sale-yards in each State. Country prices are not available.

	W.A. per 100 lbs.	N.S.W. per 100 lbs.	Victoria per 100 lbs.	Qld. per 100 lbs.	S.A. per 100 lbs.
Calves and baby beef	220	153	186	130	155
Steers (light bul- locks)	209	132	155	131	144
Medium to heavy bullocks	147	116	142	121	122
Heifers	—	117	161	120	134
Cows	160	86	123	100	106
Bulls	—	—	—	—	—

(b) *Committee of Investigation.*

Mr. LAWRENCE (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Further to his reply, will he, having regard to the difference in costs of beef, etc.—I will not go into this in detail—con-sider setting up a committee to make an investigation into the whole matter?

The MINISTER replied:

I will certainly have a look at the pro-
position and let the hon. member know
what the prospects are in connection with
his request.

FIREARMS.

Increased Licence Fees.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Have fees for licences for firearms been increased recently?

(2) What fee was payable before in-
crease?

(3) What fee is now charged?

(4) What is the reason for the increase?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

	Per Annum. s. d.
(2) Licence to possess a firearm	5 0
Renewal of licence to possess a firearm	1 0
Licence to manufacture and repair firearms and any renewal	10 0
Licence to deal in firearms and any renewal	20 0
Licence to conduct a shoot- ing gallery and any re- newal	10 0

(3) The present fees are those laid down by regulation published in the "Govern-
ment Gazette" of the 9th April, 1957, and
are as follows:—

	Per Annum. s. d.
Licence and renewal of licence to possess—	
(a) a single firearm	5 0
(b) two or more firearms	10 0
Licence to manufacture and repair firearms and any re- newal thereof	20 0
Licence to deal in firearms and any renewal thereof	40 0
Licence to conduct a shooting gallery and any renewal therof	20 0
Noting fee	5 0

(4) To bring fees into line with current
money values.

TRAFFIC.

(a) Truck Licence Fees.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What is the existing half-yearly
licence fee on a 3-ton Ford truck—8
cylinders HP23-447—used solely for an
owner-farmer's own business?

(2) What was the half-yearly licence
fee for a similar vehicle before the recent
increase was imposed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A vehicle of the description indicat-
ed is unknown at the Police Traffic Branch.
The nearest approach to this is an 8-
cylinder Ford Thames, petrol operated.
With respect to this—

Normal fee, £22 17s.; farmer's conces-
sion, £11 9s. 9d.

(2) Normal fee, £11 16s.; farmer's con-
cession, £5 18s. 6d.

Any vehicle as described in the Second
Schedule to the Traffic Act, and used
solely on a farm, but using roads only in
passing from one portion of a farm to an
adjoining portion of such a farm, may be
licensed free of charge and a traction
engine or tractor or machine used solely
for ploughing, reaping, threshing or other
similar allied agricultural purpose should
be issued with a free licence. Third party
insurance must be paid. Once the tractor
is licensed under this heading, it may
travel on roads unrestrictedly provided
always it is using roads for the purpose of
moving from one place to another for the
sole purpose of ploughing, reaping, thresh-
ing or other agricultural purpose and will,
in no way, be used for any form of hire or
reward.

(b) Number of Motor-Vehicles Licensed.

Mr. ANDREW asked the Minister for Transport:

Will he give the number of motor-vehicles licensed during each of the last five years in—

- (a) the metropolitan area;
- (b) outside the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER replied:

- (a) 1953—75,653.
1954—84,889.
1955—95,979.
1956—104,432.
1957—109,565.
- (b) 1953—71,049.
1954—74,538.
1955—79,306.
1956—81,628.
1957—83,343.

(c) Result of Causeway Checks.

Mr. ANDREW asked the Minister for Transport:

Will he give the figures of the number of motor-vehicles crossing on the Causeway, as revealed by a number of checks made during the last five years?

The MINISTER replied:

The number of motor-vehicles crossing the Causeway in both directions in one day between the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., were as follows:—

- 1952—21,169 (old Causeway).
- 1954—28,080 (new Causeway).
- 1956—32,802 (new Causeway).
- 1957—37,482 (new Causeway).

UNIFORM TAX LEGISLATION.*(a) Effect of High Court Judgment.*

Mr. COURT asked the Treasurer:

(1) Has he received a copy of the High Court's uniform tax legislation judgment?

(2) If so, will he table it?

(3) Has Crown Law opinion been sought on the effects of the decision with particular reference to Western Australia's position, should Victoria and/or New South Wales decide to take full advantage of the decision and try out their political strength and financial potential in competition with the Commonwealth?

(4) Is he seeking a Premiers' Conference to re-examine the whole of the Commonwealth-State financial relationships?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) No.

(2) See answer to No. (1).

(3) This question will be submitted to the Crown Law Department for an opinion after a copy of the High Court's judgment has been received and considered by Cabinet.

(4) This type of conference is held regularly with little or no resultant benefits to the States.

(b) Commonwealth-State Financial Relations.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Treasurer:

With reference to his answer to my question No. 10, in particular paragraph (4), does he not consider that the decision of the High Court raises issues which call for an early Premiers' Conference and could materially alter the approach of both the Commonwealth and States to the problem of Commonwealth-State financial relations?

The TREASURER replied:

I do not consider the High Court judgment calls for an early meeting of the Premiers which, of course, would include the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer. Western Australia will be reasonably satisfied to continue with the existing uniform taxation system. I should think, if any early meeting is to be called, it should be called by the Premiers of New South Wales and Victoria. They are the Premiers of the two States which were responsible for making the application to the High Court and, to some extent, the High Court decided in favour of the judgment in regard to their application.

I have read in a newspaper that if such a conference were to be convened and held, the Premier of South Australia would declare it black and refuse to attend.

WEIGHBRIDGE.*Provision at Bunbury.*

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Police:

As the W.A.G.R. has now closed down the public weighbridge in Bunbury, will the Government consider the placing of another either within the precincts of the W.A.G.R. property or under the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Bunbury or the Bunbury Harbour Board?

The MINISTER replied:

There is no record at the Police Department of the registration, by the W.A.G.R., of a public weighbridge at Bunbury at any time. There is, in fact, no registered public weighbridge at Bunbury. It is customary for local government bodies to provide public weighbridges and in some cases private people have registered public weighbridges.

STATE HOUSING COMMISSION.*House Construction for 1956, 1957 and 1958.*

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many houses were commenced and made ready for occupancy by the State Housing Commission in this State

under the Commonwealth-State housing agreement, and State Housing Act, during—

(a) the year ended the 30th June, 1956;

(b) the year ended the 30th June, 1957?

(2) How many houses are programmed to be commenced, and then made ready for occupancy, under each of the above-mentioned schemes during the year ending the 30th June, 1958?

The MINISTER replied:

(1)—

Year ended	Commenced		Completed	
	C/State	S.H.A.	C/State	S.H.A.
30/6/56	881	692	1579	883
30/6/57	1356	207	800	355

(2)—

30/6/58	785	96	*1300	*180
---------	-----	----	-------	------

*Includes houses commenced but not completed prior to 1/7/57.

I take this opportunity of asking the member for Bunbury and others to be a little more specific in framing their questions. For instance, the second portion of this question asked, "How many houses are programmed to be commenced, and then made ready for occupancy?" The position is, as will be seen under one of the headings, that 1,300 houses will be completed this year—it is anticipated—under the Commonwealth-State housing agreement. But of those commenced this financial year and completed this financial year, there will probably be only 400. It would give a totally false impression to the public, and I daresay to the member for Bunbury, if the answer "approximately 400" were given. Seeing that information was sought under headings (a) and (b) for specific matters, it was anticipated by officers of the State Housing Commission that the information under the second part of the question would be on similar lines, and the questions have been answered accordingly.

LOAN MONEY.

Approved Raisings and Allocation.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Treasurer:

(1) What was the total amount of loan raisings approved by the Loan Council for this current year?

(2) Does this total include loan raisings for—

(a) local authorities;

(b) semi-governmental authorities?

(3) If so, what was the amount approved for each of 2(a) and 2(b) above?

(4) What was Western Australia's share of the amounts under 2(a) and 2(b) above?

(5) If no local authority loans had to be raised, would the extra amount be available for Government and semi-governmental purposes?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) £289,000,000.

(2) Yes.

(3) The allocation between semi-governmental and local authorities for States other than Western Australia is not available.

(4) Semi-governmental £2,700,000
Local authorities £1,350,000

£4,050,000

(5) The same funds would still be available for investment, but the Government has little power to direct in which avenues this investment should take place.

EDUCATION.

Commencing and Leaving Ages.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has he given, or does he intend to give, consideration to raising the age at which children commence school?

(2) Has any zoning scheme been considered in this regard?

(3) Does he intend, within the foreseeable future, to implement the law relating to the school-leaving age?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) No.

(3) This is under consideration at present.

ROLEYSTONE-BROOKTON ROAD.

Alteration of Route.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it intended to widen, or, in some way alter, the route of the Roleystone to Brookton road?

(2) Has any set route yet been decided upon?

(3) If "Yes" is the answer to No. (2), when is it expected that work will commence?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Surveys and designs are in progress for the improvement of the alignment of the main road east and west of Roleystone to enable widening and reconstruction of weak sections of the road pavement to be effected.

No substantial deviation from the existing route is proposed.

(2) No.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGES.

Perth City Council's Pamphlet.

Mr. MARSHALL (without notice) asked the Speaker:

I wish to draw your attention to a pamphlet printed by "The Eastern Press," Royal-st. East Perth, commonly known to

be authorised by the Perth City Council for distribution throughout the metropolitan area, requesting members of the public to approach members of Parliament asking them to vote for the aquatic centre Bill.

As some of the requests made reflect that some action is contemplated if the members concerned vote against the Bill, do you, Mr. Speaker, consider that such intimidation comes within the provisions of Section 61 of the Criminal Code?

The SPEAKER replied:

I thank the hon. member for making a copy of this question available to me a few minutes ago. The important part of the question is as follows:—

As some of the requests made reflect that some action is contemplated if the members concerned vote against the Bill do you, Mr. Speaker, consider that such intimidation comes within the provision of Section 61 of the Criminal Code?

I have had a look at the Parliamentary Privileges Act and the Criminal Code and there is certain protection where it can be shown that intimidation takes place or influence is at work to interfere with the vote or conduct of members. The section that the hon. member has quoted is Section 61 of the Criminal Code. Section 61 (2) reads as follows:—

- (2) attempts, directly or indirectly, by fraud, or by threats or intimidation of any kind, to influence a member of either House of Parliament in his vote, opinion, judgment, or action, upon any such question or matter, or to induce him to so absent himself:

is guilty of a crime, and is liable to imprisonment with hard labour for seven years.

The offender cannot be arrested without warrant.

Members: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Order! Under the Parliamentary Privileges Act, page 204, in the Standing Rules and Orders, this is said in respect of such matters—

The assaulting, obstructing, or insulting any member in his coming to or going from the House, or on account of his behaviour in Parliament or endeavouring to compel any member by force, insult, or menace to declare himself in favour of or against any proposition or matter depending or expected to be brought before either House.

That is considered to be an offence. The concluding portion, Section 15, reads as follows:—

It shall be lawful for either House to direct the Attorney General to prosecute before the Supreme Court any such person guilty of any other contempt against the House which is punishable by law.

Unless the hon. member can produce a specific document wherein members are arraigned as he suggests, or he can submit proof that it is proposed to interfere with members coming to or going from the House, the onus is on him to submit proof. If he is able to submit that proof, the onus is on the Attorney General, and an instruction could be given to the Minister for Justice for action to be taken against such persons. I know that some members have complained that their wives are being menaced over the telephone, and consider that some action should be taken.

It is not within my ambit to take action in these cases. If there is any infringement of the Parliamentary Privileges Act or the Criminal Code, the obligation is on the House to protect members.

FISHERIES.

Establishment of Trawling Industry, Albany.

Mr. HALL (without notice) asked the Minister for Fisheries:

In view of an item broadcast by the A.B.C. regarding trawling in the Great Australian Bight, has the Minister received any reply to his representations to have the trawling operate in the Bight from Adelaide to Albany and unload its Western Australian catch at Albany?

I ask this question because the Federal member for Forest gave the item of news that adequate facilities would be available at Albany for fuelling and unloading.

The MINISTER replied:

No. I have not received any recent reply from the Minister for Fisheries in the Federal Government notwithstanding the fact that representations had been made to the Federal Government to bring about what I understand was broadcast in the news. I would say that in the majority of cases, the Federal Government has adopted the policy of giving this news to its own members ahead of advising the Minister concerned in this State. Therefore, there would be nothing new if this particular incident were correct.

CHAMBERLAIN INDUSTRIES LTD.

Parliamentary Committee Meeting.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Premier:

Further to a question asked on Tuesday, the 27th August, in connection with the parliamentary committee investigating

the affairs of Chamberlain Industries Ltd., did any meeting take place today and, if so, with what result?

The PREMIER replied:

The committee did hold a meeting this morning, and it agreed to make certain recommendations to the State Cabinet. The recommendations are calculated to assist in ensuring the continued operations of Chamberlain Industries Ltd. and also to ensure the successful operation of the industry.

PRIME MINISTER OF ENGLAND.

Invitation to Visit Western Australia.

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

Has an invitation been extended to the British Prime Minister to come to Western Australia during his visit to Australia?

The PREMIER replied:

Not as yet. One will be issued. I should hope it will receive better treatment than most of the invitations that Western Australia issues through Canberra to important overseas visitors to Australia.

BILL—BETTING CONTROL ACT CONTINUANCE.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. J. J. Brady—Guildford-Midland) [2.56] in moving the second reading said: In introducing the Betting Control Act Continuance Bill into the House, I would remind members that the Betting Control Act was passed primarily to—

- (a) overcome the extensive illegal betting being practised throughout the State, and which had grown to dimensions preventing suppression without a large increase in police personnel and motor-vehicles at week-ends; and to
- (b) meet the requirements of a large number of people who desired to bet on horse-racing in a comparatively small way, who could not by reason of distance, or who did not desire to, frequent race-courses.

Betting under the Act has now been carried on for two complete years with excellent results compared with the illegal betting in substandard shops, hotels, streets, back lanes and parks, without any control in relation to drunken persons and juveniles, or as to the standards of betting practice.

A high standard of betting premises was instituted and has been maintained, the number and location of premises controlled, the character and suitability of applicants for licences investigated, and an equally high standard of conduct in carrying on the business of bookmaking insisted upon. The experiment can be said to have been successful, and book-makers themselves have substantially co-operated. Many important people from the Eastern States have expressed their satisfaction with the standard of premises, the conduct thereof and the personnel they met. As the present off-course system of betting has proved to be an unqualified success, there is every reason in favour of the continuance of the Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Bovell, debate adjourned.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [3.0] in moving the second reading said: This measure, will, if passed, improve the Act, provide for greater security and be of help to the public generally. It deals with a number of topics, and one amendment contained in it provides for fees to be prescribed by regulation with the ultimate object of increasing the fees, in lieu of having them fixed by the Act.

Mr. Bovell: I cannot agree with that.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The hon. member does not like regulations.

Mr. Bovell: I do not.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am satisfied that the member for Vasse knows nothing about business, because this House could not carry on without regulations. Penalties which have not been altered since the coming into force of the original Act, have now been altered so as to increase certain monetary penalties by 100 per cent. There has been no increase in the daily penalties. The Bill corrects certain anomalies that have come to light in administering the Act. The provision as to advertising a reduction of capital by the company is impossible to comply with in its present wording. The advertisement has to appear twice at intervals of one week between such publications, within seven days of the passing of the resolution.

There is also a conflict between two sections in the existing Act dealing with the appointment of liquidators. One section allows a majority of creditors at a meeting of creditors to appoint, amongst others, a director or promoter of a company to be liquidator. By another section such a person, if he has held the office of

director or promoter within two years of the commencement of the winding up, would be disqualified from being liquidator in the case of a creditors' voluntary winding up. The amendment provides that a person so allied with the company cannot be the liquidator if he has held that office within two years of the winding up, unless the court approves the appointment.

Section 369 is altered in order to correct a mistake which is of some importance. The section generally prohibits the hawking of shares and the offer in writing for sale of shares, unless the written offer is accompanied by a written statement in a certain form. There are certain exceptions to this prohibition and one of them allows as an exception from the statutory requirement as to the contents of a written offer, shares which have been allotted with a view to their being offered for sale to the public.

The anomaly is that this type of share is the very one in respect of which written offers ought to be restricted for the protection of the public. The very things it was desired to control were left out, but the amendment will adjust this. The section when amended will be the same as that applying in Victoria. A further amendment deals with debts which shall be considered preferred debts when a company is being wound up. At present wages and salaries due to any clerk or servant are preferred debts up to £50. The amount of the preferred debt of an employee of the company for wages or salary is now increased by the Bill from £50 to £150. In addition, holiday pay, which is not mentioned in the principal Act, is now made fully preferential.

The Bill also deals with the filing of balance sheets by foreign companies with the Registrar of Companies in this State. At the present time there is a duty imposed on foreign companies to file their balance sheets in this State, but this provision does not apply to any company which, by the law in force in the place where it was incorporated, is not required to file its balance sheet with any person. However, in Victoria, although a proprietary company is obliged to file its balance sheet, it may do so in a sealed envelope, and the balance sheet is not available for public inspection there.

Under the existing provisions of our Act that balance sheet, although not open for inspection in Victoria, would be available for inspection when filed in this State. The purpose of the amendment is to exempt any foreign company which only has the duty of filing its balance sheet in a sealed envelope in its place of incorporation from the need to file its balance sheet in this State.

I now refer to an amendment which concerns companies where a receiver or manager has been appointed. The function of the amendment is to throw away

the blanket which generally descends over a company's affairs when a receiver is appointed. The new provisions will require a receiver or manager to give notice of his appointment in the letterheads and business stationery of the company. He is also obliged to give notice of his appointment to the registrar. A statement of the affairs of the company as at the date of the appointment of the receiver must be prepared by certain persons connected with the company and given to the receiver. A copy of the statement of affairs is to be sent to the registrar, and when a receiver is appointed by the court, to the court.

A further amendment deals with the position where a foreign company issues a prospectus circulating in this State referring to a mining interest in this State. At present, if a local company issues a prospectus concerning a mining interest in this State, the prospectus is required to include a certificate by the Department of Mines as to the nature of the interest and title to the mining interest. However, a foreign company issuing a similar prospectus is under no such duty. The purpose of the amendment is to make a foreign company undertake the same duty and comply with the same conditions as to mining interests as has a local company.

I now come to an important amendment which concerns unit trust companies. Investment in unit trust companies has become a popular form of investment, particularly amongst those members of the public who make small capital investments in shares. It has been found necessary in Victoria and England to introduce some degree of control and supervision of companies which promote unit trust schemes. The amendment is intended primarily to bring unit trust schemes under the Companies Act. It is taken partly from the English Act, but mainly from the Victorian Companies Act.

At the moment interests in unit trust schemes are not covered or protected in the same manner as the allotment of shares in public companies for purchase by the public. For instance, it is now proposed to prohibit hawking interests in unit trust schemes from house to house or place to place, in the same way as hawking shares in that manner is at the present time prohibited. The object of the amendment is to cover not only the recognised unit trust schemes where, generally speaking, shares are acquired and held on behalf of the investing public but also such schemes as reforestation or land sales.

Generally speaking, the amendment provides that no person, other than a company, or its agent, can offer to the public interests to which the new section applies. If a foreign company offers to

the public these interests for sale, then it shall be deemed to be carrying on business as a foreign company in this State and must comply with that part of the Act supervising foreign companies carrying on business in this State.

A company which offers unit trust interests to the public must issue a statement in writing which, for all purposes, shall be considered a prospectus. Where an offer is made to the public in contravention of the section, the court which convicts the offender may declare the contract void and order repayment of any money paid. The amendment also provides that a company which offers unit trust interests to the public must make provision for vesting the property in an approved trustee under a trust deed. It sets out numerous provisions which the deed must contain for the protection of the public.

Another clause deals with the power of the Registrar of Companies to inflict punishment on auditors or liquidators who commit breaches of the Act. At present, where the registrar finds that any auditor or liquidator has not properly performed his duties or observed the requirements imposed upon him by the Act, the only punishment the registrar may inflict is to cancel the registration of the auditor or liquidator.

I have always considered that penalty to be rather severe. I know of a case myself where an accountant had made an error and the only penalty that could be inflicted was to cancel his registration. It is felt that in a number of cases such a punishment may be too severe and impose too great a hardship on the person concerned, having regard to the nature of his fault. The amendment is intended to allow the registrar to inflict a punishment of less serious consequence than the cancellation of his registration. Under the amendment, the registrar may either suspend the registration of an offender for up to two years or fine him up to £100.

This Bill is necessary because there are some anomalies that have to be corrected. It will bring trusts under the Companies Act and will enable us to have a little more control over them. I think the provisions in the Bill will improve the Act because, as time goes by, our accountants, through their daily practice, locate certain anomalies and, in fact, real mistakes that must be corrected. There are one or two corrections in this Bill.

Mr. Court: What is the main reason prompting the Government to double the penalties? For some reason or other, it has been Government policy to have severe penalties in the Companies Act at all times and now it is doubling most of them.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Government has no reason other than to bring the penalties into line with the value of money. Most of these penalties are at the same figure they were when the legislation was first introduced and there have been only a few alterations made since then. If penalties were placed in any new legislation introduced, they would be in line with those in this Bill. The value of money now is only half what it was when this legislation was introduced.

Mr. Court: The need for the penalties is not based on experience of malpractice in this State. I thought we had had amazingly few prosecutions under our Companies Act.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is a deterrent. If we have had only a few prosecutions, there is nothing to worry about if we increase the penalties.

Hon. D. Brand: Do you agree that the penalties should be doubled in other legislation for the same reason that you have given?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, in other legislation and in Bills which are introduced. Even the increased penalties in this Bill are not in accordance with the drop in the value of money. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 27th August.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [3.15]: I do not think any member in this House will have any doubts as to my attitude to this measure. I shall oppose this amendment to the Transport Co-ordination Act with all the power I can bring to bear. I have been in public life in this State, in one capacity or another, for more than 50 years. I have been a member of this Assembly for only 10 or 11 years, but for many years prior to that I occupied various positions in public life in my own district.

Never before, in that long period, have I known of a Government that has shown antagonism and lack of appreciation for people living in the country districts such as has been shown by this Government, firstly, last year with its discontinuance of railway lines motion; and, secondly, by this amendment to the State Transport Co-ordination Act which will place restrictions on country people and

prevent them from using road transport even though no adequate provision has been made for an alternative service.

Mr. Andrew: You are very inconsistent. You cannot have it both ways.

Mr. ACKLAND: The member for Victoria Park is smug, like every other metropolitan member, in regard to this matter. This legislation will not affect the metropolitan area.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That is a rather sweeping statement.

Mr. Andrew: The member for Moore wants the railways but does not want to use them.

Mr. ACKLAND: We have the spectacle of the Government closing down 842 miles of railway lines on which there was a loss of £500,000, and at the same time the metropolitan transport system lost £1,500,000! Yet, as far as we are concerned, the Government has not taken any apparent steps to rectify the position in the metropolitan area. It intends to force the country people to utilise the railway system and, in addition, restrictions have been imposed upon them.

Mr. Andrew: They have done very well out of the railways.

Mr. ACKLAND: Operational losses on the railways last year amounted to £2,531,145, which represents £3 12s. 4d. per head of the 700,000 people living in Western Australia. The loss on the metropolitan system alone is costing almost £1 10s. per head.

The Minister for Transport: That is totally untrue, of course.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am quoting figures which were supplied by the commissioners in their report and also figures which have been used by the Minister at various times over the last six months.

The Minister for Transport: You have misread them.

Mr. ACKLAND: So a little more than £500,000 was lost on the railways in the country districts and the cost to the people of this State was slightly in excess of 12s. per head. Although, on the one hand, the loss is 30s. per head and, on the other hand, it is 12s. per head, there is no evidence of the Government attempting to tackle the problem in the metropolitan area. Yet the member for Victoria Park and many others on the Government side of the Chamber have been making smug remarks during the past 12 months! They know quite well that they will continue to have the privileges which they have always enjoyed. They know quite well that the country people are carrying a burden far greater than they should be asked to bear at present, and yet these further restrictions are to be imposed upon them.

Mr. Andrew: They have been heavily subsidised.

Mr. ACKLAND: The people in the country districts would be only too glad to use the railway services if service were given.

The Minister for Transport: That is an old one!

Mr. ACKLAND: The Minister may jeer at that, but during the period when there was so much agitation among people in the country against the rail closures, I attended five meetings that were held in various districts and at three of them resolutions were passed, two of which were carried unanimously and the third was carried with very nearly a unanimous vote. That resolution was to the effect that the people would use the rail services of Western Australia provided an adequate service was rendered by them.

The Minister for Transport: Airy fairy words!

Mr. ACKLAND: In regard to the people in my electorate, some are 80 miles distant from the metropolitan area; others, who are furthest away, are nearly 200 miles distant, and the average is somewhere between 120 and 130 miles. From personal experience, I know that a farmer would never put a truck on the road if he could get adequate and efficient service from the Railway Department. Often have we spoken of the actions of the Railway Department over the years when attempts were made to seek redress.

We know, of course, that the Minister for Transport is an able debater. He is very proud of the fact that, as a young man, he won debating competitions. Before ever I knew him, I remember reading of his having won debating competitions when he was still a student. I admit that he has lost none of his debating skill. His only fault is, however, that instead of his being concerned about the facts of the case, he is more concerned about making a fine speech.

Mr. Andrew: Tommyrot!

Mr. ACKLAND: I will give members facts; I do not talk without facts. During the debate on this subject the Minister has brought forward many arguments in favour of road transport. I was interested to read portion of a speech which he made on the 30th November last year and which appears on page 2818 of the 1956 Parliamentary Debates. In putting forward an argument in support of railway closures, he had this to say—

Surely all of us appreciate that not only in other parts of the world but also throughout the Commonwealth, including our own State, people are becoming more and more accustomed to using the roads for the haulage of goods and passengers and for personal travel!

One of the amusing features of this speech was the moral support he received from the then Leader of the Opposition who at this point of the Minister's speech interjected—

And progress, of course.

The Minister, in replying to the interjection, and in continuing with his speech generally, went on to say—

And progress. There are numerous advantages pertaining to road transport that appeal to the public. It may be all right for us to theorise or say that our railways are consuming local fuel whereas road transport requires imported fuel, but the point is that the public are desirous of using road transport and I very much doubt whether members of Parliament can forever and a day adopt the role of King Canute, in an endeavour to hold back the waves of progress.

So we find the Minister, in November of last year, eulogising the closure of railways and the use of road transport, but now we find that he is adopting a completely different attitude. Last night I made reference to the Commonwealth Government railways and the wages cost as compared to that on our railway system. For every £ earned, wages on the Commonwealth Government railways represented 8s. 8d., but on the State railways the wages cost was 18s. 4d. In this debate however, I am interested to find out from where the 20s. earned by the Commonwealth railways came from. Much to my surprise and to the surprise of other members, too, it is found that only 4s. 1d. is represented by coaching, 14s. 2d. represents goods; livestock represents 1s. 4d. and other earnings represent 1s. 5d.

It can be seen that practically two-thirds of the total earnings of the Commonwealth railway system came from the transport of goods. That is what we are discussing now. A few years ago dozens of road hauliers were carting goods between the Eastern States and Western Australia. Today, however, the position is totally different. There is no transport board to give protection to the Commonwealth railways. Because of the provisions of the Australian Constitution, no embargo can be placed on the transport of goods interstate and very few, if any, licence fees are paid by the proprietors of those vehicles on the carriage of such goods. Despite all that, however, the Commonwealth railways have practically run the road hauliers off the road.

In the report on Commonwealth railway operations for the year 1955-56, the following appeared under the heading of "Goods Traffic":—

For some years intensive efforts have been made to secure greater freight business for carriage by rail from and to the Eastern States to

and from Western Australia. Commercial Officers were appointed in Adelaide and in Perth whose duties include a continuous canvass of firms handling business which involves the transport of goods to or from Western Australia, with a view to inducing them to divert their traffic to rail carriage. In Melbourne and Sydney, such canvass is carried out by the State Railway Departments in conjunction with this Department.

Freight rollingstock of the most modern type has been placed in service, freight train services have been increased and faster schedules introduced, with the objective of providing the type of service necessary to attract and retain additional business, and, where necessary, special freight rates, including contract rates for truck loads, have been quoted.

It is pleasing to record that some success has been achieved in attracting business during the year under review. The tonnage of "through" goods railed to and from Western Australia in 1955-56 increased by 34.8 per cent. over the tonnage railed in 1954-55, and 82.7 per cent. as compared with 1953-54. The increase in competition from road hauliers operating between the Eastern States and Western Australia, referred to in detail elsewhere in this report, caused diversion of traffic from the railways, resulting in serious loss of revenue.

Accordingly we find that we have a Commonwealth railway system that is operating more than 2,000 miles of line, with four different systems and two different railway gauges, able to operate successfully in competition with road services.

Mr. Andrew: Over a desert.

Mr. Potter: Yes, over a desert.

Mr. ACKLAND: These members from the metropolitan area know full well that this does not apply only to Western Australia, but throughout the other States as well. When are the members who interject going to agree to any comparison that I make? They squeal when I compare the Western Australian Government Railways with the Midland Railway Co.

The Minister for Education: Do you include the Liberal members of the metropolitan area?

Mr. ACKLAND: And they are now squealing because I compare with the W.A.G.R. a service which is more difficult to operate than the W.A.G.R. No matter what one puts up, if it happens to differ from the opinion held by members on the other side, it is considered to be nonsense; we are considered to be in the kindergarten class, and are looked on as half-wits.

Members: Hear, hear!

The Minister for Education: Do you include the Liberal members in the metropolitan area?

Mr. ACKLAND: One can generally consider the worth of the criticism one receives by the outlook on life of the man making that criticism. In 1953-54 the total tonnage from east to west was 25,506 tons. In 1955-56 it had increased to 49,641 tons. Over the three-year period the total tonnage hauled both ways had increased from 31,794 tons in 1953-54 to 58,091 tons in 1955-56, which closely approximates 100 per cent. increase. The report on the Commonwealth railways operations continues—

The quotation of special commodity rates for specified goods in guaranteed annual tonnages, and special contract rates for truck load traffic despatched by forwarding agents, has been particularly successful, and much new traffic has been secured by this means.

Motor-vehicle bodies manufactured in South Australia and Victoria continue to be railed to Western Australia. Special rates have been granted to the companies engaged in the production of the bodies, and fast transport of their traffic is guaranteed. Wagons of a particular type have been constructed specially for motor body traffic. Since the traffic was secured in 1953, it has grown remarkably, and is now one of the principal sources of freight revenue.

And this, notwithstanding that there is no transport board and no restriction on road transport and little or no licence fees to be paid by these people in the Eastern States.

If the Government had made an effort to ensure that the Railway Department would give some service, and if it had tried to clean up the mess that it says was left to it—and which has increased so very much since this Government has taken office—and then found there were still things to be done, there would not be these complaints from the country districts. If we saw some evidence of the Government trying to do something with reference to the metropolitan transport service, or saw it doing something to reorganise that section which represents more than 50 per cent. of the total operating losses on the W.A.G.R., then there would possibly be some justification for it to take the action it has.

The Minister for Transport: You have multiplied the figure by three.

Mr. ACKLAND: A further quotation from the report on the Commonwealth railways is—

Over 300 tons of wool were railed from Adelaide to Jandakot (Western Australia), it being necessary to quote a special rate to secure the traffic.

The extent of eastbound freight traffic from Western Australia is not great, and practically all trucks loaded westbound from Port Pirie Junction have to be hauled back empty. Special efforts therefore have been made to obtain traffic for eastbound haulage, but with the exception of hardwood timber, with little success to date.

How very nearly Western Australia lost the export of that hardwood timber to the Eastern States. Had it not been for the fact that some consideration was given by way of subsidy by the Government for the closure of the Nornalup line, we would have lost that export trade. The Commonwealth Government has gone out of its way to try to give service on its railways. The Western Australian Government would not have to go nearly so far out of its way in order to secure the co-operation, instead of the antagonism, of the people of Western Australia.

Two years ago I mentioned the case of a man who had to go 11 miles, 11 times—that is 22 miles back and forth, 11 times—to get his super from Bindi Bindi and when he did not go the 12th time, he was billed for demurrage! I am glad to say, however, that we were able to secure him some relief from that impost. That man lives six miles nearer to Bindi Bindi than to Moora, but since then he has never sent or received a single thing from Bindi Bindi. He prefers to go the extra distance to Moora, where he knows that if he orders a truck, or perhaps a consignment from Perth, he will find it there not only on the day he expects, but very nearly on the hour at which the train is due.

I point out that what has happened in this case is also happening in the area between the Toodyay-Miling line and the Midland Company's railway and at many other places. It is known that farmers consign their wheat or barley if it is nearer, because they have no trouble with the Railway Department as somebody else takes over the responsibility. But if it is their wool that they want to send away, or if it is their super or other commodities that they want, then they prefer to go the extra 12 miles in the round trip rather than utilise a service in which they, and many others, have no confidence whatever.

A short while ago the Minister for Transport interjected and said I had made an error; in fact, I do not think he was quite as polite as that. He said I had made an error with reference to the percentage of losses on the operational expenses of the Railway Department. If the figures presented to this House are correct, then £2,531,145 is the total loss on the railway operational expenses in Western Australia last year. If we also lose the amount of money, particulars respecting which are given to us from official sources,

then half the operational costs of the railway system is represented by the loss on the metropolitan transport service; and to that loss must be added the loss on the trams and buses as well.

In more than 50 years of public life I have not known any Government to show such antagonism to the country people as the present Government has indicated, firstly, by the closure of 842 miles of railway line, and, secondly, by this measure if it were to find its way on to the statute book. It has been said that I am one-eyed. I am glad to know that. In this case I am not, but I want to be fair. Every one of the 700,000 people residing in the State, including the member for Leederville, has a responsibility.

Mr. Johnson: Why do you not get responsible yourself and stop telling us such fairy stories?

Mr. ACKLAND: I have not quoted a figure which has not been given from Government sources—

Mr. Johnson: You are now making a comparison with the uncomparable, and there is no justice in that.

Mr. ACKLAND: —or from statements made by the Minister. The Minister has been contradictory in very many things.

Mr. Johnson: That is because you have not the brains to understand him.

Mr. ACKLAND: He has been contradictory in his speeches, as one can see from the speech he made last December compared with the one he made on this Bill.

The Minister for Transport: No, he has not!

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not want to repeat some of the things which I said last night.

Mr. Johnson: It will be very different from what you will say today.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am interested to see what "The West Australian" will have to say regarding the debate on this measure. Last night I mislaid a statement which I intended to read. I have it here. It is contained in "The West Australian" of the 11th July, 1957, and reads as follows:—

City Railway Losses Demand Action.

The Government is still right in the principle of its decision to suspend services on unpaying lines. The Liberal Party is also rightly pressing its case that the Government, in over-hasty suspension of services on 840 miles of track, has not fulfilled its undertaking to ensure adequate alternative transport services by road. The Country Party is merely playing a sectional hand in persistent refusal to make any constructive State approach to the railway problem as a whole.

It is in reference to this portion of the leading article that my remarks were directed last night—

The Minister for Transport: It deserves to be on the permanent records of this House.

Mr. ACKLAND: —because everybody here knows it is not factual. Over 90 per cent. of the credits which keep this State operating come from the areas where the Government is penalising the people. The people of the metropolitan area who are so smug and sitting back with the conviction that whilst this Government remains in office they will get all the plums that are going, will eventually be the ones to reap the whirlwind of the actions taken by the Government. There will be a very great contraction in the development of the State. We know it is impossible to sell a country property, which is more than 100 miles from Perth, at the present time. Are members aware that it is virtually impossible to give away a property in those districts?

The Minister for Transport: That is not true.

Mr. ACKLAND: I know some have been put up for sale but no bid has been made.

The Minister for Transport: If the Minister for Health were here, I am sure he would have you certified.

Mr. ACKLAND: I know of people who have negotiated to purchase such properties, but as soon as they found out the properties were in the areas I refer to, they lost interest. But this action by the Government will increase the value of properties within 40 miles of Perth.

The Minister for Transport: You will say anything to suit yourself.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am speaking of what I know to be factual. If the Minister were not so bound up with his own conceit, or with his ability to twist and turn a case, he would realise there was truth in what I am saying. I have little doubt that the Bill will be carried in this House because members opposite have the weight of numbers. I am interested to find out how some Liberal members, who were so willing and anxious to close railway lines because they did not affect the interests of their electors, will vote on this measure.

Mr. Court: That is not fair comment.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am wondering whether they will support the Government in this measure.

Mr. Bovell: That is ridiculous.

Mr. ACKLAND: I know that my remark does not apply to the member for Vasse, because he has opposed rail closures as strongly as I have done.

The Minister for Education: What about the member for Nedlands?

Mr. ACKLAND: The hon. member can include the member for Nedlands if he wishes, but I am mentioning those who supported the contraction of railway services in December last. I have given a correct and factual statement of the position as it is before us today. I only wish I had two votes instead of one on this measure. It is a pity this House is not a local governing body.

The Minister for Education: You are very democratic!

Mr. ACKLAND: Every one of the votes, multiplied as they would be, would indicate—

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

Mr. ACKLAND: I have practically finished.

Sitting suspended from 3.47 to 4.9 p.m.

MR. MANN (Avon Valley) [4.9]: I cannot allow the Bill to proceed without saying a few words. My concern is for my farmer friends and myself as a farmer. There is great hostility in the Avon Valley regarding the Bill. I was in the House, and so was my colleague on my left, when the then Minister for Transport, Alex McCallum, put the Transport Bill through. I am very concerned because the area west of Brookton-Beverley—the Dale area—has always had an exemption in regard to carting by rail; the people in that district have been allowed to cart direct to Perth.

If the Bill becomes law, I hope that these people, who are 15 or 20 miles from a line, will have the right to cart their commodities direct to Perth. I hope the Minister will remember this if the Bill becomes law. Under the Act we have enjoyed this privilege that a farmer can cart his commodities—livestock and produce; and I am more concerned with livestock. At the time the McLarty-Watts Government was in power, Mr. Seward was the Minister in charge of transport. He was very vehement that he would cause the Act to be carried out in its entirety.

The member for Roe will remember the time when he and the stock manager of a certain firm approached Mr. Seward and told him in no uncertain terms that he would have to release road transport because there were not sufficient stock trucks available in the glut season to bring all the lambs down to the export market. At that time the lambs were drying off owing to lack of feed and so the member for Roe was able to force the issue in regard to road transport of stock.

Our railways are in a shocking mess due to the fault of many Governments, including that which preceded the present Government. Unfortunately, the railway system of this State today is in a chaotic

condition, under the control of the present Railways Commission. The Government of which I was a member created that commission but until the Government of the day—of whatever political colour it may be—is prepared to face up to the situation with courage and appoint one man as commissioner, with the right to hire and fire and control the system thoroughly, there is absolutely no chance of the condition of our railways improving.

A railways commissioner, successfully to put the railway system in order, must be free of political control, and until some Government brings down a measure to amend the Act so as to give effect to the views I have expressed, our railways will remain in their present condition. No matter by how much we might increase railway freights, we cannot solve the problems of the system in that way.

Mr. May: The problem could have been solved six years ago.

Mr. MANN: When any business is found to be run down, we can be sure that the man at the head is responsible and that is the position of our railways today. The state that has been reached by our railway system is such that it would take a super man to put it back into a reasonable position. No amount of money spent on the railway system, while under the present control, will have any worth-while effect.

At present we have a top-heavy department in Perth containing a great number of men who have no idea of what is necessary in the system, and now the Government is trying to force the cartage of practically all commodities on to the railways. If that is achieved it will still be of no benefit to our railway system. The farmers do not exploit the railways as I think the Minister would realise if he ascertained the full facts about the carting of stock to Midland Junction.

I do not think it pays to take empty trucks to the country districts and bring them back loaded. If the farmer gets a load of superphosphate on his truck at the works, he can take it to his farm in the one operation, which tends to lower costs. When super is loaded on the railways, it has to be taken off the railway truck at the siding, reloaded on to a motor-truck and transported to the farm, so it is plain that road transport cuts down that cost. The farmer is not gaining much benefit from carting his stock to market by truck and, in fact, many farmers bring down empty trucks.

From Beverley to Perth the cost by road is about £12 as against £10 by railways but the stock arrive in better condition. I have heard members speak of bringing stock down from Geraldton and I realise that it is important to land lambs and

baby beef on the market in good condition, because the farmer gets the benefit of a better price and the public get better meat, but long transport reduces the condition of the beast.

If this Bill would help to rehabilitate our railways, I believe the farmers would be agreeable to its being passed, but unless there is a complete change in our railway administration and a general cleaning up of the system, nothing effective will be done. I repeat that the only solution of the present difficulties is to put a powerful man in charge of the system with the right to fire and hire and get things done. The commissioners at present are subject to the Government and have no real power.

I wish now to refer to the remarks of the member for Moore in regard to my attitude towards the closure of railways. Only one small section of line—about 30 miles—in my electorate is affected. The cost of running that line is about £33,000 per annum and the revenue derived from it is about £8,000 per annum, and the farmers are satisfied that it should be closed. However, I resent the remark of the member for Moore that I am not concerned with the welfare of the farmers of the State. That has been his attitude throughout, but I tell the House that my party will oppose the Bill, although we are not sure where the Country Party stands.

While I was at home during the week-end, many farmers rang, asking me where my party stood in relation to this Bill, and I said we were against it, but I am not so sure of the Country Party. The member for Moore poses as a great charitable person, standing alone with his ideals. I recently sat by my fireside and re-read "David Copperfield", and I saw Uriah Heep—

The Minister for Transport: We can see him here.

Mr. MANN: —with a prayer book in one hand and a knife in the other. I resent the remarks of the member for Moore about my honesty in politics. He starts to deal with the subject and then goes off on a tangent and apparently thinks he is the only honest man in the House. I live on my own farm and I am concerned with the welfare of the farmers of the State. I think my feelings for the man on the land may be even more sincere than those of the member for Moore.

Years of service in this House should impart a certain dignity to members, but I think that when a man does certain things in another member's electorate, his ethics must be at a pretty low ebb. But he found it to his advantage to vent his spite on members on this side of the House. His remarks about "The West Australian"

were his own. I am not trying to support that paper, but I often wonder what sort of a paper it would be if the member for Moore were its editor.

The Minister for Transport: God forbid!

Mr. MANN: I hope the Bill will be defeated either here or somewhere else. We will make every move possible to see that it is defeated, and our efforts to do that will not be based on the petty grounds of party politics. The Bill, if passed, will not do the Government one iota of good. The Minister may hold the view that this Bill, if passed, will help the railways; but it will not. We expect increased freights, but they, too, will not help the railways. They are like a bottomless pit into which countless sums of money have been poured. It is something like the city fellows who buy farms and then pour money into them like pouring water down a sink. The Minister would have done better had he brought down a Bill to rehabilitate the railways.

The Minister for Transport: What would be your thoughts if this Bill was substantially to increase freights?

Mr. MANN: I am not going to commit myself. There are two features in regard to the railways, and neither of them will solve the problem. This afternoon we are speaking to a Bill which has been introduced to try to solve the railway problem.

The Minister for Transport: No, it is one of a number of steps.

Mr. MANN: The Minister cannot put words into my mouth. We are discussing a Bill to control road transport with the idea of feeding more money into the railways. If this Bill is passed, what additional revenue will the Government get out of it? Not much.

The Minister for Lands: I should think it would be very considerable.

Mr. MANN: No one can estimate that; the Government would not have any idea unless it had a complete check of what has been going by road—and I think that is almost impossible. Let us face the facts. If we on this side were the Government, and we were in the same position as the Government is today, and we introduced legislation such as this, there would be strong opposition to it from members opposite. I know what they are like when they are in opposition. We have to be honest about the railways and this Bill concerns the welfare of the railways and the State generally. The proper line to take is to rehabilitate the railways and that is a superman's job. In the past we have had a single commissioner and now we have a three-man commission. What a tragedy!

The Minister for Transport: Only two.

Mr. MANN: We had a three-man commission and I cannot understand why the Government which I supported appointed

them. I am not telling any tales, but I opposed the idea in the party room because, from my long experience in farming and in business, I know that no concern can carry on successfully with three persons at the head. There must be a fountain head with full power. What would be the position of all the parties here if each had no leader, but had three men in charge of them. One man must accept the responsibility; that is the natural way in business. We have had this farcical position in the railways over the years.

The Government can increase freights by 100 per cent., or increase them to such an extent that the farms cannot pay because of those increased freights. But that will not do any good because that penalises people who live in the country towns. It will drive them into the city to buy their commodities. Even today many country people come to Perth and buy their groceries in the super markets at a much cheaper rate than they can buy them in the country towns. The freight rates are already making them do that.

Hon. D. Brand: They will close them up, too.

Mr. MANN: It will force the country stores to close and that, in turn, will force people out of country towns. Living today is dearer than it ever used to be.

The Minister for Transport: That is not borne out by the statistician's cost of living figures.

Mr. MANN: I do not care about them. The average housewife in the country picks up the paper and sees that the prices at Freecorns and these other places are so much cheaper than they are in the country stores. We, in Beverley, are not so far away, but at places like Katanning and Mukinbudin, the freights make a big difference in the price of commodities. What will the ultimate end be? I presume there will be some move made in regard to the commissioners; but that is only doing the job in a piecemeal fashion. The Government must be prepared to face up to the whole problem. If the Government brings down a Bill regarding the control of railways, and it is the right Bill, we will be forced to support it because it is beyond a party issue.

This State cannot go on losing £7,500,000 a year. We have to build schools, provide water supplies and other essential needs; but they are lagging because of the terrific losses on the railways. Who knows! The following year the loss might be £10,000,000, and it will be unless there is some decent administration of the railways, which has been lacking over the years. I have heard Hon. H. H. Styants say in this House that in the days when he was an engine driver, they took care of their own engines. They polished them and looked after them—they were proud of them. Eventually, all the engines were pooled and the drivers lost any personal

pride in them until today there is no business concern at such a low ebb as the railways are. We cannot keep on pouring all this money into the railways.

I am glad that the Government has appointed Mr. Smith as a Royal Commissioner to investigate the railways, rather than have a railway man to do the job. Our trouble in the past has been that Royal Commissioners inquiring into the railways have been railway men. I oppose the Bill because it is useless and will not help the State in any way.

The Minister for Lands: You are speaking in favour of the Bill and yet you say you are voting against it.

Mr. MANN: I am not speaking in favour of it.

The Minister for Lands: You cannot have 5s. each way.

Mr. MANN: I am not going to be fooled by the Minister.

Mr. May: Tell us more about Moore.

Mr. MANN: The Minister cannot deny the facts. If many more millions are poured into the railways, the State will become bankrupt, and I think that the Grants Commission has a perfect right to say to the Government of this State, "Unless you are prepared to alter your method of expenditure, you will get no more money from the Grants Commission." We cannot carry on our railways in this way. No business could go on like it and, after all, the railways are the largest business concern in Western Australia. I hope the Bill will be defeated.

MR. I. W. MANNING (Harvey) [4.28]: I think there is an acute lack of common-sense in this measure and I offer the strongest possible objection to it. The Minister was not able to give us any indication of the amount of traffic involved, and to which he objected, nor was he able to tell us to what extent token loads were being brought to the metropolitan area for the sole purpose of back-loading goods to the country. The Leader of the Country Party believes that the present regulations are, and the proposed ones will be, difficult to police. One thing is clear to me—if these restrictive proposals are agreed to, we will need to have the iron fist of a police state to enforce them.

For my part, I am certain that the Minister who introduced the Bill has no idea of the difficulties that this will impose on the country people. Let me quote an instance of what could happen to a farmer who has a property in the Augusta-Margaret River area. If he wished to send cattle to the Midland Junction saleyards for sale on the Monday morning, he would have to transport his stock to Busselton and have it loaded by 4 p.m. on the Friday prior to the day of the sale. The stock would have to travel by a long and devious route. They would have to go through

Picton and then on to Bunbury and back from there to Perth and then on to Midland Junction and by the time they reached their destination they would not be in very good condition.

The Minister for Transport: You are shunting! You go to Picton and back to Bunbury and then on to Midland Junction.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: That is the way the stock would go. I am glad the Minister interjected because that is one of the difficulties experienced by many farmers in the South-West, which apparently has not occurred to him previously. Just imagine the condition of the stock on arrival at the market after travelling all that time! Further, if this same farmer was desirous of obtaining material or requisites for his farm he could only order his requirements so that they might be railed to Busselton. When he got back, he would have to make another trip to Busselton to pick those goods up—a distance of some 60 odd miles.

The main difficulty for such a farmer is to cart his stock from the farm to the siding for railing to Midland Junction. If he transports them by road, however, he would leave his farm on the Monday morning with his stock fresh out of the paddock and they would arrive in excellent condition at the Midland Junction saleyards on the same morning. There is no need to explain to members what a difference there would be in the condition of the stock that had been railed on the Friday to arrive at Midland Junction saleyards for Monday morning and those which were loaded early Monday morning and arrived at the saleyards a few hours later.

Members, too, can readily realise how convenient it would be for such a farmer to be able to pick up necessary equipment for his farm in Perth and load it direct on to his truck. Such equipment would include fencing material or even fuel. It would be quite possible for him to back-load his vehicle with such goods. If this Bill is agreed to, he will be prevented from doing that. I can cite another illustration as an argument against the enforcement of this legislation. The Minister claimed that there is no disadvantage felt by country people compared with the position of those living in the metropolitan area. However, if a grower producing vegetables at Guildford—which is on a railway line—were permitted to cart his goods into the metropolitan markets, he would be able to back-load his vehicle. I would point out that that man is on a railway line and close to the metropolitan area.

The Minister proposes that those living in my electorate, however—in the Benger area, for instance—must travel back with their vehicles empty after carting their vegetables to the market. Therefore,

there will be a wide disparity between those living close to the metropolitan markets and those living far distant in the country. Another speaker has referred to the effect this Bill will have on beekeepers. The Minister proposes that they shall cart only their requisites by road and that they must send their produce by rail. Any member who is acquainted with the activities of beekeepers knows full well that they travel far and wide in search of honey. Therefore, it is a great convenience for them to be able to transport by road not only their requisites from area to area but also their produce to market.

I am quite certain, therefore, that the Minister does not know half the story when he tells us that the country people and farmers particularly are among the privileged in the community. I would point out that the farming community, more than any other section of the people, has had not only heavy burdens but increasingly heavy burdens placed upon it by this Government. Yet the Minister, by this Bill, proposes to add another. I am surprised at the Minister for Lands and Agriculture for supporting such a measure because the restriction on the transport of stock alone will have a great effect on the quality of the product. That factor, in itself, justifies the Minister having another look at the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: Do you know of any section of the railway system to which a complaint against the transport of stock can be lodged?

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I do not see how that comes into the question.

The Minister for Lands: You raised the point yourself just now, and I am merely asking a question on it. The facts are that you do not know of any section.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I am pointing out the advantages of transporting stock by road. I have also pointed out how convenient it is for a farmer, after taking a load of stock or goods to the city, to take back something for the farm. If he is desirous of placing on the market a good quality product, he must transport it by road, particularly if it is young stock and especially vealers. The Minister quoted figures which indicated that a good deal of stock is being carried to Midland Junction saleyards by road. Those figures showed that of the stock transported by rail, 46 per cent. were cattle and 37 per cent. were sheep. Those figures seem to indicate that that traffic is very considerable.

If the restrictions provided in this Bill are to be imposed, I consider it is too great a price to pay for the rehabilitation of the railways. Time and again restriction after restriction has been imposed on the farming community and this is one that could prove extremely irksome for those living in country areas. In my opinion, the Government is ill advised to

bring down this measure. Of course, we are told that the Bill is designed to return as much traffic as possible to the railways so that the department's finances may be improved. Nevertheless, practically every member of this House could cite some instance of what we believe to be mismanagement of the railway system. In that regard I would like to quote one case of which I have personal knowledge.

In 1947, when the McLarty-Watts Government came into office, the morning passenger train on the Perth-Bunbury line was substituted by a road bus service. When first inaugurated this service was beset with many difficulties because the roads were rough and the drivers took some time to get used to the buses. Nevertheless, the road bus service soon established itself and it showed a good profit for many years. In 1947 the profit was £7,341. In 1952, it rose to £8,772. For even as late as last year it is estimated that the profit will be £1,075.

We have seen the railway road bus service from Perth to Bunbury virtually discontinued. Only about three buses a week are run. Nobody seems to know when they are to run and I cannot imagine them receiving very great patronage. But this proved to be an excellent service on that particular section of the road. We had buses leaving Perth in the morning and returning in the evening. We had a bus from Bunbury in the morning and back again in the evening, and this continued for at least six days a week. This was an excellent service, which was showing a profit, and yet it has been discontinued. I cannot understand why.

The timetable was upset back in 1954 when a diesel was put on; and this ran at a loss. The trains have run at a loss, and the only service that has shown a profit is the railway road bus service, but the Government has seen fit to further interfere with this service. It has just walked out and suspended the service and has lost to it any goodwill that was built up; and there was a great deal of goodwill built up, because the personnel operating that bus service were most courteous. They were always willing and helpful, and the service was a most flexible one.

The buses that were being run on this service used to stop at farm gates, and street corners, and wherever they were required; and as I have said, it was generally a most acceptable service to the country people. This service ran to a very good timetable, and over the period of time it had been operating it did an excellent job. Why the Government should at this stage suspend that service for what it terms reasons of economy, I do not know. Here we have a service that is showing a profit, and yet it has been suspended because of reasons of economy! It just does not make sense.

I also want to indicate to the member for Moore that I resent his remarks that he did not know where the Liberal members stood on this issue. I would say to that hon. member that if he decides to visit my electorate to do any campaigning in it in the near future, it might be as well for him to talk on the subject of land tax and of anti-profiteering because they are two of the subjects that are most alive in the electorate I represent; and they are two subjects on which the people there would be most interested.

The Minister for Transport: You are an unnatural comedian.

MR. OLDFIELD (Mt. Lawley) [4.45]: There is no doubt that this Bill has caused a great deal of confusion amongst members, as did the motion that was debated last night dealing with the curtailment of rail services, which I supported. The Government, on the one hand, having closed certain railway lines, is now wanting to curtail the road services while the Opposition, especially country members, on the other hand, wish the railway lines to be left open, and at the same time they want unrestricted road transport facilities to operate.

Mr. Bovell: We desire competition.

MR. OLDFIELD: That is all very well, but as I have said on previous occasions, we cannot have both these facilities. If we are to have a railway system, then we cannot have a road transport system because the economy of the State, with its large distances and its small population, will not carry the load.

Mr. Andrew: That is quite right.

MR. OLDFIELD: When we deal with the restriction on road transport, we deal with a vital principle, namely, the freedom of people to move their goods in their own vehicles from one place to another of their choosing. I have always been a consistent advocate for the extension of road services wherever possible, or wherever the road is suitable to take the loading offering. In 1953, I initiated a Bill in an attempt to extend the permissible distance in the Act from 25 miles, as it was then, to 100 miles. Subsequent to that, the Minister sponsored his own measure to make the distance 35 miles, and that is the distance that stands today.

Accordingly, to be consistent with the action I have already taken, and to pursue the line in which I have always conscientiously believed, I have no alternative but to oppose the measure before the House. As the Minister, and others who have spoken in support of the Bill have said, it is true that the privilege extended to the farming community has been abused. On the other hand, it has only been abused by a very small minority of the farmers. I would point out that in the case of any privilege granted to any section

of the community, we will always find instances of certain irresponsible people going out of their way to abuse that privilege.

But, because a minority is prepared to abuse a privilege, are we to take that privilege away from the remaining majority? I feel we should try to deal with the offenders; we should not outlaw the whole Act as is being done under this legislation. I suggest to the farming community, which has enjoyed this privilege of being able to transport its own produce from the farms or place of business to wherever the farmers wish, and to backload with the commodities that may be required on the farms, that those concerned do not abuse this privilege which we are trying to extend to them. In the past these people have been in the habit of bringing down two or three bags of oats as a cover, in order to take back a load of fuel which they may be very anxious to obtain.

Mr. Bovell: They are only isolated cases.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I know they are only isolated cases, but it is those cases that are making it bad for the rest of the farming community. I do not think we should take away a privilege to which all are entitled because of a few people who may be prepared to abuse that privilege. I suggest that the farming community should discipline its members; or if it is not able to do so, we should be given the necessary authority to enable that to be done.

Mr. Bovell: By the same token, if a person commits a murder, everybody should be locked up for it.

Mr. OLDFIELD: True, but the farmers should be most jealous of this privilege that has been accorded them; it is a privilege that is not extended to any other section of the community. For instance, the country storekeeper must use the railways to take his goods out to the country, but the farmer is entitled to come into Perth with two or three bags of grain and take back a load of fuel. On top of that, he could buy his groceries from a self-service store and take them to the farm as backloading. But the country storekeeper cannot cart these articles on his own vehicle. Members will appreciate this point when they recall that the prices of these commodities are about 10 per cent. higher in the country districts than they are in the metropolitan area. Plenty of farmers do their shopping in Perth because it is much cheaper.

Mr. Nalder: In what way should they discipline their members?

Mr. OLDFIELD: As the troops discipline their mates in the army by talking to the offenders, so in this instance by means of the Farmers' Union. It can always be done if the desire to do it is there. How do the trade unions discipline

their members when they get out of line? How does any political party discipline its members?

The Minister for Transport: The member for Mt. Lawley will know the answer to that one.

Mr. OLDFIELD: It has been done, and it should be done. I have never been able to understand the reasoning of Parliament in allowing one section, such as the farmers, to be accorded a privilege of that nature, while withholding it from the country storekeeper, particularly when that privilege has been used in recent years, as it was never intended to be used. It is unfair to the business and other people living in country towns who are compelled to use the railways, and, as a consequence, the cost of the articles they use is increased; while the farmers are permitted to purchase the same articles in the city and transport them back for their own use. At the same time, we hear the cry from the farmers about decentralisation and about the drift of people from the country to the city. It is only a small minority of the farming community who abuse the privilege they have been given.

The Railway Department itself is rather lax in many respects. Some two years ago it permitted K. W. Thomas to erect a transshipment shed on railway property where the boundaries of the Perth Road Board and Bayswater Road Board meet. This shed is located half in the Perth Road Board district, and half in the Bayswater Road Board district. At the time there was an outcry from both local authorities; and the Minister gave an assurance that not very much activity would be carried on, that it was purely a transshipment shed where rail trucks coming from the Eastern States bring goods to be transhipped on to trucks from the metropolitan area, and the goods carried by trucks were unloaded there to be placed into railway trucks for despatch East. It was strongly laid down by the Railway Department that there would be no interstate road haulage going on, either in loading or unloading at that shed.

On numerous occasions the Bayswater Road Board has complained about the huge semi-trailers being parked in the street, which is an ordinary street and not a highway, and thus cluttering up the traffic. This is a street which is being used by many motorists in preference to Guildford-rd. The Bayswater Road Board complained about the semi-trailers pulling up at the shed, and about the trucks parked on the roadway, and at times within 2ft. of the corner. Almost every day they can be seen there loading and unloading.

On each occasion when a complaint had been lodged with the railway department, the reply was that interstate loading or

unloading was not going on. That is because the department is prepared to accept the word of the manager of the company concerned, rather than to find out what really goes on. I go past the shed every day and without hesitation I can say that on four out of every six occasions I find the trailers parked there; but the Railway Department continues in its attitude of saying that no interstate loading or unloading is going on. It appears to be aiding and abetting the interstate haulage company in robbing the department itself of freight, and the use of railway property in that operation.

I strongly urge the Government and the Minister concerned to get on to the Railway Department and insist that no more interstate haulage is to take place from that site, because if it continues, what confidence will we have that the Railway Department is trying to do the right thing when it seeks to prevent the people of Western Australia under this measure from transporting goods, while at the same time it encourages interstate haulage?

This is a most contentious issue, and is one to which a lot of thought must be given. We realise that road transport offers very stiff competition to the railways. We must be mindful of the fact, as has been stated on many occasions, that road transport must play a real part in the economy of the State, and in the rapid transshipment of goods from place to place. Modern motor-vehicles, especially diesels capable of hauling large tonnages, and hauling it from door to door thus escaping terminal charges, very evidently save much cost in transporting certain goods, and especially on short hauls.

We are finding that interstate road hauliers are able to undercut shipping firms by a considerable amount on almost every commodity that is transported, so we must face up to the reality of the situation, and appreciate that there is a place in the community and the economy of the State for road transport. Rather than curtail road transport in order to bolster up an antiquated and outmoded railway system, we should reduce the railway lines, as has been the policy of this Government for the past 12 months. The Government should provide good roads so that modern transport trucks, capable of carting the traffic offering, can be given the job of providing an economic transport service which I feel the railways can never offer, because of the circumstances I have mentioned. I oppose the measure.

MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin) [4.55]: In case the member for Avon Valley and others are doubtful as to where some members of the Country Party stand on this measure, I had better assure them

where we do stand. The Minister for Transport no doubt has difficulty in trying to solve this problem, but when he introduces a Bill to amend the State Transport Co-ordination Act, thus in reality creating a monopoly for the railways, I contend he is taking an entirely wrong course of action.

Hon. A. F. Watts: It ought to be handed over to the Commissioner of Unfair Trading.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: That is what I was about to say. It was not so long ago when the Government brought in the unfair trading legislation, the main object of which was to control and prevent monopolies. In this instance, the Government has introduced a measure the exact opposite of the purposes of the legislation I referred to. The Government is seeking to protect the railways by creating a monopoly. I contend that the railways offer the best means of transport over long distances and for heavy loads, in this State or anywhere else. They have not been superseded by any other means. A few weeks ago I asked a businessman from America whether the railway lines in that country were being pulled up. He said, "By no means and we are not likely to." I contend that railways are the best means of transport available.

The Minister for Transport: They are considering closing them in Great Britain.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: They may be considering that now, but that was not so when I was there. The railways there carry the bulk of the traffic, and in competition with road transport. It is not a monopoly. I consider that by creating a monopoly, we would not be helping the railway system in this State. I would point out that there are rail routes for the sole use of the railways. Rail traffic does not have to traverse highways in competition with traffic or to face difficulties which beset road transport, which has to face hazards of injuring human life as well as of damaging property. Those advantages we should take into account very definitely.

Some figures relating to the cost of diesel locomotives were given by ex-commissioner C. W. Clarke to the Insurance Institute of W.A. This is what he said—

The cost of a modern road vehicle averages about £1,000 a ton, and the economic life may be 5 years. The cost of these locomotives (referring to diesels) works out at about £850 a ton and they should be good for 30 years. On a horsepower basis the price would be about equal, but the road vehicle would be useful for about 250,000 miles compared with more than 1,000,000 for a locomotive.

So the railways have some natural advantages in regard to cost of haulage, when compared with road transport.

The intention of this Bill is to restrict, or almost prevent, competition with the railways. I know that a very small percentage of the goods from the country is transported by road. There are many among the farming community who do not use road transport at all. We must admit that there are circumstances in various instances which influence the use of that form of transport. Sometimes it is by the type of goods that are transported. It may be cattle, sheep, or other livestock, and for various reasons, the situation of the property may, in some cases, make road transport preferable to rail, while in others rail transport is better than that by road.

I was at a meeting recently of a regional committee. At that meeting were four farmers, three of whom had never used road transport. The other one used it because he was situated in a place where it was more economical than to use rail transport. Therefore he used it for his stock. Many people contend that if the railways provided a service—a rapid service—on the mornings when it was desired, they would prefer their stock to travel by rail providing the timetable was right. These are some of the points I brought to the notice of the House when speaking only yesterday. It is a matter of management of the railways.

In many cases road transport is made more desirable by the situation of the town or the district. I might mention that my electorate is peculiarly situated in regard to road transport to Perth in that the road distance is considerably less than that by rail. By some reason or other, in the early days of the establishment of our railways we took them northward to Spencers Brook. Therefore, if we want to go south to Narrogin or to towns along the Great Southern railway, we first of all must go north before we can go south. It is to be expected that people do not want to pay rail transport charges over many miles more than their distance from Perth.

Narrogin is 42 miles nearer by road than by rail. Williams is 82 miles nearer, and those are the conditions which apply in many instances, and which affect the situation very materially. If we bring in a Bill like this, we make it a hard and fast rule and goods will have to be carried by rail irrespective of whether the demands and needs of some places are for road transport and in some places for rail. Under this Bill we intend to make it all by rail.

The Minister for Transport: No.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: My contention is that the railways can compete with road transport; but if we pass this Bill, the Government will say, "Now the railways get all the business, they will be all right." Do members think that is the way to improve the efficiency of the railways? I suggest the best way to promote efficiency in the railways is to go out and get the business in competition with everything else and after getting the business, we would restore efficiency to the system.

I maintain there should be a better service and lower freight rates. The Minister immediately thinks of increasing the freights, but it is the high freights existing today that provide the temptation to some people to use road transport. That is what is wrong with the rail system—the high freights to the country—and the sooner we can get them down, the sooner we will have a chance to make the railways pay. That may seem a contradiction, but it is not so. The more traffic that goes over the railways, the greater the revenue obtained.

Mr. Nalder: Proportionate to cost?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: If we increase the traffic on the railways by providing a good service at a reasonable cost, I believe they will earn more money. Our overheads of 70 per cent. will be there whether there is one train a day or whether there is one every five minutes. It does not make a scrap of difference, and the sooner we realise that high freights are killing the railways, the sooner we will arrive at some better basis. What guarantee have we got that if this Bill is passed, there will not be an increase of freights and that the position then will not be worse than ever? How can the country prosper in view of the conditions under which it is now labouring? We have to ensure that the country is developed to the full.

Mr. Potter: We have the lowest freight rates in the world at the present time.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: We have not. I wish members, like the member for Subiaco, would live away from Perth for a time.

Mr. Potter: I have made many trips to the country.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: We had better send the hon. member away again I think. The contention is that if we want the railways to stay as they are, we must support them, and they will be supported if they are capable of competing with other means of transport. However, does that apply to the metropolitan area? If a business concern lands goods at Fremantle, is it compelled to put these goods on a train at Fremantle to transport them to Midland Junction or Armadale? Not a bit of it. They can be picked up by truck and taken a distance of 70 miles—35 miles radius

from the city—which gives them a direct line of 70 miles. Why should they be able to do it?

I suggest that if this Bill is to become law, it be amended to include metropolitan traffic as well. We have members representing the metropolitan area crying about favours for the country; they say people in the country have all the favours. That is not the position, and why should people in the metropolitan area complain because we seek some concessions for certain produce from a farm? People in the metropolitan area can transport goods as they like, by any means of transport. They are not compelled to use the railways. Why differentiate? I cannot see any difference.

Mr. Johnson: Because we subsidise water supplies, electricity and transport.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: Electricity is not subsidised at all.

Mr. Roberts: Why don't you like the country?

Mr. Johnson: I do not like confused thinking.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I suggest that if the provisions of this measure are to apply to the country districts, they should also apply to the metropolitan area. Surely that is fair enough!

Mr. Jamieson: You will have to put in a few more railways.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: If there is a radius of 35 miles from Perth in which goods can be carted free in any way, let us put it on another basis; allow 35 miles in any district in the State. In that case from a place like Williams, which is 100 miles away, we could transport for 135 miles. That would be putting country towns on the same basis. One would not suggest compelling people in the metropolitan area to transport goods by rail from Fremantle to Subiaco, Perth, Maylands or Victoria Park.

Mr. Potter: They are not served by rail! What are you talking about?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: Goods can be transported to the nearest station, which is what people will have to do in the country under this Bill. They will have to take their goods to the nearest railway station and pick them up by truck. The complaints being made are that those in the country are seeking to be favoured. That is not the case; the favour is in the metropolitan area where there is not one vestige of control of transport. That is the position as it exists today; they do not have to be licensed under the Transport Act. They can carry anything they like and operate within a radius of 35 miles of the metropolis.

If this is allowed in the metropolitan area, why should it not be allowed in the country districts? I cannot see one iota of

good in the Bill because it seeks to create a monopoly for the railways. If we are keen on the railways providing the service that they should, then we will not present them with a monopoly but will give them an opportunity to build up their business in competition with other means of transport. I oppose the Bill.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [5.11]: I rise to oppose the Bill.

The Minister for Transport: You are half-hearted about it.

Mr. NALDER: If the Minister will wait a minute or two, he will learn that I am not.

The Minister for Transport: You will have to do better than your last effort or we will not stay here to listen.

Mr. NALDER: If the Minister feels that way he may go.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member should disregard interjections.

The Minister for Transport: I do not require the hon. member's permission to do that.

Mr. NALDER: I believe the Government is tackling in a wrong way altogether the proposition of making the railways pay. The job of making the railways efficient is more important than trying to restrict the activities of a section of the community that plays an important part in the life of Western Australia. The future of agriculture in this State will receive one of the biggest setbacks in its history if the Bill is allowed to pass.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. NALDER: If we are going to talk about increasing the productivity of the State, we must endeavour to encourage the people to produce to the greatest extent possible. I believe that the introduction of the Bill will have the opposite effect.

Much has been said on the aspect of the effect on the quality of some production by forcing producers to use the railways. The member for Harvey made some remarks about the transport of cattle from the Margaret River area. I was amazed to hear that farmers in that district have to start loading their stock on the Friday prior to the Monday's market. This area is approximately 160 to 180 miles from Perth, I think—if I am not correct the member for Vasse can put me right. To think that the farming community in a district that distance from the metropolitan area, have to start loading stock three days before sale day is most ridiculous.

If we were talking about Wiluna or some other place 700 or 800 miles from the market, we might regard that as a reasonable proposition, but not for an area situated 150 to 180 miles from the market. Farmers will be obliged, if the Bill is passed, to load their stock several days beforehand, because I know that the people will not come down to the metropolitan area and return with their vehicles empty. It is a ridiculous proposal. I know how the quality of stock can be affected if the beasts have to be loaded three to four days prior to the sale. I can imagine the Minister for Transport complaining to the Controller of the House about the toughness of the beef that is put on his plate at mealtimes.

The Premier: He does it now.

Mr. NALDER: One of the reasons that will be given is because the animal has been on the road for so long that it has deteriorated in quality. Last year the Minister for Agriculture put forward a proposition to brand baby beef. We adduced sufficient argument to prove how just the act of branding will diminish the quality and growth of an animal of that nature. What will be the condition of the same type of animal if it is sent to market three or four days before the sale day, and then has to wait probably another day or two before being slaughtered? I can well realise the amount that can be lost by the farming community—the producers of quality animals—when they have to put up with a transport system of that nature.

I oppose the measure not only on that ground, but on others. The Government could set an example. Some members have suggested that the Government should allow for some exemption with reference to the transport of goods from, perhaps, the metropolitan area to the country and vice versa. Last week I asked the Minister for Industrial Development some questions with reference to Wundowie. It is interesting to note the tonnage—pig iron, timber and other by-products—that has been carted from Wundowie to various parts of the State but mainly, I presume, to the metropolitan area.

In 1953-54, an amount of 13,683 tons, destined to various parts of the State, was carted by road. It might be interesting to observe, although the figures are a little confusing, that the production of pig iron during the same year was 10,518 tons and of timber 5,423 loads. I do not know what tonnage that represents, but it appears to me from the figures relating to the transporting of the various products by road, that practically the whole output of Wundowie was carted from that centre by road.

In the year 1954-55, some 15,044 tons were transported from Wundowie by road; 17,000 odd tons the following year, and 14,000 tons this last year. If we are asking a section of the community to support the railways, why does not the Government set the example and use the railways to the utmost? I know the Minister for Housing—

The Minister for Transport: Be careful on this one; you put your foot in it the last time you mentioned it.

Mr. NALDER: I will put both feet in.

The Premier: You should be warned by what the member for Mt. Marshall told us yesterday about the stuttering man.

Mr. NALDER: In answer to a question, the Minister advised me that very few pre-cut houses destined for transport to any part of the State during the past year, left the metropolitan area for the country. His own figures given to me in answer to a question a few days later prove that quite a number of pre-cut homes went from the metropolitan area to various places in the country. I know, although I cannot give the figures for this year because I have not them at my disposal, that quite a number of pre-cut homes that went into the country in previous years, went by road. From a number of examples of which I have knowledge, I know the materials have arrived at the site by road. If the Minister for Transport is to tell us that the farmers should use the railways more, why should not the Government use the railways, thus setting an example to the rest of the community?

The Minister for Transport: That is precisely what it has done. Instead of hundreds of houses per year being transported by road, that has been cut out and therefore the Government has set an example.

Mr. NALDER: I am pleased to hear that the Minister for Housing in the last few months has decided to use the railways to send pre-cut buildings into the country.

The Minister for Transport: It was long before the last few months.

Mr. NALDER. We may be able to ascertain, in the near future, the exact number of pre-cut homes that have been sent to the country by rail, but I know that previously most of them were transported by road. There are several matters I could mention in relation to the efficiency of the railways which, if attended to, might make it unnecessary for the Government to impose such a measure as this on the farming community. I am wondering what authority those in control actually have in their various departments and in this regard I have in mind station-masters.

Similar things may happen in other sections of the railways—I do not know—but I am aware of one example which to me proves that there are too many bosses and not sufficient people with authority to see that certain things are done to improve the efficiency of the railways. A farmer recently received a number of stock from the Eastern States and they were in a railway truck in the railway yard at their destination for a number of hours, and the agent in charge of them asked the stationmaster whether the truck could be taken to the trucking yards to be unloaded.

He asked whether the stationmaster would be good enough to see that the truck was shunted down to the stock yards and the shunter, who was standing nearby and overheard the conversation, turned around and told the stationmaster to mind his own business and said he would take the truck down to the trucking yard when it suited him. If that is the way in which an employee of the railways can turn around and tell a stationmaster where to get off and what to do, it points to gross inefficiency and I believe that discipline needs tightening up. I heard only one side of the story, but I believe it is correct and it seems to indicate lack of control. Other instances of similar nature have been mentioned in this House, and I am aware of several cases which prove that unless somebody is given authority to say what shall be done, the position of the railways will continue to deteriorate.

Mr. Marshall. Have you never had a row with your boss?

Mr. NALDER: I am not talking about anybody having a row with the boss but I am suggesting that there should be someone in control. In the case I have referred to, I think it was the duty of that stationmaster to see that the shunter put the truck where it was required. Mention has been made of the losses incurred on metropolitan passenger traffic and I say that the argument put forward by one member—that most of the metropolitan passenger traffic would be lost to the railways if the fares were increased—is without any weight. I understand it was a member of the Government who made that statement—that if the fares were raised in the metropolitan area road transport, in the form of buses and so on, would receive increased patronage at the expense of the railways.

That argument, in reverse, has application to the country and I think if the freights are raised the country people would tend to use the railways less, except for the fact that under this measure they are to be given no alternative but to use the railways. I believe the only reasonable course to follow is to try to make our

railways efficient enough to be able to compete with road transport. I believe, also, that the opposition of the farmer to using the railways has been exaggerated.

The member for Mt. Lawley said the farmers were abusing their privilege but I think the actual amount of abuse is negligible. I know that most of the farming community who come to Perth, do so on some errand and bring produce from their farms and they desire to take back various goods that they require on their properties. I am sure that very few of them do abuse that privilege.

Hon. L. Thorn: That applies to almost any law; there is always some small abuse.

Mr. NALDER: That is so. There are always those who set out to abuse the law, but the farming community as a whole are not trying to do something they know is wrong but are endeavouring to abide by the law to the best of their ability. They bring down truck loads of stock or produce and take back whatever they require—

The Minister for Transport: Do you want road transport or rail transport? You speak in a reverse direction each time you rise.

Mr. NALDER: If the Minister does not know what I mean, I will tell him that I am opposed to the measure and I hope the House will vote against it and that competition from the roads will help to put our railways on their mettle.

Mr. Potter: They are already on metal.

Mr. NALDER: I hope the farming community will continue to have the privilege which they now enjoy because they are contributing so much to the welfare and wealth of our State. I oppose the Bill.

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [5.30]: I think it is fair to say that the proposal to close the railways has caused consternation in certain country areas, particularly those directly concerned, and I speak now as a country member. The proposal in this Bill has created grave concern from one end of the State to the other. It is all very well for the Minister for Transport to defend his Bill; it is his job to do that, but he appears to be doing it purely from the point of view of the metropolitan area and he appears to have failed completely to recognise the views of those who live in the country, the farmers, the pastoralists and others.

The Minister for Transport: This, of course, does not affect the other people at all.

Hon. D. BRAND: This Bill proposes to place further restrictions on road transport. It could mean that a larger number of inspectors would be employed to

police the legislation. If it is to be policed properly, it will be necessary to employ even more men than the board now has.

The Minister for Transport: The answer to that was given last week. Not one additional inspector will be employed as a consequence of this legislation if it becomes law.

Hon. D. BRAND: I do not think the Minister is facing up to the position when he gives that undertaking. It might be found that this legislation is impossible to police with the number of men available.

The Minister for Transport: No. It will be easier to police than the present Act.

Hon. D. BRAND: Either we have too many inspectors now or there will not be enough to police this legislation when it becomes law.

The Minister for Transport: It will be easier to police than the present law.

Hon. D. BRAND: I cannot understand that. I feel that the Minister's undertaking could cause a great deal of suspicion. Just recently a number of men have been employed on a temporary basis to police the Act, and I think there is a great deal of confusion as a result of the Government's intention further to restrict road transport. I heard the Minister tonight interject when the member for Harvey was speaking. He asked that member whether he would sooner have road transport restrictions or increased railway freights.

We are all aware that the question of increased rail freights will come up sooner or later. But I would remind members that the Premier and Treasurer, when speaking to a Bill to amend the Land Tax Act last year, pointed to our friends in the Country Party and said "Do not forget that the responsibility rests on you; if this Bill does not pass, there will be increased rail freights." The Bill went through in an amended form and tonight we have heard the Minister for Transport saying, "If this Bill is not passed, up will go the railway freights."

The Minister for Transport: Be fair! All I did was ask a question.

Hon. D. BRAND: What did the Minister mean?

The Minister for Transport: I wanted information from the member for Avon Valley, but he was warned not to answer the question by one of your cobbles.

Hon. D. BRAND: Did he not infer that if this Bill failed to be passed by Parliament, we would have increased rail freights?

The Minister for Transport: I had no need to infer anything. If I mean something, I will say it.

Hon. D. BRAND: That is what the Minister meant, indirectly.

The Minister for Transport: That is right; wriggle out of it!

Hon. D. BRAND: When the Minister for Transport introduced the rail closure motion into this House, he did not say "And as well we intend to place further restrictions on road transport." As I said last night, his whole case and argument was in the form of an appeal to attack the financial problems of the railways and to avoid future loan expenditure by cutting off the uneconomic and unpayable lines in this State. But what happened? As that state of affairs has not been achieved, the Minister brings a Bill to this House the aim of which is to force the people in the country to use the amended railway system and takes away from them a privilege which they have enjoyed for many years. What does the Minister aim to do? Was he right or was he wrong when he suggested that he was tackling the problem of railway finances by closing down 840 miles of line?

The Minister for Transport: One of many necessary steps.

Hon. D. BRAND: Apparently, he has found that that has not proved to be right and now he says to the people, "You will use the railways." As a country representative, and Leader of the Opposition, I think of those people in Hyden and in Yuna and Dartmoor who lost 60 miles of railway and who now have to cart by road—and incidentally it is their own responsibility—some 60 or 70 miles to a port. The Minister has also indicated that over a period of seven years he intends to cut out the subsidy on road transport.

The Minister for Transport: Don't make this so personal! There are a few Government decisions about this.

Hon. D. BRAND: The Minister for Transport is, for the time being, the spokesman for the Government and I hope he does not feel embarrassed on this occasion because he has just said that he is not afraid to place the facts before the House. To give him credit, he has been most forthright in his argument but we, on this side of the House, feel that the decision of the Government further to restrict the use of road transport stems from a decision of the Government to close 840 miles of railway line, and it was forced upon the Government because of a union meeting which the Premier attended and to which he gave certain undertakings. I understand that as a result of that meeting a vigilance committee was set up, the

idea being that the railway men would watch and see that all the traffic that should go to the railways under the law would go to it.

We are living in a period when road transport is the order of the day. We, in Western Australia, have been most fortunate in getting from the petrol tax fund, under a very liberal arrangement, a sum of £6,000,000 to spend on our roads. The Minister for Works has been busily engaged in providing good sealed roads everywhere and it follows that modern road transport vehicles will be used. It is, to say the least, a retrograde step that such a Bill should be introduced in order to prop up our railway system; a Bill which will give it a monopoly in certain districts to the direct inconvenience of the people concerned. I am reminded that this Bill could have the effect of closing certain spot sawmills in the metropolitan area because some of the timber coming from further out, where railway services were available, would have to be carted by rail instead of by road. One can readily imagine what inconvenience would be suffered by them and what increase in cost would be imposed on those using timber from areas so far distant.

A deputation waited upon me from the beekeepers respecting the amendment in the Bill that affects them, and I am at a loss to understand why this clause in the Bill was ever contemplated even by the Minister himself. Surely he realises that the elasticity of road transport is vital to beekeepers if they are to remain in the industry. I do not know what the Minister aims at achieving with this amendment which proposes to force them to transport their honey by rail, but I would point out that in recent years a certain large area along the west coast, near Green Head, has been set aside as a reserve for apiarists and many beekeepers take their hives and equipment from their metropolitan depots to that area by road. From time to time they would cart their honey by road directly back to Perth.

The Minister for Transport: What is the necessity to do that?

Hon. D. BRAND: In the case I am thinking of they are required to do that because there is only one access road to Three Springs. There is another, of course, across to Coorow. The road to Three Springs, however, would be further around for the beekeepers. I cannot imagine the logic of attempting to force these people to cart their honey to Three Springs instead of permitting them to cart it to Perth direct by road. They still have all their equipment in the area and by travelling to Perth direct by road they cut the distance down by about half. If the honey were carried by the railways it would probably mean a gain in revenue

of only £7,000 or £8,000. These are some of the pinpricking restrictions that would be introduced if this legislation is agreed to.

Mr. Johnson: You have not fully explained the point regarding the beekeepers.

Hon. D. BRAND: The fact remains that the beekeepers themselves have put forward the argument that if they are forced to use the railway—in this case it would be the Midland railway—they would have to cart their honey from Green Head to Three Springs and would still have to return to their operating area with their trucks to pick up their equipment. They would place only a few tons of honey on the train at Three Springs every year. If they were forced to do this, I suggest that it would mean a marked increase in the production cost of honey.

The Minister for Transport: You are saying a few things but you have established nothing. I am honestly trying to find where the beekeepers have a legitimate complaint, but I have not seen anything suggestive of it yet.

Hon. D. BRAND: The Bill makes special mention of the beekeeping industry.

The Minister for Transport: Because it had a special mention in the Act; that is the only reason.

Hon. D. BRAND: Yes, that is correct. I still fail to see why we should place restrictions on beekeepers when their activity represents only a small industry and, in fact, when they put their case to me, they told me that they could keep their costs down if they were permitted to use road transport between the area in which their hives are situated and their metropolitan depots, instead of having to use the railways, because they would still have to use road transport for a distance of 30 or 40 miles. They are limited to access roads and there are very few of them in the areas in which they operate. Indeed, some of the roads over which they have to travel are just tracks. If there is a good road available from the settlement of Eneabba—I am quoting that centre because I know it—through to Perth, I cannot see why the beekeepers cannot be permitted to use road transport.

The Minister for Transport: What hardship is there? All their equipment and gear can be moved anywhere in the State by road. The only requirement provided in the Bill is that beeswax and honey shall be put on rail.

Hon. D. BRAND: The Minister has said that the only restriction is for the honey and the beeswax to be transported by rail, but why have that restriction? Why should we force them to load their trucks

with honey and beeswax and travel almost in the opposite direction to where they wish to send their honey, in order to place their product on the railway when they can transport it so conveniently and speedily direct to Perth by their own vehicles?

The Minister for Lands: That argument could apply almost to anyone. Either you have a policy or you have none at all.

Hon. D. BRAND: That is the point exactly. For that reason, we are opposing the restriction intended by this Bill. The Minister has asked me to put up a real case for the beekeepers. Evidently he has been impressed by some of the arguments already put forward. The fact remains, however, that he should not have introduced the Bill before thoroughly investigating the impact it would have on various industries. If there is any small primary industry that we wish to encourage, it is the beekeeping industry. For the sake of a few thousand pounds that will be gained by the railways, we should allow them the freedom and the mobility that they can find with the use of their own vehicles.

The Minister for Lands: You have not established any special hardship for beekeepers, as compared with other sections of the community.

Hon. D. BRAND: I am not a beekeeper and I know nothing of the industry. I am only passing on to the Minister the information that was supplied to me by the beekeepers when they approached me in the form of a deputation. They consider that this Bill will impose hardship on the members of their industry and they are very concerned indeed. If the Minister is not satisfied with what I have been telling him he should invite the beekeepers to approach him so that they may put forward their case in person.

Mr. Bovell: The Minister need only read this week's issue of "The Farmers Weekly." That sets out their case.

The Minister for Transport: What about a few substantial reasons? That is all I am asking.

Mr. Bovell: They are printed in that issue of "The Farmers Weekly."

Hon. D. BRAND: This is another glaring example of restriction on the freedom of the individual. I would point out that we are living in a time when we might, with advantage, encourage and develop road transport because it is more economical when used in conjunction with the railways, and I am sure that if this policy were to be followed, both systems could be made attractive forms of transport. Under the heading "Road Restrictions are Imposed" the Farmers' Union has clearly set out its case in the issue

of "The Farmers' Weekly" dated Thursday, the 22nd August, 1957. That article reads as follows:—

The Farmers' Union General Executive decided at an adjourned meeting on Friday to forward a motion, opposing any restrictive amendments to the present Road Transport Co-ordination Act, to members of the Opposition parties in Parliament.

The motion will also quote the Union's policy as set out in a motion carried at the last annual conference when it was decided to press for a full transport inquiry.

This was the culmination to a discussion in the course of which Mr. W. G. McDonald (Wheat) said he thought this Government would go down in history as "the greatest bar to progress we have ever had."

Mr. Bovell: Read to the Minister something about the bee industry.

The Minister for Works: It seems that the farmers apparently want the trains to run so that they can wave to the engine drivers, not so that they should carry the goods.

Hon. D. BRAND: I think the point made by Mr. McDonald in that Press article, in suggesting that the Government had been a bar to progress, is proved by the introduction of this Bill. Next I quote from an article dealing with beekeepers from the same issue of "The Farmers Weekly," which reads as follows:—

Beekeepers Will Be Severely Affected.

"All beekeepers must be severely affected by the proposed restrictions, while for many it must mean that they will be forced out of business. It is the greatest blow which the industry has yet suffered," said the president of the beekeepers' section of the Farmers' Union (Mr. R. E. Smith).

Beekeepers feel that excessive hardship would be imposed on them collectively and individually by the withdrawal of the right of carting honey to the processing centre or factory.

The Minister for Transport: That is a generality.

Hon. D. BRAND: I do not propose to read any further.

The Minister for Lands: There is nothing further to read.

Hon. D. BRAND: The very fact that the Minister questions this matter, reveals that he has no knowledge as to the impact of these restrictions on the various sections that are affected. That is the point we are making. The Bill is here,

firstly, as a result of the closure of the railways on a decision made at a union meeting. Not a great deal has been done to tackle the basic difficulties associated with the railways, but, in the meantime, we are to force the country people to use the railways and grant to the railways a further monopoly under this amending legislation. I oppose the Bill, and I hope that it will be thrown out in this House.

I am rather surprised to find that the members on the Government side representing country electorates—for instance, the member for Geraldton—have not risen to oppose the Government on this issue.

The Minister for Transport: They are taking a statesmanlike view of the situation.

Hon. D. BRAND: It could, of course, be that they are afraid to oppose the measure. They expressed themselves on the legislation dealing with the aquatic centre and they were lined up for doing so. Accordingly, I should imagine that they would be dead scared to express themselves in regard to a Government measure.

The Minister for Lands: That is the weakest case I have heard you put up.

Hon. D. BRAND: I hope these members on the Government side who represent country electorates will rise to their feet and oppose the measure in the interests of the electors they represent.

On motion by Hon. Sir Ross McLarty, debate adjourned.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 20th August.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [5.53]: I support this Bill.

The Minister for Education: Marvelous!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Minister was quite correct when introducing it. He said it was a small measure. It is a Bill to validate two actions that have been taken by the Nurses Registration Board over a period of years. Because it felt it was entitled to do so, this board has been adopting certain procedures. It has now been pointed out, however, that these actions were illegal and, accordingly, the Government has brought down this measure to validate those actions.

The first of these concerns the remission of portion of the training period that nurses are required to undergo, while the second concerns the ability of the board to make adjustments concerning the qualifications of students before they are accepted as trainee nurses.

The Minister for Health: Educationally.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: That is so. The way the Nurses Registration Board is constituted, I feel these two actions should be validated, and the board should be perfectly entitled to carry on in the manner it has. I do not intend to spend any time in discussing the merits of these two actions, but I did want to query the remarks made by the Minister during his second reading speech. In regard to the qualification for trainee nurses he said—

Until recent years the board conducted a nurses' entrance examination. It now requires students to hold minimum educational qualifications such as the junior certificate.

I do hope that this does not mean that any girl who has not passed the junior examination will be prevented from entering the nursing profession if she is capable of passing some qualifying examination that may be set by the Nurses Registration Board.

The Minister for Health: It really means that the junior will be an example of the educational qualifications required; it does not necessarily mean a junior certificate.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Minister has relieved my mind on that point. If it is a fact that the junior examination is merely a mark at which to aim as far as educational qualifications are concerned, I agree it is a perfectly sound principle, but if it were to prove that the junior examination was the only qualifying examination, then I would beg to disagree with the wisdom of such a decision; because it could happen, and frequently does happen, that some girls are prevented for one reason or another from taking that examination, and if, at a later date, the girls desire to enter the nursing profession they would be disqualified from doing so because of this bar. The maturity of individual cases must also be taken into consideration. Some girls may not be older than 14 or 15 when the junior examination is taken, yet others might not take it till they are 17 or 18.

The Minister for Health: The junior is only a guide.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: If that is so, the way is open for those who may not have the ability or the opportunity at the time to pass the examination. Having cleared that point, I would like to say that I have no quarrel with the Bill. It merely validates two actions that the board has been taking for some time.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.57 p.m.