

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 14th August, 1957.

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

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Ayes. | |
| Hon. N. E. Baxter | Hon. J. Murray |
| Hon. J. Cunningham | Hon. C. H. Simpson |
| Hon. L. C. Diver | Hon. J. M. Thomson |
| Hon. A. F. Griffith | Hon. H. K. Watson |
| Hon. Sir Chas. Latham | Hon. F. D. Willmott |
| Hon. L. A. Logan | Hon. G. MacKinnon |
| Hon. R. C. Mattiske | (Teller.) |

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Noes. | |
| Hon. G. Bennetts | Hon. H. C. Strickland |
| Hon. E. M. Davies | Hon. J. D. Teahan |
| Hon. E. M. Heenan | Hon. W. F. Willsee |
| Hon. R. F. Hutchison | Hon. F. J. S. Wise |
| Hon. G. E. Jeffery | Hon. P. R. H. Lavery |
| | (Teller.) |

| | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Ayes. | Noes. |
| Hon. H. L. Roche | Hon. G. Fraser |
| Hon. A. R. Jones | Hon. J. J. Garrigan |

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That the words "the same order as that so recorded in the list by the clerk" in lines 13 and 14, page 79, be struck out and the words "alphabetical order" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 100 to 104—agreed to.

Clause 105—Ballot boxes:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That the words "or president" in line 23, page 82, be struck out.

Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: If agreed to, the amendment would make the clause inconsistent with Clause 10 under which, as amended, there is the alternative that where one-third of the councillors or 50 per cent. of the ratepayers sign, and so on, they may alter the system of elections.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 106 to 108—agreed to.

Clause 109—Voting in absence:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: As I intend to move to have the Bill recommitted, I will not proceed at present with the amendment standing in my name on the notice paper.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 110—agreed to.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.37 p.m.

QUESTIONS.

CORRIGIN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.

Hostel for Students.

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is he aware that the Corrigin Parents and Citizens' Association plans to build a hostel for children from neighbouring districts, who are attending Corrigin junior high school?

(2) Does he favour such a project?

(3) Are donations by district residents towards such a hostel building fund allowable deductions for taxation purposes?

(4) If not, will he take steps to provide that the Taxation Department makes such donations allowable deductions?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Yes, but the department cannot assist financially.

(3) and (4) The Taxation Department cannot give a ruling in such matters unless an application is made in writing giving full information regarding the control, etc., of the proposed hostel.

STATE HOUSING COMMISSION HOMES.

Income Limit of Applicants.

Mr. W. A. MANNING asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What is the income limit of applicants for a rental or purchase home under the State Housing Commission?

(2) When was this limit last altered?

(3) What was the previous limit?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £1,078 per annum plus £25 for each dependent child. The limit is adjusted in accordance with basic wage variations.

(2) The 1st July, 1957.

(3) £1,068.

NORTH-WEST.

Appointment of Resident Magistrate, Carnarvon.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Justice:

Can he give any indication when a magistrate will be appointed to Carnarvon as the district has now been without a resident magistrate for 12 months?

The MINISTER replied:

It is hoped that the appointment of a magistrate to Carnarvon will be possible before the end of this year.

ONIONS.

Value and Quantity Imported.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Agriculture:

What value and quantity of onions was brought to Western Australia for the year ended the 30th June, 1957 from—

(a) Eastern States;

(b) overseas?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied:

(a) From the Eastern States—22,604 cwt.s., landed cost £84,761.

(b) From overseas—651 cwt.s., £975 f.o.b. port of shipment.

SCOTT RIVER AREA.

Progress of Survey, etc.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) What progress has been made with survey of the Scott River area?

(2) How many separate holdings will be available for selection and what is the average area of each location?

(3) When will the land be open for selection and what will be the maximum area allotted to each applicant?

(4) Are any plans envisaged for access roads, and if so, what are they?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Lands) replied:

(1) Subdivisional roads only have been surveyed.

(2) In the first instance, 10 holdings, most of which will contain about 1,300 acres.

(3) Early in the new year, following resumption of survey when the ground is sufficiently dry.

One location per applicant.

(4) All the locations to be thrown open for selection will be served by access roads linking with Brockman Highway and Scotts-rd.

BUNBURY REGIONAL HOSPITAL.

Suitability of Site.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Health:

Are the 17 acres set aside for a regional hospital at Bunbury adequate and its location considered suitable in view of the future potential growth of that town?

The MINISTER replied:

The whole matter is being reviewed in consultation with the Town Planning Commissioner.

MUNICIPALITY OF BUNBURY.

Houses Under Construction, July, 1956.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Housing:

How many houses were under construction within the boundaries of the Municipality of Bunbury on the 1st July, 1956?

The MINISTER replied:

For the State Housing Commission—42.

FISHING.

Research by Commonwealth Government.

Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Fisheries:

(1) Has the Fisheries Department submitted a list of suggested examinations which should be undertaken by the Commonwealth Government in research in connection with crayfish-tuna-prawns and net fishing, out of the sale of Carnarvon whaling station?

(2) If so, what approach was made?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The Commonwealth Government has been approached regarding the following projects:—

(1) Technological investigations into the best method of processing prawns for export.

(2) Trawling experiments—with modern vessel—in the waters of the Great Australian Bight east of Albany.

(3) Danish-seining experiments in the area lying between Albany and Doubtful Island.

(4) Research to determine the distribution of the southern crayfish in waters east of Cape Leeuwin, and experiments in relation to the best method of capture.

(5) Investigations to determine the distribution of tuna and bonito in waters in the lower South-West, and the best method of catching them.

FRANCES CHRISTINE DEAN.

Inquiry into Conducting of Inquest.

Mr. POTTER asked the Minister for Justice:

(1) Does he recollect the letter I forwarded to him on the 11th April, 1957, regarding the circumstances of the death of Mrs. Frances Christine Dean?

(2) Does he also recollect that I stated, from information supplied by my constituent, Mr. R. W. Dean, that neither he

nor his solicitor was notified of the resumption of the coroner's court on the 29th March, 1957?

(3) Is he aware that my letter to him was forwarded to the City Coroner by the Under-Secretary for Law?

(4) Is he aware that the City Coroner replied to the Under Secretary for Law on the 1st May, 1957, stating, *inter alia*, "I have read with interest and amazement, the letter of Mr. Potter, M.L.A., and may I respectfully say I have never read anything so trifling. If people would only get the facts correct before making complaints, I feel that such complaints would not be made. Such complaints as these are upsetting to me and I feel it is regrettable that I should have to answer statements which I may be pardoned in saying are trifling—ridiculous and are far from the true facts."

(5) Does he think that this reply from an officer of his department is a right and proper manner to answer a letter from a member of this House seeking to obtain information for one of his constituents?

(6) Is he also aware that my constituent's complaints regarding the conduct of this inquest have been fully supported by his solicitor, who was present at the first sitting of the coroner's court, not notified of the second sitting, and has substantially refuted in writing the coroner's version?

(7) Does he not feel that the manner in which this inquest was conducted should be inquired into fully, and, if so, will he have such inquiry made?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) Yes.

(4) Yes.

(5) The City Coroner is a stipendiary magistrate appointed under the Stipendiary Magistrates Act, 1930, and as such is not an officer of the Crown Law Department.

I do not propose to comment as to whether his answer was given in a "right or proper manner" but would mention that in his reply he dealt with the complaint that neither Mr. Dean nor his solicitor was notified of the resumed hearing.

(6) Yes.

(7) No. The proper procedure to be followed is set out in Section 14 of the Coroners Act, 1920. If a request should be made for another inquest to be held, supported by sufficient affidavit, application will be made under that section to the Supreme Court.

MAIN ROADS DEPARTMENT.

Expenditure Approved.

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

(1) What amounts have been approved for expenditure for this year by the Main Roads Department—

- (a) by its own teams; and
(b) through local authorities;

on each of the following roads:—

- (i) Mt. Barker-Manjimup — Plantagenet Road Board section.

(ii) Cranbrook-Frankland.

(iii) Mt. Barker-Porongorups.

(iv) Albany-Ongerup — Plantagenet Road Board section and Gnowangerup Road Board section.

(v) Tambellup-Gnowangerup.

(vi) Denmark-Nornalup?

(2) What priming or sealing work, and where, is included in the above?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The information required is found in the following statement:—

| Name of Road. | Road District. | To be expended by | | Total. |
|------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| | | (a) Day Labour. | (b) Local Authority. | |
| Manjimup-Mt. Barker | Plantagenet | £ 28,500 | £ 500 | £ 29,000 |
| Cranbrook-Frankland | Cranbrook | 6,300 | Nil | 6,300 |
| Mt. Barker-Porongorups | Plantagenet | 20,750 | 250 | 21,000 |
| Albany-Ongerup | Plantagenet | 23,100 | Nil | 23,100 |
| | Cranbrook | 2,300 | Nil | 2,300 |
| | Gnowangerup | 35,000 | 2,000 | 37,000 |
| | | 60,400 | 2,000 | 62,400 |
| Tambellup-Gnowangerup | Tambellup | Nil | Nil | |
| | Gnowangerup | Nil | Nil | |
| Denmark-Nornalup | Denmark | 65,400 | Nil | 65,400 |
| | | £181,350 | £2,750 | £184,100 |

(2) The details required are set out in the following statement:—

Reconditioning, Priming and Sealing, 1957-58 Allocations.

| Name of Road. | Road Board. | Priming. | Sealing. | Amount. |
|------------------------------------|-------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Manjimup-Mt. Barker | Plantagenet | 8 miles (268-276M.) | 10.1 miles (276-286.1M.) | £ 28,000 |
| Cranbrook-Frankland | Cranbrook | 2.3 miles (00-2.3M.) | | 1,100 |
| | | C.B.S. Works 50-50 MRD-LA | | |
| Mt. Barker-Porongorups | Plantagenet | 7.2 miles (7.9-15.1M.) | 4 miles (3.9-7.9M.) | 20,500 |
| Lake Grace-Albany (Albany-Ongerup) | Plantagenet | 8.1 miles (26.4-34.5M.) | 3.3 miles (23.1-26.4M.) | 22,000 |
| Denmark-Nornalup | Denmark | 5.5 miles Sections— 41.4-42.6M., 52.8-53.4M., 53.9-57.6M. | 6.4 miles (46.4-52.8M.) | 21,400 |
| Totals | | 31.1 miles | 23.8 miles | £93,000 |

HIRE-PURCHASE.*Consideration of Tax.*

Mr. COURT asked the Treasurer:

Is the Government considering a tax on hire-purchase transactions?

The TREASURER replied:

Not at present.

TRAFFIC.*(a) Licences, Reciprocity with United Kingdom.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) With reference to the answers to my questions on the 31st July, 1957, regarding reciprocal vehicle and drivers' licences between the United Kingdom and Australia, will he confirm that the British Government has ratified the 1949 convention on road traffic as from the 7th August, 1957, and that Australian visitors will be permitted to drive their own motorcar or a hired vehicle in the United Kingdom on an international driving permit or a current Western Australian driver's licence valid for the class of vehicle the visitor proposes driving?

(2) Will he also confirm that a driver importing a vehicle under tourist documents visiting the United Kingdom need not register the vehicle in that country provided it is currently registered in Australia and is carrying an AUS plate?

The MINISTER replied:

I have no official advice of the ratification of the 1949 convention. The advice received is a copy of the news given to the Press and radio by the secretary of the Australian Automobile Association.

(b) New Vehicle Registration Licence.

Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Has he seen the new traffic licence?

(2) Is he aware that the new licence does not show the engine number or the year model?

(3) For what reason was the engine number and the year model left off the licence?

(4) Is the new licence considered an improvement on the old one?

(5) Does he realise that all hire-purchase agreements and bills of sale are based on the engine number and year model?

(6) Is he aware that plates can now be changed from vehicle to vehicle without any identification of the new vehicle from the new licence?

(7) Is he aware that by the deletion of these essential details, the number plates of similar makes can now be switched by unscrupulous persons without any positive identification being made by an unsuspecting buyer?

(8) Is he aware that no person purchasing a used car can now be sure that he is purchasing a vehicle to which he has a clear title, unless he checks at the Traffic Office against the original licence?

(9) Does he realise that the amount of time saved in the issuing of traffic licences can more than be lost by the added inquiries which will undoubtedly be made?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) To facilitate typing and eliminate errors in incorrect typing or mistakes in engine numbers. The method of renewal is similar to that in the country districts which has been in force for several years, where a licence is issued originally and a receipt only is issued on renewal.

(4) It is a renewal of a licence previously issued.

(5) Not of my own knowledge.

(6) No.

(7) Unscrupulous persons could switch plates at any time. A buyer should insist on seeing the licence in addition to the renewal licence to check all relevant details.

(8) Answered by above.

(9) There should not be any additional inquiries at the Traffic Branch.

NOLLAMARA SHOPS.*Authenticity of Press Report.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is the announcement in "The Sunday Times," of the 11th August, 1957, with reference to shops at Nollamara, substantially correct?

(2) Does this mean—

(a) that the ultimate occupants of shops will be unknown until the shops are built and auctioned;

(b) that the commission is nominating the type of business that must be conducted in each shop;

(c) that the ultimate occupiers will have no say in the design, etc., of the shops?

(3) Will the shops, after auction, be freehold or leasehold?

(4) Does the reference to the R. & I. Bank mean that the commission is giving a banking monopoly in the centre to that bank?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) (a) No. It is proposed to hold the auction at the earliest possible date following acceptance of

satisfactory tenders and commencement of construction. This will mean that all shops will be submitted for sale well before building finishes. The sale date is tentatively set for October next.

(b) Yes. However, the commission only nominates the basic requirements to meet community needs, viz. butcher, greengrocer, general store, delicatessen and chemist. Successful purchasers of each shop may expand their lines as they think fit.

(c) Yes, in precisely the same manner as anyone buying shopping premises anywhere.

(3) The auction will be conducted on a contract of sale basis as lot titles are not available. However, the commission will issue freehold titles to the successful purchasers as soon as titles are available. No great delay is expected.

(4) No. Requests for a site have not been received from other banks although further business sites will be available later.

CHAMBERLAIN INDUSTRIES LTD.

(a) Particulars of Directors.

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Premier:

(1) What are the names of the directors of Chamberlain Industries Ltd.?

(2) Do any of these men hold Government positions?

(3) If so, what positions do they hold in the Government service?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Messrs. N. Fernie, G. Hankin, and A. Constantine.

(2) and (3) Mr. G. Hankin is a commissioner of the Rural & Industries Bank, and Mr. A. Constantine is the general manager of the Wundowie charcoal iron industry.

(b) Release of Committee's Report.

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Premier:

(1) Has the committee appointed by the Government last year to report on Chamberlain Industries submitted its report to the Government?

(2) If so, when was the report received by the Government?

(3) When does the Government intend to make the report of the committee's findings available to members?

The PREMIER replied:

The committee has had several meetings but has not yet submitted a final report to the Government.

AMUSEMENT TAX.

Comparative Attendances at Metropolitan Race Meetings.

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Treasurer:

(1) What were the attendance figures for the metropolitan race meetings at each of the last five meetings, as shown by amusement tax returns?

(2) What were the attendance figures for the comparative five meetings as shown by amusement tax returns in 1956?

The TREASURER replied:

(1)

| | 1957 | Admissions |
|-------------|-------|------------|
| 13th July | 3,004 | |
| 20th July | 4,568 | |
| 27th July | 3,479 | |
| 3rd August | 3,854 | |
| 10th August | 5,543 | |

(2)

| | 1956 | Admissions |
|-------------|-------|------------|
| 14th July | 2,597 | |
| 21st July | 3,147 | |
| 28th July | 2,451 | |
| 4th August | 2,380 | |
| 11th August | 2,886 | |

NATIVE WELFARE.

(a) Administrative Costs.

Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

In each of the past seven years, what amount has been used by the Department of Native Welfare for administrative costs?

The MINISTER replied:

| | £ |
|---------|---------|
| 1950-51 | 117,860 |
| 1951-52 | 111,857 |
| 1952-53 | 98,914 |
| 1953-54 | 63,709 |
| 1954-55 | 70,602 |
| 1955-56 | 68,907 |
| 1956-57 | 80,634 |

(b) Visit of Officer to Camp of Canning Basin Survey Party.

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) Has the native welfare officer who is stationed at Derby ever visited the present camp of the Canning Basin survey party from which recent reports regarding natives emanated?

(2) If so, on what dates did he arrive at, and depart from, the camp?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

NURSES.

Rates Paid in Government Hospitals.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What rates of pay do nurses in Government hospitals receive?

(2) What rates of pay do trainee nurses of one, two, and three years in Government hospitals receive?

(3) What are the rates paid for over-time in excess of 40 hours?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Trained nurses—vary from £11 17s. 3d. per week for a nurse with midwifery certificate only, to £17 17s. 3d. per week for the principal tutor at Royal Perth Hospital.

The great majority are receiving—

| | Per Week. | | |
|----------------|-----------|----|----|
| | £ | s. | d. |
| 1st year | 12 | 17 | 3 |
| 2nd year | 13 | 2 | 3 |
| 3rd year | 13 | 12 | 3 |

Matrons—range from £15 7s. 3d. per week for a hospital under five beds, to £21 7s. 3d. per week for the matron of a hospital of 550 beds and over.

(2) Female student nurses are paid the following:—

| | Per Week. | | |
|----------------|-----------|----|----|
| | £ | s. | d. |
| 1st year | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| 2nd Year | 5 | 0 | 2 |
| 3rd year | 5 | 15 | 3 |
| 4th year | 6 | 18 | 3 |

plus free board and lodging.

(3) Trained nurses.—Time and a half for first eight hours. Double time thereafter.

Student nurses.—Ordinary time for first four hours. Time and a half for next four hours. Double time thereafter.

Some of the salary rates will be increased as the result of a new award expected to be approved by the Arbitration Court today.

FLUORINE.

Healthy Percentage and Quantity in Dams.

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What is regarded as a normal and healthy percentage of fluorine in water for human and animal consumption?

(2) What is the percentage of fluorine in—

- G.W.S. supply;
- metropolitan supply;
- Wellington Dam;
- other major supplies in Western Australia?

(3) Has fluorine been added to any Government water supply scheme in Western Australia?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) One part of fluorine per million is considered safe and is adequate to prevent dental caries.

(2) (a), (b) and (c): Less than 0.1 parts per million.

(d) The highest recorded in a water supply to a major country town is 0.35 parts per million.

(3) No.

RAILWAYS.

(a) *Resignation of Assistant Commissioner Clarke.*

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Premier:

Is there any reason other than that Executive Council has not met, for delaying the acceptance of the resignation of Mr. C. W. Clarke as a member of the Railways Commission? When does he propose to have it accepted by Executive Council?

The PREMIER replied:

No meeting of the Executive Council has been held recently. One will be held early next week.

(b) *Discontinuance of Meekatharra-Mullewa and Malcolm-Kalgoorlie Lines.*

Mr. O'BRIEN (without notice) asked the Premier:

When I was in my district a few days ago several local residents approached me in regard to rumours currently circulating there that the Meekatharra-Mullewa and the Malcolm-Kalgoorlie railway lines were to be discontinued in the near future. Will he please confirm in writing that that is not the case so as to put the minds of local residents at rest.

The PREMIER replied:

Yes.

AGENT GENERAL.

Decision on Appointment.

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Premier:

Has a decision been arrived at regarding the appointment of an Agent General? If so, who has been appointed; if not, when is finality in this direction expected?

The PREMIER replied:

The question of appointing a person to the position of Agent General will receive active consideration by the Government as soon as possible after Parliament has finalised the appropriate Bill.

SHEEP.*Consignment from South Australia.*

Mr. NALDER (without notice) asked the Premier:

Is a reply to the question I asked yesterday afternoon available now?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) 3,818 full mouth Merino ewes reached Kalgoorlie by rail from South Australia on the 13th instant; 71 were dead on arrival and 20 more died on the following day.

(2) The sheep were accompanied by a health certificate issued by the South Australian Department of Agriculture.

(3) This certificate would not be issued without an inspection.

(4) The sheep were shorn a fortnight before consignment.

(5) The sheep were in poor condition and death was reported to have resulted from exposure during transit.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.*Loan Expenditure, City and Country.*

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Treasurer:

(1) What was the expenditure from loans on the erection of or additions to public buildings for each of the financial years 1945-46, 1948-49, 1949-50?

(2) How much of the amount in each of such years was expended—

(a) in the metropolitan area;

(b) outside that area?

The TREASURER replied:

(1)—

| 1945-46. | 1948-49. | 1949-50. |
|----------|----------|----------|
| £ | £ | £ |
| 116,595 | 473,994 | 718,062 |

(2)—

| | | |
|------------|---------|---------|
| (a) 64,155 | 333,244 | 395,829 |
| (b) 52,440 | 140,750 | 322,233 |

BILLS (6)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Audit Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Treasurer.
- 2, Bread Act Amendment.
- 3, Factories and Shops Act Amendment.
- 4, Fremantle Harbour Trust Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Labour.
- 5, Chiropodists.
Introduced by Mr. Gaffy.
- 6, Nurses Registration Act Amendment.
Received from the Council.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Nollamara Land Vesting.
Transmitted to the Council.
- 2, Western Australian Marine Act Amendment.

Passed.

BILL—CREDIT-SALE AGREEMENTS.*Second Reading.*

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [4.55] in moving the second reading said: This is a companion measure to the Hire-Purchase Agreements Bill which I introduced last Wednesday. Like the latter measure, it is based on New South Wales law.

We in Western Australia have had a Hire-Purchase Agreements Act on the statute book for many years, but it is only in general terms and gives little detailed control of any part of the average transaction, as it is concerned only with the matters of repossession and reopening of harsh and unconscionable transactions.

In New South Wales, there has been a detailed statute since 1941 and, while the legislation has proved very useful, shark operators have found ways of evading the Act and exploiting the unsuspecting customers. One of the ways in which this was done was a form of contract so similar to a hire-purchase contract as to be indistinguishable to the man in the street, but having a very real legal difference that put it outside hire-purchase control—the credit-sale agreement.

The vital difference between hire-purchase and credit-sale agreements is that in the former the property in the goods remains in the hands of the vendor until the contract is completed; while in the latter, the property in the goods passes at the time of signing from the vendor to the purchaser. To the purchaser, the transaction looks identical. He pays a similar deposit, signs similar documents, and agrees to pay similar regular weekly, fortnightly or monthly payments. He undertakes to regard the goods as security for the amount owing and to return them should he find himself unable to keep up the payments.

It looks identical to him, except that he has to pay higher interest rates; and quite often the purchaser would not realise that there was a difference in rates as his general query is, "How much is my weekly payment?" without considering what the interest content of the transaction is. One of the leading exponents of this type of exploitation was the firm of Walton-Sears which came in for so much criticism in regard to the manner in which it attempted to hi-jack Cox Bros. into a take-over or amalgamation a year before last. This form of contract is not much in evidence in Western Australia as the lack of detail in our law on hire-purchase allowed those with the urge to exploit to do so under hire-purchase contracts which are undoubtedly a better security than credit-sale agreements.

From the point of view of the operator, the credit-sale agreement has one big weakness in that there is no easy method of financing the business by discounting the agreements with a hire-purchase firm.

These have to be financed by the firm itself, because they are security to the firm only and not nearly as negotiable a document as a hire-purchase agreement.

While this form of contract is uncommon in Western Australia, there is no doubt that, if the hire-purchase agreements that are currently before the House pass into law, this type of contract will appear here very quickly. It is in order to avoid that possibility that this Bill is being introduced. Members will note the very close resemblance between it and the measure on hire-purchase. In general the provisions are identical in intent. They are also identical with the New South Wales Act, the only difference being where reference is made to courts or Acts, in which cases the Western Australian reference has been inserted in place of that of the New South Wales measure. Once again, I wish to make it clear that I do not entirely agree with the rates of interest set out in this Bill, but I have adopted those used in New South Wales for the sake of uniformity.

The provisions of the Bill will not interfere with normal credit trading. It will not affect the accounts which so many people have in shops, nor lay-by accounts, nor budget charge accounts unless they run for longer than nine months. In fact, it will probably be said that this Bill affects nothing and achieves nothing—that is the intention. The whole idea is preventive—to prevent this rather objectionable type of trade-getting going on in this State. I trust that will achieve that objective. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

1. Justices Act Amendment.
2. Local Courts Act Amendment.
Without amendment.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 31st July.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT

(Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [5.31]: It will be recalled that last session a Bill was introduced to amend the Traffic Act and its purpose was, among other things, to increase licence fees, or registration fees for motor-vehicles in this State to bring them to a basis more comparable with the rates operating in other States of the Commonwealth. The fact is, however, that notwithstanding the increases then made, Western Australia is today below the other States in the Commonwealth in this regard and in many cases well below them.

No doubt members could make out a case for persons in different classes and categories being given some special dis-

pensation but, as I pointed out during the debate on the measure last year, the scale of fees which operated until early this year had not been increased since 1923 and, of course, money today is of only insignificant value compared with its worth when those fees were imposed. On the other hand, the cost of road construction and maintenance has increased considerably.

Neither the Department of Local Government nor the police traffic authorities are in agreement with the concessions sought to be laid down specifically in the measure now before us. Further, there is no need for this Bill because there is already provision in the Act as it stands to cater for the situation envisaged by the member for Blackwood. Section 11 of the Act says, *inter alia*—

Only one-half of the fee payable according to the scale in the Third Schedule shall be chargeable in any case in which it is proved to the satisfaction of the licensing authority—

- (i) that the licence applied for is required for a motor wagon, motor carrier, trailer or semi-trailer or any vehicle used for the purpose of hauling such trailer or semi-trailer which is owned by a person carrying out the business of farming and/or grazing on any farm or other land and will be used during the currency of the licence solely or mainly for the carriage of the products of or requisites for such business . . .

If members have followed that, they will see that if the local authority is satisfied with the applications made, it already has power to grant a licence at half the usual fee. When we bear in mind that the figures were deliberately increased for the purpose of providing additional revenue to local authorities and to bring them more into conformity with those obtaining in other States, I suggest there is no warrant whatever for the special provision which the member for Blackwood seeks, and I therefore ask the House to reject the Bill.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [5.8]: This Bill is an endeavour on the part of the member for Blackwood to obtain some concession for primary producers using tractors for the purpose of carting certain commodities. The areas I represent have been hit heavily by the closure of railways and that applies particularly to the potato-growing industry. This measure, therefore, would afford some relief to the potato growers, particularly in the Marybrook-Vasse area, by allowing them to use their tractors for the purpose mentioned and at a limited fee.

All the primary producers' charges are increasing. A number of additional charges have been imposed on primary

producers in recent years and in this connection, I could mention the drainage rates imposed about seven years ago and more recently the land tax at unimproved value but on improved agricultural land—a tax that had not been imposed since 1931, when it was wiped out by the then Mitchell Government.

It is vital in the interests of the State's economy that we keep down the costs of primary production as far as possible and while the concession sought in this Bill might be considered a small contribution to that end, it would help primary producers to curtail their expenditure. The Minister has said that local authorities already have power to grant licences at half rates for the use of tractors for the cartage of goods. That is what I understood him to say, but I feel that if the Bill is passed it will be a lead to local authorities to allow concessions in this respect.

I repeat that the potato growers in the area I represent have been hard hit by the closure of railways and are finding the transport of potatoes to the rail head at Busselton a difficult business. I intend to deal with that phase of their difficulties further when I speak on the motion moved by the Leader of the Country Party and which is next on the notice paper. I hope the other section on this side of the House—namely, the Country Party members—will have something to say on this question because it affects primary producers, especially in the more closely settled areas.

For my part, I do not know whether it affects the wheat and sheep areas to the same extent as it affects the South-West where holdings are smaller and the country is more closely settled, but the measure would be of distinct advantage to a great many small primary producers, some of whom are at present struggling for their financial existence. The affluence of those farming small properties in the South-West is not great and many of them have to save every possible expense.

The Minister for Transport: You realise that the Bill provides a maximum of two tons pay load, which would be very hard to police?

Mr. BOVELL: I do not think policing would be necessary.

The Minister for Transport: You want it to be a straight out gift to these people?

Mr. BOVELL: It is an endeavour to gain a small concession for the primary producers, a principle that I adhere to firmly. I am surprised that the Minister has opposed the measure and the only reason he gave for doing so was that the local authorities already have power to grant half-rates in individual cases after considering them on their merits. I believe the matter would be much better dealt with in this way so as to give a lead

to the local authorities. I commend the Bill to the House and trust that despite the Minister's opposition—for which I think he gave no legitimate grounds—members will agree to the measure.

On motion by Mr. Roberts, debate adjourned.

MOTION—RAIL CLOSURES.

Rescission of 1956 Resolution.

Debate resumed from the 31st July on the following motion by Hon. A. F. Watts:—

That the resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly on the 13th December, 1956, reading as follows:—

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

Subject to the Government—

- (a) ensuring that through increased efficiency and economies throughout the W.A.G.R., including workshops and administration, a substantial reduction in the railway deficit will be achieved as a result of the cessation of the railways in Appendix "B"; and
- (b) ensuring an adequate replacement system of passenger and freight transport before cessation of operation of the railways in Appendix "B"; and
- (c) overhauling and re-organising the metropolitan Government passenger transport services with a view to reducing substantially the deficits in such services.

Appendix "A."

- (1) The annual cash deficits of the State railways.
- (2) The condition of State railways generally and particularly of the railways listed in Appendix "B."
- (3) The need for improvements in the economical operation of the State railways, and for the concentration of railway resources to permit of all-round improvements in the cost of operating the railways.

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

(5) The rising costs of operating railways.

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

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

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

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

Appendix "B."

| | Length of Railways. Miles. |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Meekatharra to Wiluna | 111 |
| Cue to Big Bell | 19 |
| Malcolm to Laverton | 64 |
| Geraldton to Ajana | 67 |
| Wokarina to Yuna | 38 |
| Burakin to Bonnie Rock | 76 |
| Mukinbudin to Lake Brown | 8 |
| Lake Brown to Bullfinch | 50 |
| Bullfinch to Southern Cross | 22 |
| Boddington to Narrogin | 51 |
| Busselton to Margaret River | 38 |
| Margaret River to Flinders Bay | 29 |
| Elleker to Nornalup | 61 |
| Brookton to Corrigin | 56 |
| Lake Grace to Hyden | 58 |
| Katanning to Pingrup | 59 |
| Gnowangerup to Ongerup | 35 |

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be, and is hereby, rescinded.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [5.13]: I say here and now that I am strongly behind the Leader of the Country Party—

The Minister for Transport: How far behind him?

MR. NALDER: If the Minister listens quietly, he will find out how close behind the Leader of the Country Party I am. I commend the Leader of the Country Party for his opposition to the closure of railway lines. In this motion he asks the House to rescind the resolution which it carried towards the end of last year. Like other members on this side of the House, I am convinced that all was not well in Government circles when that resolution was

carried and that is proved by the speeches made at that time by members supporting the Government.

The rumblings that were heard during that period and since, have proved that this was correct. It was quite evident that when the vote was taken last year, there was a good deal of concern, and it was expressed in this House. All the members sitting behind the Government were not strongly in favour of the move to close certain railway lines in accordance with the motion moved by the Minister for Transport. I am convinced, as are other members on this side, that there was some concern in Cabinet where I understand at least one member was strongly opposed to the closure of railway lines. So strong was his opposition to it that the voicing of that opposition re-echoed throughout the Cabinet room and was heard outside.

Mr. Bovell: There must have been a row that day.

Mr. NALDER: Perhaps we cannot blame the Premier for the wholesale closure of lines that started a few months ago. Perhaps we cannot blame the Minister for Railways; but history will record that the Minister who can take some blame for bringing down the axe on so many miles of Western Australian railways, is the Minister for Transport.

The Minister for Transport: You do not know what a goat you are!

The **SPEAKER**: Order!

Mr. NALDER: It is all right. We are used to that sort of comment.

The Minister for Transport: **Mr. Speaker**, he has never heard of a governmental decision and the way he is performing, he will never participate in one.

Mr. NALDER: That will not worry the member for Katanning one bit.

Hon. A. F. Watts: It is obvious now but it was not so a week ago.

Mr. NALDER: Before I go any further, I will prove what I have said.

The Minister for Works: That will be a difficult job because what you are saying is nonsense.

Mr. NALDER: I repeat, before I go further, I will prove it.

The Minister for Works: It is nonsense to say that you can prove it.

Mr. NALDER: I will give evidence to prove it, and plenty of evidence.

The Minister for Works: You will have a job in front of you to prove it.

Mr. NALDER: I will do that.

The Minister for Works: Then you are a better man than I am, Gunga Din.

Mr. NALDER: As the Leader of the Country Party mentioned, he led a deputation to the Premier on the 12th March to

give reasons why there should be some delay in suspending services on certain lines. Certain features were mentioned and the Premier agreed that there was some evidence to prove that what the deputation had said was right. In answer to a query raised by the member for Roe, respecting the impression that had been gained in the country that a number of lines were to be closed before the 30th June, the Premier said that the only line listed for closure on a certain date was the Nornalup-Elleker line, and he thought that that was the only line which was likely to be closed before the 30th June. But apparently the Premier had another think coming because on the 7th April the Minister for Transport—not the Premier who is the Leader of the Government or the Minister for Railways who is in charge of the department, but the Minister for Transport—said that certain lines were to be closed on specified dates.

Mr. Bovell: I bet he didn't go to the country and tell the people that!

Mr. Roberts: That would be 1957 and not 1956.

Mr. NALDER: If the Minister for Transport had journeyed a little further than the Causeway he might have realised the position in the country. But apparently he did not consider that that was necessary. Apparently, he was the Minister who made the decision because he came out in the Press—in the "Sunday Times"—on the 7th April and made that statement.

The Minister for Works: Are you seriously suggesting that a Minister can make a decision which the Government adopts—a single Minister?

Mr. NALDER: I am saying that the Minister made that statement to the Press.

The Minister for Works: You said the Minister made the decision.

Mr. NALDER: Does not the Minister think that the Premier, who is the head of the Government, should have made the statement, or that the Minister for Railways should have made it?

The Minister for Works: Don't run away from it! What you said was that the Minister for Transport made the decision.

Mr. NALDER: Does the Minister for Education make an announcement as to what the Minister for Works will do?

The Minister for Works: Don't ask questions! Face up to your own statement.

Mr. NALDER: That is what the Minister is trying to suggest.

The Minister for Works: I am not trying to suggest anything; I am telling you to face up to your own statement that the Minister for Transport made the decision.

Hon. A. F. Watts: The Minister is being highly disorderly.

The Minister for Works: It is not the first time that you have been disorderly, either.

Mr. NALDER: I am sorry that I have misplacred the Press statement; however, it was published in the "Sunday Times" on the 7th April. That statement was that the Minister for Transport said that certain lines were to be closed and so, according to that statement, the lines were closed. I want to make some comment on the haphazard manner in which the closing of the Katanning-Pingrup line was carried out.

Approximately during the first week in May a letter was received by members of Parliament representing that area in which it was stated that the Pingrup line was to close on the 24th June; that all the necessary details were being worked out so that there would be no confusion and the transport of goods that had been carried out by the railways would be taken over by road transport; that there would be no hitch and that every effort would be made so that the smooth running of alternative transport would be a feature of the closure.

The chairman and officers of the Transport Board, and a representative of the Railway Department, met the members of the Katanning Road Board, representatives of the Kent Road Board and other interested people, at a meeting held at Katanning. It was stated that previously an officer of the Transport Board had been to the area concerned, had approached members of the various organisations in that district and had suggested that local carriers might be interested in the transport of goods from Katanning to the outlying district.

A notice had been sent out in, approximately, the first week in May intimating that the line was to be closed and it stated that members of the Transport Board would be in Katanning early in June to discuss with those who were interested any problems that might arise. The chairman of the Transport Board said that an officer of his department had interviewed carriers in the area with the object of trying to interest them in carting goods from Katanning to the various districts concerned. I should now like to quote from a letter that was received by one of the old-established carrying firms in Katanning, Messrs. Old & Cornish. This letter is dated the 5th June and I ask members to bear in mind that the date for the closure of the Pingrup line was the 24th June. That is what the letter stated—

Following upon the decision to close the Katanning-Pingrup railway my board has decided to invite tenders for a road transport service between the two towns mentioned. To enable you

to submit a tender, if you are so minded, I am enclosing herewith forms of application for commercial goods vehicle licences and a schedule of rates and charges proposed to be made. You will note that the schedule of rates and charges is rather comprehensive. It may well be that you consider that the institution of a regular service to transport particular items, for example, livestock, is not warranted. It will be open to you to submit an application and schedule in respect to the particular transport that you are prepared to undertake. If you are desirous of submitting a tender, will you please let me have same not later than the 14th inst.?

This letter was written in Perth and dated the 5th June and it was not received by Messrs. Old & Cornish until three days later. I will repeat what is at the bottom of the letter —

If you are desirous of submitting a tender, will you please let me have same not later than the 14th instant?

That meant that these people had to fill in the form, portions of which I will read to members later on, and give details of the cartage of all the items listed from Katanning to Badgebup, Katanning to Nyabing and Katanning to Pingrup. This firm had to investigate the whole position in approximately three or four days and send a reply to the Transport Board by the 14th June.

I should now like to quote to members the list of goods concerned because it appears to me, and to a number of other people concerned, that the members of the Transport Board were not anxious that any contractor should submit a list of charges for the transport of goods. If the Transport Board had been endeavouring to interest carriers in doing this work, it would have given them sufficient time to submit tenders. This is the list of commodities the cartage of which, between the three towns on the line concerned, was to be tendered for—

Produce:—(Flour, oats, wheat, stockfoods)—Per ton per mile.

Superphosphate—Per ton per mile.

General stores and groceries—Half ton lots and over per ton per mile. over 1cwt. and less than 10cwt. per ton per mile.

Agricultural machinery—Per ton per mile.

Fuels and oils, beer, wine and spirits—Per ton per mile.

Miscellaneous building materials—Per ton per mile.

All other—Half ton lots and over per ton per mile. Over 1cwt. and less than 10cwt. per ton per mile.

The list is very comprehensive and I do not want to weary the House by reading each item. I merely quote it to prove

that it was impossible for any carrier, no matter how interested he might have been, to be able to go through this list and tender a price that might have been acceptable to the Transport Board. I would like members to note, however, that the board did not receive one tender, and it had to make other arrangements. This was contrary to the statements made by the railway officer, who was at the meeting, that the Railway Department was dissociating itself entirely from the cartage of goods from Katanning to Pingrup, and that it would be the job of the Transport Board to make those arrangements. The board received no tenders whatever from any of the carriers in the Katanning, Pingrup or Nyabing areas.

How could they be interested in tendering when they only had about three days in which to submit a tender and have the reply in the office of the Transport Board in Perth? They had to make other arrangements, and it eventually fell to the Railway Department to bring in its own trucks and transport these goods when the rail service ceased. I will give some further evidence of the matter-of-fact way in which the Transport Board carried out these arrangements. The road board at Katanning received a letter from the Railway Department stating that that department would run three buses a week from Katanning to Pingrup when the rail services ceased.

Two days later, however, the road board received another letter from the Transport Board to say that that board had arranged for two services to be run between Katanning and Pingrup. Within two days, the road board had received two conflicting reports—one from the Railway Department to say that it would run three buses from Katanning to Pingrup, and the other from the Transport Board to say that it intended to run two services. This will show members just how much co-operation there was between the two departments as to how the services should be continued.

There is some further very interesting information that comes to hand. As we march along we find that nobody seems to know very much about the question of costs. Although the Minister for Transport was good enough on the 24th July, to answer some questions I asked with reference to the cartage of certain commodities by rail from Perth to Katanning, and from Katanning to Pingrup, there still seems to be some uncertainty as to what the charges will actually be.

On the 24th July, I asked the Minister what was the freight charge on 10 tons of superphosphate from Bassendean to Pingrup before the rail closures, and he replied that the charge was £26 17s. 5d. I then asked him what was the freight charge on 10 tons of superphosphate from Bassendean to Pingrup under present

transport arrangements, and he replied that under present transport arrangements the charge amounted to the same. On the 13th August—that is, yesterday—I asked the Minister the following question:—

Is it the intention of the Government to pay the difference between road transport and present railway charges by way of subsidy on goods carted to and from districts where rail services have been discontinued?

The Minister replied—

Subsidy will be paid in respect of goods classified as "Miscellaneous" under the railways' freight classification.

In order to find out what goods were included in the miscellaneous category, I got in touch today with the Railway Department and was supplied with a list of goods so classified. I want to mention only a few of these goods because the others will not be carted on this particular line and it is not, therefore, necessary to make any mention of them. The goods that are classified, however, are barley, wheat, rye, pollard, bran, artificial manures and flour. I think those are all that it is necessary for me to mention as goods coming under the heading "miscellaneous."

There are also a number of other classes such as A-class goods, B-class goods and C-class goods; there are goods that come into the category of 1st class, and these include such commodities as groceries. Miscellaneous goods—those that are in M-class—must be of a minimum weight of eight tons before they qualify for that cartage rate. Immediately they are under that weight—for example, say they happened to be six tons—they would come into the A-class category, and if they were of two tons weight, they would be placed in the B-class.

I also asked the Minister on the 24th July, what had been the charge on one ton of rabbit netting from Fremantle to Pingrup before the rail closures, and what the charge would be under present transport arrangements. I was told that before the rail closures the charge was £8 2s. 9d., and under the present transport arrangements, the Minister said—

Conveyed by the Railway Department's rail and road service provided for general goods rated at classifications "B" rate and higher, for the throughout journey the charge would be £8 16s. 4d.

In order to prove that the cessation of rail services, on these particular lines, is going to hit the primary producer very hard indeed, there is another very interesting point that I wish to mention. The figures I received from the Railway Department today were staggering. I would like members to take particular note of

this, because when I asked the Minister yesterday what the details of the subsidy were, he replied—

The subsidy will apply to and from the nearest practicable railway point. For the first year it will equal the full amount of the difference between the cost which would have applied if the railway had continued and the cost of the alternative transport. After the first year the subsidy will be reduced by one-seventh annually and eventually eliminated.

This means that after seven years the farmers in those areas will have to pay the full cost of the transport of all goods from the nearest railway point.

The Minister for Transport: Who do you think should pay, the workers of East Perth? What ideas have you got on this matter?

Mr. NALDER: If the Minister will be patient he might find out.

The Minister for Transport: And I might not.

Mr. NALDER: I asked an officer of the Railway Department today to illustrate what the position was likely to be in seven years' time in regard to the cost of transporting under present conditions.

Mr. Potter: How would he know?

Mr. NALDER: I asked him to let me know what would be the cost of transporting 10 tons of super from Bassendean to Pingrup under the present arrangements. After he had given me a figure, I queried it and he said that he would like to check it to make sure it was right. Having checked it, he then said "I will put you on to another officer to be certain that the figure is correct." The senior officer discovered that there was a mistake of £5 and that it would cost £5 more than the figure given by the previous officer.

Mr. Lawrence: How could he give you an estimate of what it would cost in seven years' time?

Mr. NALDER: I asked him to do so under present arrangements. The Minister has said that his Government is prepared, the first year, to pay the full subsidy—that is, the difference between the cost of transporting goods by railway and the increased cost by road. The Government is going to pay as a full subsidy the difference between the two costs, and each year this has to be reduced by one-seventh. I wanted to find out what the cost would be after seven years if the ruling rate, as it is today, existed in seven years' time. I was told by this officer to whom I have referred that the cost of freight from Bassendean to Katanning would be in the vicinity of £23, to the nearest pound; and to Pingrup it would be £26.

Taking today's rail freights on 10 tons of super, he said that the charge at the end of seven years would be £55 18s. 3d. I

queried that figure and the senior officer then told me it was £5 out, and that the cost would, in fact, be £60 odd. If members will pay particular attention, they will see that at the end of seven years a farmer would be obliged to pay £60 odd for the cartage of 10 tons of super as against the present rate of £26.

Mr. Rodoreda: How far is that?

Mr. NALDER: From Bassendean to Katanning is about 220 miles and from Katanning to Pingrup another 59 miles. I merely quote that to show the huge rise in costs which the farmer will have to meet.

Mr. Johnson: By what form of guesswork do you arrive at £60?

Mr. NALDER: I am not employing guesswork; this is the figure given me by officers of the Railway Department.

Mr. Johnson: How was the figure arrived at?

Mr. NALDER: By considering the cost by rail and the increased cost of road transport from Katanning to Pingrup.

The Minister for Transport: Do you mean to tell me that the department knows the result of the tenders which closed only the other day, even though they have not yet been considered by the Transport Board? How would they know what would be the cost of transporting super?

Mr. NALDER: I received a letter from a farmer last week saying that he had ordered 20 tons of super to be delivered this month. He had been in the habit of receiving 20 tons in August each year, and he wished to be supplied with the same quantity he had received in the past. He accordingly arranged for his agent to have the super delivered to Katanning. But he received a letter from the agent saying that it was his responsibility to take delivery of the super, and that the difference in the freight costs would be paid by the Government. The figures I was given were those as they exist today under present transport conditions, and what they are likely to be in seven years' time. I think I was entitled to quote them. I think my argument is on sound lines.

The Minister for Transport: I was pointing out that tenders have just been called and have not yet been accepted. I have not seen them, and I do not know whether they are high or low. I was wondering if you could have been given a figure for super, and what the charges might be.

Mr. NALDER: I am talking about the position as it exists now. This particular farmer wrote to me and asked what arrangements he had to make. He was not able to get any satisfaction from the agents and the Transport Board told him to make his own arrangements. I made these inquiries on his behalf and found out the present freight charges and what he would have to pay. I am only giving this as an

illustration, but if the Minister can prove these figures are wrong, I will accept his explanation.

The Minister for Transport: I would not suggest they are wrong; I was curious about them.

Mr. NALDER: I have the name of the officer who supplied these figures to me. I queried them three times on the telephone and was informed they were correct. The illustration I have given is one of many. We can also take fuel, oil, wheat, wool, oats, barley and various other commodities required by the farming community.

Mr. Rodoreda: What is the rail freight from Bassendean to Katanning?

Mr. NALDER: It is £23 to £24. To Pingrup it is £26.

Mr. Rodoreda: Did the officer know you were going to use these figures?

Mr. NALDER: When the officer gave me the figures, I told him I was going to use them in the House. He said they were correct. I do not intend to give the officer's name, but can tell the Minister that he is prepared to assert that the statement which was given to me is correct. I have quoted these figures because I feel the rail closure is affecting a section of the farming community that can ill-afford to pay the increased costs.

Previously the Minister stated that farmers were playing ducks and drakes with the railways, but the people in those particular areas, where closures have been effected, are the people who can ill afford to pay the increases I have mentioned tonight. They are the people who will have to bear the burden of them, because the Minister stated that at the end of seven years they will have to carry the full cost of transporting goods from their centre to the nearest rail point. These figures alone prove that we cannot sit idly by and accept the situation while these things are going on.

Mr. Johnson: The figures are guesswork.

Mr. NALDER: No, they are not.

Mr. Johnson: How did you arrive at them?

Mr. NALDER: By the officer in the department giving me the details of the increased costs of road transport. I will give an illustration of some of the increases. First of all, 12s. 6d. is charged by the Railway Department for handling. In addition, there is a loading fee of 6s. 3d. per ton and an unloading charge of 6s. 3d. per ton as well as 2s. 6d. for each article covered.

Mr. Norton: On superphosphate?

Mr. NALDER: Yes.

Mr. Norton: The superphosphate works do not load the trucks.

Mr. NALDER: That is what the officer told me and I have a verbatim copy of what he said.

The Minister for Transport: It sounds as though the officer should be charged with giving false information to a member of Parliament.

Mr. NALDER: I do not think the figures are false, because I made four phone calls to the office in order to make sure there was no wrong information.

The Minister for Transport: The figures you have given for cartage over 59 miles are simply fantastic.

Mr. NALDER: They are the figures given to me by the officer, and they were verified by the head of the department. When I asked the officer if he could verify the figures as being correct, he referred the matter to his head and, after about five minutes, the latter said the figures were £5 out and should be £60. If the Minister can show that these figures are incorrect, I hope he will inform the House.

The Minister for Transport: You will then vote on the opposite side on this motion?

Mr. NALDER: I think I have given sufficient evidence to the House to show that the increased charges which are to be levied on a section of the community are excessive, and we should not agree to such transport arrangements. Therefore, I strongly support the motion of the Leader of the Country Party to have the resolution rescinded and hope that in the very near future, the services on those lines that have been suspended will be brought back into operation so the transport of goods from the city to the areas affected will be carried out without any further interruption.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [5.51]: So much has been said in recent months regarding the closure of railways, and so much has been said to members representing districts where these closures have taken place, that the position seems to be a bad dream still in progress.

The Government went ahead with the closure of railways in the outback without heeding the costs to primary producers or the inconvenience they would experience. The member for Katanning has referred to the fact that there was great dissension in Cabinet itself and rumblings were heard outside the Cabinet room. I cannot vouch for the correctness or otherwise of that statement, but I do know that the justifiable explosions which occurred in areas that have suffered a curtailment of these rail services were much greater than any explosion that could have taken place in the Cabinet room.

I explained my opposition to the closure of these railways when the matter was before Parliament last year. I considered

then that they were being dealt with hurriedly and that, if the rail closures were to take place, some trial transport organisation should operate in the first instance. However, just before Christmas, Parliament went into recess and, as soon as the Christmas holidays were over, the Government took immediate steps to close the railways as outlined in the motion moved by the Leader of the Country Party. It took this action without considering the cost to the people concerned in those areas.

The promise was made that every consideration would be given to these people and on-the-spot discussions would ensue in the areas concerned between local authorities, farmers' unions and other organisations, attended by a representative of the Government. From that, I took it that a Minister of the Crown would go to the districts concerned and learn first hand of the problems that were, and still are, confronting these people. This was to be done as far back as November last year.

The Augusta-Margaret River Road Board approached me with a view to inviting the Minister for Railways to go to the district and see for himself some of the difficulties which would occur if the railway were closed from Busselton south to Flinders Bay. The Minister replied that no good purpose could be served by visiting the district; that Parliament had made a decision and, therefore, the matter would be proceeded with. A further invitation was extended to the Minister for Transport, who replied that he had no intention of going to the district, but members of the Transport Board would pay a visit in due course to discuss problems with the local people.

The local authorities of the district, the farmers' unions and others were not satisfied with this position and I was commissioned to approach the Premier with a view to his receiving a deputation. The Premier wrote back and said he had much more to do than receive deputations; he had received so many that no good purpose could be served by receiving another. In due course, members of the Transport Board visited the district and spent one day, from 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.—being generous, I will say 6 p.m.—discussing the problems of the whole district.

These meetings were held when it was decided that the railway would be closed on the 1st July. Just prior to the closure, the Transport Board met the people of the Margaret River district at a public meeting at 9.30 a.m. Discussions ensued until lunchtime—I don't think any of the persons concerned had time to have adequate lunch—and a further meeting was held at Augusta, some 28 miles south of Margaret River. This meeting was held before 3 o'clock in the afternoon, because the

members of the Transport Board were due back at Busselton to meet people there at 3 p.m.

In each case, the members of the Transport Board listened to what the local representatives and delegates had to say, but the former had a cut and dried case; the lines were going to be closed and the people could take it or leave it. Unfortunately, the chairman of the Transport Board, Mr. Howard, was not present owing to illness, but Mr. Drake-Brockman was acting for the board at that particular time and he listened to the complaints of the people of the district.

The rail closure eventually took place on the 1st July this year, and, since then, certain difficulties have been experienced. My main concern at the moment is in regard to the transport of potatoes from the Marybrook area into Busselton, which is the rail head for that area. It is some 10 to 12 miles from Busselton and is not served by the main road from Busselton to Flinders Bay. It branches off at Vasse and from there the road is a local authority road which has recently been primed, the cost of which has been borne by the ratepayers of the particular ward of the Busselton Road Board.

In discussing the freight rates and costs at Busselton, Mr. Drake-Brockman advised the potato growers that as potatoes were in the "M" class goods range, the subsidy would operate over a seven year period—that is to say, the first year there would be no freight rate increase; the growers would be subsidised to allow them to transport their potatoes at the former cost, and in the succeeding years the subsidy would be reducible by one-seventh each year so that at the end of the period it would completely disappear and the producer would have to bear the full impact of any transport increases. Of course, the potato growers were not happy about this arrangement but they had to accept it; there was no alternative.

The potato industry is controlled by a board and the transport costs are charged under a system. There is a cartage cost which is averaged over all potato-growing districts and this is allowed for, in the equalisation of cartage costs and so on, at 14s. per ton. Some growers benefit to an extent as a result of their close proximity to roads or railways, but that figure has been averaged and the amount of 14s. per ton is allowed in the cost structure.

Naturally, the matter of extra transport costs is not expected to be related to any system which the Potato Marketing Board has in regard to the costs of production and the overall transport costs. Accepting Mr. Drake-Brockman's statement that as an "M" class commodity, the transport costs on potatoes would not, in effect, be increased at all, the agent of the Potato Board at Marybrook received this

letter which is dated the 24th July. It is addressed to Mr. F. H. Berryman, potato agent, Marybrook, and it states—

Replying to your letter of the 3rd instant I have to advise that the producer is expected to pay to the carrier employed the full cost of transport effected.

The producer may then submit details to this office of the transport undertaken, at the same time quoting the location number of the land on which the crop was produced and the mileage involved.

A general mileage rate which carriers may charge will be struck by the board and this, after making allowances for normal terminal haulage, will be accepted as the road transport rate. If this exceeds the previous rail rate plus the averaged amount of 14s. per ton allowed by the Potato Marketing Board, the difference will be paid to the producer by way of subsidy.

Why should the Transport Board interfere with the operations of the Potato Marketing Board and try to capitalise on a system under which some producers are benefiting to a degree by the allowance of 14s. per ton on potatoes? I say without hesitation there has been a breach of contract. Any transport charges in addition to those that were operating before the cessation of rail services for the first year, if the Transport Board's undertaking is to be fulfilled, should not be a charge against the producer, no matter what arrangements he may have with the Potato Marketing Board.

Mr. Lawrence: Did you take the matter up with the Minister?

Mr. BOVELL: I am just trying to point out an anomaly. The Minister for Transport does not appear to be very concerned.

The Minister for Transport: He is very concerned.

Mr. BOVELL: I would ask the Minister to have the Transport Board give effect to its undertaking at a public meeting at Busselton that the seven-year subsidy plan will be carried into effect as far as the potato growers are concerned without any assessment of the functions of the Potato Marketing Board.

It was never thought that the Transport Board would take into account the operations of the Potato Marketing Board and just allow a subsidy which might be ineffective after the 14s. had been allowed for. I ask the Minister to see that the overall subsidy on potatoes for the first year covers, without any qualification, the additional cost of any transport over and above the costs that were operating when

the railways hauled the potatoes from Marybrook to their destination. The letter goes on—

You, as an agent, are not permitted to undertake the transport of potatoes and carriers are being licensed for this purpose.

A producer effecting his own transport may claim for subsidy, but it will be necessary for him to supply full details and documents confirming his claim in a manner similar to that to be adopted when using the services of a carrier. If, of course, his costs amount to less than the 14s. per ton allowed by the Potato Marketing Board there will be no point in his lodging a claim as no subsidy will be payable.

I say that is a breach of contract I was at the meetings at which Mr. Drake-Brockman and other members of the Transport Board were present in Margaret River and Augusta. Admittedly, I was late in arriving at the Busselton meeting, but I did attend it and I understood that the full subsidy would be payable for the first year irrespective of any arrangements the producers might have with the Potato Marketing Board. That is one instance where there is an anomaly, and I feel that the producers are being penalised.

Again I say that the closure of these railways was carried out in indecent haste: that the Government was sheltering under a resolution—which I consider was quite unnecessary—passed by both Houses of Parliament. But, in effect, it carried out only one portion of the resolution and that portion was to close the lines. The other portions—the amendment moved by the member for Nedlands, now the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—were completely ignored in the Government's operations.

The Minister for Transport: You cannot honestly say that.

Mr. BOVELL: I do say it. There is no evidence to show that the conditions incorporated in the amendment moved by the now Deputy Leader of the Opposition have been fulfilled in any way, although we know that Magistrate Smith has been inquiring into certain phases of the administration of the Railway Department. No figures that I am aware of have been produced since Parliament has been sitting to show that any real attempt has been made by the Government to curtail expenditure in connection with the metropolitan rail services; and no attempt that I am aware of has been made to economise in the operations of the Midland Junction workshops. These matters were incorporated in the amendment moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and accepted by Parliament with the rest of the motion.

The Minister for Transport: You know that the Smith inquiry started in the Midland workshops?

Mr. BOVELL: I do not care where it started. It should have started right at the top.

The Minister for Transport: That is where it got Mr. Smith in a very short time, didn't it?

Mr. BOVELL: That seems to be where it is ending.

The Minister for Works: It could not get much nearer.

Mr. BOVELL: It is getting very close to the top, I admit. It has only to get to the commissioner and the Minister, and it will have got to the pinnacle of the railway organisation. Before this indecent haste was exercised in closing the outback railways, some inquiries should have been made into the controlling organisation of the department.

I support the motion, and in doing so I feel that the lines affected should be re-instated. At present the only people who are suffering from the Government's action in closing the 842 miles of railways are the farmers, business people and others living in the areas concerned. Not only have the closures created great inconvenience but, as has been stated by the member for Katanning, and as I have tried to convey in connection with the potato growers, costs have been increased to primary producers and businessmen.

There is no doubt that freights and costs have been increased and I would say that the increase must in the end be passed on to the consumer. So I ask the House to agree to the motion, and I also request the Minister for Transport to make a thorough investigation into the anomalous position that has arisen in relation to the potato growers in the Marybrook area and no doubt in other areas—in the districts represented by the Minister for Agriculture, and the member for Harvey and the member for Blackwood and, perhaps, the member for Albany.

The Minister for Transport: I did not know that 10 miles of bitumen road could be such a problem to anyone.

Mr. BOVELL: If the Minister would only visit the district to learn something of the problems that the producers have to contend with, he would have some first-hand knowledge of the matter.

The Minister for Transport: I think I know a bit too much for you, because they came and saw me.

Mr. BOVELL: Do not raise that matter! I was going to forget about it. There has been a newspaper controversy in the lower South-West since the Minister made a statement to that effect when speaking to the censure motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. It so happened that the chairman, the deputy chairman and the

secretary of the Augusta-Margaret River Road Board were in the Speaker's gallery on that occasion. They returned home and made some statements to the effect that the Minister for Transport had said that he had received a deputation from the Margaret River zone council of the Farmers' Union and that they had told him to take no notice of the Country Party and no notice of the main organisation of the Farmers' Union; that the Farmers' Union in Augusta-Margaret River, which included all the farmers in the area, was for the closure of the railways and that it would be beneficial to the district.

The Minister for Transport: I think you are over-reaching yourself.

Mr. BOVELL: I might be.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. BOVELL: I was proceeding to recount certain events in consequence of the interjection by the Minister that the Margaret River zone council of the Farmers' Union had, by way of deputation, advocated the closure of the Busselton-Flinders Bay railway. I had no intention of raising this point previously, but in view of the interjection by the Minister for Transport, which reaffirmed his statement that the deputation had advocated the closure of this line, I must refer to a Press controversy which has been progressing in the "Margaret River District Times" in recent weeks.

The latest report on the subject appearing in that newspaper was from one member of the deputation who said that they were grateful to the Minister for receiving a deputation which had approached him concerning the difficulty at that time—this was before the closure of the railways—of getting superphosphate supplies by rail and the matter of these supplies being transported illegally by road. This newspaper correspondent stated that the Minister received the deputation cordially and gave it a favourable hearing. He also agreed to the transport of superphosphate by road at that time. According to the statement made by this member of the deputation to the local newspaper it was at that stage that the deputation concluded, whereupon the Minister very hospitably asked that the members of the deputation to join him in afternoon tea, and they accepted.

According to the statement by this Press correspondent, discussion ensued and it was made clear to the Minister that the opinion of certain members of this deputation was that, so far as they were concerned—it was their personal opinion only—the closure of the railway was quite satisfactory and it would not adversely affect them. However, this had nothing to do with the business of the deputation and it was not the opinion held by the Farmers' Union. In the opinion of the Press correspondent it was considered

that by referring to the closure of the railway line and by saying that they were in favour of it, the Minister had created something of a discordant note in what was otherwise a very cordial deputation.

I state those facts as they are and repeat, and emphasise, that the official opinion of the Margaret River zone council of the Farmers' Union is that the railway from Busselton to Flinders Bay should have been retained and there was no official deputation authorised from the Margaret River zone council of the Farmers' Union to advocate the closure of that railway. At this stage, I can only repeat that I had no intention of referring to this matter until the Minister for Transport made his interjection earlier in the evening.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [7.38]: I desire to support the motion for the rescission of the motion carried by this House last year, which has been moved by the Leader of the Country Party, and I also support the action taken by the Legislative Council. I think all members of the House, as well as a great many people outside of it, realise that the Treasurer of this or of any other State in the Commonwealth has not a particularly easy task at present. So far as this State is concerned, one of the most difficult problems the Treasurer and the members of Cabinet have to grapple with is the loss on the State railway system.

In recent times there has been a great deal of discussion on this subject and I have no wish to engage in needless repetition. I think it is necessary, however, for us to reflect on the events of the past 12 months. It may be that we can see the picture more clearly now than we could earlier. It will be remembered that even before the motion to discontinue services on certain lines was introduced in both Houses of Parliament, Cabinet had been giving consideration to this subject and departmental committees had been appointed to inquire into the best means of finding a solution to the problem.

Those reports were submitted to the Government and subsequently were released for public perusal. The action taken by the Government did not follow exactly the recommendations made in those reports. We were never told why the reports of the committees were not closely followed by the Government. However, since then the Government has relied to a considerable degree on the recommendations of those committees in supporting the case for the discontinuance of certain lines.

I think it would be as well for us to remember that the recommendations of those committees provided for the closure of a much greater mileage of railway than has taken place up to the present. If members will peruse the map on the wall of the Chamber they will realise that if

all the recommendations of those committees were followed, the only railway lines that would be left operating in that part of the State where the Roe electorate lies, would be the Kalgoorlie line, the Great Southern line to Albany, the Narrogin-Bruce Rock-Merredin link and the Wagin-Lake Grace-Newdegate line.

If that proposal were carried into effect it would, I agree, be more far-reaching than the action taken by the Government to date. In fact, I think there is some obligation on the Premier and the Minister for Transport to state clearly in this House what the final intentions of the Government are. If the Government intends to go no further with the discontinuance of services on various lines, it will be possible for the members of this House and of the State generally to consider the situation that will then be created. If, on the other hand, the Government intends to proceed further and to accept ultimately the recommendations of the committees that were appointed by the Government, of course a much different situation will have to be faced.

I would point out that the result of the action of the Government so far has gone a very small way—if any distance at all—towards rehabilitating the railway system of Western Australia. It could be that the final result will be even worse for the Treasurer than it was before the position was tinkered with quite recently. I think most of us realise that if any private business concern or if any Government enterprise is in difficulties, it is necessary to have a close look at its position and determine the general policy that is to be followed. Obviously, the action taken by the Government so far is not going to achieve the end which both the Treasurer and the people of the State expect, namely, the placing of the railway system on a sound financial basis.

Members can well realise that people living in the areas where rail services have been discontinued feel that they have been made the scapegoat for faults in the railway system and in Government finance which cannot be solved by tinkering with the problem in that way. People living in the districts affected pay taxes and contribute to the finances of the State in the same way as do people living elsewhere. It should be easy to understand the feeling of frustration and resentment engendered when they find that many other non-paying services are carried on by the Government, yet the railway services available to them—in many cases those services are depended upon to a great degree—have been drastically curtailed.

The assumption of the committee, and it is a point of view put forward vigorously by "The West Australian," is that the only way the problem of the railway finances can be solved is to drastically curtail the length of track over which the services are run. That might be so. I do not know

if it is right or wrong. I feel pretty certain that the Treasurer, the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Railways cannot be certain that that is the ultimate answer because a great deal of the information made available to the Government, and later on to members of this House and the public by way of reports from the departmental committees, is only partially correct.

In the debates which have taken place in this House and in another place, figures were quoted to show that a huge rehabilitation programme must be carried out on the tracks, particularly on the branch lines, if the railway system is to be kept operating at all. It so happens that at present, as evidenced from information given by men working on the railway tracks, from personal observations and from official reports of the Railway Department, the track on many of the branch lines is in better shape than it had been for a long time previously.

I know from personal knowledge of some sections of track where services have been discontinued that in the 12 months preceding, a very extensive programme of rehabilitation was carried out by substituting concrete pipes for wooden culverts for example. That seems to be an extraordinary position and it could very well be investigated by the Government when consideration is given to railway administration generally.

Mr. Toms: They would be bigger culverts to deal with flood waters.

Mr. PERKINS: I cannot answer that authoritatively. A layman would be taking some risk in speaking to these technical questions. My information is that the pipes put in were approximately of the same size as the wooden culverts. It appeared to be a general track rehabilitation programme. The action of the Government in discontinuing services on the lines would have been very much more understandable if any of the sections had got into such a state of disrepair that it was no longer safe to run trains over them. No spokesman on the Government side of the House attempted to prove that proposition.

My information is that it would be possible to continue using the suspended lines, with a minimum of attention to the track, for a period of at least two to three years. If that is the case, then obviously the accounting position of each branch line can look very different from the position as disclosed to us, after the Government has added on the cost of a very large rehabilitation programme to the ordinary working expenses of the lines. The theory has been advanced very vigorously in this House, and I must admit not only by the present Government, that if the railways were to pay their way, everything possible

must be carried by rail. I think the Premier made a rather cheap jibe at the delegates to the recent road board conference when he asked how many of them had travelled to Perth by train.

Mr. May: How many of them did?

Mr. PERKINS: I would have forgiven the delegates if they had in turn asked the Premier how many of his Ministers have travelled anywhere in the State by train in the last two years.

Mr. Andrew: They did not have to pay.

Mr. PERKINS: If they were not paying, they need not have travelled by Government car. I imagine it would cost considerably more for Ministers to travel by Government car than it does for those delegates to travel by car in order to attend the road board conference in Perth.

Mr. Lapham: Were the Ministers complaining about the closure of the lines?

Mr. PERKINS: The Premier was complaining that few, if any, of the road board delegates had travelled to Perth by train. If he did not actually complain, the implication was that that was one of the reasons why the railway system was in difficulties, because insufficient people were travelling by train. Many of the people in the country districts would not lose very much sleep if all the country passenger rail services were discontinued. So far as I am concerned, I would very much prefer that to be done. I would even agree to the Government cutting out the rail parcel service and to substitute a road parcel service, if it meant that the branch lines were to be kept operating for grain and superphosphate. If a very careful account were kept of the cost of carting passengers and parcels on all country lines, we might find that the real cost of providing those services was a very big factor in the huge railway loss.

I realise this is not a change that can be made overnight. For the railways to do away with that type of traffic and to concentrate on heavy traffic would require a vast reorganisation of the system. In those circumstances, it could happen that there would be a very big surplus of staff. The railway system might be able to operate with a skeleton staff as compared with the total personnel now employed. I do not wish to be dogmatic on that subject because none of us who are non-technical people can give a conclusive answer. I feel that none of the information so far available to the Government has been sufficiently conclusive to enable it to express an informed opinion on this particular subject.

There is, I understand, another measure to be introduced, designed to direct a greater amount of traffic to the railway system. Comments have been made by Government spokesmen in this Chamber from time to time to the effect that the

causes of the loss on the system are due to country people not using the rail services as much as they could, and to their carting portion of the goods required by road. Undoubtedly a considerable quantity of goods is carted by road, and in some instances a case could be made out for the cartage of those goods by rail. If they could be carted equally well by rail as by road, then everything possible should be done to encourage transport by rail. I would point out that the Government itself finds that it is uneconomical for a great tonnage of goods, directly under its control, to be carted by rail. Very recently letters appeared in the Press complaining of the noise caused by large diesel road trucks carting coal from the wharf to the East Perth power house.

Mr. Rodoreda: There is a story behind that.

Mr. PERKINS: If there is, we would like to hear it. The fact remains, as the hon. member knows, that a rail track from the wharf to the East Perth power house exists. Another example is the cartage of pig iron from Wundowie. I do not know what is being done now, but until very recently anyone travelling along Great Eastern Highway could see very large diesel road trucks—I am not sure whether they were Government or privately-owned—carting pig iron from Wundowie to the metropolitan area.

Mr. Norton: Would they be railway road trucks?

Mr. PERKINS: I do not know whether they were railway road trucks or privately-owned trucks. That does not matter for the illustration I am giving. The fact remains that there is a railway siding adjacent to the Wundowie charcoal iron project, but the Government found it desirable to cart pig iron by road instead of by rail. I have no doubt there was some good reason for it, but it does not go down very well when the Government finds it necessary to do that while others are chided by the Government for not using the railway system.

I freely admit that many factors come into the question as to whether goods should be carted by rail or by road. It appears to me that this is a subject which needs fairly close investigation. I feel it is one line of investigation which could have been carried very much further, before drastic action was taken to suspend services on various country branch lines, the result of which could very seriously retard the progress of the State.

At one stage in the debate in another place, the Minister for Railways stated that he had not heard of any serious complaints from people along the lines where railway services had been discontinued regarding the alternative services available. I do not know where the bottleneck

was, but I am certain that a great number of complaints came in; and I would like to detail the position that exists in some of the areas which I represent, and with which I am perfectly conversant.

The Katanning-Pingrup section has already been dealt with by the member for Katanning, because portion of that line comes within his area; and I do not propose to cover that ground again. Approximately half of the section from Brookton to Corrigin comes within the Roe electorate. On that line, the position before the discontinuance of rail services was that there was a train on Monday from Brookton to Corrigin and back next day and specials were run as required to cope with the heavy freight offering.

In addition, there was a railway passenger freighter from Perth through Brookton out to Corrigin on Thursdays and back on Fridays. Following the discontinuance of rail services on that line, a passenger freighter service continued to run on Thursday and back on Friday. I understand that the schedule is to be altered so that it will return on Saturday in the near future.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Is that where the extraordinarily low amount of tonnage was carried?

Mr. PERKINS: I think that the member for Fremantle must be confusing that area with some other area.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I do not know; I am merely asking you.

Mr. PERKINS: No; the actual tonnage on that line was very high. The Government has provided no service whatsoever in lieu of the train service formerly run from Brookton on the Monday and back next day. Various people have been going into Brookton to get their requirements. Farmers in the area have been running a kind of roster service between themselves to pick up their goods from Brookton. If the Minister for Transport or the Minister for Railways regards that as suitable alternative services, I think he is using his imagination to a very great extent.

On the Lake Grace-Hyden section the rail services have been entirely discontinued; and on the southern portion, from Pingaring to Lake Grace, the Government has provided no alternative service whatsoever. There is a service which has been given the blessing of the Transport Board, but the board pays nothing towards it. It is run by the baker at Lake Grace to Pingaring, and small parcels are carted. I think he can carry up to one ton in weight only. I recently attended a meeting at Pingaring, and it is not hard to imagine what the idea of the people there was concerning the mythical alternative services provided by the Government.

In the area further north from Pingaring on the Hyden line the railway road service continues to operate from Perth

through Quairading, Corrigin and Kondinin to Hyden twice a week. But there again, the Transport Board has given its blessing to a local contractor who carts goods which the passenger freighter service cannot handle, and that is as far as it goes. The Government has provided no service in lieu of the train service which used to operate.

There is another rather peculiar situation which has developed and which I have been trying to ventilate by medium of questions in this House. At present, the Railway Department, through its railway side and its road service side, provides a service from Katanning out through Ongerup to Jerramungup. Most of that territory comes within the Stirling electorate, represented by the Leader of the Country Party. There is another service from Katanning out to Pingrup. Those services are provided partly by Government motor trucks and partly by passenger freighters—the large dual purpose vehicles which are operated by the Railway Department, and with which I think most members are conversant.

The goods are carried to Katanning by rail, mostly at second-class goods rates; and in the case of goods being consigned from Perth to Pingrup, the rate charged is the second-class goods rate based on the mileage from Perth to Pingrup, plus a loading of 12s. 6d. a ton to compensate for the additional handling at Katanning, presumably, and for any extra cost of road transport. Those figures work out in the case of second-class goods rates at 205s. 5d. a ton plus 12s. 6d. a ton loading for the 284 miles from Perth to Pingrup. To give an idea how the rates operate, I would point out that the rate for vegetables—which is a cheaper rate—works out at 93s. 11d. a ton on that run.

It so happens, according to my information, that the railway road trucks are unable to handle all the traffic offering; and, in order to get the goods through, any loading which the railway road trucks are unable to take is placed in passenger freighters at departmental convenience. The net result is that people in that area are getting all their goods through—whether they are carried from Katanning by railway road trucks or by passenger freighters—at the second-class goods rate plus 12s. 6d. per ton. I might make it clear that the ordinary rate charged on the passenger freighter service is the ordinary parcels rate, which is a very high rate indeed. I cannot state exactly what it is, but I think it would be at least double the second-class goods rate.

Mr. May: How does that compare with the figure charged when the train went right through?

Mr. PERKINS: There is not much complaint with regard to that class of goods. For the information of the hon. member, in case he was not listening, it works out

that from Perth to Pingrup the second-class goods rate is 205s. 5d. per ton plus a loading of 12s. 6d. per ton. The people are paying 12s. 6d. a ton more than in the days when the railway service operated right through.

Mr. May: They are getting quicker delivery. Is that it?

Mr. PERKINS: I am not sure; I do not think there is much difference.

Hon. A. F. Watts: There is not any difference.

Mr. PERKINS: There have not been any complaints on that score. But I might interpolate that, notwithstanding the assurances given that the roads were in good order and that the Main Roads Department was paying particular attention to the area where the railway services had been discontinued, on the first road service that was run, one road vehicle—I am not sure which it was; either the railway road truck or the passenger freighter—was bogged before it got to Nyabing; and the other one was bogged before it got to Pingrup, and the service did not get through at all, with the result that the help of local farmers had to be enlisted to extricate the vehicles from the difficulties they got into and to put them back on the road to Katanning. So much for the alternative services provided.

What I was coming to was the anomalous position in the case of the Brookton-Corrigin line. This applies also, of course, on the Kondinin-Hyden section, where the road services are passenger freighters and buses operate. If someone on the Brookton-Corrigin line has goods consigned from Perth, they are sent by rail from Brookton; but because the department does not operate any railway road truck in that area, when they are loaded on to exactly the same sort of vehicle that carts them from Katanning to Pingrup—in many cases it is the passenger freighter—they are not charged second-class goods rates plus 12s. 6d. ton loading, but ordinary parcels rates. This makes the cost almost prohibitive and has been responsible for a great deal of dissatisfaction in those areas.

Mr. Nalder: Apparently they have a different rate for every line.

Mr. PERKINS: No. Where one of these railway road trucks operates the second-class goods rate prevails. When passenger freighters run alongside, they all arrive at the same time and goods arrive in the same condition; but there is this differentiation between one area and another because of the different policy adopted. I have taken up these matters with the Railway Department, but I think I am at about the same point as when I started.

Mr. Court: Has the Minister for Transport given any explanation of the anomalies?

Mr. PERKINS: Apparently he does not know anything about them. No one, from the Minister for Transport down through the Transport Board, seems to be aware of the position in the tiniest degree. I have had extensive negotiations with senior officers in the departments, but have got nowhere.

Mr. Potter: They are probably worrying about it.

Mr. PERKINS: I hope they are, and that there will be some effect, because up to date all the worrying is being done by the people living in those areas. It is certainly not being done by the Minister and the senior officers of the department. They probably have other worries of their own but when drastic action such as this is taken to alter the service provided by a major Government utility, close attention should be paid to the alternative service provided. I wish also to refer to the Kondinin-Hyden section where the position is similar to that on the Brookton-Corrigin line. If goods are sent to Kondinin and are carted out by railway road bus or passenger freighter, those vehicles are capable of taking about three tons, but they are often carrying less than one ton of freight at the end of the journey.

Mr. Lawrence: What sort of freight?

Mr. PERKINS: If the hon. member would come with me, we could make a detailed examination. If he would come on that trip with me, notwithstanding the poor treatment received by the people of that area from the Government, I am sure he would be received courteously.

Mr. Lapham: Is the invitation extended only to the member for South Fremantle?

Mr. PERKINS: He was first in the field; I cannot invite an unlimited number.

Mr. Rodoreda: Does not that service show a big loss?

Mr. PERKINS: That interjection is most appropriate. Members may have gained the impression from my remarks about the availability of space in these vehicles, that the Government road services are running at a loss. If the member for Pilbara has listened to the replies to questions given by the Minister for Transport in recent days he will have heard that on the service from Perth to Quairading, Corrigin, Kondinin and Hyden, in each of the last two years there has been a profit of more than £1,000, after paying what I would regard as excessive sums to the department for what the railway administration is pleased to call general administration charges.

To add insult to injury a further sum is charged and is known as an agency charge. It is a 5 per cent. levy on all

tickets sold by stationmasters. The practice is for the bus driver to sell the tickets at any point where there is no stationmaster. But if a stationmaster at Kondinin, Corrigin, Quairading or York sells a ticket, this 5 per cent. charge is added.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Five per cent. extra on the cost of their own tickets?

Mr. PERKINS: Yes, for what is known as railway administration. This figure for agency charges is a considerable sum although nothing like the general administration charge. The profit I have mentioned is arrived at after paying interest on all the money covered by the vehicles and so on used on the run, together with the normal depreciation charges. Apparently everything possible is levied against these services, and yet they show a profit. Surely in a remote area like that the Government should not expect to make a profit out of the service provided!

I hope that even at this late stage the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Railways will endeavour to see that goods carried by rail to terminal stations such as Brookton and Kondinin can be carried at the ordinary goods rate just the same as when carried by rail. Judging by what private operators are able to do, it should be possible for any Government road service to carry goods at ordinary railway rates. I suppose we will be told by Government spokesmen when a Bill to amend the State Transport Co-ordination Act is introduced to the House, that it is necessary arbitrarily to restrict the right of private operators to cart goods in this category because they are profitable freight.

If private operators can cart those goods at ordinary railway rates and show a substantial profit, it is anomalous that the railway road service should charge the extraordinarily high rates that are specified in the parcels rates schedule. My point is that wherever those services operate, the people of the districts concerned should be given an opportunity to receive their goods at the lowest possible rate, and I believe it should not be any higher than the second-class goods rate, without any surcharge of 12s. 6d. per ton such as is being levied in some areas. I will pursue this subject further later on but will not deal with it in detail at this stage although I thought it necessary to give the House an illustration of how things are working out.

Mr. Lawrence: You say they are working out?

Mr. PERKINS: The hon. member had better listen more carefully and I think he should come on the trip I mentioned. I will now refer to the Lake Grace-Hyden

section as I believe that unless the Government has abandoned all ideas of further agricultural development in Western Australia, the closure of that line was not justified.

Mr. May: You know that is not true.

Mr. PERKINS: Does the hon. member say it is not true that the Government has abandoned all idea of further agricultural development? I am pleased to have that assurance, and I think the Minister for Mines supports the hon. member's remarks.

Mr. Potter: They will probably use more modern types of transport.

Mr. PERKINS: On looking at the map, members will notice that the section I refer to and the Newdegate line are like two fingers stretching out into parts of the State where considerable areas of new land are being developed, where the rainfall is good, where many established settlers are doing very well and where new settlers will do well unless the Government loads them with excessive charges.

Mr. Rodoreda: You go a long way around to get to Hyden by rail.

Mr. PERKINS: I was not responsible for putting the line there, and surely the local people should not be penalised for the mistake of some previous Government! I do not know whether the hon. member is suggesting that some other rail service should be provided for Hyden, but I suggest that the rails which are there and which are in reasonably good condition should be used while usable.

My information is that with very little attention, it would be possible to continue using that line for at least two or three years. The Minister for Transport promised some time ago that he would meet the people of that area and look at the development taking place there and the Minister for Railways promised he would try to accompany him. Unfortunately, neither of those Ministers has been to the area and I think the Government has a very scanty knowledge of what is taking place there.

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

On motion by Hon. A. F. Watts, time extended.

Mr. PERKINS: Development is taking place as far as 20 or 30 miles north-east of Hyden and I would be pleased if not only Ministers but also other members of this House who are interested would go and look at that area. If members are willing to visit the district to see the development taking place there, I am sure the local people will be pleased to receive them and they will have a very instructive trip.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I agree. I was out there.

Mr. PERKINS: The hon. member was at the opening of the hall. It is discouraging to people who are doing an excellent job developing new ground when they feel that just when they can see some daylight and are able to improve local facilities, a major Government facility is being taken from them. That will have a disastrous effect on the development of that part of the State. The member for Fremantle and some other members were out there—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I think the Minister for Police was there.

Mr. PERKINS: Yes, when the Governor opened the hall. Since then many other public facilities have been provided there. The township of Hyden is improving all the time and only a month ago I opened a new golf course at Hyden Rock. It is a credit to all concerned as they have built a brick club house with a tiled roof and all the facilities available in any progressive country district. They have not asked for subsidies but have spent their own money and the work done is parallel with the development that they are doing on their own properties.

I think there is a greater proportion of nice homes on properties there than there is in any other area that I know. For the reasons I have given, I feel that the discontinuance of the railway service to an area such as that is putting the clock back as far as the development of new areas in this State is concerned. Many young men have gone out there, depending entirely on their own resources.

Members know how hard I have tried in this House to secure for the agency section of the R. & I. Bank more capital in order to provide these young men more funds with which to speed up their development. Notwithstanding that, they have risked all their money and they are working far harder than most people in Australia are prepared to work at present. I congratulate them on what they are doing. I believe that if more funds had been made available in recent years, we would have seen more rapid development in that area and perhaps the railway system would have been in better shape.

There were various matters I intended to deal with, but I find that my time is running short. Perhaps the most important feature is the waste, dislocation and extra costs that are likely to arise when the Government proceeds with the proposal to trans-ship grain from the sidings on those lines where services have been discontinued, on to sidings on the main line. I have spoken on this subject before and I feel that the position has not been improved in recent weeks. I know that the Minister for Transport has arranged for the calling of tenders for the trans-shipment of grain from those sidings to sidings where rail services are still operating; and also for the backloading of super-

I feel that the tenders received for that service are not likely to compare with rail freights.

I am not suggesting that road transport in favoured circumstances cannot cart goods at very low rates. I know of an instance in this State where ore is being carted over very long distances at something less than 4d. per ton mile. But the point there is that the truck is operating for 24 hours of the day; there is no waste time in loading and unloading and that is an important point. Obviously, the Government has done no planning as yet to assist Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. in any way in the expeditious outloading from bins on to motor-trucks, or for the provision of any special facilities for unloading those motor-trucks, when they arrive at the trans-shipping point on the lines where rail services still operate. If the small gear which has been satisfactory for the receipt of grain from the comparatively small trucks at the ordinary siding installations of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. are to be used for the trans-shipment, we cannot expect a quick turn round of vehicles, at a minimum cost, such as is the case where a vehicle is being loaded very quickly and at the other end practically tipping its load straight over a grid or straight into a motor-truck.

If the Government is to provide those facilities, then I do not think it should expect Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. to pay for them because that is not part of its work. That organisation built up its system in good faith and if some change is to be made, it should be the prerogative of the Government to pay for the work. Of course, that will cost money and I can imagine that if proper investigations are made, the Government is likely to find its financial position, since discontinuing services on these branch lines, is little if any better than its position was previously.

When one weighs the very small saving that may be effected against the damage that the closing of these lines will do to the State's development and to the discouragement of maximum primary production—which I have stressed very often in this Chamber is so vital for the economic good health of Australia—one will find that we are moving backwards rather than forwards. I believe that this railway problem has to be tackled by much more fundamental reforms than are contained in the action so far taken. In all the circumstances, I strongly support the motion moved by the Leader of the Country Party and I hope, even at this late hour, that the Government will see the wisdom of following that course.

Mr. Nalder: Hear, hear!

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

MOTION—STATE TRADING CONCERNS.

Request to Government to Sell.

Debate resumed from the 7th August on the following motion by Mr. W. A. Manning:—

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

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

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

MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin—in reply) [8.37]: I am sorry that the Minister is not in his place this evening because there are some matters to which I wish to refer in connection with his speech on the motion.

Mr. Lawrence: He can read your speech in Hansard.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I would like to point out that the motion was based on one particular point—and that was that this State needs funds. That is not my statement but a statement which has been made by Ministers and the Premier, from time to time. If they are sincere in their statements that there is a shortage of funds for this and that, my motion points out how funds can be obtained and how they can be used. I would like to draw members' attention to the reason for the motion. It clearly sets out—

That this House, in view of the necessity for additional funds for expansion of both primary and secondary industries and essential requirements

The second part of the motion reads—

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

Members will see that the purpose of the motion was to show the Government how funds could be made available. Yet when one listened to the speech of the Minister, one heard no mention whatever of that aspect. He avoided completely the reason for the introduction of the motion and merely quoted details in regard to the trading concerns mentioned. I wonder why that was. Could it be that the Government has no need of funds? Would that be the answer? Or can it be that the Government cannot see the need? Surely it cannot be said that the Government is not aware of the need! I cannot believe that any of those explanations would be

the answer to the question. So there is only one conclusion one can draw and that is that the Minister avoided the question, because it was unanswerable.

I also raised the question whether these trading concerns were, from a Government point of view, worth continuing. I detailed the losses that have been incurred by three of them and I dealt with the State Engineering Works. There are one or two matters I would like to point out. In regard to the State hotels, these are a losing proposition. They are drawing on the funds of the State when we are so short of money and we could use those funds to greater advantage. I would instance one particular hotel—that at Bruce Rock—where a sum of £20,000 is being spent on renovations. This is not for the purpose of providing extra accommodation because, when the work is completed, there will be two bedrooms fewer than there are now. Yet £20,000 of public money is being spent on that work at the Bruce Rock hospital.

The Minister for Mines: You are a bit mixed.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I meant the Bruce Rock hotel. We must have a surplus of funds if we can carry out renovations like that to our State hotels.

The Minister for Mines: The member for Roe has advocated that work for many years.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I am dealing with the question from one particular angle at present; I am talking of the financial aspect.

Mr. Nalder: The member for Roe has been doing that in order that the hotel can be sold. Under present conditions nobody would buy it.

The Minister for Mines: He did it in the hope that it would come off.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: In his speech the Minister said that I had a lot to learn about the State Engineering Works. I can only say that the Minister must have a lot to remember because I pointed out that the State Engineering Works were working principally on a cost-plus basis, with which he disagreed. But I would draw members' attention to the Minister's reply to a question asked of him on the 11th July last. This question was in regard to the Fremantle slipway and it reads as follows:—

Are there any restrictions on the use of the Fremantle slipway by private firms?

If so, to what extent?

The Minister replied—

Yes. The owner of the ship or vessel shall arrange with the manager of the State Engineering Works for the carrying out of all work of whatever nature is required to be done

while the vessel is on the slipway, with the exception of work to be done by the crew employed on the vessel.

It is obvious that the State Engineering Works have a monopoly of the work on the slipway. On the same day another question was asked of the Minister as follows—

Who is undertaking the conversion and repair on the State ship "Delamere"?

The answer to which question was—

The major portion of this work is being done by the State Engineering Works.

The second question was "Were tenders called," to which the Minister replied—

No. Calling of tenders is not a common practice in shipping repair work.

I contend that my argument was perfectly correct, that the State Engineering Works are doing work for the Government on a cost-plus basis. The Minister's own reply informed us that I am correct. If a concern cannot make a profit when it is working on a cost-plus basis, then all I can say is that it never will, because that is the basis on which profits are made.

The Minister was very careful to tell us of the service that the State Brick Works were rendering and of the materials in short supply that they were producing at low prices. I find that during the last two days—and I only saw this on Monday—the State Brick Works sent to Narrogin for a Government contract a truckload of State pressed bricks. When those bricks arrived at Narrogin, they were immediately condemned. Landed in Narrogin those bricks cost £12 a thousand more than the Narrogin bricks. The State Brick Works have now to reimburse the contractor to the extent of the difference in price between the State pressed bricks and the Narrogin bricks, which is £12 per thousand.

Mr. Nalder: Did they cart the bricks back?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: No, they are to be left there and will be used for internal walls at the reduced price. If that is the sort of thing that happens, there does not seem much justification for that State undertaking to be continued, because it is only putting up the price of the work the Government is doing. There is a specified price to the contractor and the overall price is based on that.

From the speech of the Minister one would think that because these State trading concerns were established in times past for some particular reason, they are justified now. As a matter of fact, I was not arguing that point at all. They might have served a good purpose in days gone by, but my motion is concerned with the needs of the present. Surely we could have a plan for our concerns which suits the needs of the particular moment! I contend that the most important fact at the present

time is that the State can use £3,000,000 much better in the building of hospitals, schools and public works of various descriptions than in the running of hotels, brickworks, sawmills and engineering works.

That is my contention. The matter relative to the detail of these concerns is quite subsidiary to my main point, which was that we could use these funds. If, as the Minister suggests, these concerns have such a profit-making potential, then he will be rewarded in the price that will be offered when they are put up for sale. It should not constitute a loss to the State at all. I do not contend that these instrumentalities should be sold at give-away prices; they should be sold at reasonable market prices. I see no reason why any business—and State trading concerns are businesses—should not at some time decide to sell a portion of its assets, say a branch or some other particular part of the concern.

That happens every day in the business world, so why should it not be so in State affairs? We run business concerns and that being so, surely we can adopt business methods! If we find we could use the money to better advantage in the provision of amenities in this State than in investing those funds in these instrumentalities, which are unnecessary from our point of view, surely we could do it without feeling that we have betrayed those for whom they were established in the past!

The need of the moment must be considered. I know from what the Minister has said, that the Government does not intend to support this motion. I do hope, however, it will at least take some notice of the motion, and I suggest that when a Minister sits down to dictate a letter to any part of this State and says, "We recognise the great need for this particular concern but we regret that because of the lack of finance we are unable to do anything about it," he will see dazzling before him the £3,000,000 which it will be possible to recover from the sale of those concerns.

Mr. Nalder: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I hope the Government will give some consideration to that aspect when replying to people and telling them they cannot have a certain facility because of lack of finance. The Government should tell the people the real reason, namely, that they refuse to realise on their assets in order to provide those amenities that are required by the public. If the Government is genuine in its desire to provide essential needs for the community, I suggest that it give further consideration to the sale of those assets which are not only draining our loan funds but also our revenue fund, because they are being run at a loss.

The Minister for Mines: Why did not the previous Government sell all these concerns?

The Premier: It did not have time.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I am not concerned at this moment about that point.

The Minister for Mines: You should be.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I believe that we must face up to the present situation and if the Government says it needs funds at the moment and it can find a buyer for these concerns, why should it not dispose of them and obtain the necessary funds? That is my argument. The fact that we have done something in the past for some reason or other should not concern us very much now. It is necessary for us to meet the needs of the moment, and the particular need seems to arise from a lack of loan funds. If the Government is short of loan funds, then it should realise on these instrumentalities to which I have referred.

Mr. May: What about the S.E.C.?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I hope the Government will take some notice of this motion. If it is finance that the Government requires, this can be obtained if the Government is prepared to take the necessary action.

Question put and negatived.

House adjourned at 8.53 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, 15th August, 1957.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

COMO BEACH.

Hydrographic Survey.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Has a recent hydrographic survey been made of the river in the vicinity of the Canning Bridge, Como Beach and Melville foreshore areas, with a view to determining whether the proposed new beach at Como will remain stable?

(2) If there is such a report in existence, will he lay it on the Table of the House?

(3) If no such report is in existence, upon what basis is it claimed that the proposed new beach and the associated sand-banks in the river will remain stable?

(4) How is the sum of £11,000, stated to be additional cost for the proposed new beach at Como, made up?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A hydrographic survey was made to determine the depth of water and the suitability of material available for reclamation purposes.

(2) A copy of the report can be seen at the office of the Director of Works.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

(4) The sum of £11,000 was the estimated cost at 4s. per cubic yard to provide at least an equivalent area of beach to that now existing.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Meters and Assessments.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON (for Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham) asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is it the policy of the Water Supply Department in future to render to the public water-rate notices without meter readings and showing only gallons used? If so—

(a) What is the reason for this decision?

(b) Was this decision referred to Parliament?

(2) In the event of a meter becoming damaged, or developing a fault, causing it to cease registering, how does this affect the assessment of that consumer's account in—

(a) the metropolitan area;

(b) the Goldfields area?

(3) If a water meter is suspected of registering slightly out, during periodical readings, is it possible to adjust the meter to register either faster or slower without removing it from the premises?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The existing policy of not issuing meter readings will continue for the present, but it is under review. Experience over the past six years has disclosed that