

# Legislative Council.

Thursday, 3rd August, 1944.

Question : School bus services, annual expenditure ....	PAGE 67
Address-in-reply, third day ....	67

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

## QUESTION—SCHOOL BUS SERVICES.

### *Annual Expenditure.*

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I desire to ask the Chief Secretary the question standing in my name.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member has no question on the notice paper standing in his name.

The Chief Secretary: The question is on the notice paper, but for Tuesday next. I have the reply and am quite prepared to give it to the hon. member.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It appears a mistake has been made. I gave notice of my question for the next sitting of the House.

The PRESIDENT: Does the hon. member want the question answered today?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: If you please, Sir.

The PRESIDENT: Could the Chief Secretary read the question and the reply?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. The question is as follows:—

What is the total amount expended by the State annually on providing school bus services?

The reply is—

The expenditure for the year ended the 30th June, 1944, was £23,054.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

### *Third Day.*

Debate resumed from the 1st August.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [5.36]: Mr. President, I feel, with others, that I must express my very deep gratitude to that Destiny which shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will, which has guided the Empire, to which we are all proud to belong, to its present very satisfactory position. We can only hope, as we have been hoping for the last few terrible years, that when we

again assemble—if Providence so permits—there shall have been ushered in a very long period of peace.

I have expressed the opinion before that because of the gradual encroachment of Federal powers, we find ourselves year by year with less for which to criticise the State Government. That position today is very much worse than it has been hitherto. Speaking for myself, I find it difficult to castigate the State Government as I think it should be for some things left undone—more for things left undone than for things done—because I realise that the Premier of this State, with other State Premiers, has to make periodical visits to Canberra to obtain the money necessary to administer the affairs of the State. I realise the truth of the dictum laid down for many years by persons who are a great deal more experienced than any member of this Chamber, that government is finance and finance is government. We, and when I say “we” I mean the Parliament of this State, decided to hand over the power of finance to the Loan Council; we had to do so willy-nilly, and we thought it would be in our best interests to do so. I am not prepared to say that it was not. However, there is not the slightest doubt to my mind that that was the beginning of the end.

I do not wish to take up much time in discussing the proposed referendum because I think it is right and proper that the people should decide that matter. However, I do desire to express my keen disappointment at the tone adopted by the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia at the meeting which he addressed in the Perth Town Hall. I hold no brief for the gentleman upon whom he thought fit to make a bitter, personal, sarcastic attack. Surely, a man in the high and honourable position Mr. Forde holds should try to set a better example in a matter of Australia-wide importance. Surely that matter should be lifted out of the hurly-burly of party politics. Above all, it should not be discussed in a petty, personal way. As far as I could see I was the only member not tied to Labour who was at that meeting. I came away frankly disappointed. Whatever Dr. Evatt may or may not be, and whatever he may have said—and he has now contradicted himself; and I went to his very crowded meeting in a hall in Pier street—I must agree that the hon. gentleman rose a long way above the tone adopted by his colleague, Mr. Forde. He lifted the dis-

cussion completely out of the personal arena. I want to be quite frank. I think I have previously given expression here to somewhat similar views.

I would like to see the different States more closely united, but I must try to remember the treatment meted out to this, my native State, and some other States of Australia by the Commonwealth Parliament. Those of us who are not bound by party ties say that all Commonwealth Governments have sinned against us. Those of us who do not owe allegiance to the Labour Party are unfortunate that it is not an anti-Labour or National-Country Party Government in power in the Federal sphere at present. If that were so, we would be given an opportunity to show the people of this State that it did not matter to us what party was in power, but that because of the experience we had had of Commonwealth Governments in the past we felt that we could not trust them in the future. Those remarks apply to all parties. As far as I am concerned I do want to see this discussion lifted completely away from the party political atmosphere.

Speakers should certainly not descend, as Mr. Forde did at his Town Hall meeting at Perth the other week, to personal sarcasm and abuse of a man who, I think, is held in very high esteem in this city. The fact that he is not a Labour man does not matter. He is earning his livelihood here in quite an honourable way. The Deputy Prime Minister came here and made a bitter personal attack on him, and accused him of being in the pay of vested interests. Similar statements appear in the Press today about the former Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies. Because he does not happen to see eye to eye with those in power he is said to be in the pay of vested interests. Where are we getting? What an example we are setting the young people of this country! Surely we can give other people credit for believing that the stand taken by them is in the best interests of the country, without descending to tactics of that description.

Hon. A. Thomson: Who is the man that Mr. Forde attacked?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I prefer not to say. I was very pleased to see that "The West Australian" did not enable Mr. Forde to spread his personal abuse any further than those who were listening to him in the Town Hall. I do not want to

touch on the much heralded new order because unless we can get away from this tendency I have been talking about and give other people credit for good intention there will be no change at all. We will continue on in the same old selfish way of running the other fellow down to get all we can for ourselves. Apart from all that comes before us about the new order, we are hearing and reading quite a lot about something respecting which even this State Government can do something. I refer to education. Other members of this Chamber must be receiving about every month as I am, a little booklet showing what the educationists of Australia are thinking about this very important subject.

What can be done by getting hold of the young plastic mind has been proved without any shadow of doubt. If the young people can be educated in the way that they have been for the horrors of this world—I refer to German youth generally—I suppose it will not be so easily accomplished, but at least we can make a determined effort to impart a more thorough and varied instruction to lift our children to a higher plane so that they may be enabled to do better in the future than their elders have in the past. So I come to something that this State Government still has control of, and that is the education of the children of Western Australia. In most of our principal towns we have what are known as district high schools. Most of them were erected by previous Governments, but the last one was erected in Geraldton by the Willecock Government. That is a credit to the Government and to everyone concerned, but the job has been only half done. I will try to show why.

Members know that if children from as far north as Wyndham and as far south as Carnamah on the Midland line, and Dalwallinu on the Wongan Hills line win scholarships they have to go to the Geraldton High School. Their parents cannot say, "I will send my child to Bunbury or Albany." The child must go to Geraldton. This matter is well known to members, but I feel I must stress it. What happens when the boy or girl goes to Geraldton to take the advantage of the small scholarship, which is the bare means of the child receiving that higher education we have seen fit to provide? Some place must be found where the child can stay. Who will take a strange boy or girl into his home just for the love

of it? So I say, without desiring to depreciate the efforts of those people who do take in these boys and girls, that the conditions under which these children go to Geraldton—and the same thing applies in the other towns such as Northam, Albany and Bunbury—are not as satisfactory as they might be.

I have taken the trouble to inquire about evening studies and have found that it is necessary for a child wishing to gain the Junior certificate to do anything from one to one and a-half hours' study each evening and for the Leaving certificate a little more. Thus we are asking these children—and they are not dull children either—to pore over their books from 8 p.m. till 10 p.m., and what have we done to provide suitable accommodation for them? I am not referring to the children of parents living in Geraldton any more than to the children of parents in the metropolitan area who have the University. The same remark applies to children who come to Perth from the country to attend the University. What have we done to provide for children from the vast outback areas decent accommodation to enable them to take full advantage of the very fine education made available to them? Apart from the small amount of money granted for a scholarship, we have done nothing.

At the request of the Parents and Citizens' Association I took up this matter and asked that something should be done in the direction of providing a hostel for these children. I was informed that it was not the policy of the Government to do anything of that sort. I urge the Government to give serious consideration to the advisableness of changing that policy and providing decent accommodation for the boys and girls who take advantage of scholarships to attend the various district high schools. I am not foolish enough to expect something for Geraldton that would not be made available to other towns. The Chief Secretary was Minister for Education when the Geraldton High School was built, and he will remember the cost of it, but apart from the capital cost, the school is staffed with highly trained and paid teachers. Why only half do the job? Why not go the whole way and enable these children to do their evening study under conditions and in an environment that will ensure their attaining that for which they are striving

and for which their parents, in many instances, are making great sacrifices?

Some years ago a home was built at Geraldton to house girls attending the high school. Now, the people of Geraldton are again doing something to help themselves and this emboldens me to make a claim on the Government, bearing in mind the old saying that those who help themselves will receive help. It was my pleasure the week before last to hear a gentleman on Founder's Day addressing a gathering at the Geraldton High School make the announcement that some £600 odd had been subscribed towards the cost of erecting and conducting a hostel for boys. I believe that the Country Women's Association has done something similar in other centres; in fact, it has a small place for boys at Geraldton, but there is accommodation for only about half-a-dozen. When the townspeople show themselves so convinced of the necessity for providing such a place, I think we might safely ask the Government to provide at least a pound-for-pound subsidy such as is done in connection with hospitals, and my idea is that the Government should grant pound-for-pound not only for capital cost but also for the expense of conducting the home.

At the risk of being told that comparisons are invidious, I wish to read a brief extract to show what Tasmania is doing in this direction. Tasmania's population is roughly equal to that of Perth and the attitude of the Government of that State—a Labour Government—and of the community to education is reflected in the willingness to spend money on area schools. This is a statement by Mr. Foxcroft:—

Shortly before I left Tasmania, the Parliamentary Public Works Committee recommended the erection of an area school at Snug as an urgent matter. The site selected contains 11 acres. The building is to be a modern brick, concrete foundation structure embracing five class rooms, library, assembly hall, gymnasium, change rooms and showers, stage, staff room, office, stores, cloak and wash-rooms, and the estimated cost is £12,850. This is the first of 15 new area schools and 12 central schools for which plans have been prepared.

There is a lead for our State Labour Government, which might well follow the example of Tasmania and do something along the lines I have indicated for the people who are living outside the metropolitan area. Another matter I wish to stress is in regard to children between two and six years of age. I refer to statements that are made by people

who have spent some years in fitting themselves to become experts, and who claim that the most important years of a child's life are between the ages of two and six. We were told that by trained witnesses who were examined by the Royal Commission appointed to deal with delinquent children. I have also read the statement several times since. If that is the case, are we members of Parliament, who represent people in the country, justified in remaining silent? I should say that the people in the country have a right to expect that we would ask from our seats in Parliament what is being done for the children between two and six years of age. Only in today's paper we find those connected with the kindergartens putting forward a £6,000 scheme to cater for children of that age.

We have to be reasonable about these things, but if the experts are right I say it is only a question of time when, if people are expected to stay in the country districts, some attention should be given to this matter. At present we are doing nothing. For children on the farms nothing is being done whilst, in the case of the metropolitan area, over the air, in the papers and even on the doorsteps of those in authority, we find persons constantly endeavouring to obtain financial assistance for the carrying on of this important work. We people from the country are entitled to ask that this matter shall receive consideration, especially when we know that when a child reaches the age of six the State comes in and says to the country parents, "Your child must go to school."

It has become the vogue in the Education Department of recent years—that is taking place in other States and perhaps other countries—to close down the one-teacher small country school and institute bus services. Members know that that is occurring in their provinces as well as it is in mine. These bus services are all right so far as they go, but I think most parents will agree that it is not a fair thing to transport children between six and eight years of age under present conditions. Many of the youngsters have to walk several miles to reach the bus and then have to travel many more miles before getting to school. Then they have to go through that all over again when coming home in the afternoon. I have spoken to several teachers and parents on the subject and they all say it is neither right nor fair that children of that tender age

should have to rise early in the morning, perhaps walk a couple of miles to the bus, and then have to ride long distances over country roads that are more rough than smooth in order to get to school.

These vehicles are called buses, but what are they really? I am not complaining about those who get the contracts, because the latter are advertised in the Press and tenders are called for the conveyance of children to school. The same old thing goes on. A man may get a truck converted into a bus with seats all along the side. No doubt the vehicle is safe for the children. I do not say that the department does not take steps to see that these vehicles are safe, but I am sure that members of the Government, as well as members of Parliament, would not like to be transported in such vehicles over such roads for five days a week, both morning and afternoon. We should watch these bus services closely.

Like everything else, the system is all right up to a point, but whilst we have people crying out for something to be done and money to be spent on the education of children between two and six in the metropolitan area, nothing is being done in the country. When the children reach the age of six it may be that the country school has been closed down and they are forced to go to some other school by bus and travel many miles from and to their homes each day. The system is not right. I hope the womenfolk, if not the men, will take up the question and hammer away at the Government until some remedy is provided.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Some children have to walk four miles in order to reach the bus route.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I thank the hon. member for his interjection. I know it will not be easy to find a remedy. It is never easy to do that. If we are going to tackle this question and induce people to stay in the country districts and add to the wealth of the country, we must take these very special circumstances into consideration. I ask the House to bear with me while I read a letter that was written to the "Perenjori Pioneer." The writer signed his name to the communication. The statements may be exaggerated, but I have never seen any reply to them. This letter appeared in the news-

paper on the 13th February and is as follows:—

Sir,—The Minister for Education gives us a bus service, but whoever administer the bus services are inefficient, or are not capable of carrying out their duties, and should get their walking tickets.

Pintharuka bus is a fine example of this muddling; it runs about as frequent as our creeks do in summer. The present contractor has had the contract about two years. In 1942, the first six months he did not run at all, the remainder of that year it was a hit and miss service, last year it was a most unsatisfactory service, and now to begin this year, the first two weeks he did not run at all.

The school inspector when visiting the school, I take it, inspects the register, but does he ever take the trouble to find out for himself why there are so many absent on certain days and so many days in the year? If he would take the trouble to ask the parents we could give him a solution to the problem. It would be interesting to know if there is a penalty clause attached to bus contracts, and if so, how often has it been applied to the Pintharuka bus?

The buses themselves are obsolete and fit for the scrap heap. The big bus is far from dry on wet days, and on cold, wintry mornings the draughts are enough to give all the children their death of cold. Not only that; there are two small platforms on the back of the bus. One carries the firebox of the gas producer, then, at the rear door three to four feet away there is another platform. On this platform I myself have seen a 44-gallon drum of petrol carried, not four feet from the firebox. If this caught fire it is doubtful if one child would get out of the bus alive.

During superphosphate carting, he has loaded his bus up with superphosphate and our children have had to sit on the superphosphate in their school clothes (plenty of coupons!). He has also loaded his bus up with building timber and the children have had to sit amongst the timber. He also carried water drums and pulled up at Pintharuka and the children have pumped water to fill the drums. To cap the lot, he has pulled the bus on to Mr. North's property and loaded up with rocks, to be used in building his new house. These are only a few of his doings. I could write a small book on it.

The small bus—I don't know how it passed the department. There is only one door for the children to get in and out. If the children had to get out of the front door, they would have to scramble over the front seat and in their hurry probably none of them would get out. The bus was only a car, converted by the contractor, and in this he carries 10 to 12 children, plus himself, plus gas producer. I don't know what axle strain these axles are supposed to carry, but I am certain this bus would not be allowed to carry the same number of children in Perth. The traffic police would soon put a stop to this. Then this same bus is out of alignment; some day, there will be an accident with it, and all the department and Minister will do will be to send the parents

a letter of sympathy, and lay the blame on us for not informing the department. I also doubt very much if these buses are insured. If not, the parents of Pintharuka are taking a grave risk, as the owner does not appear to possess great wealth, and if it comes to fighting the Education Department, it has the money to keep going to a higher court and the parents have not. (Sgd.) A. W. Johnson. Morawa.

I have interviewed the Director who says that the statements are untrue and exaggerated. I have ridden on one of these buses and I know what they are like. We cannot blame the men who get these contracts, but if the children have to be conveyed to school by this means, they should be conveyed under better conditions. The vehicle should be properly sprung and the accommodation should be such as not to subject the children to too much inconvenience.

I have been asked to make a request to the Government, and I am doing so now. Will the Government consider bringing down a Bill to make it illegal to publish the many unsavoury proceedings to which judges are forced to listen in the divorce court? I cannot see why they should be published. Children may often be asked by their teachers if they read their daily papers, and if they do read some newspapers they may read these particular reports. It is not a vitally important matter, but I point out that the State is not tackling many big propositions at the moment and this is a question that might well be taken up. I wonder whether the Government has given consideration to the question of preventing some newspapers, which seem to take a delight in publishing unsavoury reports of divorce proceedings, from doing so.

Hon J. Cornell: The remedy is to keep the Press out of the courts.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The trend of events in Australia generally gives food for very serious thought. I do not wish to be an alarmist, but when we read of the many irregularities or breaches of the law that are taking place amongst people employed by the State we must pause. I refer particularly to the constant flouting of the Arbitration Court and its awards. I cannot see that we can look with very kindly feelings on this continually-growing canker. The failure of the Commonwealth Government to come to grips with the coal-miners of New South Wales over such a long period, has apparently given other people the idea that they

can carry on in a somewhat similar lawless manner. This is one of the happenings that I regard as a pointer. It is only a few months since we read in "The West Australian" that the Premier, having received a request—if it can be called a request—from the Labour Party or somebody at the Trades Hall, had consented to civil servants not being required to go to their offices on Saturday morning. The Premier sanctioned that at the request of the Labour Party.

It may be asked, "What is wrong with that?" This is what is wrong: Here in Perth, owing to the present state of affairs, many people are working at high pressure yet people in State departments are told they can have Saturday mornings off. Of course, I remember that they were supposed to work longer hours during the other five days. This request came from the Labour Party and, without hesitation, the Premier gave a notification that since the enemy was getting farther away from our shores he thought it only fair that the request should be complied with. I am wondering whether, instead of putting up our requests here, where they are not so promptly attended to, we should go as a body and address ourselves to the Trades Hall. I am very pleased to notice from the Lieut.-Governor's Speech that consideration is being given to the establishment of facilities for dealing with sub-normal and delinquent boys and girls, and that measures will be introduced to improve the Adoption of Children Act and the Guardianship of Infants Act.

We have read from time to time in the Press, before the Chief Secretary vacated his position as Minister for Education and since the present Minister has been in charge, that attention has been given to the Royal Commission's report. I understand that one additional male probation officer has been appointed. That was a month or so ago, but it is over 12 months since the Commission's report was presented. Certainly one thing was done following that report, but it would have been a crime had it not been done. I refer to the erection, near the Police Court, of a detention place for juveniles. The previous conditions were so shocking that nobody thought the Government would delay doing something in that connection. The probation officer appeared before the Commission. He is a wonderful man. I do not think I should hesitate to mention his name.

I refer to Mr. Bulley. He gave evidence on this matter but it has taken the Government 12 months to appoint another male probation officer. There are, of course, two or three women probation officers and perhaps more. It has been quite impossible for one male officer to do anything like justice to his position, yet it has taken the Government 12 months to make another appointment, which I understand took place just recently.

I have here papers galore dealing with this subject but I do not propose to quote from them all, because members will have seen for themselves the position in which the magistrate is placed. I shall quote one instance. On the 26th July appeared the following headline in "The Daily News":—"Boy Bushrangers Cause Train Havoc." It is unbelievable that boys of such tender years could be guilty of such things as are recorded in this extract. One does not need to study under Professor Fowler, the psychologist at the University, to be struck by the fact that there must be something wrong with boys who act like this. It is not a question of stealing fruit or lollies. Who has not done that?

Hon. J. Cornell: Reports regarding such matters would be better left out of the Press.

HON. E. H. H. HALL: The account in the paper was as follows:—

Captured by police who lay in wait for them at a hideout in an old shed about three miles from Midland Junction, two boy "bush-rangers" were found on July 3 to have prepared for a long stay away from home.

They had been caught in the act of rifling one of seven railway trucks in Midland yards on July 2, had been taken to their homes by railway detectives and questioned. That same afternoon the boys—one aged 11, the other nine—took to the bush.

Detectives and other railway officials who inspected the seven trucks were amazed at the wanton destruction done by the two boys. One official said the trucks looked as if "a tornado had struck them."

Five of the seven trucks had contained groceries and other articles. Seals of the trucks had been broken and with keys which they used as levers the boys had prised open cases.

Bottles of sauce and soup were opened and their contents strewn over packages of flour. Nine bottles of wine were opened and the wine poured on the floor of the trucks.

Cases of butter were damaged by the pouring of liquid over them. Custard powder was strewn about. Sauce was poured over bedding.

Railway officials were able to salvage much of the goods but two trucks were so hopelessly disturbed that they had to be sent back to the consignors so that they could sort out their contents.

A quantity of butter and tea was found wrapped up. The boys admitted they had wrapped it to take away with them. This is what I particularly want the House to listen to—

Yesterday in the Children's Court, Midland Junction, the boys were committed to an institution for 12 months on a charge of having wilfully damaged railway trucks. One boy was subsequently released on bond to be of good behaviour for 12 months.

Each was ordered to pay £3 12s. 1d. costs.

Do members know just what that means? That boy was released on bond. Most members are fathers themselves and they realise there must be something wrong with boys of that age when they will do things like that, and such boys need special treatment. In view of the number of boys out on probation, and the fact that there are only two probation officers, it is an absolute physical impossibility for the lads to receive anything like the attention and treatment they must have if they are going to be cured of their peculiar kinks. Only close personal treatment will cure boys so warped in mind as to be guilty of wanton destruction of this sort. In yesterday's paper we read of the misdemeanours of a child eight years of age who was sent to Heathcote. The paper said that the boy stated he was quite all right, that he had had some pills and everybody had made a fuss of him.

Fancy stuff like that being published in the paper about a boy of that age! The Rev. Mr. Hamilton appeared before the Commission. He has done his best to study the psychology of such children. He was in England in this connection but his studies were interrupted by the war, and he had to return to Western Australia. He gives his services for, I understand, a peppercorn payment, and there is some doctor who also gives assistance in matters of this kind; but there is no place for the proper examination and treatment of these boys. That is a matter to which the State Government should give attention. I am pleased to know that the portfolios of Education and Child Welfare are now held by the same Minister. Previously they were held by different Ministers, who were busy men. Now that we have Mr. Tonkin administering the two departments, I am very hopeful that he will lose no further time in attending to this matter and showing the people of this State that we are alive to the dangers that threaten. There

is not a big percentage of such cases, but the number is big enough to warrant serious and prompt attention by the Government.

The Speech indicated that a Bill would be placed before Parliament to liberalise the franchise for the Legislative Council. That is something we have heard before and I do not want to deal with the matter in a contemptuous or sarcastic way. I believe the Government is really desirous of broadening the franchise for this House. We have heard a lot about the conservative nature of and the undemocratic franchise for this place. I have a suggestion to make to the Government, believing that it is in earnest about this matter, which has been dragging on for far too many years. I understand that members of the Labour Party believe in referenda. I would ask them whether they think it at all likely—and I do not say this in an offensive spirit—that the members of this Chamber will vote to close down this branch of the Legislature? I do not think we can be expected to believe the Government takes that view. Why not take a referendum of the people who possess the right to send members to this House? They are the people who pay; they are the people who have the protection we think this Chamber gives them. Why not ask them whether they are in favour of this House being closed down as was the Queensland Legislative Council?

While I do not want to hurt the feelings of members representing the Metropolitan and Metropolitan-Suburban provinces in this House I draw attention to the shocking vote recorded in connection with the election of those members. It indicates that the people who enjoy the franchise for the Legislative Council do not value it. Why not give them the opportunity to say whether they want the Chamber continued or not? If the Government did that, it would be an indication that it was really in earnest. Putting a statement like this in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech is nothing more or less than a waste of time. I am not going to say it is window-dressing or that it is done to satisfy the Government's supporters or anything unkind like that, but it is a pure waste of time. If the question of the abolition of the Chamber was put to the people concerned those of us who want this House continued could put forward our side of the question and those

who wanted it abolished, could advance their arguments, and then the matter would be settled for all time.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.30 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 3rd August, 1944.*

	PAGE
Electoral: Swearing-in of Member .....	74
Questions: Post-war works, as to Western Australian programme .....	74
Goldfields water supply, as to north-eastern wheatbelt pipes .....	74
Address-in-reply, fourth day .....	75

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

### ELECTORAL—SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am prepared to swear in the member for Collie, who was returned at the last general election.

Mr. Wilson took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

### QUESTIONS (2).

#### POST-WAR WORKS.

*As to Western Australian Programme.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Referring to a question concerning post-war works answered on Tuesday last, will he give the date on which the list mentioned was forwarded to the Commonwealth Government?

(2) Has his attention been drawn to the following statement from Canberra stated to be made by a Government spokesman and published in "The West Australian" newspaper of the 28th June, 1944:—

Concern at the dilatoriness of States in submitting to the Commonwealth Government their lists of public works to be carried out during 1944-45 was voiced to-day by a Government spokesman.

(3) As no mention was made in this statement regarding this State, is it true that this State has been dilatory in regard to this matter?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied:

(1) 12th June, 1944.

(2) Yes.

(3) No.

### GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY.

*As to North-Eastern Wheatbelt Pipes.*

Mr. LESLIE asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is he aware that the water pipes on branch lines from the Goldfields Water Supply, and from the No. 1 water scheme, serving farmers in the north-eastern wheatbelt, are so seriously corroded and deteriorated that stock-owners were, during the summer just past, unable to obtain anything like adequate water supplies?

(2) Is he further aware, that owing to the increased demand for water during the summer months, in consequence of the large increase in stock in those districts, the existing pipes on the branch lines, even if in good condition, are not of sufficient capacity to carry the amount of water required by stock-owners?

(3) Is it his intention to remedy these defects before the coming summer?

(4) If so, what action will be taken, and if none, why?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied:

(1) The Minister is aware that owing to the abnormally long dry summer, the corroded condition of some of the extensions, the heavy stocking by farmers, and the substantial draw by farmers not connected to the systems from free water standpipes, the reticulation was unable to cope with the abnormal requirements.

(2) If the present heavy stockings by farmers are to be maintained permanently, the demand in some districts in very dry seasons would be beyond the capacity of the present reticulation.

(3) and (4) Enlargement and improvement proposals have been designed and are under consideration. Progress on approved work of this nature is dependent on available manpower and material.

The advice of the Agricultural Bank Commissioners is being sought as to the relative urgency of the various proposals.