

- (2) What was the condition of the loan?
 (3) What interest is being paid on the amount outstanding?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Treasurer) replied:

- (1) £500,000.
 (2) The initial term of the loan was one year, but by arrangement with the company, it was extended for a further two years.
 (3) 4½ per cent. per annum.

EDUCATION.

Electricity Supply for Roleystone School.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware that the new school at Roleystone has been wired up and ready to be connected to the electricity mains?
 (2) Is it intended to have electricity made available to the school, and if so, when?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) Yes.
 (2) Yes. When the State Electricity Commission makes the necessary extension to the electrical mains.

DAIRYING.

Governmental Assistance, Margaret River and Northcliffe.

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

In view of the reply from the Premier regarding the availability of finance to the State Government to commence the dairy farm improvement scheme in the Margaret River and Northcliffe areas, has a decision been made by Cabinet as to the amount which this State can provide?

The MINISTER replied:

As I told the House on a previous occasion, a survey has been made of both areas mentioned. We are now awaiting the end of the winter months before taking heavy machinery to those areas. The sum of money has not yet been decided on, but whatever it is, it will be sufficient to commence and complete the work in connection with present applications.

BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT CONTINUANCE.

Returned from the Council with an amendment.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 29th August, 1956.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Local government, sources of revenue	430
Electricity, (a) first aid instruction for S.E.C. employees	430
(b) subsidy to South-West power scheme	430
(c) extension to Dwellingup	431
(d) Bunbury power station	431
Railways, river depths at Fremantle bridge	431
Electoral, nominations of Mr. J. P. Collins	431
Fisheries, marketing, metropolitan area	432
Increased charges, (a) Press statement by Leader of the Opposition	432
(b) overtime involved in furnishing reply	434
(c) increases and charges by Government	434
Child welfare, proposed reformatory system	434
Housing, accommodation for evictees, etc.	435
Main roads, (a) Ballidu-Pithara section, expenditure	435
(b) Albany Highway, reconstruction of Gosnells bridge	435
Native welfare, (a) ministerial investigation of cruelty charges	435
(b) amplification of answer	435
Potatoes, rationing and prices	436
"The Light Grows Brighter," (a) Premier's reaction to publication	436
(b) tabling of book	436
Tinmining, assistance to Siamese Tin Syndicate, Ltd., etc.	436
Ministerial visit to America, (a) effect of Deputy Premier's speech	436
(b) industrial expansion and controls	437
(c) meaning of Premier's answer	437
(d) Government instructions and position in South Australia	437
Profiteering, definition	438
Transport, (a) rights-of-way and receipt and despatch of goods	438
(b) submission by firms	439
Motions : Five-day banking week, to inquire by select committee	439
Uneconomic railway lines, to inquire by select committee	439
Bills : Albany Lot 184 (Validation of Title), 1r.	439
Gas Undertaking Act Amendment, 2r.	449
Municipality of Fremantle Act Amendment, 2r.	450
Electoral Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r.	451
Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Continuance, Council's amendment	454
Nurses Registration Act Amendment, 2r.	454
Corneal and Tissue Grafting, 2r.	455

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

QUESTIONS.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Sources of Revenue.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

(1) What sources of revenue, other than rates on property, are available to local government?

(2) Will he list for each of the authorities in the metropolitan area—

- (a) income from rates;
- (b) income from other sources;
- (c) percentage (b) to total income?

The figures for 1953-54 are:

MUNICIPALITIES.

	Rates.		(a)	(b)	(c)	% (B) to Total.
	General.	Loan.	Total.	Other Income.	Total	
	£	£	£	£	£	
Claremont	14,359	—	14,359	34,233	48,592	70%
Cottesloe	15,229	4,067	19,296	30,035	49,331	60%
Fremantle	41,738	10,435	52,173	103,452	155,625	66%
Fremantle E.	9,356	4,678	14,034	30,411	44,445	68%
Fremantle N.	7,288	—	7,288	11,585	18,873	61%
Guildford	5,391	—	5,391	9,147	14,538	63%
Mid. Junction	10,874	3,915	14,789	31,709	46,498	68%
Perth	327,960	39,281	367,241	344,836	712,077	48%
Subiaco	27,313	3,767	31,080	34,408	65,488	52%
	£459,508	£66,143	£525,651	£629,816	£1,155,467	54%

ROAD BOARDS.

	General.	Loan.	Total.	Other Income.	Total	% (B) to Total.
	£	£	£	£	£	
Bassendean	9,688	3,282	12,970	21,536	34,506	62%
Bayswater	22,945	12,903	35,848	26,762	62,610	43%
Belmont Pk.	19,863	5,941	25,804	45,103	70,907	63%
Canning	27,950	4,271	32,221	33,084	65,305	51%
Melville	33,924	15,107	49,031	65,751	114,782	57%
Mosman Pk.	12,118	971	13,089	7,979	21,068	38%
Nedlands	42,796	2,967	45,763	34,431	80,194	43%
Pepp. Grove	6,030	—	6,030	2,032	8,062	25%
Perth	78,038	46,070	124,108	89,035	213,143	43%
South Perth	35,461	9,667	45,128	70,965	116,093	61%
Swan	8,613	—	8,613	25,557	34,170	75%
	£297,426	£101,179	£398,605	£422,235	£820,840	51%

ELECTRICITY.

(a) *First Aid Instruction for S.E.C. Employees.*

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Works:

In accordance with the provisions of the regulations under the Electricity Act, 1945 (Part 9—Overhead Line Working Safety Regulations, clause 282)—

(1) Has the State Electricity Commission appointed a full-time first aid instructor?

(2) Are all employees given instruction on resuscitation methods before working on live mains?

(3) From the commencement of employment, what time elapses before a worker receives instruction?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied:

(1) Traffic licence fees, Transport Board fees, other licence fees (building, dog, etc.), income from property (rents, plant hire, etc.), contribution to works (half cost of crossings, approaches, etc.), subdivisional roads (amounts paid by subdividers for road construction), Main Roads Department grants for roads, fines and penalties.

(2) The latest accurate figures available covering all local authorities in the metropolitan area are for the financial year 1953-54. No significant change in trend could be expected for subsequent years.

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) No new employees work on live mains. Most new employees are attached to gangs, and are instructed in resuscitation as soon as possible.

(b) *Subsidy to South-West Power Scheme.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Does he agree that the yearly subsidy of £72,000 being paid on the South-West power scheme was an aid to development, and a valuable encouragement to the policy of decentralisation?

(2) In view of the accumulated profit of the State Electricity Commission at the 30th June, 1955, of £56,000, would the Government be penalised by the Grants Commission if it were to supplement this amount by the amount necessary to bring it and any future profits up to £72,000, if necessary, to enable the payment of the subsidy to continue?

(3) What was done with the profit of £56,000 referred to?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) It was retained by the commission and used for the purposes of the commission.

(c) Extension to Dwellingup.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) In view of the work being carried out by the Government to shift the Holyoake mill to Dwellingup and the centralising of forestry activities in that centre, can he state if any plans have been made to extend electricity to Dwellingup?

(2) If so, when are the extensions likely to be made?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No plans have been made. There are no funds for this work.

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

(d) Bunbury Power Station.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Treasurer:

On the 17th November, 1955, in reply to a question by me he stated that a total of £1,940,000 of loan funds was to be expended in the financial year on the Bunbury power station project.

On the 23rd August, 1956, the Minister for Works, in reply to a question by me stated that a total of £1,814,227 had been spent in the last financial year on the Bunbury power station project.

In view of the saving of £125,773 of loan funds on this project during the last financial year, will the Treasurer advise—

(a) Why persons employed on this project were retrenched late 1955 and early in 1956?

(b) If the sum saved, namely, £125,773 would be immediately allocated to this project thereby expediting the work and alleviating the unemployment position in Bunbury?

The TREASURER replied:

(a) Other works carried out by the State Electricity Commission absorbed a greater proportion of funds than was originally anticipated, and it became necessary to reduce expenditure on the Bunbury power station project.

(b) As the reduction of £125,773 in the anticipated expenditure on the Bunbury power station was expended on other State Electricity Commission projects, this so-called saving is not available for the purpose suggested.

RAILWAYS.

River Depths at Fremantle Bridge.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Regarding my question No. 17 on Wednesday, the 22nd August, 1956, does his answer mean that only 90 ft. of the river has any waterway left, and that the rest of the river at the bridge has been filled up with stone and rubble to low water level so as to try to make sure it is safe?

(2) Is he aware that the Deputy Chief Engineer for Railways in the latter part of last year placed a memo. on the bridge file stating that "the matter is urgent and an early decision would be appreciated"?

(3) In view of this and the fact that people's lives may depend upon it, will he get a report and answer my question as asked, so that this House will have the latest information?

(4) Is he also aware that a few months after I asked the question about this bridge in 1925, the bridge collapsed just after a trainload of children had passed over it?

(5) In view of the Deputy Chief Engineer's report on the file, can he assure the House that history will not repeat itself?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) No. The information given referred to the two navigation channels only.

(2) Yes.

(3) A survey will be necessary to obtain the information, and this will be undertaken.

(4) On the 22nd July, 1926, after a record rainfall combined with severe gales over several days, flood waters scoured out the foundations of the abutment on the north side which brought about a collapse of portion of the bridge. The bridge was under observation at the time, and the damage was noticed at its commencement and in sufficient time to have all traffic stopped.

(5) A dangerous situation will not be permitted to develop.

ELECTORAL.

Nominations of Mr. J. P. Collins.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Justice:

Will he advise the House—

(1) How many times Mr. J. P. Collins, builder, of Mt. Lawley, has nominated for—

(a) the Legislative Assembly;

(b) the Legislative Council?

- (2) How many other nominations were received on each of the above occasions and what political parties did they represent?
- (3) What was the result of each election?
- (4) On how many occasions did Mr. Collins lose his deposit?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) (a) Eight times.
 - (b) Three times.
- (2) Legislative Assembly:
- 1945—Five. 2 Independents, 1 All Parties League, 1 Ind. Labour and 1 A.L.P.
- 1947—Two. 1 A.L.P. and 1 Communist.
- 1948—Six. 1 A.L.P., 1 C. & D.L., 1 Ind., 1 L.C.L., 1 Communist and 1 Unendorsed Lib.
- 1948—Two. 1 A.L.P. and 1 L.C.L.
- 1950—One. 1 L.C.L.
- 1953—Two. 1 A.L.P. and 1 Ind.
- 1955—Two. 1 L.C.L. and 1 A.L.P.
- 1956—One. 1 A.L.P.

Legislative Council:

- 1954—One. 1 A.L.P.
- 1955—Two. 1 A.L.P. and 1 L.C.L.
- 1956—One. 1 A.L.P. (Current by-election).

(3) Legislative Assembly:

Victoria Park District by-election (10/2/45)—Read (Ind.) elected—majority 1,019.

East Perth District general election (15/3/47)—Graham (A.L.P.) elected—majority, 1,012.

Guildford-Midland District by-election (13/3/48)—Brady (A.L.P.) elected—majority 480.

Boulder District by-election (4/12/48)—Oliver (A.L.P.) elected—majority 1,759.

Mt. Lawley District general election (25/3/50)—Abbott (L.C.L.) elected—majority 2,740.

Melville District general election (14/2/53)—Tonkin (A.L.P.) elected—majority 3,752.

Bunbury District by-election (29/10/55)—Roberts (L.C.L.) elected—majority 139.

Northam District general election (7/4/56)—Hawke (A.L.P.) elected—majority 2,408.

Legislative Council:

West Province general election (8/5/54)—Fraser (A.L.P.) elected—majority 1,378.

South-East Province by-election (10/9/55)—Cunningham (L.C.L.) elected—majority 138.

North Province by-election (22/9/56)—To be held.

(4) Five occasions.

FISHERIES.

Marketing, Metropolitan Area.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Fisheries:

In view of the statement attributed to Mr. A. J. Fraser, superintendent of the Fisheries Department over the ABC news at 9 p.m. on the 23rd instant, that there was not a glut of fish on the Western Australian market, can he advise the House—

- (1) Why the fishermen at Shark Bay are advised there is no sale for their fish for periods up to three weeks as there is a glut in Perth and fish are unsaleable?
- (2) Does he consider that there might be an organisation which is controlling the sale of wet fish in the metropolitan area so as to maintain a constantly high price irrespective of the quantities which could be offered to the public?
- (3) If the answer to No. (2) is "Yes," does he consider that an inquiry into the marketing of wet fish in the metropolitan area is warranted, and would be to the advantage of the fishermen and public alike?
- (4) Does he consider that the price of wet fish is kept to a level at which imported processed fish can compete in the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (for the Minister for Fisheries) replied:

(1) There is a much greater demand by the public for good quality fresh fish than for frozen fish of a similar quality. On occasions when fresh fish are plentiful, it is difficult for short periods to dispose of frozen fish.

(2) No. Prices are regulated by supply, quality and demand. A considerable portion of the Shark Bay fish is sold to metropolitan buyers by private negotiation.

(3) Answered by No. 2.

(4) No. Public demand may be influenced by the price of local fish as compared with that of imported processed fish.

INCREASED CHARGES.

(a) *Press Statement by Leader of the Opposition.*

Mr. ANDREW asked the Premier:

(1) Did he read in the last issue of the "Sunday Times" a statement by the Leader of the Opposition on the rise in fares?

(2) Is it not a fact that when the Leader of the Opposition was the Premier, his Government raised fares and a number of other charges?

(3) Can he say why the Leader of the Opposition should criticise this Government for doing something which he—the Leader of the Opposition—himself did in the same or similar circumstances?

(4) Would not the same arguments and criticisms which the Leader of the Opposition is using now apply to the circumstances at the time when he raised charges?

(5) Would he outline the increased fares and other charges made by the McLarty-Watts Government?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) Yes.

(3) No, but it is strange the Leader of the Opposition never criticises increases in charges made by business concerns.

(4) Yes.

(5) The particulars are as follow—

Railways—

September, 1948.—Overall increase in fares and freights of 20 per cent.

August, 1949.—Increase of 7½ per cent on country lines for fares and freights, except wheat and superphosphate, which were increased by ½d. and 1d. respectively on a ton mile.

May, 1951.—Fares and freights increased—Country, 30 per cent., Suburban, 40 per cent.

Tramways—

February, 1951.—Increases by 1d. to 3d. dependent on number of sections traversed.

November, 1951.—Increased by 1d. to 2d. dependent on the distance travelled.

February, 1952.—Sections 6 to 11 increased by 1d.

July, 1952.—Sections 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11 increased by 1d.

Workers' fares were increased by 100 per cent from February, 1951, 50 per cent. from November, 1951, and 20 per cent. from July, 1952.

Forests Department—

April, 1949.—Sawmilling permits for royalties increased 2s. 6d. per load on log timber.

October, 1950.—Inspection fees and royalties on piles and poles increased on a sliding scale—approximate average increase 200 per cent.

August, 1952.—Sawmilling permits for royalties increased by 2s. 6d. per load on log timber.

Lands Department—

Survey Fees.

December, 1949.—Increased schedule rates by 20 per cent.

November, 1951.—Increased schedule rates by 25 per cent.

Land Fees.

December, 1949.—Office fees and charges under Land Act averaged 20 per cent. increase.

Land Tax.

1948 Assessments.—Increase of 25 per cent. unimproved over £250.

Vermin tax on pastoral leases increased by 50 per cent.

Police Department—

March, 1949.—Weights and measures schedule—20 per cent. increase.

October, 1952.—Marine collectors' licences increased from 5s. to 15s.

March, 1953.—Motor drivers' licences from 5s. to 10s.

Transfer fees schedule rates increased approximately 100 per cent.

Crown Law Department—

October, 1948.—Local Court and Police Court fees increased by 25 per cent.

Supreme Court charges increased by 20 per cent.

Titles Office—

September, 1948.—General increase in charges ranging from 20 per cent. to 25 per cent.

State Shipping Service—

July, 1949.—Increase 30 per cent. on freight.

September, 1949.—Fares increased by 30 per cent.

November, 1952.—Freight increase of 22s. 6d. per ton on the basic rate.

Passenger fares increased by 33½ per cent. excepting concessional fares to women and children from the North.

Return fares were discontinued.

Metropolitan Water Supply Department—

1951-1952.—Rate for sewerage was increased from 1s. 4d. to 1s. 6d. in the £1 on annual valuation.

Public Works Department—

Water.

1951.—Southern Cross district increased from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. in the £1 to bring it into line with other districts.

Irrigation.

1950-1951 year.—Rates increased:— First watering 7s. 6d. to 9s. per acre. Additional waterings 2s. 6d. to 3s. per acre. Surcharge for out of zone areas—£1 to £1 4s.

1952-1953 year.—First watering 9s. to 11s. 3d. per acre. Additional waterings 3s. to 3s. 9d. per acre. Surcharge for out of zone areas—£1 4s. to £1 10s.

Sprinkler Irrigation.

1950-1951. — Increases in charges:—£1 to £1 4s. per acre.

1952-1953.—£1 4s. to £1 10s. per acre.

Drainage.

1951.—Increase of 20 per cent. to be spread over a period of three years.

Sundry Fees—January, 1949.

Auctioneers' licences:

General—£25 to £30

Country—£15 to £20

District—£5 to £7 10s.

Land agents.—£5 to £7 10s.

Money lenders.—£5 to £10

Pawnbrokers.—£10 to £15

Marine stores.—£1 to £2

Shops and factories.—Schedule increased by 20 per cent.

Change of name regulation.—Schedule increased £1 to £2.

(b) Overtime Involved in Furnishing Reply.

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

While the Premier was in Canberra, I asked for information in regard to the amount of overtime paid by the Railway Department. I was informed that because of the amount of overtime that would have to be paid to provide the information, it could not readily be made available.

Will the Premier tell me if any overtime was involved in obtaining the information asked for by the member for Victoria Park in regard to the questions as to taxes and charges made by my Government?

The PREMIER replied:

None at all. It was prepared by the very efficient officers of the Treasury Department, some of whom are personally known to the Leader of the Opposition.

(c) Increases and Charges by Government.

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

(1) Will the Premier read to the House a similar list of increases and charges since his Government took office in February, 1953?

(2) How many days notice were given by the member for Victoria Park in order to allow departmental officers to provide the information which the Premier has given today?

The Minister for Lands: This has got under your skin by the look of it.

The PREMIER replied:

The answer to the second part of the question is that I had no notice of the questions except as they came out on the notice paper in the usual way. If the Leader of the Opposition were to cast his mind back a year or so ago, he would remember that this subject was discussed in the House and a statement was given here at the time in regard to the increases of any fees and charges imposed upon the people of Western Australia by the Government of the Leader of the Opposition during the six years his Government was in office.

Coming to the first part of the question, I would have no objection to reading to the House a list of the increased charges and the increased fees imposed by the present Government during its period of office, providing the Leader of the Opposition places the appropriate questions upon the notice paper.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: They are too lengthy.

CHILD WELFARE.

Proposed Reformatory System.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Child Welfare:

The Lieut-Governor's Speech says: "The Government, in conjunction with the Church of England, will develop the reformatory system for delinquent boys by establishing a reform school for the more sophisticated types, thereby enabling the Anglican Farm School at Stoneville to cater for the milder type of delinquent".

(1) Does this mean that the reform school "for the more sophisticated types" is to be a Government institution?

- (2) If the answer to No. (1) is "Yes," does this mean that church influence in metropolitan area and near metropolitan area reformatory work for delinquent boys is to be restricted to a Church of England school "for the milder type of delinquent"?
- (3) What are the existing facilities for handling delinquent boys and girls in the metropolitan area and other parts of the State, both through church and Government institutions?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) No. Both institutions will be under the control of the Anglican Homes Board with an advisory committee representative of the Church of England and the Child Welfare Department.

(3) For Boys—(a) The Anglican Farm School at Stoneville.

(b) Temporary use of a small section of the Migrant Hostel at Pt. Walter for from eight to 10 "trusted" boys.

For Girls—The Roman Catholic Home of the Good Shepherd at Wembley.

HOUSING.

Accommodation for Evictees, etc.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Housing:

The Lieut-Governor's Speech (page 5) says: "In the last 12 months over 800 families have been allotted accommodation on account of eviction or other emergent circumstances".

(1) What are the relevant numbers for—

- (a) accommodation on account of eviction; and
- (b) accommodation on account of other emergent circumstances?

(2) What are the several broad headings grouped as "other emergent circumstances"?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) 295.

(b) 642.

(2) Living under conditions prejudicial to health. Living in condemned or condemnable houses. Separation of family units. Living in overcrowded conditions.

MAIN ROADS.

(a) *Ballidu-Pithara Section, Expenditure.*

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Minister for Works:

What amount does the Main Roads Board propose to spend during the year ending the 30th June, 1957, on the main

road between Ballidu and Pithara, and what works is it proposed shall be done with funds provided?

The MINISTER replied:

The particulars are as follows:—

Northam-Goomalling-Mullewa Road:

Ballidu-Pithara Section.

Works proposed for 1956-57.

Wongan-Ballidu Road Board—

	£
Ballidu-Damboring: Improve-	
provements 7M.	6,000
Maintenance	600
Dalwallinu Road Board—	
Maintenance	720
Total	7,320

(b) *Albany Highway, Reconstruction of Gosnells Bridge.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Works:

(1) In view of the further widening programme to be undertaken on the Albany Highway this financial year, is it the intention of the Government to reconstruct the bridge over the Canning at Gosnells?

(2) If so, when is work likely to commence?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

NATIVE WELFARE.

(a) *Ministerial Investigation of Cruelty Charges.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

With reference to my questions of the 8th and 21st August regarding the Native Welfare Department's report, will he inform the House why a further six weeks is still required to furnish a report when his predecessor had his attention invited to the matter in question in November, 1955, and the issue involved is important, both locally and internationally?

The MINISTER replied:

In order to make a factual report on the matter raised by the hon. member, it is necessary to have a double check on certain aspects of the report referred to, and this is actually taking place at the moment. Furthermore, the Commissioner of Native Welfare is out of the State for several weeks on departmental business while his department is carrying out the major part of the work involved which will enable me to answer the hon. member's question.

(b) *Amplification of Answer.*

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

In view of his answer to my question, does this mean that no action was taken between November, 1955, and the time of my asking the first question on this subject during this session?

The MINISTER replied:
No.

POTATOES.

Rationing and Prices.

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

Is there any truth in the rumour that potatoes are being rationed by merchants to retailers on a 50 per cent. basis owing to a shortage caused by export?

The MINISTER replied:

There is no truth in the rumour whatsoever. At various times we have people—and I am sorry to say that in some cases they are merchants—who, for reasons of their own, make alarming statements and cause such rumours to circulate. I have been in touch with the Potato Marketing Board today because I also heard this rumour, and I was informed that there are plenty of potatoes in country districts. There is no intention on the part of the board to ration potatoes; and if there is any slight shortage—which is doubted even at this moment—it could be on account of growers planting and cultivating potatoes for the next crop during which period they are sometimes reluctant for a day or two to get their stored potatoes in transit. But there is no shortage whatsoever, and no intention to ration potatoes. Furthermore, in view of doubts caused in people's minds in recent days, the board, at its meeting yesterday, decided there would not be any increase in the price of potatoes in Western Australia.

"THE LIGHT GROWS BRIGHTER."

(a) Premier's Reaction to Publication.

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Has he read the report in this morning's issue of "The West Australian" headed, "Burton's Book Stirs Labour"?

(2) If so, has he a copy of the publication entitled, "The Light Grows Brighter"?

(3) If so, does he approve of the foreword written by the Australian Labour Party president, Mr. F. E. Chamberlain, and the Federal Leader, Dr. Evatt?

The PREMIER replied:

I have not read the publication, consequently I am not in a position to say whether the reading of it would stir me, or otherwise.

(b) Tabling of Book.

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Premier:

Will he endeavour to obtain a copy of this publication of Dr. Burton's from his Federal Leader, and lay same upon the Table of the House?

The PREMIER replied:

No, but if the member for Vasse cares to obtain a copy for me I will read it, if I can find the time.

TINMINING.

Assistance to Siamese Tin Syndicate Ltd.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Has any financial assistance been made available by the Government in connection with the proposition to interest Siamese Tin Syndicate Ltd. in the development of the Greenbushes tin field?

(2) Is the Government aware of the urgency of an immediate decision in this matter?

(3) Does the Government hold out any hope of the assistance being sought by Tin and Strategic Minerals Ltd. being forthcoming?

(4) Does the Government consider the advent of Siamese Tin Syndicate Ltd. in the Greenbushes field would introduce British capital and alleviate unemployment?

The PREMIER replied:

The hon. member supplied me with a copy of these questions before the House met, for which I thank him.

(1) Not up to the present moment.

(2) Yes.

(3) and (4) At least one representative of the local company at Greenbushes has discussed this matter in detail with the Acting Minister for Mines—I think the hon. member has also had some discussions—and a report is now in course of preparation by officers of the Mines Department. The report should be in the hands of the acting Minister tomorrow morning and a decision, based upon the report, will be made if at all possible tomorrow, and at the latest on Friday.

MINISTERIAL VISIT TO AMERICA.

(a) Effect of Deputy Premier's Speech.

Mr. WILD (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Has the Premier read the report, apparently emanating from Mr. Kelly who is now visiting America on behalf of this Government, that appeared in Monday's paper in which it was stated that he had been visiting various firms over there with a view to getting them to come to Western Australia.

(2) If so, does he think that the speech made by the Deputy Premier in regard to private companies that make profits, is going to do very much to help to bring capital to Western Australia, and to help alleviate the unemployment which he is creating in Western Australia?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) I did not read in any newspaper a report made available by the Minister for Mines, Mr. Kelly.

Mr. Wild: It is in Monday's "West."

The PREMIER: I think the member for Dale did not read that, either; I am sure he did not. I read in "The West Australian" of Monday last, if I remember the date, correctly, a report sent to "The West Australian" newspaper by a special reporter. I have no idea of the name of the special reporter. Therefore, the first claim in the questions, is, of course, not correct and I would suggest the member for Dale read these things more accurately and carefully in the future before basing questions upon them in this House.

It is a strange thing, but more than one member of the Liberal Party section of the Opposition has been trying to sabotage Mr. Kelly's mission to the United States of America in recent weeks.

Mr. Wild: Do you not think the Deputy Premier did more?

The PREMIER: I refer first of all to a statement of the Leader of the Opposition published in the "Sunday Times" newspaper on the 22nd July, in which, in the first part of the statement, the Leader of the Opposition gave the mission his blessing, and then in the second part raised a lot of idle talk about socialism, socialisation and so on. That sort of statement could have only one effect upon anyone in America who might possibly come into possession of the newspaper and read it. The effect would be to sabotage the mission of the Minister.

I think the member for Nedlands in this House said something a few nights or days ago, much along the same line; and, of course, the member for Dale, unable to suppress an overwhelming desire to try to discredit the Government and make it difficult for Mr. Kelly, comes in this afternoon with portion of his question aiming to do the same sort of thing. I suggest to members of the Liberal Party section of the Opposition that they lay off this sort of attack and give the Minister a fair and reasonable chance of achieving some successful results in America.

Members: Hear! hear!

(b) Industrial Expansion and Controls.

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

(1) Does he not think that the Government's action in proclaiming to the State and to the world generally, that it proposes to inflict controls in this State would be detrimental to encouraging private industry to come to Western Australia?

(2) Does he not feel that I, as Leader of the Opposition, have very good reasons for drawing attention to this particular

state of affairs which will, undoubtedly, be detrimental to encouraging outside capital to come to Western Australia?

The PREMIER replied:

The only control, if anyone cares to call it that, which the Government has suggested should be placed upon anyone in industry is to prevent profiteering. It is strange that in this regard the Leader of the Liberal Party Government in the neighbouring State of South Australia has operated this kind of legislation continuously, for several years; yet overseas interests, American, British and other, have come to South Australia to establish their industries and have expanded them. I understand from Mr. Playford, in discussions which I had with him in Canberra recently, that industries in South Australia are still expanding.

(c) Meaning of Premier's Answer.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the reply to the question asked in connection with the venture of the Minister for Mines, are we to interpret it to mean that any mention of socialism is to be regarded as detrimental to the Minister's mission and, if any of the Government's platform is detrimental, is he asking us not to ventilate it?

Mr. May: Do not be silly!

The PREMIER replied:

I am not asking the hon. member to do or not to do anything; I leave him to his own resources. I say what I said before: Public men in this State who are anxious to see Western Australia progress and expand should not in one statement laud the Minister's mission and in some other statement try to sabotage it.

(d) Government Instructions and Position in South Australia.

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

Is it not a fact that the Premier of South Australia has given special inducements to manufacturers to establish their industries in that State and that he has thereby been most successful? What special instructions has the Minister for Mines taken from the Government to the United States which would induce investors to come to Western Australia from that country?

The PREMIER replied:

The fact that the Premier of South Australia, on behalf of his Government, offered special inducements to manufacturers to go to South Australia does not wipe out the other fact that the Premier of that State, and his Government, operate a system to prevent profiteering in South Australia. I have no doubt that all those to whom he might offer inducements to establish industries in South Australia

know very well of the existence of legal power in that State to prevent business companies and business individuals from profiteering against the community.

I would say quite frankly, on behalf of this Government, that we do not want new firms or new companies to establish themselves in Western Australia if their main objective in coming here is to profiteer against the people of our State. The Minister for Industrial Development (Mr. Kelly) has gone to America with a considerable amount of discretion with regard to the inducements that he can offer to American business interests to try to prevail upon them to consider establishing industries of one kind or another in Western Australia.

In addition, of course, he has an authority to communicate with the Government at any time, if he feels it necessary, to go beyond the discretion which has been given to him. The inducements which he has been given authority to offer include many things such as sites for industries, the provision of rail transport and roads, where they are required, the provision of power supplies, water and so on, and, where it might be required and was later found to be justified, the granting of financial assistance; not that it is anticipated that any American business concern intending to establish an industry or branch in Western Australia would require any financial help.

PROFITEERING.

Definition.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Premier:

Will he indicate to the House what he considers to be profiteering when, in point of fact, the mere yardstick of percentage of profits on funds employed is not necessarily an indication of profiteering?

The PREMIER replied:

Leaving out of consideration altogether the legal technicalities of this question, I would say that profiteering against the community is the charging to them of prices which are above what might be considered, on a commonsense basis, fair and reasonable.

TRANSPORT.

(a) Rights-of-Way and Receipt and Despatch of Goods.

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

Is he in a position to give to the House a statement on his plan for rights-of-way and the receipt and despatch of goods in the City of Perth in view of the grave concern being expressed by some firms which have difficult structural problems in providing turntables or turning space for their vehicles within their business areas?

The MINISTER replied:

As is well known, I have announced that as from the 1st July next year there will be certain restrictions on the movement of commercial vehicles in a prescribed inner area of the City of Perth. In the final plans, which will be announced before long, some provision will be made for kerbside loading and unloading. It is not my intention to be unduly generous in that regard believing that the growth and development of the City of Perth has reached a stage where it is necessary to reduce to an absolute minimum, and ultimately perhaps abolish entirely, the use—the exclusive use—of the Queen's highway in the heart of the city for loading and unloading. Therefore, there increasingly devolves on business concerns a responsibility to make arrangements in this regard—and there are many alternatives—for the purpose of receiving and despatching goods.

I can give an assurance that steps, as they are progressively taken, will take into account the difficulties likely to confront some of the business people. But I want them to understand very definitely that a decision has been made and it is not intended to depart from it. I say that because I have been approached by several firms who are wondering, in view of certain vacillations that may have taken place in the past, as to whether they will be, in their own words, the mugs if they spend money in making new arrangements, whereas, perhaps, people who do nothing about it whatever will be allowed to get away with it in the future. However, I can assure the member for Nedlands that full consideration is being given to the rights of all sections of the community and I am not unappreciative of certain difficulties which may be encountered by the business people.

(b) Submissions by Firms.

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

Is he yet ready to receive submissions from firms who, because of structural difficulties, are not in a position to install turntables or able to arrange for the turning of vehicles within their premises without major reconstruction of their existing buildings, or is it too soon to make representation to him?

The MINISTER replied:

I thought I had made it perfectly clear that whether submissions are made or not, the policy laid down will come into effect. It will be implemented and the responsibility is upon the firms themselves to make their own arrangements. There are quite a number of alternatives which were outlined by me on the occasion of making the announcement of what I intended to do and of my giving 12 months' notice of what was proposed to be effected.

Even if there is considerable cost involved, firms will have to make up their minds in many cases. Whether they are prepared to meet that cost; whether they will participate in a mutual scheme of rear access; whether they will institute a scheme, with others, outside the prohibited hours, or perhaps enter into some other arrangement are matters entirely in their hands. It is impossible to allow, for very much longer, a situation which has developed in the heart of the City of Perth and which is proceeding to get worse and worse every week. I think I have been sufficiently fair in giving the amount of notice I have given. The responsibility is that of the firms concerned to make their own arrangements.

BILL—ALBANY LOT 184 (VALIDATION OF TITLE).

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

MOTION—FIVE DAY BANKING WEEK.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [5.15]: I move—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the desirability of establishing a five-day working week for banks operating in Western Australia; the effect of such proposal on commerce and industry and the public generally; the question of banking hours most suitable to the industry and the general public; and the effect of the present six-day working week on the banking industry.

The proposal to appoint a select committee to examine this subject can be regarded as advance notice, possibly, of my intention—provided the select committee produces a favourable report—to introduce a measure dealing with this subject once again. For the information of new members and to remind other members of the House, I point out that I have, on two previous occasions, introduced Bills to amend the Bank Holidays Act to make each and every Saturday a bank holiday. In other words, a measure to introduce a five-day banking week in Western Australia.

The attempt made last year to introduce this reform met with some degree of success and a little later I will illustrate just why I am moving this motion at this time. However, there are other reasons and I will commence to outline one of them. Members are aware that there are a great number of differences between the forms of Government in Western Australia and in the United States of America.

Whilst I maintain that our system of Government, our method of making and administering laws, is preferable to that

which applies in the United States, the legislators in that country do take a step which is not sufficiently availed of in our methods. That is, they in the United States use the committee universally. I have here the 1953 edition of a standard text book on "The American System of Government" by Ferguson and McHenry. An extract from it reads as follows:—

Standing committees are by far the most important class of committee, for they constitute the screen through which the great mass of proposed legislation is sifted.

With regard to the procedure of introducing Bills into the legislature, it says—

Introduction of Bills: A Bill is introduced in the House of Representatives merely by sending it to the clerk's desk.

It goes on with a little more detail and, with reference to the committee stage, it reads—

Reference to committee is the next step in the legislative process. In committee, Bills are given a preliminary examination. Most of them are buried as meriting no further consideration. The more important pieces of legislation are studied in detail, public hearings are held, and the testimony of interested persons is heard. The committee arrives at its verdict. If it is favourable, the proposed legislation, often in amended form, is forwarded to the floor of the House. On important matters the committee report may be extensive and exhaustive; on minor matters it may convey little more than a simple affirmative. In general, Bills that secure favourable committee action are in a strong position to secure passage in the House; conversely, committee objection of a measure makes passage extremely unlikely.

It has appealed to me that the system of examining some of our legislation of a non-party nature—such as this subject would involve—was such that the details may become known to those who are required to cast a vote upon it. It is a useful procedure and to some extent my moving for a select committee to be appointed to investigate this subject could be regarded as an experiment in that general line.

Reverting to the proceedings regarding the move last year, it will be remembered that there were suggestions that the Bill then introduced should be referred to a select committee, and, as the mover of that Bill, I opposed that step. I admit I appear to have made an error in doing so. I thought that the matter was such a simple one, and the methods of obtaining information so easy, that it was unnecessary to go to that trouble. It will be recalled—and for those who do not remember, a study of Hansard will reveal—that in introducing the measure I took only a short time.

My introductory speech took a total of 19 minutes. I thought that was sufficient to deal with all-important matters, and to indicate where the people who felt they might oppose the measure should make their inquiries to inform themselves. However, it became apparent that members of the Opposition were not very well informed and had, in the main, gone to very little trouble to inform themselves.

After the speech of the member for Toodyay in which he tried hard to draw red herrings across the trail, and after a number of others had spoken to the measure, the member for North Perth made a long and detailed speech on the matter, using information that was available to him and which, indeed, was available to anybody else who wanted that information, covering nearly all aspects of the position. The further speeches that followed once more failed to take any notice of the information which was made available to them on the subject—and a good deal was made available to them. The Bill was able to pass through this Chamber and it moved to another place. Once again there was a good deal of misinformed criticism and in both places there were suggestions that the matter be referred to a select committee.

Accordingly, it can be said that the second reason for moving for this select committee is that there should be no doubt as to any of the information. If members who are opposed to reform are not prepared to take on trust sober statements made by people who are informed and if, furthermore, they are not prepared to examine the sources of information that are available to them, but are only prepared to oppose, there appears to be no other method open but to take educational steps and have all the information made available to them.

I would like to illustrate some of the matters that should be discussed before a select committee in order that the questions that are posed by inquiries, or by statements which are in some cases not in accord with fact, can be authoritatively determined by the taking of evidence before such a committee. In his speech the member for Toodyay asked, "Are not members of the public entitled to consideration?" and continued by saying, "The banks render an essential service to the public and it is necessary that it be rendered on Saturday mornings . . ."

It appears to me that that question of necessity is one which could be examined and if the member for Toodyay is anxious to pose questions in any particular form, I have no doubt that those questions will be posed for him, and to people who are able to answer them in an authoritative manner. Further in his speech the hon. member said, "If the Bill were agreed to, most of our businesses would have to draw on Fridays all the money required for

change and other purposes on Saturdays and would have to run the risk of holding it overnight."

That again is a question that is capable of being answered and one which should be examined to see to whom it refers; how many there are concerned; how important it is and whether it is possible for the people concerned—whether many or few—to make alternative arrangements. All other relative matters could also be examined. The member for Toodyay then went on to talk about the suggestion that in asking for a five-day week for bankers, one is losing sight of the fact that trams are running over the week-end and the men employed are working seven days a week.

He suggested that we were asking that no activity should take place over the week-end. That statement is capable of refutation and it would be open, I feel, to the commonsense of the member for Toodyay which I am sure he would apply were he outside the Chamber. The hon. member continued, "Then let the banks increase their staff and do the same thing." It will be noted that the terms of reference of the select committee deal with the matter of staff. The member for Toodyay quoted a letter from the Chamber of Commerce written in 1952 as follows:—

Saturday is not a general holiday in Western Australia and there is a legitimate and real public need to be met by the banks on that day.

Further on the letter continues—

It is considered that whilst ordinary trading is conducted on a Saturday morning, the commercial community, retailers and the public, are entitled to expect banking facilities to be made available to them, especially with respect to change, deposits and withdrawals.

All these matters can be dealt with before the select committee to determine whether the said legitimate demand is legitimate or whether it is purely selfish; to determine how real it is.

In a further statement the hon. member said, "I wonder what effect this legislation would have on the Commonwealth Bank." This is a matter which can be determined by the select committee. If he or any other member of the Opposition is not prepared to accept the statements which come from very authoritative sources, and is not prepared to at least inquire from the Commonwealth Bank what the effect of the proposed legislation will be, then the select committee can make those inquiries and determine them authoritatively. I might say that I have no doubt the legislation applying to banks in this State also applies to the Commonwealth Bank more so in this particular form. There is no case on record of the Commonwealth Bank failing to comply with the Bank Holidays Act.

The next speaker in opposition to the measure was the member for Roe, who said—

When, previously, a similar Bill to this one was introduced to the House by the member for Leederville, I made the comment that it was rather a clumsy way to tackle this question, and I repeat that comment now.

This question can be tackled only in one way, and that is by legislation. I have made this as clear as I possibly could. If the member for Roe is not prepared to accept my statements, I trust he will be prepared to accept the statements which are made before a select committee. Further on he suggested that we should deal with all business establishments, and not merely a portion of them, as was being done in the measure before the House. It would appear that that is another question which can be dealt with by the select committee, that is as to whether the action to allow a five-day trading week for banks is separable from the current six-day working week in the distributing trade.

To me the situation appears to be wholly separable. To bank officers who are fairly skilled in the subject because they are the ones to whom such legislation applies, it is also separable. I know of no evidence which can be produced to show that it is not inseparable. If that be the opinion held by the member for Roe, or those from whom he sought advice on such matters, then this will be the opportunity for him to produce both fact and opinion before the select committee, where they can be weighed by a group who will listen to all sides of the question and assess their value.

After giving a very useful blessing to the State Savings Bank, which has since been established, the member for Vasse said in opposition to the measure—

In introducing this measure, I feel that the member for Leederville has not submitted sufficient evidence to obtain a mature and reasoned assessment of whether the closing of banks on Saturday mornings will be in the best interests of the community.

I must admit that I was in error in failing to take hours and hours of the time of this Parliament to go into all the details. At that stage, I felt that at least in the member for Vasse, who has had experience of the banking industry, I would have a supporter, and I would find in him a person well aware of the sources from which inquiry could have been made to check any doubts he might have had in his mind, or which might have been in the minds of his colleagues. However, the opportunity will be given if the select committee is formed.

Mr. Bovell: You should have moved for this select committee before, and not gone on as you did.

Mr. JOHNSON: As I said earlier, whilst the hon. member was asleep—

Mr. Bovell: Do not get nasty! I was trying to be a little helpful. You should not antagonise me, otherwise you will lose my support.

Mr. JOHNSON: I have come to the conclusion that I was in error in not taking more time and giving fuller details, and in not making allowances for the very great call on the time of members of the Opposition who were so preoccupied that they could not investigate the sources which were available to inform their minds on the subject. On this occasion I am taking the step to move for a select committee so as to make it possible for anyone who has the slightest doubt to get his question asked and to get an authoritative answer, in order that—when, as I anticipate, the select committee recognises that a Bill should be introduced—there will be no need to waste any time in introducing the Bill or passing it, because it will be brought forward with the unanimous approval of members on both sides of the House, after an examination of all the aspects.

The next speaker in opposition to the measure—the member for Nedlands said:

If the decision that has to be made by this Parliament could be confined to the question whether the bank officers should be released from duty on Saturday mornings, I do not think there would be any insurmountable difficulty in finding general agreement.

That was a very hopeful remark. I would say that he was the only member opposing this Bill who appeared to have put in any work on the subject. As he admitted, the evidence which he did produce was two-thirds in favour of the Bill. I hope and trust that such energy will be displayed in the examination of that one-third which he found was opposed to it.

Mr. Court: That was not quite correct. I gave certain information from some quarters which indicated there was no serious objection, but you would have to quote the whole of my remarks to get the full story.

Mr. JOHNSON: I will quote the lot to make the picture clear.

Mr. Court: If you quote the lot you will make it clear.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. JOHNSON: The member for Nedlands said quite a lot about the effect on the economy of Australia, and in particular its application to Western Australia. He said—

One of the biggest problems confronting Australia at the moment in the task of preserving or protecting our

prosperity is to achieve more in tangible effort with as much or less money than we have been spending.

We are all agreed on this point. It becomes more obvious now than at that stage. Later on he referred to a tendency in some countries to liberalise, if anything, the hours of merchandising. That is a subject which comes within the terms of reference. Those who are concerned with merchandising will be able to put their views before the select committee in the most authoritative manner possible. I trust that in doing so they will furnish support for their opinions by giving full details and statistics.

Later on in his speech the member for Nedlands went on to say—

I suggest that this problem should be attacked on an Australia-wide level; and there is a proper place for it to be attacked by the Government, namely, the Premiers' Conference. I understand that is the place where the Premiers of each State can discuss these matters of high economic and other importance.

I would say I disagree with the hon. member and I fancy evidence will be placed before the select committee to show that the closing of the banks for an hour and a half on Saturdays would have, if any, very little economic importance. However, that is a point on which the hon. member and his advisers and consultants will be able to produce whatever evidence is available.

I must admit that my search in that direction has not been very great; it has been confined practically solely to people who use the banks on Saturday mornings, and there does not appear very much to support the attitude that that one and a half hours on Saturday morning has any grave economic importance. The hon. member also said—

I wish to refer to the fact that whilst we are not out to make things tougher for any section of the community than is reasonable, some people accept a calling or profession where the demands on them are different from those that are made on the ordinary person. A man might go in for architecture, law, medicine, banking or he may follow some manual pursuit.

Once again I repeat that the terms of the motion calling for the select committee cover that particular aspect.

The then member for Claremont, Hon. C. F. J. North, said in relation to the matter of a select committee—

That means either one of two things. It either means that the hon. member wishes to stall the entire Bill, which I do not think is his intention, or it means that he wants

to find out if it will be possible to work out something whereby all the ramifications could be considered as to other businesses.

Whilst I must admit my impression of the motion was the first alternative, it would appear I was in error and the opportunity is being given to follow that in full. The then member for Subiaco also spoke against the motion. I shall make no reference to her remarks beyond mentioning that she spoke against the motion from the housewives' angle which was completely contrary to the experience of bank officers in relation to the matter.

In his contribution the member for Blackwood spoke about the effect in the country and said—

If the banks were closed it would inconvenience them and would necessitate a trip into town during the week, probably on Friday afternoon. That may not be satisfactory from the farmers' point of view.

He also said—

I refer particularly to towns like Boyup Brook where there are timber mills and flax mills whose employees are paid on Friday afternoon after the banks are closed. They are paid by cheque.

This is a further question which could be dealt with, and I feel sure that if it is sufficiently urgent, the select committee could travel to Boyup Brook or similar towns on some particular week-end to examine the matter in detail; or it might be possible that an authoritative representative of the district could produce facts and figures for the committee.

I would interpolate here that I understood it was the responsibility of an employer to pay his employees and that a cheque was not a satisfaction of that payment until such time as it was cashed, and I fancy, in this regard it might be found possible to insist that the employer carry out his contractual commitments to pay in legal tender. That may be the answer to that particular question which appears to me to be a very simple one. The hon. member also said—

I agree with the member for Leederville that if the banks close on Saturdays, people will get by.

The matter that appeared to be worrying several members of the Opposition and it was also mentioned by the member for Dale, was that the closing of the banks on Saturdays might lead to a further general demand for a five-day week for other industries. We must agree that that demand is a real one and has to be examined, and we might find it possible to have it examined before the committee. If the committee thought it wise, it might also examine other aspects of the problem of whether the distributive trade should also

get a five-day week. That I think would be a justifiable side issue in the terms of reference.

The Leader of the Opposition said—

I represent a country constituency, and I feel that the closing of banks in rural areas would cause some inconvenience.

The hon. member further went on to say—

I would say that the stock firms in country areas, which do a very large volume of business on a Saturday morning—very much more than is the case in the metropolitan area—would also probably have to close.

The appointment of a select committee will give an opportunity for the stock firms to indicate accurately whether this is so or not and whether this matter, on which the Leader of the Opposition had some doubt, left room for legitimate doubt and whether the stock firms agreed with him. The hon. member did say—

I have not had any request from bank managements or banking heads that I should either support or oppose the Bill. It appears to me that the banks themselves do not seem to be showing any particular interest in what may happen to the measure.

This is quite a justifiable comment on the situation because the banks are well aware, as the distributive trades should be well aware, that there is only a certain amount of business that can be done.

There is an upper limit to the volume of business, and the same amount of business can be transacted over five days as over five days plus 1½ hours. I feel sure that the banks would agree, if asked, that it would ease a great number of their problems if there were a five-day week and this odd little bit of work had not to be done on Saturdays. The hon. member did say—

I think, if we had an impartial inquiry, one could accept the finding.

I trust that when the select committee produces a finding, the member for Murray will remember that.

Reference was made by the member for Maylands to night-safes and the facilities available. That is another matter on which a good deal of fact could be produced. The then member for Mt. Lawley, Hon. A. V. R. Abbott, said, amongst other things:

I understand that at present only a skeleton staff is employed on Saturday by the banks, perhaps one officer in four.

That is an indication of a lack of knowledge that is so readily available, and of the necessity to carry out educational

practices before introducing this matter again. That there is some rostering of staff on Saturdays is true, and I imagine that a select committee could obtain complete details of that. It varies in relation to different banks and to different branches of those banks. In at least one bank it is totally prohibited by the general manager's order because of the jealousy produced thereby.

In moving for a select committee, the member for Nedlands said:

The six reasons that I feel are sound for having the Bill referred to a select committee are: Firstly, there are many people directly and indirectly affected and they are entitled to be heard. The appointment of a select committee is a convenient and desirable method by which they can be heard. Secondly, the economic aspects of this measure, as distinct from the lesser factors of inconvenience, could be thoroughly examined by a select committee. Thirdly, a select committee would afford ample opportunity for people to be heard without their being put to any great expense. They could be heard in an informal atmosphere, and would have ample opportunity to present a case themselves and bring evidence in support of it.

The sections of the community to which I specifically refer are the employees directly affected, the employees' associations directly affected, the employers' associations, the trade associations, the banks themselves, the city and country interests, business people, the general public—including housewives, and the savings bank depositor.

Fourthly, a select committee could examine the effect of Saturday closing on savings bank depositors, and the operations of the savings bank deposit system. Fifthly, it could examine whether the Bill would bind the Commonwealth Bank. It could determine the effect if the Commonwealth Bank were not bound—I have my doubts whether it would be—because it could be detrimental to our own Rural & Industries Bank if it were not allowed to function on a Saturday, and to the Western Australian branches of the several trading banks.

Sixthly, the select committee could examine the methods necessary for providing ample security for depositors' funds.

Mr. Oldfield: Who said that?

Mr. JOHNSON: The member for Nedlands, in moving for a select committee last year. Those are some of the questions which he and his advisers and conferees can produce evidence about, and that evidence could be examined with a view to seeing which are important questions and which are minor questions.

There is a good deal that I could quote in relation to this matter. There did appear to be a concerted programme by persons opposed to the measure last year to suggest that a select committee is the appropriate manner in which to deal with the subject; and so, on this occasion, I am agreeing to that point in advance. I trust that when the select committee hears evidence and brings forward a recommendation, all parties who have any doubts will refer to that select committee and its findings, and to the members of it before expressing those doubts in the form of a vote against the proposal.

The debate in the other Chamber was, if anything, less well-informed than the one in this House, and it was quite evident that a number of people who opposed the measure there were not in the least concerned with the rights and wrongs of it, but only with the fact that it was introduced by a private member on the Government side; and that, because members of the Government had voted for it, they must therefore oppose it in any form they could.

It would amuse the House were I to read quite a number of extracts which are available, and to which I would refer them, including one containing a suggestion by Hon. A. R. Jones that because none of the farmers had asked him to vote for the measure, all farmers were against it—a delightful piece of reasoning which I think the appointment of a select committee would give him an opportunity to examine, and in regard to which I trust that he will change his mind. I think he will find a great deal of difficulty in persuading any large number of farmers to give evidence that they would be materially hampered in their business by the loss of Saturday trading of banks.

I will not delay the House any longer. The proposal is for a select committee, and it has this major value—and I think that is supported by the experience which I have read from the text book in relation to the United States—that at least in regard to non-party measures—and this is a non-party measure—there should, after endorsement by a select committee, be very little difficulty in the passing of a measure through the House quickly and easily. I hope that will prove to be a fact, and that the House will agree to the appointment of a select committee which will be able to get evidence quickly and authoritatively. I hope that people who produce opinions will support them with facts and that the recommendations of the select committee will be unanimous.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

MOTION—UNECONOMIC RAILWAY LINES.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [6.11]: I move—

That in view of the obvious problem of uneconomic railway lines, a select committee be appointed to inquire into and make recommendations on—

- (a) the establishment of an experimental test road to determine the lowest attainable cost of providing a road, and operating road transport vehicles in country areas of low traffic density at present served by uneconomic railway lines;
- (b) a suitable length of road or roads for the establishment of such an experimental test road;
- (c) the type of authority considered most suitable for the conduct of such an experiment and research into related questions;
- (d) the types of vehicles and equipment and operating conditions best suited to the several requirements of giving satisfactory service to the areas likely to be affected;
- (e) to make any other relevant suggestions.

To commence, I would like to recapitulate very briefly some of the remarks I passed a week or two ago during the course of the Address-in-reply debate. On that occasion I stressed the urgency of doing something in connection with this matter on two main grounds. Firstly, I felt that there was a considerable risk that the Grants Commission may not continue to be as generous to us in the future, in making up our railway deficits, as it has been in the past.

Members may recall some of the figures I quoted on that occasion which did indicate that some of our railway lines, from the economic viewpoint, were in a parlous position. The other factor, which to my mind warranted urgency, was the rapid deterioration of the actual road bed in the case of some of these lines, which could easily result in the commission deciding that certain lines were unsafe to operate. In that case I felt that closure could be forced on us much more quickly than we would wish, and certainly it would present a problem that we were not equipped to handle at the present time.

During the debate on the Supply Bill, the Leader of the Country Party suggested that caution was needed in approaching the question of uneconomic lines because he felt that a precipitate closure could easily result in the creation of a greater difficulty than would exist by maintaining the line of operation. It is just that very problem which exercises my mind, and the situation which he envisages as being quite

possible is one which I am seeking to avoid, and I think the only way of avoiding such a situation as could well be forced on us by one means or another, is to acquire sufficient knowledge now, before the actual emergency arises, to enable us to meet the situation. I do feel that this is a matter of some urgency and that Parliament should apply itself to it with the idea of deciding what, in all the circumstances, is the best thing to do.

I make it quite clear that my idea in bringing the matter before the House is not to endeavour to provide some circuitous means of bringing about the closure of any specific line. That is not my aim at all. I am concerned with the overall efficiency of our transport system because I realise that transport costs, amounting to as much as one-third of the total cost of production of certain articles, is most important, and I feel it is to our advantage to ensure that we have the most efficient transport system, combining all types of transport in the State. If we were placed in the position whereby we did have to close some lines at the moment, considerable confusion would arise for the simple reason that it would be necessary quickly to substitute some form of road transport which would, I fear, be of an improvised nature, and the results would be unsatisfactory both from the point of view of the district being served and from the point of view of the Government which was endeavouring to keep that improvised system operating.

In the past, all sorts of problems have arisen when, for any reason, a railway system has proved inadequate and we have had to substitute road haulage. I know that various difficulties have arisen, and in some people's minds, road haulage has got a bad name. I emphasise that that very largely comes about because the wrong type of vehicles is used for the work, and in many cases limitations are placed on road haulage operators. These limitations may be necessary, but they certainly prevent us from getting the best out of road haulage.

In areas which would perhaps have to be serviced by road hauliers, I think it desirable that we should set about the job as soon as possible to determine what are the best means available so that the area can be serviced by road haulage to the satisfaction of all concerned. I would also point out that this matter goes a good deal further than just merely the question of the areas served by uneconomic railway lines.

In this State we have areas—I have one in my own electorate and I am by no means the only one in that position—which are not served by railway lines and which are most unlikely in the future ever to be served by railway lines; but they are areas with a considerable agricultural potential. They are developing and can develop rapidly. So there is a clear-cut obligation

to provide a satisfactory transport service in those districts and if we are not to provide it by railway lines—and I think very few people these days would be prepared to advocate that that service should be provided by the railways—then I suggest that there is a clear obligation on our part to go into the ways and means of providing the most efficient form of road transport, taking into account modern science and ingenuity.

The benefits that could flow from the type of investigation I have envisaged in this motion would not only benefit the people in the areas I have mentioned, which are served by hopelessly uneconomic railway lines, but could also be of immediate advantage to areas where at present there is no railway line whatever. Therefore, I hope that members do not get confused in their thinking on this matter and read into my motion some round-about method of trying to do away with certain railway lines. I would also like to stress the fact that I do not envisage road transport vehicles simply using all the roads throughout the State. In my opinion, road haulage should be regarded as complementary to railway haulage rather than in competition with it.

My thinking is that if we can concentrate more goods by road haulage at railheads we can reduce the uneconomic running of our railways. That, I think, would be a very desirable achievement. It should commend itself to the people who live in country areas because it should make it possible to maintain reasonable rail freight rates. This evening, I do not intend to discuss at great length the question of whether our freight rates should be tagged onto the freight rates of the other States. I think I have already discussed that matter fairly fully and in any case it is outside the scope of this motion. But it is a matter that can be related to this investigation, and I hope members do not lose sight of that point.

One of the problems at the moment, for which I do not think anybody has the answer, is to say, with any degree of certainty, what benefits, if any, would accrue from the closing of any particular section of railway line. I think we must have further information on that question before we try to answer it. It is an important point in regard to this subject because we should know, before we close any line at all, exactly what kind of service we intend to use as a substitute; what the costs of it will be and the effect of it on people living in the area concerned. In short, we should know all the pros and cons of the question. At the moment I do not think we have sufficient data available to us to be able to say with any degree of certainty what, if any, particular line should be discontinued. To say, at this stage, that this line, or that line should be closed, is premature because as yet we do not know the position in regard to a particular line.

Hon. A. F. Watts: It was only the Lieut.-Governor's Speech that drew my attention to it.

Mr. HEARMAN: The Lieut.-Governor's Speech has led us to believe that the matter is being examined; I have also gained that impression from conversations I have had with Ministers. In my opinion, the most satisfactory way to examine the matter is to do some practical work somewhere to see just what we can do. That is why I feel that an experimental test road of the type I have envisaged would be of considerable benefit to the State. This idea of an experimental test road is in no wise an original one. Test roads of various types have been established to provide the answers to various problems throughout the world. To my knowledge one section of the Melbourne-Geelong road is a test section and, of course, it provides data to enable answers to be given to all sorts of questions; but the problems in Victoria are rather different to the one we have to solve. The other night I also quoted some details about American tests being conducted and probably the questions they are wanting answered would be more closely allied to the problems that confront us. I am sure that the best way to provide some of the answers to our problems in this regard is to establish our own experimental test roads so that we can investigate the matter for ourselves.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. HEARMAN: Before the tea suspension I was trying to give the House some indication of the thinking behind this motion and, to sum up my ideas in that connection, I want to emphasise that this is not a motion intended to close certain railway lines, but it is an endeavour to minimise a problem that could arise should we be forced, for any particular reason, to close any particular line. It is an endeavour to determine to what extent it may be desirable or even practicable to close some lines or a particular line and it is to ensure that if road transport is substituted for rail transport, the best possible form of road transport is used to do the job. The object is also to enable us to obtain some further data so that we may acquire the best means of providing an adequate and satisfactory transport service in those agricultural areas which are not served by railway lines, areas which are developing and which have just as strong a claim to satisfactory transport service as have those parts in which railway lines are already built.

In my opinion, over the years, successive Governments have made a wrong approach to the question of road transport. There has been the idea in their minds that road transport is essentially competitive with rail transport and legislation of various kinds has been passed from time to time in an endeavour to protect the railways

against competition from road transport. As a result of that we are now in a position, in Western Australia, of perhaps not being fully aware and of having no real sound knowledge of what modern developments in road transport would enable us to do, if full advantage were taken of those developments.

I consider that other countries are fully appreciative of the advantages that may result from the full use of all forms of modern transport. If we are to keep abreast of other countries—it will be a serious matter for us if we do not—it is essential for us to go into the question of the best possible use of road transport and my concept of the whole matter is that these two forms of transport—road and rail—are not necessarily competitive but rather should be regarded as being complementary.

In areas of low traffic density road transport should be used to the fullest extent to carry goods to the railhead and thus enable the railways to function more efficiently. I am well aware that there are in existence regulations which are uniform throughout Australia on certain matters such as vehicle widths, axle loadings, gross vehicle weights and matters of that nature. It is not necessarily my desire to break down those regulations and I am not thinking in those terms. I realise that they are of an Australian standard and that there is a great deal to be said for having uniform standards throughout Australia. However, it is freely agreed by all concerned that those regulations have been and are being modified to suit particular vehicles and particular areas. I think this method of dealing with an adequate transport service in areas of low traffic density represents one of those instances where a modification of those regulations should be adopted in this State.

I would point out that we have some regulations which make particularly anomalous reading. For instance, I think we regulate for a gross vehicle weight of 12½ tons. That means that if a person purchases a relatively light vehicle he can license it to carry relatively heavy loads, provided the maximum tare weight does not exceed 12½ tons. If a person purchases one of the cheaper and lighter makes of 5-ton trucks he can register it for a loading of eight tons and still be within the regulation despite the fact that the vehicle is designed to carry only five tons. On the other hand, if a vehicle is designed to carry eight tons, that vehicle will weight considerably more than the cheaper and lighter vehicle and we will find that the payload on that vehicle is most probably lighter than that which the cheaper and lighter vehicle is licensed to carry.

That regulation may have been extremely desirable at the time it was introduced, but it simply means, in effect, that we are not able to take the fullest advantage of modern trends in vehicle design. This problem has confronted vehicle designers

the world over. They realise that their vehicles have to be used on roads of relatively light construction; roads over which it was never envisaged that vehicles of modern design would traverse. Consequently, those vehicles have to use bigger and bigger tyres and generally the impact of that vehicle on the road has been reduced. As a result, it is possible to carry much heavier loads over those roads than it was 10 or 15 years ago with no great detrimental effect on the road surface.

If we are to solve this problem of transport in the areas of low traffic density, we have to remember that many of the roads in those areas were not built to carry heavy loads. In the South-West we have to cart timber, wheat and super, all of which tend to make for heavy loading and we have to consider what modifications of our present regulations are desirable to enable us to obtain the cheapest possible form of transport and at the same time take into account all the factors that could be considered. The first paragraph in my motion is intended to encompass that particular problem. Actually, it reads—

(a) the establishment of an experimental test road to determine the lowest attainable cost of providing a road, and operating road transport vehicles in country areas of low traffic density at present served by uneconomic railway lines.

In other words we have to reconcile the type of road we construct with the type of vehicle to run over it, bearing in mind that we have the initial cost of constructing the road, the maintenance cost and the further consideration, which is important, of the actual cost per ton mile of transporting goods over such a road. I feel that is a question which could very well be investigated by a committee of the type I suggest in my motion. The fact that in the United States they have problems of this nature confronting them, which they are endeavouring to solve, indicates the need for experiment, and the road test to which I referred the other night is rather interesting.

I do not intend to weary the House with long quotations regarding it, but I would point out that the lightest axle loading they considered in that test was slightly over eight tons per axle, and the test vehicles were single axle, semi-trailers. That was the lightest one. There is also the question of what they called the distress area. If we take the distress area on the pavement for that vehicle as one when the figure gets to 22,400 lbs. or approximately 10 tons per axle load on a single axle vehicle, as would be expected the distress area increases by .14 per cent. When it gets up to 32,000 lbs or slightly over 14½ tons per axle for

a tandem-axle vehicle, the distress area goes down; it represents a reduction of .5 per cent. on the 8-ton axle load vehicle with a single axle. Those are the figures produced in America. The largest was for just under 18 tons which we can disregard, although they were one and a half times as great so far as pavement damage is concerned than the lightest vehicle used.

The figures I have are not complete. The more heavily laden vehicles obviously travel more slowly and that is probably the secret of the result. But it indicates that there is scope for investigation of the question of this maximum permissible axle load. I am aware of the fact that we have certain problems. There is the question of bridges and culverts. Perhaps one bridge in a long length of road could easily be the determining factor. I mention those figures in an effort to demonstrate that there is tremendous scope for investigation and it may well be that we could have a second look at the present axle loading and an increase of gross weights from all these areas I am discussing.

The second part of my motion suggests that we should try to discover a suitable length of road, or roads, for the establishment of such an experimental road. It is not for me to say what or where is the most suitable road in this State for such an experiment. Obviously, there are people better informed on that point than I am. But I have given the matter some consideration and, in the first place, I would suggest that a road of this nature should be in an area that is not served at all by railway lines. Preferably it should be in one of the areas where a railway line was projected, but never built, because there we would have a road doing the job that it was originally intended should be done by a railway line. This could very easily give us the comparative figures.

There is one stretch of road in my electorate, namely, the 46-mile stretch in the Boyup Brook-Tone River area. At the moment there is a subsidised road haulier operating on that stretch of road. It was constructed after a railway survey where it was originally intended to construct a railway line. The existing bridges and culverts for the most part, if not entirely, were built to railway specifications and for that reason they are well able to withstand additional loadings which such a test would obviously entail.

Furthermore, it is in a developing agricultural area and there is at the moment a considerable amount of loading on that road, or on portions of it, in the form of timber transport, inasmuch as the forestry concession at Hartlea provides for a permissible daily cut of 60 loads available there in perpetuity. Accordingly if this particular road were to be used there would be sufficient loading available and there

will be enough traffic on it to try it out. Obviously it is not good practice to put a test road where it is only planned to carry 3,000 or 4,000 tons a year.

I am not suggesting that that is the road that should be used. There may be better examples, and the Minister for Works may be able to make suggestions in that direction. I merely suggest it because if one is to be practical in these matters one has to have ideas as to what should be done. So I suggest that if no better road should be found for that purpose, then that road could fulfil the requirements for the experimental test. As I pointed out, I am not laying down that that is the road which should be used, though there is a sound argument that could be made out in favour of it. It is in an area of fairly heavy rainfall—it receives about 24 in. a year—and for that reason it would probably present road maintenance problems that may not be as severe in other portions of the State.

Again that is a matter which I am not competent to discuss. I merely put the suggestions forward because if the House agrees that an experimental test road should be set up, then obviously the success or failure of the experiment would to a great extent depend on the selection of a suitable length of road. That is why I have suggested in the terms of reference that this could be one of the matters that the committee could look into.

The next point dealt with in the motion is one which leaves scope for endless discussion and thinking. It refers to the type of authority which would be considered most suitable to conduct such an experiment and the research necessary into related problems. I am only going to make some suggestions. Here again I feel it would be desirable and necessary to have some representation from the Main Roads Department on an authority of this nature. But, of course, the Main Roads Department is not necessarily the beginning and the end of it.

I think that the Railways Commission could with equal merit ask to be represented. I also think the farming community are entitled to be represented because they have a very definite stake in this question. I feel that we should also take the fullest possible advantage of the knowledge gained by private companies or individuals who have had personal experience, as it were, of the operation of heavy transport vehicles in this State under conditions that exist here. Any authority that did not take the fullest possible advantage of any experience that has been gained in this State would not be the best authority that could be set up. A very sound case could also be argued for the inclusion of a body like the University, if it could be interested in being represented on that authority, because in it we would have an independent engineering faction which

would tend to assist and hold the balance between the conflicting interests of the other specialist personnel on it.

These aspects are mentioned not in an effort to inform the House exactly what ought to be done, but merely to provide some food for thought for members who might not have given this matter as much attention as I have. I do not suggest that I have even covered all the parties that could possibly be interested in this matter, and it is likely that the W.A. Road Transport Association has a stake in it. It is also conceivable that the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Manufactures will be interested. I believe that an authority of this nature should be as all-embracing as is reasonably consistent with getting effective work done. An endeavour should be made to gain the goodwill of all sections of the community which are affected by a test of this description. As I mentioned the other night, there is no section of the community that is not affected, either directly or indirectly, by the transport problem.

The next paragraph deals with the types of vehicles, equipment and operating conditions best suited. To some people this is perhaps the most difficult question of the lot, but possibly the most important. It is not only necessary to consider the types of vehicles, but as I mentioned earlier, the American test does provide us with a good deal of thought on this subject; and the types of vehicles which the regulations of this State encourage might not be the most suitable for this sort of work. That is only one of the matters embraced in this paragraph. There is also the question of equipment, and by that I mean the type that could well be used in handling loads from road vehicles to rail vehicles, and vice versa. We in this State have not given this aspect much thought. I believe that in other countries considerable advances have been made in that direction.

If we are to bring the economics of the proposals into as favourable a light as possible, then it is necessary that we take full advantage of the most modern technique for handling loads. What is the most suitable equipment in a particular area, and how we can best handle these things are, of course, matters for discussion. To give some indication of what I have in mind as being embraced by this particular paragraph, I would refer to an American system which at first glance appears to be perhaps a little strange, but on investigation I rather think that what the Americans do is not nearly as silly as it may seem. I refer to the pick-a-back system. I do not know if the Minister knows what I mean.

The Minister for Works: I have seen it operating.

Mr. HEARMAN: That could well be applied in two areas I have in mind—in the electorate represented by the Leader

of the Country Party and in my own electorate. If that system were adopted for super haulage, the costs would be reduced by quite a bit. It is worth while looking at it from that angle. The system would tend to keep the heaviest vehicles off the main roads altogether, and to run them on the roads they are intended to travel over, thus getting away from the pressure of trying to cart loads on roads for which they were not intended. I do not know the economics of such a system, and I doubt whether anyone in the State can tell me. This is a matter for investigation by such an authority as I have in mind, and could be incorporated in the experimental test road.

It might well be that the terminology of my motion is subject to improvement. That was just one suggestion to illustrate what I have in mind when I refer to the types of vehicles, equipment and operating conditions best suited to give a satisfactory service to the areas that are likely to be served. Obviously, some areas would have different loading problems from others. There is no set rule. I feel there is ample scope for investigation, and any data gained at all would be of use to us.

The last paragraph is the dragnet one which allows for the making of any relevant suggestions. It does not require much explanation and I do not think anyone will cavil at that particular term of reference for the select committee. My reason for moving for a select committee is this: I first mentioned this matter last year during the Estimates, but not in very great detail. I had the idea in mind, and if anybody likes to refer to my speech he will find that mention was made of these matters. I also mentioned it during the Address-in-reply debate because I felt it was a constructive suggestion which might assist to solve some of our transport difficulties. I do not suggest by any stretch of imagination that it will provide all the answers that are needed, but at least it will be an effort to provide some of the answers.

As a member of the Opposition, in order to keep the idea current, as it were, and before the House, it is necessary for me to either move a motion of some description, or introduce a Bill. I cannot very well introduce a Bill to accomplish this and I do not think it would be necessary. That is not the most desirable way. But I do want to keep this matter before the House and I am taking this opportunity of moving for a select committee in order to achieve that objective.

I am well aware that a select committee is not the only approach that can be made. Personally, I would be well satisfied if I felt that the suggestions I am putting forward were accepted by the Government, and if the Government were to give me some tangible evidence of agreement in general terms. My efforts will be well worth while if the Government takes some

steps to obtain the data which I set out to gain in this motion. Obviously, the Government has the numbers to reject the motion, to modify it, or to accept it. I hope it will at least accept in the spirit in which they are given the suggestions I am putting forward, because this is an effort to be helpful.

If the Government or any private member can develop these ideas, I shall feel very pleased that I have started some thought along these lines. There is not a great deal more for me to say. I hope I have made my meaning completely clear. If there are any other matters on which members would like further information, I would be only too pleased if they would approach me privately, or if they participated in this debate. If they adopt the latter course from time to time, as the motion comes before the House, then I would feel that my efforts were worth while.

In conclusion, I would suggest to the Government that one of the drawbacks in the idea of a select committee is the time factor. An investigation of the nature I have in mind must take time. If possible, I would like the Government to remember that and convey to us its decision for the appointment of a select committee as soon as is reasonably possible. If a select committee is to function effectively, it must conclude its findings before Parliament adjourns, unless it is turned into an honorary Royal Commission. The Government could of course consider that alternative, too, but I do hope that if it decides in its wisdom and agrees to this motion it will bear in mind the need for reasonable expedition of the matter. That concludes all I want to say at the moment, as I will have an opportunity of replying to this debate when I trust I shall be able to satisfy any queries that may be raised. The whole idea behind the motion is to gain information we need but have not got in a form acceptable to all people concerned.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

BILL—GAS UNDERTAKINGS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [8.3] in moving the second reading said: This Bill will not take very long to explain. Its intention is simply to make provision for the Fremantle Gas Co. to pay £2 10s. on every £100 in excess of the interest paid on the last Commonwealth loan. At present the Gas Undertakings Act limits the interest to 6 per cent. but they find they cannot procure the money at that rate and it is necessary to bring down a Bill in order to allow them to pay a larger interest.

I would draw the attention of the House to a provision in the 1955 Act of New South Wales which reads as follows:—

- (1) (a) The profits of a gas company available for distribution among the holders of its share capital in any year shall not, except as hereinafter provided, exceed the following rates (in this Act referred to as the standard rates of dividend), that is to say—

on the ordinary share capital of the company—in respect of every one hundred pounds actually paid up or issued as paid up of that capital, a rate being two pounds in excess of the effective annual rate of interest payable in respect of the cash or conversion loan, not being a loan for a term of less than ten years nor a compulsory loan nor a tax free loan, last issued by the Commonwealth of Australia before the declaration of the dividend to be paid on that capital by the company in that year.

That Act was only brought down last year. I also have a copy of a prospectus from the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland in regard to a loan it was raising. It reads as follows:—

The stock is a first class investment offering a combination of high interest varying with current rates and of security not available elsewhere from any comparable investment with prospects of ultimate capital appreciation. Interest is payable on the stock on the 31st December and the 30th June in each financial year at a rate of two per cent. above the effective rate of interest payable on the Commonwealth Loan last issued in the preceding financial year. As the effective rate of interest on the Commonwealth Loan has now been fixed at £5 1s. 9d. per cent. per annum, interest on the variable interest stock will be increased to £7 1s. 9d. per cent. per annum from 1st July, 1956.

So this is not the only State having difficulty in raising money, as they are experiencing trouble in both New South Wales and Queensland.

I would like to give the House a few facts concerning the gas company. This is quite a large company—a monopoly, I might say—which takes in a very large tract of country from Swanbourne to the other side of Spearwood and then eastward, taking in the whole of the Melville territory. The size of the district is approximately 25 square miles with a population of 93,193 and 17,612 dwellings. The total fixed assets

of the company are valued at £830,775 and include mains and house services. Its current stock is valued at £40,008 and sundry debtors amount to £44,181. It has laid 150 miles of gas pipes and it is remarkable what it has cost to lay the mains to these homes. The cost of laying mains and installation to consumers' residences approximates £90 per consumer. It is a large district where a lot of work has to be done, so the company must have the money. If it cannot get it at the interest under the Gas Undertakings Act, we must make provision to increase the interest so the company can obtain the necessary capital. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

BILL—MUNICIPALITY OF FREMANTLE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [8.8] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is required by the City of Fremantle. It is a very important Bill for people who are having their land resumed by the council for streets and roadways. When the council makes a new building line, it is necessary for it to resume certain lands. At the present time it can compensate owners of land on which a building is erected.

But when there is a vacant block, with no buildings on it, the municipal authorities are unable to compensate the owner for the land resumed. We have heard a lot in the last two years about land resumptions and about people not getting a fair go in that connection, and the council desires to do the fair thing by the owners of land. Up till a few years ago the City of Perth Act was the same as that covering the City of Fremantle; but an amendment was made to the City of Perth Act identical with the one now being proposed, making provision for the council to compensate the owners of land taken for the purpose of providing new building alignments.

That is about all there is to the Bill. The Fremantle council wants to resume land but does not desire to do so without compensating the owners. That being so, and as this proposed amendment is identical with that made to the City of Perth Act, I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

**BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT
(No. 2).**

Second Reading.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [8.12] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is quite simple and is demonstrated fairly clearly in the wording. It can be read and understood without reference to the principal Act. The purpose is quite clear. The principal Act is amended by adding a new section as follows:—

Notwithstanding the provisions of this Act or of any other Act, or of the regulation made under such Act, a person shall not be required by the Government at any time to work outside the offices of the Chief Electoral Officer or of any Registrar or Returning Officer, or the offices of any other government department (whether State or Federal) for the purpose of obtaining information to enable the Chief Electoral Officer or any of his officers to add to, alter or revise any roll or supplementary roll, whereon enrolment is not compulsory.

It will be seen that, in effect, the purpose is to prevent any Government from employing any person for the purpose of enrolling people on the Legislative Council roll. I would like it to be understood quite clearly at the outset that this measure does not prevent any political party canvassing enrolments for the Legislative Council. It is only necessary for the Bill to be read for that to be understood. Any political party is quite at liberty and entitled to spend its own money on enrolling people on a non-compulsory roll.

What this Bill endeavours to do is to prevent a Government—be it Liberal or Labour—from spending Government money, the taxpayers' money, with a view to making enrolments on a voluntary roll. The Bill is as simple as that. Furthermore, it may be pointed out that by preventing a Government from spending public money in making enrolments on such rolls, we would prevent a Government from trying to obtain political advantage by putting employees only into a field which is predominantly of one political complexion or the other.

The Minister for Justice: I do not think that that ever entered into it on this side. They were taken on a fair basis.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I would like to think that that is so. However, any listener may judge for himself on hearing the full story, and the Minister will have an opportunity to reply.

The Minister for Justice: I will.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON: At this stage, after having stated fairly simply the purpose of the Bill, I would say that if any visitor or stranger were to hear what has happened, he might wonder what is the

necessity for such legislation. It might be wondered why this Bill is necessary. Surely, it might be thought, such occasion would not arise; that a Government would not spend public money, would not use money from the public purse, to obtain a political advantage.

MR. JAMIESON: It would not if your side took a reasonable view.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The hon. member will have an opportunity to speak later. I would like to develop what I have to say before answering any interjections. People would wonder why it was necessary for a Government to spend public money in making enrolments on a non-compulsory roll. Undoubtedly the Minister will give us some reason why this was done. So far, however, the Government has made no comment on various charges that have been made both by myself and the Leader of the Opposition, and also by "The West Australian."

I was talking about the possibility of a visitor hearing what I have said so far, and wondering about the necessity for the introduction of such legislation; and I was saying that such a person might well wonder that such an occasion could arise, and that a Government would do such a thing. Unfortunately the Government opposite has done it. Worse than that, it has done so on two separate occasions, using Government funds to gain a political advantage.

MR. JAMIESON: And it has been endorsed by the people.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It was endorsed by the Labour Party.

MR. JAMIESON: And by the people in between the two occasions.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Would the member for Beeloo like the Liberal Party to do it? I would ask the member for Beeloo that considered question. Would he like the Liberal Party, the Liberal Government—

MR. JAMIESON: I would—

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Wait a moment! Would he like the Liberal Government to employ officers of the Electoral Department to make enrolments on a non-compulsory roll in Peppermint Grove?

MR. JAMIESON: Yes, if the people were entitled to be on the roll. That has been my argument for years.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It is not likely to happen.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I would like to hear the Minister say he would appreciate a Liberal Government using civil servants to put people on a non-compulsory roll, and employing Government money for that purpose.

There is a background to this which has already been indicated, and the story begins in the West Province in the early

part of this year when a rumour went around the city to the effect that the Liberals were going to put up a candidate for the West Province. The Government shortly after that decided to put into the field in the West Province, in new State Housing Commission areas, a number of officers from the Electoral Department, and it paid them overtime rates to canvass those areas and so, in effect, make its position more secure in the West Province.

I heard about this at the time, and I felt there must be some reason for it—that the Government must have some reason—and I thought I would bare the matter by writing a letter to the Press, so I wrote to the editor of "The West Australian" and the letter was published on the 14th February this year. It was headed "Canvassing for Council Roll" and it reads—

Ross Hutchinson, M.L.A., Parliament House: I have been amazed to hear reports that officers of the Electoral Department have been engaged, at overtime rates, by the Government in enrolling people for the Legislative Council.

I am told that these officers have been concentrated in housing settlements in the West Province.

As the basis of enrolment for Legislative Council elections is a voluntary one, I would like to know how the Government justifies an expenditure of public money on these enrolments.

Irrespective of whether Liberal or Labour supporters are enrolled, surely it is wrong, and an abuse of public money, for the Government to canvass certain areas to place people on a roll that is purely voluntary.

This instance has drawn the attention of the Government was drawn to this fact, and the public were informed of what was going on; but no answer was forthcoming from the Government. This being a fairly serious charge, it is interesting to note that two weeks later an article appeared in "The West Australian" on the Government's silence regarding the matter. It might be as well at this stage to let members know just what "The West Australian" had to say at that time. This article, which appeared in "The West Australian" of the 28th February, 1956, is headed "Canvassing Charge Draws No Comment." It is written by C. E. Menagh and it states—

State Electoral Department officers yesterday refused to comment on a recent complaint by Mr. Ross Hutchinson, M.L.A., that officers of the department had been employed at overtime rates enrolling voters for the Legislative Council.

Mr. Hutchinson's statement was correct. About 12 electoral officers, on instructions from the Chief Electoral Officer (Mr. G. F. Mathea), went about at night and on at least one

Saturday morning for a week seeking enrolments from persons entitled to the Upper House franchise who were not enrolled.

So far as is known, no such departmental canvassing had taken place before.

It is thought that Mr. Mathea received some ministerial prompting.

Labour members (including ministers) and non-Labour members were particularly active for months enrolling qualified electors for the Legislative Council up to February 15th, when the rolls closed.

Mr. Hutchinson, when he made his complaint, contended that it was wrong and an abuse of public money for the Government to canvass certain areas to place people on a roll when enrolment was not compulsory.

The article continues, but I do not think there is any need to weary the House by reading it further. There was still no comment from the Government as the result of the article. On this occasion some comment will have to be made by the person who secures the adjournment of the debate. I suppose that in defence of itself, the Government will have to adopt a line somewhat as suggested by the member for Beeloo who says that he is prepared to let a Liberal Government do such things. I think I could say that a Liberal Government would not do such a thing; it would not damn itself by doing it.

Mr. Jamieson: If it thought it could get an advantage, it would do anything.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I have just tried to prove to the member for Beeloo that that is not so. In the West Province, there was no Liberal candidate forthcoming and therefore there was no election in that region, and no further canvassing was done there.

As I have already done, I again point out, that the region where this canvassing was carried out was one which might be said to have a majority of Labour supporters. About two months later, due to the death of Hon. Harry Hearn, a by-election became necessary in the Metropolitan Province. Let us study rather carefully what happened from here on. Both the Liberal and the Labour Parties were very active and hard at work trying to enrol people in the Metropolitan Province. Members from each side of the House were active in various parts of this province, but in addition to Liberal and Labour Party members and their supporters making enrolments, the Labour Party through the instrumentality of the Labour Government, again employed officers of the Electoral Department, at overtime rates, in State Housing Commission areas to help its party in making enrolments. This is the sort of thing that my Bill endeavours to prevent.

Mr. I. W. Manning: You would not think the Minister for Police would come at that!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: These doings of the Government were reported in the Press at the time in some detail, and in order to put forward again what was said, I should like to read briefly from two newspaper reports. The first is from the "Daily News" of the 21st April, 1956, and is headed "Suburb Combed for Voters". It states—

Ten officers of the Electoral Department spent four hours today canvassing for Legislative Council voters at Killarney, near Scarborough.

Each officer was equipped with a Metropolitan Province roll and a bundle of application cards.

The target was the man of the house. If he was not at home an application card was left with his wife.

Working in two-men teams—one each side of the street—they visited about 15 homes an hour. By 12.30 p.m., more than 600 potential new voters had been approached.

About one in five immediately filled in the card and handed it to the officer.

In all cases the men introduced themselves as officers of the Electoral Department and when asked if they were members of any political party they told residents they were civil servants.

The canvass is not expected to be finished by today's drive.

Explaining the drive for voters, Justice Minister Nulsen, who administers the Electoral Department, said: "The canvassers will call on all homes irrespective of the political outlook of the occupants."

"I would not like electors to think I was trying to get only Labour people on the roll."

The Metropolitan Province was being canvassed because it contained new homes. Many of the residents of the older districts had had a better chance to get on the roll.

"I would not be associated with anything that would give an unfair advantage to the Labour Party. Discrimination would not be right," Mr. Nulsen said.

I have no doubt that the Minister was sincere when he said that; but I cannot believe that his party would receive no political advantage from such a move. I am afraid that I cannot swallow that and I am doubtful whether members as a whole will be able to swallow it either. The enrolments were sought only in certain areas—new housing areas—and the reason given was that the areas contained new homes.

Even in my own electorate hundreds of new homes have been built in the last three years. The people who occupy them are probably just as entitled to the preferential treatment that was accorded these other people. But no; these officers were employed only in certain housing areas and one cannot get away from the fact that those areas are occupied, predominantly, by Labour voters. I have some figures in this regard that I could quote, but possibly some other member might want to quote them at a later stage.

In "The West Australian", also on the 21st April, 1956, there is a report headed, "Canvass for Upper House Reported." It reads—

Electoral officers, it is reported, will start this morning a canvass of the new housing areas in the Metropolitan Province. Many people in this area, qualified to become Legislative Council electors, are not on the roll. It was stated yesterday that the Electoral Department had received a "nudge" from a top Government level because of the success of the Labour Party at the recent State general election and the gain of one Upper House seat at the legislative biennial poll. One critic admitted that it was quite within the province of the Electoral Department, through its own officers, to increase enrolments whenever possible. The keen desire for additional enrolments for the province has been caused by a forthcoming election made necessary by the death on March 20, of Mr. H. Hearn.

In another section of the same report it says—

Some Labour men, even a Minister or two, have since regarded the province as a Liberal stronghold, but others feel that a build-up of enrolments in the new housing areas in the Wembley Beaches and Mt. Hawthorn electorates could make it otherwise. Other Assembly electorates within the province are Subiaco, Nedlands, Claremont and Cottesloe.

A similar canvassing drive was made by Electoral Department officers two months ago in the West Province when Labour thought that Mr. Evan Davies might be opposed by a Liberal for his West Province seat. The canvassing was done by officers outside ordinary hours and paid for at overtime rates.

It is quite significant that these two instances occurred just prior to an election. Indeed, on the first occasion, no further canvassing was carried out when it was found that there was to be no election. In the second instance, canvassing was carried out to enrol people on a non-compulsory roll. Government money was used to do it and on this occasion the canvassing was carried out when the Government was holding up the date for the election.

Someone, at a later stage, may go into more detail in regard to this matter; but a private citizen found it necessary to force the Government to declare an election date otherwise the Government would have delayed still further the date of that election and utilised civil servants to enrol people in certain areas.

I have completed my case as far as I want to go at this stage because I will have an opportunity of replying to the debate. I shall be most interested to hear further debate on this question. We may hear certain reasons given for the action taken and I suppose one of them will be in regard to what is remiss with the Legislative Council and the reforms that the Labour party thinks are overdue in regard to that House. But the fact remains that the law is the law and if the Government, through a loophole, can do this sort of thing, in my opinion it is not in the public interest. The Government should not seek political advantage by utilising civil servants for this work, and, in effect, using taxpayers' money for the purpose.

The Minister for Justice: I absolutely deny that there was any political advantage to be gained from it.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I shall be interested to hear from the Minister although I believe that he was quite sincere when he made the original statement. However, I also said a few moments ago, that I just cannot believe that his party received no political advantage from such an action. Bearing those points in mind, I feel it is in the public interest that this Bill should reach the statute book. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Justice, debate adjourned.

BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT CONTINUANCE.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

The CHAIRMAN: The Council's amendment is as follows:—

Title—Insert after the word "to" in line 1, page 1, the words "amend and."

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: As the amendment is only a matter of clarification in the Title, I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [8.41] in moving the second reading said: I have a Bill here which in size is similar to that which the member for Fremantle has just introduced. Its purposes is to amend the Nurses Registration Act. The Bill has been brought about as a result of a resolution passed by the Nurses' Registration Board seeking a reduction in the age at which nurses may be able to effect registration with the board. The nurses affected will be general, children's, mental and tuberculosis. The age specified in the Act at the present time is 21 years.

The reason for the request is that when approval is given to trainees to commence their training at 17½ years of age in the case of general, children's and mental nurses, they can complete the training period of three years and pass their final examination before they are 21, but they cannot be granted registration because of the provisions of the Act. Tuberculosis nurses are required to train for a period of two years—unless they are already registered general or mental nurses—and cannot commence training until they have attained the age of 18. Because of the Act they must wait 12 months before being eligible for registration.

Thus their salaries and progression in the profession are retarded and a good deal of unhappiness arises. In addition, the wearing of the nurse's veil is limited to registered nurses. It is considered that trainees can well commence their training at 17 years in the case of general, children's and mental nursing. In fact, many are lost to nursing for the simple reason that it is too long for them to wait until they reach 17½ years of age to commence their training. In Victoria the age for registration has been reduced to 20 years. In Queensland there is no provision in the Nurses Registration Act concerning the age for registration. Nurses are registered subsequent to completing satisfactorily the prescribed period of training and passing the examinations conducted by the board.

As members are well aware, we are extremely short of nurses so we must give them every facility and advantage that we can offer. This is the only State that still has this restriction in the nursing profession. In the Eastern States they qualify for registration by examination.

Hon. D. Brand: What is the position in regard to nursing staff in country hospitals now?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The position in the country at the present time is most acute. We are doing everything we possibly can to encourage nurses to stay in the country, especially in regard to the provision of accommodation. It has been

found that because many young girls of 17 years of age have had to wait a further six months before they could commence their training, they have been lost to other professions.

In fact, I know a couple of girls belonging to a relative of mine who, because they could not enter the profession when they wanted to, are now working at the university. Those girls were of a most desirable type but unfortunately they have now been lost to the nursing profession. I would not be surprised if we had to reduce even further the age at which a girl can commence training. We are not very keen to do that, of course, because it is a highly qualified profession. Nevertheless, if we cannot obtain the girls necessary to fill the gaps in the profession, we shall have to resort to something else to encourage them to take up training. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Ross Hutchinson, debate adjourned.

BILL—CORNEAL AND TISSUE GRAFTING.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [8.48] in moving the second reading said: This is a small but very important Bill because it will assist many persons who are suffering from blindness and the lack of tissues which could keep them well and, in many instances, could keep them alive. Members will be aware of the advance in medical knowledge and and surgical techniques which has taken place over recent years.

In introducing this measure I am referring particularly to the field of tissue grafting. Members may be surprised to learn that blood transfusion is really an example of a tissue graft. In the case of a blood transfusion, the blood is obtained from a donor who is alive and with his consent. There are other cases where the suprarenal gland has been grafted and more recently grafts have been made of sections of arteries. Other possibilities are opening up all the time. Considerable progress has been made in the transplanting of the cornea of the eye. The cornea is that part of the front of the eye covering the coloured portion, or iris, and the pupil. Cases have been reported in the daily papers of persons giving their eyes or cornea for the benefit of some sufferer. We had a case the other day of a lady who offered one of her eyes to a woman who was blind. I understand the operation was very successful and resulted in giving that person back a considerable amount of sight. She can now get about and read large print.

Many a person with disease or malformation of the cornea has had his vision improved by this means. Although it is possible that one person, whilst still alive,

would be prepared to sacrifice an eye for the benefit of another, this is most unusual. The same applies to other tissues from living persons. However, a cornea or some other tissue removed from a person who has recently died can be used provided the removal of the tissue occurs within a matter of some hours of the occurrence of death. These corneal grafts have been highly successful and are coming into increasing use. The problem is to obtain the tissues of deceased persons for therapeutic purposes and because of this corneal and tissue grafts are being handicapped in this State.

A few years ago Great Britain faced the problem by passing an Act which provides for the use of eyes of deceased persons for therapeutic purposes. It is proposed to do the same here because apart from statute a person cannot by will or otherwise legally dispose of his body after death, and any directions he may have given during his life are not binding on his representatives after his death. The Criminal Code precludes improper interference with a dead human body. The Anatomy Act provides for the use of the body of a dead person in certain circumstances for the purposes of dissection but it is not possible to use the provisions of that Act for the obtaining of a corneal or other tissue graft. Somewhat similar legislation has been passed in New South Wales and Victoria.

The Bill has been drafted to provide that if any person, either in writing or orally, in the presence of two or more witnesses during his last illness, expresses a request that his eyes or other tissues of his body be used for therapeutic purposes after his death, the party lawfully in possession of the body after death may, unless he believes the request was subsequently withdrawn, authorised the removal of the eyes or other tissues from the body for use for healing purposes.

Authority is given to the party lawfully in possession of the body of a deceased person to grant approval for the removal of the eyes or other tissues unless that party has reason to believe that the deceased had expressed objection to such action and had not withdrawn that objection; or that the surviving spouse or any surviving relative of the deceased objects to the deceased's eyes or other tissues being so dealt with. There is a safeguarding provision that the removal shall be effected only by a medical practitioner who must have satisfied himself by a personal examination of the body that life is extinct.

Mr. Court: That means the relatives can override the deceased's wishes.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, they could object. But if there is no objection and he has, in the presence of two witnesses, willed his eyes or tissues

for therapeutic purposes, they can be used. There is another safeguard in that no authority shall be given in respect of the body of a deceased person by a person entrusted with the body for the purpose only of its interment. In the case of a body lying in a hospital, authority may be given by a person designated by the person having control and the management of the hospital.

This is a very necessary Bill. We all know how important blood transfusion is, although that is given while a patient is alive. It is just as important to have the use of the cornea of people's eyes for the use of those people who are almost blind. It is now possible, provided the person has not been dead too long, for the corneas and tissues to be placed in cold storage and used when required. This is done pretty extensively in England and it is now becoming the practice in New South Wales. The same applies to arteries and other tissues. The Bill proposes to give authority to help alleviate misery.

The previous Bill I brought in two years ago was amended to such a degree that there was no point in going on with it, and if members propose to do the same with this one it would defeat the whole purpose of the Bill. Accordingly, I hope the House will give serious consideration to the matter. When an eye is removed from a body it is not possible for relatives to know that this has been done. I have a brother who had one eye taken out; he now has a glass eye and it is very difficult to tell the difference.

Mr. Court: That was our argument last time. What is the time limit in the Bill during which relatives can object?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There is no time limit. There is nothing to fear in the provisions of this Bill. They will be of great help to a number of persons who are suffering from blindness. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Crommelin, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.59 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 30th August, 1956.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Goldmining, (a) assistance to prospectors at Big Bell	456
(b) diamond drilling in Murchison ..	457
Coal, (a) details of S.E.C. and Railway Department purchases	457
(b) basis of price fixation	457
Wundowie charcoal iron industry, financial results of operations	457
Lands, (a) conditional leases and timber rights	457
(b) lessees and Crown grants	458
Railways, dispensing with dog box carriages	458
Pensioners, transport concession fares ..	458
Water supplies, railway dams, Murchison Rural & Industries Bank, deposits in savings section	458
Forests, pine planting, Kimberleys	459
Sewerage, funds for Bunbury scheme	459
Harbours, fishermen's jetty, Bunbury ..	459
Housing, residents and conditions at Manilana	459
Timber shipment, loading at Bunbury	459
Wheat, rail freights	459
Bills : State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment, Message, 2r.	459
Local Government, Message, 2r., adjournment of debate	461
Wheat Marketing Act Continuance, Message, 2r.	469
Bills of Sale Act Amendment, 2r.	470
Agriculture Protection Board Act Amendment, Message, 2r.	471
Criminal Code Amendment, 2r.	472
Licensing Act Amendment, 2r.	472
Electoral Act Amendment (No. 1), Message, 2r.	474
Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment, Message, 2r.	474
Constitution Acts Amendment, 2r.	476
Evidence Act Amendment, 2r.	476
Plant Diseases Act Amendment, 2r.	477

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

QUESTIONS.

GOLDMINING.

(a) Assistance to Prospectors at Big Bell.

Mr. O'BRIEN asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) In view of the fact that two prospecting parties at Big Bell claim to have located a large body of gold-bearing ore, will he assist them by having a geologist report on same?

(2) If the geologist's report is satisfactory, will he endeavour to grant the necessary required assistance, such as—

(a) the supplying of a compressor unit;

(b) modern equipment such as an air-leg and tungsten steel?