

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 10th October, 1957.

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

QUESTIONS.

NATIVE WELFARE.

Threats to Kelmescott Farmer by Commissioner.

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) Is he aware that the Commissioner of Native Welfare described charges that he had threatened a Kelmescott farmer as being "quite untrue" ("The West Australian" of the 4th October, 1957)?

(2) Is he aware that the four occupants of the farm are prepared to testify on oath that they were threatened?

(3) Is he aware that the commissioner said that his visit to Cranny had been made as a private person who considered himself aggrieved and that it was not an official visit ("The West Australian" of the 4th October, 1957)?

(4) Is he aware that the occupants of the farm will testify that the commissioner used such terms as "You know who I am, don't you? I am Mr. Middleton, the Commissioner of Native Welfare," and "My department" and "Officers of my department"?

(5) Is he aware that the commissioner arrived at the farm soon after 9 a.m. on Thursday, the 3rd October, 1957, and after interviewing two occupants of the farm and being told that Mr. Cranny and his wife were out, waited approximately half an hour until they returned?

(6) Is he aware that this visit took place during departmental office hours?

(7) In view of the facts contained in Nos. (4), (5) and (6), how can the commissioner now claim that his visit had been made as a private individual ("The West Australian" of the 4th October, 1957)?

(8) In view of the fact that Cranny's letter in "The West Australian" on the 3rd October, 1957 (which provoked the commissioner's visit) was factual in every detail, what did the commissioner expect Mr. Cranny to "retract" ("The West Australian" of the 4th October, 1957) when he visited Mr. Cranny on the morning the letter was published in "The West Australian"?

(9) Was the statement made by the commissioner and published in "The West Australian" on the 4th October, 1957, made by him as a private individual or as commissioner?

(10) If the answer to No. (9) is "As the commissioner," will he, the Minister, in fairness to Mr. Cranny, produce evidence to prove the inference contained in the commissioner's published statement that "He hoped that Cranny might be persuaded to recognise that he was wrong and make a published retraction"?

The MINISTER replied.

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) No.
- (5) No.

(6) and (7) Under Public Service regulations, officers are entitled to short leave.

(8) The commissioner considered the letter was not factual in every detail.

(9) As a private individual; the statement was made from his private home.

(10) See reply to No. (9).

EDUCATION.

(a) *New School, Wyndham.*

Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Because of the age and general condition of the Wyndham school, which makes maintenance difficult, when does he anticipate a new school will be built?

(2) How many classrooms will it contain?

(3) Where will it be situated—in the old or new town?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is not possible at this stage to give any definite date, but it is hoped that the building will be erected during the 1958-59 financial year.

(2) Three.

(3) At the new townsite. Negotiations are proceeding for the acquisition of a suitable site within the boundary of the new townsite.

(b) *Kimberley Research Station, Classroom.*

Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Education:

When will a classroom be built at the Kimberley research station?

The MINISTER replied:

Tenders close on the 15th October, 1957.

POTATOES.

Industrial Utilisation of Surplus.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) What investigations, if any, have been carried out by his department to determine the possibilities of starch production and other industrial utilisation of surplus potatoes in Western Australia?

(2) Is it known to the department what commercial products come from surplus potatoes in the U.S.A. and what secondary industries use these products?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) At the request of the Potato Growers' Association, consideration was given some time ago to the possible utilisation of substandard potatoes for production of starch and other chemical products.

Fresh potatoes contain about 15 per cent. of starch, compared with 60 per cent. in wheat, and it would appear that potatoes would have to be available at works at under £6 per ton to compete with wheat as a source of starch. The local demand for starch is small, about 300 tons per annum, valued at, say, £45,000, but starch can be further processed to give such products as dextrin, glucose, alcohol, etc.

However, it appeared that the quantity of substandard potatoes available was not sufficient to support an extractive industry, especially as supplies would be seasonal to some extent, and would have to be drawn from widely scattered sources.

(2) No.

POTATO MARKETING BOARD.

Number of Inspectors Employed.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How many inspectors have been employed by the Potato Marketing Board during the years ended December, 1955, 1956 and ending December, 1957?

(2) What was the total cost to the Potato Marketing Board in employing these inspectors?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 1955—One inspector.

1956—One inspector up to the 13th November when another inspector was appointed. A third inspector was appointed on the 26th November.

1957—Three inspectors up to the 30th March. From then to the 9th September, only two. On the 9th and 17th September, respectively, two more inspectors were appointed.

At present therefore, four inspectors are employed. During the last 12 months three part-time inspectors have been employed for short periods at a total cost of £400.

- (2) 1955—£1,836.
 1956—£2,350.
 1957—£3,791 (including cost of part-time inspectors).

COLLIE COAL.

Briquetting Process.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Mines:

What information is available from the Lurgi organisation in Germany on the briquetting process developed for Collie coal?

The MINISTER replied:

It is anticipated that a report will be made to the Government by Lurgi, Germany, within the next two weeks.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

Adjustment of Scales in Country.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Police:

(1) What changes have been made recently in the procedure of the weights and measures branch so far as adjustment of weights of scales in the country is concerned?

(2) What is the reason for this change of procedure?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) None.

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

UNIFORM BUILDING BY-LAWS.

Clause 428 (a), Car Ports.

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

(1) Has he read item 6, on page 2828, of the "Government Gazette" of the 4th October, 1957, relating to Clause 428(a) of the uniform building by-laws dealing with car ports in Section (2)?

(2) Does he agree with this clause?

(3) Does he realise that all steel pipes must be imported into this State?

(4) Why cannot bricks or in some cases timber be used as a support for a car port?

(5) Does he intend insisting on this clause to the detriment of local manufacturers?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) In principle, yes.

(3) Yes.

(4) The addition of Clause 428(a) to the uniform by-laws was specifically included for the purpose of enabling people with residences already erected on lots in such a manner that it would be impossible to build a garage, to comply with the regulations and construct a car port.

The car port would, in the majority of cases, be in front of the existing dwelling and, consequently, would also be in front of the adjoining dwelling. So as to cause a minimum of interference with visibility of adjoining residents, the committee of reference was of the opinion that the supports should be as small as possible and it was for this reason, of course, that steel piping as supports was inserted in the new clause.

(5) The number of car ports for which permission would be sought would be small and it is not thought that the requirement for the supports to be of steel piping in such cases would be to the detriment of local manufacturers. If any serious detriment is caused, the committee will be asked to reconsider the matter.

ARGENTINE ANTS.

Spraying at Albany.

Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What number of homes have been sprayed in Albany for the eradication of argentine ants?

(2) What number of homes are still to be sprayed?

(3) When does the department intend to recommence spraying?

(4) Have any reports been received by the department as to the success or failure of spraying operations?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The entire business area and most of the residential area totalling 1,667 acres, or 2,470 locations.

(2) A small number, mainly in the new suburb of Lockyer.

(3) As soon as the weather permits in the new year.

(4) Reports obtained by the Department of Agriculture have shown that the campaign has been successful.

LAND TAX.

Valuations and Reduction in Rate.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Treasurer:

(1) In view of the very steep increase in land tax valuations throughout the State, during the past two years, thereby adding to production costs, will he give early and favourable consideration to a reduction in the rate of tax now being imposed?

(2) Over what periods are new valuations made throughout the State?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) In view of the heavy estimated deficit for the current financial year, no reduction in the rate of tax is possible.

(2) Generally, the valuations come up for review each five-year period, but if conditions have been reasonably static in the area for review, no alterations are made.

PASTORAL LEASE HOLDERS.

"Run Throughs."

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it the responsibility of the owner of a pastoral lease to install and maintain "run throughs" on fences which cross a gazetted main road.

(2) Is it permissible for the owner of a pastoral lease to erect gates on his boundary fences where they cross a gazetted main road?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) At a new fence line, it is the responsibility of the owner to install or have the structure installed to departmental standards. The department would accept responsibility for maintenance.

(2) Permission and licence may be granted under some conditions, but usually a gate would prove unsatisfactory to the owner.

NEW COLLIE POWER STATION.

(a) Coal Supplies.

Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

From what source, and by what method, does the Government propose to obtain coal for the new Collie power station, if such power station is proceeded with?

The PREMIER replied:

The coal will be obtained from coal deposits at Collie. The method will be decided in due course.

(b) Request for Specific Information.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the expansive answer he gave to my question, can he be more specific and tell us from which part of Collie the coal will come and by what method it will be obtained?

The PREMIER replied:

The proposed new power house will not come into operation for some years yet. Consequently, to date, detailed consideration has not been given to the exact spot from which the coal will be obtained, nor to the method by which it will be obtained. However, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition could well leave this question to the Government with the same confidence that he left the recent coal contracts to the Government.

VETERINARY SCIENCE.

State Assistance Scheme.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What number of students from Western Australia are attending university veterinary schools in the Eastern States, under the State assistance scheme?

(2) How many applicants are now waiting to attend these schools?

(3) How many students who have qualified in veterinary science, under the scheme, are employed by the Government and what is the nature of the work on which they are engaged?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Five.

(2) Two first year veterinary science cadets are at present attending the University of Western Australia. If successful, they will continue the course at an Eastern States university.

(3) Four. One is employed as a veterinary pathologist at the Animal Health and Nutrition Laboratories. Three are employed as veterinary surgeons with headquarters located at Perth, Bunbury and Geraldton respectively.

MYXOMATOSIS.

Effective Control of Rabbit Increases.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) In which districts throughout the State is myxomatosis considered to be effectively controlling rabbit increases?

(2) What are the prospects of increased effective virus strength being obtained through myxomatosis?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Myxomatosis is assisting all control methods such as poisoning with "1080" and warren destruction, to control rabbits in all agricultural districts.

(2) The decrease in the effectiveness of myxomatosis is regarded as inevitable. Endeavours are being made to keep up the strength as long as possible by the issue of laboratory strain virus—

(a) for sale to the public,

(b) free to vermin boards,

(c) to vermin control officers for use in their respective territories.

Also there is a special virus unit which is continually infecting rabbits.

SUPERANNUATION BOARD FUNDS.

Investment in Housing for Government Employees.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Treasurer:

(1) What legal difficulties exist preventing the Superannuation Board from investing money in housing for Government employees?

(2) Has the Government given any consideration to the question of finding further money for housing for permanent Government employees from trust funds held by the Treasury on behalf of the Superannuation Board?

(3) Does he agree that there is an acute shortage of housing for some Government employees such as school teachers in the country?

(4) Would it be possible to legislate so that the Superannuation Board could invest money in housing for Government employees?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) The erection by the Government of housing for Government employees has to be treated as government expenditure and carried out from loan funds which are allocated to the State by the Loan Council. Some portion of Superannuation Board funds is invested in loans raised by the Loan Council. If additional funds are allocated for housing, it would mean a reduction of loan expenditure on other more urgent works.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) Some shortage exists, but it is not nearly as great as it was a few years ago.

(4) It is considered legislation is unnecessary, as Government employees enjoy the same privileges as other citizens of the State and can look after their own housing requirements through the various authorities set up for that purpose.

STATE HOUSING COMMISSION.

Appointment of Building Superintendent.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What special qualifications did Mr. A. D. Hynam have to justify his being appointed building Superintendent of the State Housing Commission in 1954?

(2) Does he hold a master builder's certificate or is he a qualified building tradesman, and if so, in what trade?

(3) Was Mr. Hynam a union secretary or union organiser at some time prior to his appointment to the staff of the Department of Industrial Development, and if so, what union?

(4) Is Mr. Hynam a returned soldier within the meaning of the Public Service Act, i.e. personnel who served overseas in either world war, and if so, how long did he serve overseas?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Housing) replied:

(1) Considerable technical knowledge, initiative, ability to overcome difficulties, and personal qualities necessary to command the confidence of building contractors, building tradesmen, and manufacturers and suppliers of building materials.

(2) Mr. Hynam does not hold a master builder's certificate, but was a qualified tradesman in structural engineering, a qualified health inspector—which requires a knowledge of building construction—and qualified in sanitary science as applied to public buildings.

(3) No.

(4) Yes. He served overseas during the first world war for 396 days.

SERPENTINE DAM. ✕

(a) Method of Building.

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

Is it proposed to build the main Serpentine Dam by contract after tenders have been called, or by Government day labour?

The MINISTER replied:

The dam will be built by the Government's own very efficient organisation, of course.

(b) Calling of Tenders.

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

Was consideration given by the Government to the calling of tenders and having the work done by contract?

The MINISTER replied:

Having had considerable experience of the great efficiency of the department's organisation, it was never necessary to have regard to any other method of construction.

(c) Government's Policy re Calling of Tenders.

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

Does the Minister's answer mean that it is now government policy not to call tenders for major public works such as the Serpentine Dam project?

The MINISTER replied:

The hon. member is not entitled to infer from my answer that it is government policy, in all circumstances, to do work by day labour. The hon. member's question refers specifically to work on the Serpentine Dam. As the department has an adequate and efficient work force to do that job, there would be no rhyme or reason in having that force idle while the job was given to an outside company. For this reason, never at any time was the question of calling tenders taken into consideration.

Mr. Court: Say you could have got it done cheaper and quicker?

The MINISTER: Should the occasion arise when the department's own work force is fully engaged and it is considered desirable and of advantage to the State to call tenders, then the matter would be considered, but that situation did not arise, nor is it likely to arise, in connection with the Serpentine Dam.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.

Reduction in Price of Coal and Gas.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

(1) As the cost of coal to the State Electricity Commission will be £12 per ton cheaper during 1957 than in 1956, will the Government reduce the price of electricity and gas?

(2) Having regard to the availability of cheaper coal would not the formula on which the price of electricity and gas is assessed automatically reduce the cost to the consumer?

The MINISTER replied:

I do not know where the Leader of the Opposition gets the idea that the price of coal to the Government will be £12 per ton cheaper.

The Premier: Me either; I wish it were.

The MINISTER: Obviously, his arithmetic is sadly astray. Approximately 12s. a ton will be saved to the Government; and the cost of coal is only one of the factors which determine the price of electricity and gas. The commission is investigating the effect of coal prices and other operating costs.

Hon. D. Brand: I acknowledge the error. The amount is 12s., but the principle in respect of the question is the same.

CHAMBERLAIN INDUSTRIES.

Report of Investigating Committee.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Premier:

When will he let us have the report of the committee investigating Chamberlain Industries?

The PREMIER replied:

I hope Cabinet will make a final decision in this matter next Monday afternoon.

HOGGET.

(a) *Question of Branding of Carcass Meat.*

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

Having regard to the answers he gave on the 9th October last when he said that the question of branding carcass meat was under consideration, can he give some idea of the date when this consideration will be given?

The MINISTER replied:

I cannot do any such thing at this stage. We are still examining the matter. If it is considered necessary to do it at all, it will be done at a reasonably early date; but a decision has not yet been made on the point.

(b) *Clarification of Answer.*

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

What does he mean by "reasonably"?

The MINISTER replied:

I cannot see the purpose of this question. I have not a complete picture of what we are likely to find after examination. A reasonable time would be as early as practicable after a decision has been made.

Mr. Lawrence: That is worse.

RAILWAYS ROYAL COMMISSION.

Midland Junction Workshops.

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

(1) Will the inquiries now being carried out into the railways by Mr. Smith also cover the workings of the Midland Junction workshops?

(2) If so, does he think that Mr. Smith should be assisted by a highly qualified engineer?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The inquiry being carried out by Royal Commissioner Smith will cover the operations and management of the Midland Junction workshops.

(2) The Government would be willing to make available to Mr. Smith any such technical help as he may request.

BILL—HOUSING LOAN GUARANTEE.

Introduced by the Premier (for the Minister for Housing) and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Electoral Act Amendment (No. 1).

Transmitted to the Council.

2. Newspaper Libel and Registration Act Amendment.

Passed.

BILLS (2)—REPORT.

1. Associations Incorporation Act Amendment.

2. Marketing of Potatoes Act Amendment.

Adopted.

BILL—LOAN, £16,073,000.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE TREASURER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [2.42] in moving the second reading said: This is the Loan Bill which is introduced concurrently each year with the Loan Estimates. These estimates have already been introduced and all members will have the opportunity of participating in the general debate which will take place in connection with them. We have already had authority from Parliament this session for some loan expenditure, and this Bill is introduced to give the Government the parliamentary authority necessary to expend legally the loan funds which are proposed to be covered by this Bill.

The amount provided for in the measure is £16,073,000 and the details of the expenditure in connection with this

amount will be found in the First Schedule. Other information appropriate to the loan works for the current financial year will also be found in the Bill and as the general debate in connection with the Loan Estimates gets under way, as it will do in the reasonably near future, every member will have ample opportunity to discuss the Government's loan expenditure policy, and also to take advantage of the opportunity to put forward such requests as he feels desirable in relation to loan expenditure in his own electorate. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. D. Brand, debate adjourned.

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

1. University of Western Australia Act Amendment.
 2. Cemeteries Act Amendment.
 3. Pig Industry Compensation Act Amendment.
- Without amendment.

BILL—JETTIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. L. F. Kelly—Merredin-Yilgarn) [2.48] in moving the second reading said: There is very little to explain in this very short Bill, but the Mines Department has had a number of applications from foreign migrants for various classes of engine drivers' certificates issued under this Act. At present the Act provides that every applicant for a certificate shall be a British subject, or an ex-serviceman, or a worker who has served in the merchant navy or merchant marine of any of the Allied Nations during the world war of 1939-1945. Of course, he has to satisfy the board that he has a sufficient knowledge of the English language to be able to perform the duties required of him as the holder of one of these certificates.

Over the last eight to 10 years we have had a big influx of immigrants from various parts of the world who do not come under this specified category. Because many of these people are skilled in this particular type of work, and because it has been impossible to engage them owing to the Act in its present form, two small amendments were thought necessary in order that the scope of employment could be widened, and so enable many of these people to obtain positions.

It is proposed to widen the section involved to enable the examiners' board to grant certificates to suitably qualified

immigrants who must, however, have a reasonable knowledge of the English language, and they must also apply for naturalisation immediately they are entitled to do so. The principal unions concerned in the granting of these certificates have been approached and they do not offer any objection to the legislation. Finally, I point out that a similar provision has been inserted in this type of legislation operating in all other States. I commend the Bill to the House for favourable consideration. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

BILL—ROMAN CATHOLIC VICARIATE OF THE KIMBERLEYS PROPERTY.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen-Eyre) [2.52] in moving the second reading said: I have here a small Bill which relates to the vesting of all Roman Catholic church property situated in the Kimberleys. The constitution of the Roman Catholic vicariate of the Kimberleys and the appointment of a Vicar Apostolic to that Vicariate has given rise to the desirability of vesting in the Vicar Apostolic all Roman Catholic church property situated within the vicariate and of making provision for him to deal with property in a corporate capacity on lines similar to those set out, with respect to Roman Catholic church property in the Diocese of Bunbury, in the Roman Catholic Bunbury Church Property Act, 1955.

The main objects of the Bill are to divest persons and bodies holding property belonging to or in trust for the Roman Catholic church within the vicariate of the Kimberleys, of that property and vest it in the Vicar Apostolic of the Kimberleys and his successors in office and to give the Vicar Apostolic the status of a corporation sole and the power to deal with that property in his corporate capacity. A list of the instruments of title relating to the real property to be vested in the Vicar Apostolic is incorporated in the First Schedule to the Bill.

Part 1 of the schedule contains the instrument of title at present in the name of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Perth. Parts II and III contain instruments at present in the name of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Geraldton and the Pious Society of Missions Incorporated of Broome respectively. Letters have been obtained from the Roman Catholic Bishops of Perth and Geraldton and the Provincial of the Pious Society of Missions consenting to the vesting in the Vicar Apostolic of the properties which are at present held by them on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church and mentioned in the

certificates of title listed in the First Schedule. The vesting takes effect on the coming into operation of the Bill.

Many Bills similar to this have been passed by this House for various religious bodies. This measure is designed simply to transfer property in the Kimberleys to the Vicar Apostolic. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Crommelin, debate adjourned.

BILL—CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL LANDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. CROMMELIN (Claremont) [2.55]: I support the second reading of this Bill. It concerns principally the Guildford Grammar School and the Christ Church Grammar School which receive benefits from the help rendered to them by the Diocesan Trustees. The parent Act has become outmoded and with the passing of this Bill, it will permit the Guildford Grammar School to get 9/16th of any proceeds that may be obtained from any Church of England diocese and the Christ Church Grammar School will get 5/16ths.

For a period of 25 years, the remaining 2/16ths will be divided equally between the two schools. At the conclusion of that period the 2/16ths can be applied by the Diocesan Trustees to any other requirement that the trustees may consider necessary. This Bill has been the subject of much discussion between the two schools and they are anxious to have it proclaimed. I trust, therefore, that the House will agree to the measure.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [2.57]: The House could well agree to the second reading of this Bill. As the member for Claremont has pointed out, it affects only the two schools mentioned. The fact that there have been changes made in at least one of those schools has led to a situation which requires legislative rectification. In Committee I propose to move two small amendments which are designed only to clarify the Bill and will make no difference to its objective. I support the second reading.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [2.58]: Many Bills relating to church property are presented to Parliament from time to time for its consideration and, in my opinion, the Government would be well advised to revise the position relating to churches and their trusts in Western Australia with a view to ascertaining whether a Bill can be drafted to give the respective churches authority in their own right. The Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church—and no doubt other churches—have, so to speak, their own Parliaments

constituted in their synods and it would be much better, in my opinion, if Parliament granted authority to those organisations to allow them to deal with their own affairs.

It is unnecessary to bring before Parliament Bills which deal with church affairs which could be handled quite competently by the church itself, the members of which are elected on a democratic basis to deal with any problem at hand. The synod is often termed the parliament of a church and I would like to see vested in the synod sufficient authority to enable it to deal with its own church affairs. I think a Bill could quite well be presented to Parliament to implement the suggestion I have made. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Norton in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Section 5 repealed and re-enacted with amendments:

MR. HEARMAN: I did not know that the Minister intended to go into the Committee on the Bill today. I have not had the opportunity to place amendments on the notice paper. I am at a disadvantage in that the amendments are in the hands of the clerk, and I have not a copy of them. They are very simple.

The Minister for Lands: You could have mentioned them.

MR. HEARMAN: I do not know if it is usual to go through the Committee stage of a Bill, the second reading of which was moved only last evening. How would it be possible to get amendments on the notice paper?

The Minister for Lands: In a small Bill like this, it is usual to go through the Committee stage.

MR. HEARMAN: The Minister can take advantage of that position, but I would prefer progress to be reported. I move an amendment—

That after the word "such" in line 30, page 2, the word "proceeds" be inserted.

In the same line I also propose to move, after the word "moneys", for the insertion of the words "rents, issues and profits." The amendment seeks to clarify an ambiguity in the phraseology of the clause. In line 24 of the clause there is already reference to "all moneys". The amendment endeavours to show that the interest on such moneys will not only be the interest, but also the proceeds which might accrue from the profits. The intention is to give the people concerned the full earnings from the properties.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I could not understand from the hon. member's remarks the importance of the amendment. I do not know if he has had a discussion with the church authorities.

Mr. Hearman: I have.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Could the hon. member give the Committee some further information? At this moment the best thing to do, in order that the Bill can be proceeded with in this Chamber, is to effect amendments in another place.

Mr. HEARMAN: The amendment comes from Mr. Wickham who prepared the Bill before it was submitted to the parliamentary draftsman.

The Premier: Who is Mr. Wickham?

Mr. HEARMAN: He is chairman of the Guildford Grammar School council.

The Premier: I would have thought that he would have made some approach to the Minister who undertook the responsibility of introducing the Bill.

Mr. HEARMAN: He has not had very much time to do that.

The Premier: He has had time to see you. That is a pretty poor method of doing business.

Mr. HEARMAN: It is a pretty poor method for the Government to do business by attempting to rush this measure through.

The Premier: It is a simple measure, and it is the usual procedure to proceed with it.

Mr. HEARMAN: Mr. Chairman, would you be prepared to shut the Premier up?

The Premier: It would be more than you could do.

Mr. HEARMAN: He should not go on like this.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HEARMAN: Who are you, Mr. Chairman, calling to order—the Premier or me?

The Premier: Why don't you go on the Chair?

Mr. HEARMAN: I cannot.

The Premier: Don't put this Hitler stuff over me!

Mr. HEARMAN: As soon as I could, I gave notice of the amendments. Because the Minister does not know anything about them, in the normal process he would be able to find out. I did not have time to complete them before the meeting of the House this afternoon. This is the normal and proper procedure. It is quite wrong for the Premier to suggest—

The Premier: It is not normal and proper for an organisation to approach the Government to request the introduction of a Bill, and then for that organisation to go to a private member to have the

Bill altered without giving the Government any indication. That is most improper.

Mr. HEARMAN: I do not think the organisation concerned is doing that at all. If the Premier desires it, he can report progress.

The Premier: We will not do that.

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. member to speak to the Chair.

Mr. HEARMAN: I wish you, Mr. Chairman, would get the Premier to do the same. I hope the Minister will be satisfied that these amendments have been moved in good faith. They will tidy up the provision, should there be legal ambiguity. I do not know if the party concerned got in touch with the Minister. I do not think so because the amendments were drafted only a few minutes before the bells were rung this afternoon. Time has been against us in this matter.

I do not think there can be any objection to the amendments. I have done the best I could to conform to the normal practice in moving them. If the Minister desires to report progress, I shall be quite happy. If the Minister desires, I can arrange for the people concerned to get in touch with him. As a private member, I am quite entitled to place amendments on the notice paper. That is all I have done, especially as I have been asked to. If the Government wants to be difficult, I cannot help that. That action will not bring great credit on the Government. I do not know if I have given the Minister the answer he sought.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: First of all I would like to say that a great deal of thought and time was taken up in the preparation of even this very small Bill. Not only was the Crown Law Department involved in it, but also the Chancellor of the Diocese who is connected with a Perth legal firm. So the church itself was represented, in a legal sense, by one of its members. We had a very good look at the proposition. We thought the proposition was sound and we decided to assist.

As the Premier said by way of interjection, the normal procedure in a small Bill—unless there is an indication coming from some quarters that an adjournment is required for a special reason—is to proceed with it up to the third reading stage. That has been done in every case with a Bill of this description. After going to considerable trouble on behalf of the Perth diocese, I take a pretty dim view when those concerned have not seen fit to go back to the Government, after reconsidering the Bill, to suggest that those who were responsible for drafting the measure in conjunction with the church, should not have an opportunity of examining the amendments before they were introduced. It appears that only one member in this

Chamber knows anything about them. I am not prepared to accept the amendment at this stage.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Is there not a little confusion in this?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not on my part. I know exactly what I think about it. If it is preferred to effect amendments in another place, that can be done. I oppose the amendment.

Mr. COURT: I am amazed at the attitude adopted by the Premier. I can understand somebody being annoyed in that the amendments did not go before the Minister, but I cannot understand the Premier, who professes to be a great upholder of the privileges of private members, getting annoyed because somebody places an amendment on the notice paper.

The Minister for Works: Where is it on the notice paper?

Mr. COURT: The mover of the amendment has done all in his power to get the amendment on the notice paper. The second reading of the Bill was agreed to only last night.

The Minister for Works: What is the good of saying it is on the notice paper when it is not?

Mr. COURT: The mover did the best he could. He could do no more.

The Minister for Works: You might as well be factual.

Mr. COURT: I might be technically wrong in saying the amendment was on the notice paper. The mover did all in his power to get it on the notice paper. Let us be fair on this matter. I am amazed that the Premier has taken exception to a private member endeavouring to amend the Bill.

The Premier: I do not take exception to that at all.

Mr. COURT: The fact is that the gentleman referred to saw the member for Blackwood about the matter. He did not approach the member for Blackwood. In accordance with a promise made by the member for Blackwood, he gave that gentleman a copy of the Bill, which is a normal and legitimate procedure. All members of Parliament receive requests from interested parties for copies of Bills. It is our duty to give each of them a copy. This solicitor, I understand, is the solicitor of one of the schools involved. To my knowledge he is not the solicitor for the Diocesan Trustees.

It might be that as a matter of courtesy, he could have gone to the Diocesan Trustees or to the Minister. I do not argue that point at all. Surely a private citizen cannot be expected to know all about the procedure of Parliament! Through lack of knowledge of procedure, he gave his information to a private member. Most

private members on both sides of the House are always anxious to help anyone interested by bringing down amendments.

I must confess that I have no particular knowledge of the amendment now moved. I can only take it, as explained by the mover. On the surface it appears to be a purely legal drafting correction, necessary to remove an anomaly from the Bill. If the Minister had said that, in view of the lack of notice and the circumstances of the case, he wanted to get the Bill through today, but promised to give consideration to the amendment before the Bill was dealt with in another place, I am sure the member for Blackwood would have agreed.

The Premier: The Minister said that.

Mr. COURT: I did not hear him say it. He expressed resentment from the first. The Premier took it as a decided affront to the Government, because somebody had the temerity to mention the matter to a private member.

The Premier: I think the hon. member was not concentrating.

Mr. COURT: I have been concentrating. I was amazed at the attitude of the Premier in regard to this matter, just because a private member brings forward an amendment. Maybe it is not on the notice paper, but the mover was strictly within his rights.

The PREMIER: The member for Nedlands, as is the case with him now and then, started off by making a statement which was not correct at all. He tried to lead members of the Committee to believe the amendment was on the notice paper; but had to admit, when challenged by the Minister for Works, that it was not.

Mr. Court: You are just being difficult and trivial.

The PREMIER: He went on to say that the member for Blackwood had done his best to put the amendment on the notice paper.

Mr. Court: Which he did.

The PREMIER: What that means, I would not know. The member for Blackwood did not even supply the Minister with a copy. If the member for Blackwood was in a position to supply the Clerk with a copy of the amendment to go on tomorrow's notice paper or some other notice paper, he was equally in a position to supply the Minister with a copy.

Mr. Court: I do not doubt that he would have done so if he had been given a chance. He never expected the Bill to be proceeded with in Committee.

The PREMIER: He had the chance—and took it—of supplying the Clerk with a copy and must have had an equal, if not a better, chance—and certainly an

equal obligation—to supply the Minister with a copy. I am not criticising any attempt by any private member to move an amendment to any Bill. He is perfectly entitled to do that. But it is bad practice for an amendment to be moved to a Bill at the instigation of someone associated with an organisation when the Government, at the special request of that organisation, has drafted the Bill and undertaken the responsibility of introducing it in Parliament.

I do not know whether this lawyer—if he is a lawyer—who supplied the hon. member with this amendment had the authority of the Diocesan Trustees to do so. Unless he had full authority of the Diocesan Trustees, the Government has no right to accept the amendment, and does not propose to do so. If there is to be any amendment to this Bill from the Church of England, it should come officially from that church to the Minister concerned.

Mr. Court: It doesn't have to.

The PREMIER: Until that takes place, we have no option but to believe that this Bill, in the form in which it is now drafted, is the Bill which the Church of England wants the Government to introduce and wants Parliament to pass in this form. Until we hear otherwise officially from the church, that is our stand.

Mr. HEARMAN: The Premier seems to be trying to make a storm out of nothing. I desire to clarify my position. The second reading of the Bill took place last night; and I handed my amendments to the Clerk after Parliament met today, because I had not got them drafted previously. I went through the House looking for the Minister prior to the time of assembly in order to try to get him to discuss the matter. There was no intention on my part to put anything over the Minister; and the Premier is completely out of order in suggesting that I am trying to put any Hitler stuff over.

The Premier: That was over the Chairman.

Mr. HEARMAN: The Premier tried to put it over the Chairman. I had the floor.

The Minister for Works: Did you have any knowledge of this desired amendment before the Bill was introduced?

Mr. HEARMAN: None whatsoever. I had no knowledge other than that the Bill was coming forward. I had no knowledge of what it purported to contain. Obviously, all I could do after the second reading was to take the first opportunity to hand amendments to the Clerk; and that I did. I also looked for the Minister and could not find him.

The Premier: When?

Mr. HEARMAN: After lunch today.

The Premier: You should have had a copy passed to him as soon as the House met.

Mr. HEARMAN: I did not know that we were going into Committee; and it is not the normal procedure. I do not know whether the Premier wants to establish the procedure that any member putting an amendment on the notice paper must immediately send a copy to the Minister concerned. If he wants that to be the practice, let him say so, and let it be the practice. If not, he should not complain about it.

To the best of my knowledge this is purely a drafting amendment—and the situation which has been created arises from the decision of the Government to take the Bill to the Committee stage before there was any opportunity for amendments to be placed on the notice paper. Surely the responsibility for that is the Government's! Any inconvenience that may have been caused is surely its responsibility and not that of private members. The Premier has talked about Hitler stuff; but surely no Government is going to accept the proposition that a private member cannot introduce an amendment without telling the Minister and getting it on the notice paper first! If the Government goes straight ahead with legislation in this manner, I suggest that it is precluding private members from the right to put amendments on the notice paper.

The Minister for Works: You know that is not the point. Suppose you introduced a Bill on behalf of somebody. What would you think if an individual went to another private member with an amendment?

Mr. HEARMAN: How does the Minister know that that is what was done?

The Premier: You said so.

Mr. HEARMAN: I said nothing of the kind; and I won't be contradicted like that by the Premier. I said the person concerned represented one of the schools.

The Premier: That makes the amendment worse.

Mr. HEARMAN: It is no good—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If members will keep to the amendment we will make more progress.

Mr. HEARMAN: I did not get away from the amendment until I was encouraged to do so. I am sorry.

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

Ayes	....	....	....	....	18
Noes	....	....	....	....	25

Majority against .. 7

Ayes.

Mr. Ackland
Mr. Bovell
Mr. Brand
Mr. Cornell
Mr. Court
Mr. Crommellin
Mr. Hearman
Mr. Hutchinson

Mr. W. Manning
Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Nalder
Mr. Roberts
Mr. Watts
Mr. Wild
Mr. I. Manning

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Brady
Mr. Evans
Mr. Gaffy
Mr. Hall
Mr. Hawke
Mr. Heal
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Hoar
Mr. Jamieson
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Kelly
Mr. Lapham
Mr. Lawrence

Mr. Marshall
Mr. Molr
Mr. Nulsen
Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Potter
Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Sewell
Mr. Toms
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. May

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.
Mr. Grayden
Mr. Owen
Mr. Thorn

Noes.
Mr. Graham
Mr. Andrew
Mr. Sleeman

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—JUNIOR FARMERS' MOVEMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from previous day.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [3.28]: I have no hesitation in supporting the second reading of this measure. The first amendment is obviously desirable in clarifying the position that the representative of agriculture should be one from Western Australia. The second is to clear up the situation of a person who has been seconded from the Public Service to the Junior Farmers' Movement and to preserve any rights that may have accrued in his favour. Neither of those matters can, I think, be successfully argued against. Therefore, I have great pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn) [3.3] in moving the second reading said: Like the measure which has just preceded this one, I think that this Bill, on examination, will be found to be in no way contentious, nor should there be any division of opinion among members with regard to it. I will preface my remarks

by indicating that the Bill came to this House as a result of conferences between the Australian Workers' Union, the Pastoralists' Association and the Farmers' Union, and I would invite any member who is interested to check up with any of those organisations, because I feel quite safe in saying that unanimity was reached between those three bodies in respect of the amendments that are now before the House.

The Shearers' Accommodation Act was first passed in 1912 and has been amended on only one occasion since then, and that was in 1944. Any member who cares to examine the original Act will find that, as compared with present-day standards, it was a rather primitive measure. The 1944 amendment improved the provisions of the Act to some extent, and the Bill now before us, if passed, will still further improve the standard of accommodation under which shearers will operate in their employment.

Without explaining in full at this stage, the purport of all the clauses, I would point out that the object of the measure is to ensure improved amenities with respect to such matters as drainage around the shearing sheds, sanitation, bathing facilities, cooking facilities and sleeping accommodation. It seeks also to alter the basis of application of the Act. Up to the present, the Act has not extended to any shearing shed where less than eight shearers were employed, but this measure provides that it shall apply where there are more than four shearers employed.

With regard to the question of sleeping accommodation—I do not want the member for Bunbury to interject here—the number of cubic feet of air space provided, per shearer, is at present 360 and the Bill proposes to increase that—with respect to any huts that are built in the future—to 480 feet of cubic air space. The height of the ceilings will also be limited so as to ensure that future structures will be reasonably built. The original Act provided that not more than four shearers can be accommodated in each compartment, or hut as they are called and the 1944 amendment reduced the number to three. This Bill seeks to reduce the number further, to two, and that is most desirable because it is necessary that every possible comfort should be provided for shearers whose occupation is rather an arduous one.

Mr. Nalder: Have you ever tried it?

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Yes, and I was not a snagger, although I was not actually a gun.

Mr. Roberts: Did you say "snagger" or "dagger"?

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I said "snagger," and I would not insult the member for Bunbury by calling him what the shearers would call him. I can speak from

experience because I have shorn over 200 sheep per day. I was not wasting any time—

The Premier: You must have had a good machine.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: There was a very good man behind it, and do not forget that one has to be good. I say that in all seriousness. I was about to indicate that one of the reasons why it is proposed to reduce the number in the huts to two is that the men are tired out after a hard day's work and I have been in sheds or huts where one simply could not sleep owing to the noise from the other shearers. As a matter of fact, the snoring in the huts is sometimes such that it would drown the roar of the Serpentine Falls in flood. Accommodation such as the Bill provides for would improve the amenities of the shearers.

Mention is made in the Bill of the supplying of refrigerators. That is by agreement between the organisations I have mentioned and it is indeed a far cry from the days of the old hessian meat safe. The accommodation envisaged here is far different from that provided in the days of the slush lamp and hurricane lantern and tents or bough sheds. I repeat that the Bill should commend itself to all members. It is pleasing to note that the union and the two employers' organisations concerned have been able to reach agreement on it.

Mr. Roberts: There should be more of that.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The standard of accommodation for shearers has improved considerably over the years and if agreed to, this measure will set a standard for the future building of shearers' huts. I think I have indicated the improvements that have taken place over the years. Many employers already supply refrigerators, electric light and other amenities that are appreciated by the shearers. I have pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Nalder, debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 3.38 to 4.2 p.m.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [4.2] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill to prove democracy. I feel it will facilitate matters very greatly so far as elections are concerned and keep everything fair and square and above board.

Mr. Nalder: Have we had this one before?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No.

Mr. Nalder: It is an entirely new one?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes.

Hon. D. Brand: A new hardy annua.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This is a Bill to amend the provisions of the Electoral Act relating to postal voting. The Bill deletes the existing provisions for the appointment of postal vote officers and in lieu thereof includes provisions similar to those prescribed in the Commonwealth Act and in the Acts of other States within the Commonwealth, which make it necessary for an elector entitled to vote by post to make a written application for a postal ballot paper. It is improving the close co-operation between the various States in regard to voting.

The present system by which postal vote officers are appointed and issued with postal ballot books has been in operation practically since the inception of the electoral laws of the State and during the course of time it has been the subject of much adverse criticism. Amendments have been made by Parliament in recent years in an endeavour to tighten up the system, but nevertheless complaints have still been received by the Chief Electoral Officer as to the methods adopted by some postal vote officers in obtaining postal votes.

The position of postal vote officer is honorary and difficulty is experienced, particularly in the metropolitan area, in obtaining the services of suitable persons who can spare the time and be relied upon to carry out the duties required. At present there are approximately 1,800 postal vote officers throughout the State and as the State becomes more populous, additional appointments will be necessary. It is appreciated that a large number of these officers who give their services gratuitously, perform their duties in a very satisfactory manner and by so doing render an invaluable service to the State and to the electors; but unfortunately it requires only a small percentage of postal vote officers to act irregularly to cause the whole system to be viewed with suspicion.

With the provision for absent voting in force, postal voting may now be regarded as limited to electors who will be more than seven miles from any polling place on polling day, and to the sick and infirm; but it is in respect of the latter class that most complaints arise. A postal vote officer armed with a postal ballot book can attend indiscriminately at hospitals and institutions and the private homes of the sick and infirm for the purpose of obtaining postal votes, regardless of whether any prior request had been made by an elector or the relatives of an elector. This is one of the main weaknesses in our system and one which has brought discredit to the whole system. It is a reflection on the electoral laws of the State when postal vote officers are permitted to wait at the doors of institutions before the hour of nomination ready to attack

immediately nominations are declared. The Bill will eliminate this unsavoury practice.

The Bill provides that at any time after the tenth day prior to the issue of the writs and before 6 o'clock in the afternoon of the day immediately preceding polling day, any elector eligible to vote by post may make an application to the Chief Electoral Officer or to a returning officer for a postal ballot paper. It will not be necessary to make an application to the returning officer for the district for which the elector is enrolled and application forms will be readily available from various sources throughout the State.

Hon. D. Brand: Is this in conformity with Commonwealth Law?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, and with other State laws in Australia. The machinery clauses in the Bill set out the manner in which an application shall be dealt with and the manner in which an elector shall record his vote. There is also provision in the Bill for an elector enrolled for a province or district in the North-West area or in any other part of the State declared a remote area, who finds it difficult on account of distance, to attend a polling place, to register as a general postal voter and, in consequence, he will not be required to lodge an application for a postal vote for each election, but on each occasion a postal ballot paper will be sent to him immediately after the close of nominations. By this provision, electors in those areas should, in normal circumstances, receive their ballot papers in sufficient time to record their votes and return them before the close of the poll.

Under the existing system an elector temporarily outside the State is unable to record a vote for a State election, but under this Bill an elector is able to record a postal vote anywhere within Australia, and the authorised witnesses before whom an elector can record his vote, are defined. It is considered that the proposals will give the Chief Electoral Officer more rigid control over postal voting and will eliminate the unsatisfactory features of the present system.

This is a very simple Bill and is uniform with laws of the Commonwealth and the other States. I feel it will be better than the old system, because there will be more control and not such a possibility of forcing people—the sick and infirm—to vote for a particular political body whereas if they used their own judgment they would probably vote otherwise. Provision is made for those living in remote areas to have a ballot paper sent to them in time to record their votes, and they will not have to make application. I think the Bill provides a lot of advantages and I hope hon. members will give due consideration to these greater facilities. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. D. Brand, debate adjourned.

BILL—BETTING CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 25th September.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne—in reply) [4.13]: I must thank members for the contributions which they have made. However, I am still of the opinion that no matter what Bill is introduced, there are some minor points missed by many, if not all members and this is, in my opinion, one thing which was missed. The member for Murchison pointed out the number of fielders and so on at Port Hedland and other districts. However, while at Carnarvon I was informed that even at Port Hedland there were insufficient bookmakers to take the money offering.

The hon. member mentioned race meetings up and down the coast and the number of bookmakers who followed the normal round of big meetings. It is only natural that certain bookmakers follow these as a practice. However, no mention was made of the smaller country meetings, which I desire to cover in this Bill. I would also mention that no reference was made of any objections being lodged by the Bookmakers' Association, which I think would be the logical body to object to a measure such as this. While I provide in the Bill for a limitation of 30 miles from the G.P.O., I do so purely to be in conformity with the Licensing Act. I have no objection to the amendment forecast by the member for Dale.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee—Progress Arrested.

Mr. Sewell in the Chair; Mr. Norton in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 11 amended:

Mr. WILD: I move an amendment—

That the words "situated more than thirty miles from the Town Hall in Perth" in lines 19 and 20, page 2, be struck out with a view to inserting other words.

When the parent Act was introduced it was not envisaged that we would have a close association of the liquor and betting interests. However, we are in sympathy with those in the extreme North, and we recognise their remoteness and the fact that there are usually very few people who are able to undertake this occupation at the race meetings that are held there, probably only annually.

Mr. RODOREDA: Unfortunately I missed the second reading of the Bill, to which I am opposed. The amendment is of doubtful value because if the principle is good enough for the North-West, it should be good enough for the whole State.

I do not know that in the area of the North-West that I am aware of, there is any call for this measure. If a man runs a business, it should be enough for him, and the business of bookmaking should be left to the professional bookmakers who make their living from it.

The member for Dale is probably well-meaning, but his facts are astray in regard to the lack of bookmakers being available in the North-West. There are three North-West bookmakers who regularly travel to every meeting—they also bet at country meetings in the lower part of the State—at tremendous expense. They should be protected from a local person who has some other business. I shall vote against the amendment.

Mr. BOVELL: I am not in favour of the Bill. It only sort of encourages book-making operations as spare-time work. I remained silent on the second reading because this amendment appeared on the notice paper. The North-West suffers many difficulties, and if I can extend any privilege or convenience to people in that part of the State, I am pleased to do so. I took the voice of the member for Gascoyne as speaking for the North-West, but the member for Pilbara has now said he is not in favour of the Bill. I am not in favour of it in principle, and if it is not going to serve the North-West, I shall not support it.

The member for Pilbara said that if it is good enough for the North-West it is good enough for the whole State. I remind the Committee that the late Mr. Boylen, introduced a Bill in the Legislative Council to enable people on the Goldfields to purchase two bottles of beer on a Sunday. I was opposed to that measure but in view of the difficulties on the Goldfields I was not very strong in my opposition. On this occasion, however, I shall certainly oppose the third reading if the provisions of the Bill are extended to the whole State; and now that the member for Pilbara has stated that it will serve no useful purpose in his large electorate, I shall probably vote against the third reading anyhow.

Mr. OLDFIELD: Most members have not a first-hand knowledge as to the availability of bookmakers in the North-West and that is why only a few of us had anything to say at the second reading stage. We were prepared to be guided by members from that part of the State. Recently information has come to light that quite a number of registered bookmakers tour the North-West from July to October during what is called "the round." They travel at great expense, some of them doing quite a lot of air travel. At most of these meetings no less than six bookmakers operate.

The basic principle in the parent Act is that a bookmaker should be a bookmaker and devote his time to that profession and not be dilly-dallying with

other types of investment. For a good reason we have tried to keep bookmaking segregated from the liquor industry. I understand that the Bill has been introduced due to the fact that one person who used to be a bookmaker now holds a liquor licence and is therefore prevented from holding a bookmaker's licence. The person concerned should have thought twice and decided whether he wanted to sell liquor or operate as a bookmaker. I understand he wants to field only at Carnarvon meetings.

If we are going to introduce amending legislation to provide for people who have been debarred by virtue of the existing legislation, we will leave our laws wide open. If this right is extended to the North-West, we should extend it to the whole State.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I regret that through being a little inattentive I lost the opportunity to speak on the second reading. It had been my intention to oppose the Bill because it seems to me to have two considerable objections, the first being that it is departing from the principle in the parent Act that persons concerned in the liquor trade should not participate in licences under the Betting Control Act. The second is that it makes no limitation—except a radius of 30 miles from Perth—in respect of the area over which this proposal shall extend. Therefore, even if there were some necessity for it in the area represented by the member for Gascoyne, there is certainly none in the rest of the State outside of 30 miles from the Perth Town Hall.

On these two grounds it was my intention to speak against the second reading of the measure. When the member for Dale moved his amendment it did occur to me that it removed at least one of the objections, namely, that the measure would apply only to a limited and sparsely populated area of the State; and in this respect I subscribe wholeheartedly to the views expressed by the member for Vasse. Now we find that two members who represent areas north of the 26th parallel—the member for Murchison and the member for Pilbara—have expressed grave doubts as to whether the Bill will serve any good purpose, even in the area proposed by the member for Dale. So I am in a worse position than when I started, and whether the amendment is carried or not, I shall oppose the clause.

Mr. WILD: When I moved this amendment, I was working on what the hon. member had to say when he introduced the Bill, and I was trying to be sympathetic towards the people in the far-distant North. When the parent Act was first introduced, Parliament's intention was that liquor and betting should not be associated in any way; but, in view of the member for Gascoyne saying that at country race meetings in the North the

local bookmakers are business people and interested in the towns—in several cases, he said, they have been holders of gallon licences—I felt inclined to support it. Now I find that two other members who represent the North claim that bookmakers come up from the south to field at the meetings. That knocked the ground from under my feet and had I known it, I would not have suggested the amendment. In the circumstances, I think I ought to ask for permission to withdraw it.

Hon. D. BRAND: I agree with the sentiments expressed by the member for Dale. A glance through the second reading speech of the member for Gascoyne will show that I said by way of interjection at the conclusion, "A most undesirable measure." It was only because we wanted to help the local people in these outback areas that we felt that we could limit it to that part of the State. Yet we find the members of Murchison and Pilbara opposing the Bill. I should like to hear the member for Kimberley speak on the question. Also I hope that the member for Dale will withdraw his amendment.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I would like to see the amendment withdrawn and then the whole Bill defeated. I spoke in opposition to it on the second reading, and my reason for so doing was that I am of the opinion it would be the thin end of the wedge to enable those who have liquor licences to apply for registration as bookmakers. Consequently, I strongly oppose the Bill. The parent Act specifically states that the board shall not grant a licence to a person who holds, or who is employed in any capacity by one who holds, a licence for the sale of liquor under the Licensing Act.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I move—

That the Chairman do now leave the Chair.

Motion put.

The CHAIRMAN: The ayes have it.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Divide!

The CHAIRMAN: A division is called for.

Bells rung and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	.....	16
Noes	.....	22
Majority against	.....	6

Ayes.

Mr. Ackland	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Court	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Owen
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. W. Manning	Mr. I. Manning

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Evans	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Gaff	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Graham	Mr. Norton
Mr. Hall	Mr. Nuisen
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Potter
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Watts
Mr. Johnson	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. RHATIGAN: I cannot agree with my colleague, the member for Gascoyne, on this Bill. Unfortunately, I was out of the Chamber just prior to his replying to the debate, otherwise I would have indicated my opposition at the second reading stage. There are five race meetings a year in my electorate and bookmakers travel from the city, and at least one or two who do the meetings up there live in Geraldton. Their expenses are heavy and they stay at the hotels during the race meetings. I certainly do not agree that any person who holds a liquor licence should also hold a bookmaker's licence in the North or anywhere else.

Mr. WILD: I would like to hear from the member for Gascoyne before I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Mr. NORTON: A case has been made out for those towns which run a sequence of race meetings at certain times of the year. Admittedly, there are four bookmakers who do that run, but they are only part-time bookmakers. Two of them are in shearing teams and another has three taxis running in Perth. They are certainly not professional bookmakers, but they go North for the spring round. Nothing has been said about outback places such as Landor, or other places where they have small meetings. The Bill has been introduced to cater for those people.

The member for Mt. Lawley inferred that the Bill had been introduced on behalf of only one person. From his remarks I gathered to whom he was referring, but I would remind him that that man has had a gallon licence for many years, and he held a bookmaker's licence for years. If this Bill is passed, it will help to keep money in the northern towns. If the bookmakers had any objection to this they could have stated their objections through the Bookmakers' Association. As far as I can find out, no official objection has been lodged by that association. Therefore, I shall press on with the Bill.

Mr. WILD: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and negatived.

Title—put and negatived.

Mr. BOVELL: I move—

That the Chairman do now leave the Chair.

Mr. Oldfield: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, does not the vote apply to the previous question?

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the member for Mt. Lawley that the Bill is finished.

Motion put and passed.

The Chairman accordingly left the Chair and the Bill lapsed.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1957-58.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 3rd October, Mr. Sewell in the Chair.

Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £1,169,080:

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [4.47] I propose to give the Committee some information regarding the expenditure of the Public Works Department and the Water Supply Department. The activities of these departments have been considerable and the expenditure forms an extremely large part of the State budget. Under the heading of Public Works and Buildings the estimated expenditure is £1,169,080, which shows an increase of £52,717 compared with the actual expenditure for 1956-57.

The expenditure in connection with the North-West has again been included in the vote for the Minister for the North-West—under Division No. 54. There are certain items which were previously included in the Public Works division and I will give those items which are now also to be found under Division No. 54. They are—

- (a) Country Water Supplies, Sewerage, Drainage and Irrigation, Incidentals, Operating Expenses and Interest and Sinking Fund.
- (b) Salaries and Allowances.
- (c) Incidentals.
- (d) Repairs and Maintenance North-West Harbours, etc.
- (e) Additional Watering points, Kimberley Cattle Stations.
- (f) Northern Australian Development Committee Expenses.
- (g) Refrigeration Plants—North-West Operating Expenses.
- (h) Additions, Repairs and Maintenance of Public Buildings, N.W.

Those items make up a total expenditure of £321,650, provision for which previously was made under the Public Works Vote, but now it is to be found under Division No. 54.

Mr. Nalder: How far north in the North-West does that apply? North of the 26th parallel?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. The gross amount provided on last year's estimates for Division 22 was £295,600 and the actual expenditure was £327,076. The rebates estimate for 1956-57 was £77,120 and the actual amount recovered was £77,886. The net expenditure for 1956-57 was therefore £249,190, compared with the net provision for that year of £218,480. The reason for the actual expenditure exceeding the estimate was the increase in salary margin and the actual payment of arrears of the increased margins covering the 1955-56 year.

The gross amount provided on the current year's estimates is £321,700 and the estimate of the rebates is £81,020, leaving a net provision of £240,680, or a decrease of £8,510, compared with the net expenditure for 1956-57. In addition to the above, the following provisions for Public Works Department salaries are made elsewhere in Division No. 54 at page 103, in the estimates for the North-West.

Under that division the estimate for the current year is £21,300, compared with an expenditure of £18,747 for last year. Under Division No. 59, on page 114 of the estimates, comes Country Water Supplies, Sewerage, Drainage and Irrigation and the estimated expenditure on those items for the current year is £189,500, compared with an actual expenditure for 1956-57 of £181,400.

Although the drafting staffs have been separated, the sun-printing and plan mounting branch still does work for both departments, but the Public Works Department continues to find the officers' salaries. So, for the services rendered for the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department there is provided an amount of £2,400.

In regard to the Main Roads Department, the amounts to be claimed for work performed by the Public Works Department officer attached to the drafting, sun-printing and plan-mounting section and also the amounts to be claimed for clerical assistance rendered by the accounts office of the Public Works Department total £31,000. This is in addition to the salaries of the staff of engineers and clerks employed exclusively by the Commissioner of Main Roads. These officers are paid from the funds of the Main Roads Department.

I think the item of Contingencies requires a little explanation. The estimated total expenditure from the various contingency items—as distinct from salaries—for the year 1957-58 is £928,400, compared with the actual expenditure of £867,173 for 1956-57, or an increase of £61,227. Various salary items or incidental expenditure appear in the estimates, but I do not intend to take up the time of the Committee in dealing with them.

Reference will be found in the estimates to the operating expenses in connection with the north and south slipways at

Fremantle. These show an increase of £4,042. This item includes provision for the salary of the dockmaster and the Public Works Department's staff which will be rebated to the Public Works salaries vote to the extent of £4,200. The anticipated increased expenditure will result in increased revenue if the anticipated additional servicing of vessels eventuates. The member for Bunbury will be particularly interested in Item 10 which sets down the costs of the dredging and harbour maintenance at Bunbury. The estimate is one which I would think would catch his interest straight away.

Hon. D. Brand: They would not do much dredging for £1,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Actually, there is nothing for dredging. This item would catch the interest of the member for Bunbury straight away because he would expect a far larger sum to be provided. It is very probable that that amount will be exceeded, of course, but that depends upon when the dredge will become available. There is more work to be carried out at Bunbury than can be expected to be done this financial year.

Mr. Court: You referred to a large item of contingencies a while ago. Could you indicate where that item is in the estimates?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, it is on page 48. Actually, no provision has been made for dredging in 1957-58 in the revenue estimates, although the dredge, "Sir James Mitchell", will be carrying out departmental maintenance dredging in 1958. The cost of this dredging will be charged initially to a Public Works Department, Works and Sales Account and any amount not recouped by the Bunbury Harbour Board will be considered as to whether it should be charged against revenue.

I consider that some explanation is required by the Committee in connection with additions, repairs and maintenance to public buildings generally and for reasons already given these will exclude the North-West. The amount for 1957-58 is £525,500 against an actual expenditure of £529,557 in 1956-57, or a decrease of £4,057. This item now includes provision for school desks and furniture. Until the 1953-54 financial year, these items were provided under the Education Vote and farm buildings previously came under the Department of Agriculture Vote. Decreased provision will, of course, result in decreased maintenance work being carried out.

Mr. Court: What was the reason for the change in the appropriation of the expenditure?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was considered to be more appropriate under the heading of the department which actually did the work, because the P.W.D.

erects these buildings for other departments, and its maintenance staff attends to repairs and maintenance. It was considered more appropriate that the expenditure should be charged to a vote specially set aside for that purpose.

Mr. Court: It does create an anomaly. The P.W.D. is really carrying out a service for another department. It would appear that the other department's vote is less than it really is.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, according to the way it is viewed. Although buildings are used by other departments, they are built by the P.W.D. in the first instance from funds provided under the P.W.D. architectural vote. There is nothing anomalous in charging against the vote set aside for that purpose sums necessary for the maintenance of those buildings. I can see the hon. member's viewpoint.

Another item of interest is No. 16, Other Revenue Producing Works. The estimate for 1957-58 is £9,000, but the actual expenditure in 1956-57 was £9,116. There is a decrease of £116. Practically all the transactions represented under this item are related to land grading in irrigation districts. A minor matter is the roading of dam catchments in the agricultural areas. Operations for 1957-58 are anticipated to be much the same as for 1956-57. As all work under this item is carried out for private individuals, a reduction in expenditure necessarily means a reduction in income.

Dealing with the revenue collections side, I desire to give this information to the Committee. It is anticipated that the amount of public works revenue which will be received in 1957-58 will be £280,000 compared with £288,392 actually received in 1956-57, or a decrease of £8,392. Most of this is under the heading of "Supervision" which is affected by outside work. To give some idea of how this sum is made up, I wish to quote a few items, although not the lot, because I have no desire to put before the Committee unnecessary details.

The revenue from slipways is estimated at £65,000 for the current financial year, as against actual collections in the last financial year of £66,806. Scaffolding fees are expected to yield £20,000, as against actual collections of £18,559 in 1956-57. Supervision fees are estimated to bring in £116,800 as against actual collections of £121,905. So it is clear that these estimates are a little on the conservative side, and I am pretty confident they will be realised.

Division 59 on page 114 deals with country water supplies, sewerage, drainage and irrigation. This division is a combination of two separate divisions provided in 1956 and 1957. Country area water supplies was Division No. 58 and other

hydraulic undertakings Division No. 59. The total estimated expenditure for 1957-58 is £1,441,812, compared with expenditure of £1,405,756 in 1956-57, or an increase of £36,059. The provisions in the Revenue Estimates for this division are divided into three sections covering (a) country water supplies, (b) country towns sewerage, and (c) country drainage and irrigation.

The estimated expenditure on country water supplies for 1957-58 is £1,205,802, compared with actual expenditure for 1956-57 of £1,184,709, or an increase of £21,093. In connection with this section, Item, 1, Salaries and Allowances, the estimate is £148,690, as against actual expenditure in 1956-57 of £145,416. Included in that estimate is an amount of £700 which is payable annually to the Government Stores Department for services rendered. The balance of £147,990 is that part of the total salary of the Public Works Department which it is considered is a reasonable charge against country water supplies. The amount has been adjusted following a complete review, and allowing for increments generally and staff appointments.

Under the item of Operating Expenses-Reticulated Schemes, there is an estimate of £978,520, compared with actual expenditure in 1956-57 of £933,665, or an increase of £44,855. The amount provided covers all reticulated and operating water supplies, including the former Goldfields Water Supply. The increase is due to the necessity to pump more water; the natural growth of services; special maintenance in particular areas and the addition of new water supplies.

The greater length of pipeline in the southern section of the comprehensive scheme, and the major reticulation of new farm lands in the northern section requires more money in operating costs. Increased expenditure resulting from the pumping of more water and new schemes coming into operation will, of course, be reflected in increased revenue.

Provision has been made for payroll surcharge to cover payroll tax, workers' compensation, long service leave, sick leave, public holidays and annual leave. A percentage—at present 12 per cent—is levied on wages and credited to a trust account at the Treasury, and against this trust account actual payments are charged when made.

Item 4, Operating Costs of Other Hydraulic Undertakings, shows an estimate of £57,770 as against the actual expenditure in 1956-57 of £90,929, or a decrease of £23,199. This item covers such operations as investigations, surveys, maintenance of dams, boring investigations, tanks and wells, stock routes and trucked water. It is anticipated that less money will be required for trucked water, minor country water supplies, and dams

and catchments. The cost of pumping, etc., on the Wellington-Narrogin main has for the year 1957-58 been brought into the item for reticulated concerns. Provision has been made for payroll surcharge to cover payroll tax, workers' compensation, public holidays, and annual leave.

For 1957-1958, provision has been made for a full year's transaction of the Northam sewerage scheme which was taken over during the previous year. The Collie town sewerage scheme will commence to operate during the current year. This will further increase expenditure and operating costs. It is doubtful if funds allocated will prove sufficient. The extension of activities, although increasing expenditure, will also increase revenue receipts. Provision has been made for payroll surcharge to cover payroll tax, workers' compensation, long service leave, sick leave, public holidays and annual leave.

Item 12, Operating Expenses on Revenue Producing Concerns, shows an estimate for 1957-58 of £150,300, as against actual expenditure of £147,174 for 1956-57, or an increase of £3,126. This amount provided is for all drainage in irrigation districts which operate as such, and where rates are levied and charges made. The number of waterings taken by irrigationists is increasing and drainage districts are being extended. Rehabilitation of drainage and irrigation works is being carried out progressively. Any increase in this expenditure, which brings new properties into rating, will increase revenue receipts.

Under Item 13, Operating Expenses—Non-Revenue Producing Concerns, there is an estimate of £26,600, against the actual expenditure in 1956-57 of £21,001, or an increase of £5,599. The funds provided under this item cover the cost of works, mainly drainage in areas where rates are not levied; for example, Herdsman's Lake, Preston River levees, and also drainage surveys and river gaugings, and Murray River investigations. The increase for 1957-58 is accounted for by the proposed increased expenditure mainly of surveys and gaugings, and on Murray River investigations. Provision has been made for payroll surcharge to cover payroll tax, workers' compensation, long service leave, sick leave, public holidays and annual leave, as in the other cases I have already mentioned.

The estimated revenue for 1957-58 for country water supplies, sewerage, drainage and irrigation is £1,022,375, compared with actual collections in 1956-57 of £894,416, or an increase of £127,959. The total estimated collections for 1957-58 and the actual collections for 1956-57 are allocated in the following way:—

Estimate 1957-58—	£
Water supplies	887,380
Country towns sewerage	34,875
Drainage and irrigation	101,120

The original estimates of water supply revenue put forward by the department envisaged the collection of £787,380 based on existing prices. This original estimate was segregated as follows:—

	£
Mines Trust and other mines	176,000
Country lands services, excluding Commonwealth services	62,500
Metropolitan water supply	30,000
All other services	518,880

In anticipation of increased prices, the Treasury Department added £100,000 to the total estimated water supply collections for 1957-58. Based on the original estimate of collections for water supplies, there was an anticipated increase of £21,114 due to approved higher rates and new water supplies coming into operation.

Hon. D. Brand: What are the increased prices anticipated?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In those districts where they are not on the maximum rating, it is anticipated there will be a lifting to the maximum.

Hon. D. Brand: Northam, for instance?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would not say that it would go to the maximum rating, because it is considerably below that. But it could be expected that there would be an increase in the rates at present obtaining. The extent has not yet been decided.

Mr. Court: There will be a further increase from any adjustment in valuations, won't there?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. The Public Works Department has taken over on behalf of the Harbour and Light Department, from the Railway Department, the maintenance of the wharves at Geraldton and of the jetties at Busselton and Esperance. This accounts for £30,000 of the overall increase in item 8.

Under "harbours and rivers maintenance," provision has also been made to the extent of £9,000 for the removal of viaduct, and breakwater repairs at Geraldton; and £1,000 has been set aside for dredging at the Barrack-st. jetty. Additional funds are being made available to improve the condition of the Swan River by way of cleansing, and further funds for the repair of the Avon River weir at Northam.

A sum of £33,000 has been provided for the completion of No. 2 berth at Albany, and £83,000 for jetty improvements and dredging at Bunbury. Under the heading of "General," there is an amount of £104,000, making provision for expenditure of £65,000 on the 600-ton slipway at Fremantle, and £16,500 on the 2,000-ton slipway.

An amount of £82,000 is being provided for additions and improvements to jetties, tramways and rollingstock in the North-West. Other amounts set aside are as follows:—

	£
Point Samson—improvements to handling facilities	14,700
Derby jetty and goods shed	12,500
Onslow foreshore protection	2,000
Carnarvon flood protection	4,500
Port Hedland jetty and goods yards improvements (special funds provided for extension)	23,000

Minor improvements will be carried out at Wyndham, Broome and Onslow, and provision has been made for the purchase of three locomotives.

Mr. Court: Does your reference to the Public Works Department taking over the jetties at Esperance and Busselton foreshadow local harbour boards?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No decision has been made yet regarding that matter. Under the heading of "Public Utilities, Country Water Supplies, Sewerage, Drainage and Irrigation," on page 113, an amount of £1,441,812 is shown. Item 3 dealing with the operating expenses of the reticulation schemes, shows an amount of £978,520, an increase of £44,855.

The increase is due to the necessity to pump more water; continuous growth of services; maintenance; and new water supplies. The operation of the new pipeline from Wellington Dam to Narrogin, and lately to Pingelly, as also the major reticulation of new farmlands in the northern section of the C.A. and G.S.T. water supply schemes are drawing more heavily on operation funds. Increased revenue will be received from this work.

On the comprehensive water supply scheme, the expenditure has been about £5,500,000, and the State expenditure was approximately £200,000 more than that of the Commonwealth. In this connection I would refer to the recent decision of the Commonwealth to agree to lift the annual limit which previously obtained in connection with the subsidy being made available. The State Government made representations several times to the Commonwealth, pointing out that the Commonwealth legislation which limited the annual subsidy was retarding the progress of the comprehensive scheme very considerably and in an unfair way.

Mr. Crommelin drew attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was explaining that the Commonwealth Government had lately made a decision to remove the limit which had been imposed on the amount of annual subsidy being made available to the State in connection with the comprehensive water supply

scheme. I am very glad that this decision was made, because it now means that the full amount of money which the State is able to set aside for expenditure on the comprehensive scheme is matched £ for £ by a contribution from the Commonwealth.

Previously if the State spent more than the annual subsidy made available by the Commonwealth—and it invariably did so during the term of this Government—then we were in difficulties the following year because the amount of unpaid subsidy which was due for the previous year was taken into consideration when the amount of subsidy for the following year was paid, and therefore the amount of actual cash available to the State was reduced to that extent.

For example, if the State spent £100,000 more than it received in subsidy from the Commonwealth the previous year, and the subsidy was £462,500—and that was the amount—then £100,000 would be deducted from the £462,500, leaving only £362,500 available in Commonwealth money for the work of that particular financial year.

If the State did no more than match that expenditure, a very considerable slowing down of work resulted. But if the State maintained the same rate of progress that it was able to carry out the previous year, its financial position at the end of that year was far worse than in the current year because there was a still greater amount of money lagging, and it would be deducted from the subsidy available for the next year. It took a good deal of argument and time before the Commonwealth agreed to see the State's point of view and lift the limit on the subsidy. I am very pleased to say that we are now able to proceed without any hindrance in that direction.

Mr. Court: Now that disability has been removed, what increased rate of progress will result this year? It is not reflected in the Loan Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will not very substantially increase the rate, but the same very satisfactory rate of progress as was achieved the previous year will be maintained. It could not have been maintained at all if the Commonwealth had adhered to its policy, because it was having the effect of slowly but surely slowing down the tempo of the work since it called more and more upon State funds each year. That position has been rectified, and the burden is not so great upon the State to maintain the rate of progress previously achieved.

I think it must be freely admitted that there is now a complete absence of protest from the districts to be served by the comprehensive water supply scheme, whereas in other years we were never without them. I can remember almost

week after week members raising their voices in the Chamber about the slow progress on the main to Narrogin. Figures were quoted to show that the yearly achievement was very poor indeed. But I have not received any protest, nor seen any, over the last two years, from any district where the pipeline is proceeding. On the contrary there has been nothing but commendation from, firstly, Narrogin; secondly, Pingelly; and now, from Wagin and Katanning.

Mr. Mann: And, I hope, Brookton, by and by.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will not be very long.

Mr. Mann: Thanks very much.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Although the scheme is not yet to Wagin, it is not very far off, as the member for Wagin knows; and it is within measurable distance of Katanning. The Government made a promise that it would be in Katanning by June, 1958. The progress to date has been such that I am very confident we will beat that target by a very considerable length of time—probably several months.

The Minister for Transport: What a Government!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This speed would certainly not have been maintained if the Commonwealth had not agreed to remove the annual limit which was previously imposed upon the amount of the subsidy. While it was there, the State was struggling to find funds to maintain the rate of progress which it had achieved and desired to maintain. Katanning is in the unfortunate position that the rainfall there has been very light this year and the storage is very poor. We have had to impose at this early period, before the summer has actually commenced, severe water restrictions on the town, restrictions which I am afraid threaten the existence of the gardens of the people, the bowling greens, and so on. There is nothing much we can do about it as the water simply is not there and if restrictions were not imposed, the town supply would cut out long before it will be possible to get the comprehensive scheme there.

In considering the situation of the town, the department has stepped up its work on the pipeline in a very necessary endeavour to cut down the time that it would otherwise take to reach Katanning with the pipeline. I think the people of Katanning will be very happy with the result that will be achieved, providing nothing goes wrong in the meantime to interrupt the supply of steel plate for the manufacture of the pipes.

Hon. D. Brand: Would that hold up the progress?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the plate did not come forward as ordered and as promised, we would not be able to get the pipes from our contractors and the work would be held up.

Hon. D. Brand: That is what held up the work on the Narrogin pipeline.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, it was not. The Leader of the Opposition has put his foot in it properly there.

Hon. D. Brand: No, he has not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If given time to explain, I will show how he did so. On the 9th August, 1951, as reported at page 75 of Hansard of that year, Hon. A. R. Jones, on behalf of Hon. A. L. Loton, in the Legislative Council asked the Minister for Transport the following questions:—

(1) How many miles of the main pipeline from Collie to Narrogin have been completed?

(2) How many miles of pipeline have been delivered but not connected?

(3) Is there sufficient steel on hand to complete the Collie-Narrogin section?

(4) Have tenders for the supply of electrically-driven pumps for this section been accepted by the Government. If not, why not?

(5) At what date does the Government consider that the supply of water from Collie to Narrogin will become an accomplished fact?

That was in the period of the McLarty-Watts Government—and the Minister replied—

(1) Thirty and one-quarter miles.

(2) One mile.

(3) No.

(4) Tender of Kelly & Lewis Ltd. has been accepted.

(5) Time required for completion of main depends on the availability of steel plate, and no firm estimate of date of completion can be given.

At the very time that those answers were being given, the McLarty-Watts Government was cancelling contracts for the supply of steel.

Hon. D. Brand: From where?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: From Great Britain.

Hon. D. Brand: Why?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You supply the answer, because you were in the Government. I am only stating facts. It was you who had no steel to go on with the pipeline.

Hon. D. Brand: No, because we had no money to buy steel from Great Britain at the exorbitant price we had to pay for it, and there was much more important work to be done with the money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But you let the contracts and when you were telling the people of Narrogin that you had no steel on hand for the job, you were cancelling contracts for the supply of steel.

Hon. D. Brand: For the simple reason that we could not afford to buy the steel at that price.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am simply stating the facts of the matter.

Hon. D. Brand: They are not facts. We did not have the steel or the money to buy it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You had just as much money for the purpose as I have had available to my department, but we have not cancelled any contracts for steel. What we did was to channel the bulk of the money for use on water supplies.

Hon. D. Brand: Have you had to import any steel from overseas?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Hon. D. Brand: What price would you have had to pay for it if you did?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not stating a hypothetical case; I am dealing with the facts.

Hon. D. Brand: What are you paying for Australian steel?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know we have to pay £90,000 more than we budgeted for on the Serpentine scheme, because, despite the fact that B.H.F. made a £7,000,000 profit last year, it has put the price up. The Leader of the Opposition cannot argue that the steel was not coming forward. This all arose because I stated that providing there was no interruption in the supply of steel plate—I said nothing about money—this work would go ahead to schedule.

Hon. D. Brand: And so it should.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh! Of course, we could cancel the contracts the same as the hon. member did, and then it would not go ahead—

Hon. D. Brand: Why would you cancel them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The work you brought to a standstill on that main should not have been brought to a standstill and would not have been if you had not cancelled the contracts for steel.

Mr. Roberts: Was Australian steel available at that time?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What has that to do with the matter? The point is that the Government was proposing to go ahead with the comprehensive plan and it had ordered steel to enable it to proceed, and then it told the people that it had no steel and while it was telling them that, it was cancelling contracts for the supply of the steel.

Hon. D. Brand: Because we had no money to pay for the steel overseas.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was the situation. I do not know why the ex-Minister for Works keeps on harping that he had no money.

Hon. D. Brand: If I wanted to copy anyone in harping, I would only have to copy you over the last four years.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I told the ex-Minister when he was making all the promises from this side of the House about what he was doing at Kwinana, that he would not have the money, but he pooh-poohed the idea. He should look up Hansard and refresh his memory. At that time he stated that the Treasurer had assured him that there would be plenty of money available.

Hon. D. Brand: When did you say that about Kwinana?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When the Bill was going through this House—I think it was about 1951.

Hon. D. Brand: It was March, 1952, and you have been quoting August, 1951.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is less than 12 months difference there. You were satisfied that you were assured in March, 1952, that you had the money, when in August, 1951, you did not. As a matter of fact, your financial position was worse in 1952 than in 1951. How do you square that up?

Hon. D. Brand: That is so; it was worse.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: During the debate on Kwinana, you assured me that the Treasurer had advised you that that there would be ample money and yet you cancelled contracts for steel in 1951—you say because you did not have the money. For the life of me, I cannot reconcile those two statements. I repeat, Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition has put his foot in it over this question.

Hon. D. Brand: You have convinced nobody.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Let me come back to the progress being made on the comprehensive scheme with no more funds available in this connection than the Leader of the Opposition had. We have been able considerably to step up the work on the northern and southern sections of the pipeline; so much so that there has been no dissatisfaction expressed anywhere with what is being done—

Hon. D. Brand: In the four years you have had, you should have covered some ground.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We certainly have.

Mr. Bovell: With the help of whom?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I suppose it has been with the help of Almighty God.

Mr. Bovell: And of the Commonwealth Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know where the hon. member has been for the last half hour, but I have been endeavouring to show that the annual limit which the Commonwealth imposed upon its subsidy was retarding the progress of the work, and let me add that it was deliberately done for that purpose.

Hon. D. Brand: Goodness gracious! Don't be stupid!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Do you doubt it?

Hon. D. Brand: Very much.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am in the fortunate position of being able to produce a letter from the Prime Minister, in which he said that.

Hon. D. Brand: What did he say?

Mr. Roberts: Produce the letter.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Like a rabbit out of a hat.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There will be an opportunity on Tuesday for me to produce this letter. I have not the file here.

Hon. D. Brand: What do you say the Prime Minister said?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He stated in his letter that the reason why the annual limit was imposed upon the subsidy was because Commonwealth policy required it, as it was necessary for public works to be retarded. I will produce that letter on Tuesday.

Hon. D. Brand: Very well.

The Minister for Transport: I think the Opposition had better keep quiet. It is getting into hot water.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The Prime Minister is having extreme difficulty in raising funds and if he did not provide you with money from revenue, you would be in a hopeless position.

The Minister for Transport: There is plenty of money for the Snowy River scheme and many other things.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Prime Minister never at any stage in our negotiations stated that he did not have the funds.

Mr. Court: You seem almost disappointed that he has taken the lid off it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am pleased that the Leader of Opposition came in on this question.

Hon. D. Brand: No, you are not. You wanted to get up and spout about what you had done in comparison with what we did.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Are we not entitled to?

Hon. D. Brand: In the four years you have been there and with the money you have had, and in view of the work we did, you should have made progress.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: And in view of all the materials we left.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The work you did?

Hon. D. Brand: You have nothing to crow about.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And the member for Murray now pipes in about "all the material." Unfortunately, he was not in the Chamber when I charged his Government with deliberately depriving itself of material.

Hon. D. Brand: Have you ever heard such nonsense?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: His Government deliberately deprived itself of the materials.

Hon. D. Brand: He says we cancelled the overseas orders for steel.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At the time Parliament was being informed that he did not have the steel to proceed with the comprehensive water scheme, the then Premier was cancelling contracts for the supply of steel.

Mr. Bovell: We have been through all that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but the member for Murray has not.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Why was he cancelling contracts?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Murray would be in a better position to answer that because he was the Premier.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: If the Treasurer has not the money, he cannot pay, can he?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Will the ex-Premier explain how in 1952 he was able to assure his Minister for Works that there was ample money to do all that was proposed at Kwinana and yet he was apparently so short of money that he had to cancel steel contracts? I think the member for Murray will have to take time off to answer that one.

Mr. Bovell: Has not the Commonwealth Government given special grants for the comprehensive scheme?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No special grant except what is required under the legislation in relation to the comprehensive scheme. The Commonwealth Government did agree to subsidise us £ for £ up to a total of £4,000,000 commitment on its part. Now I am glad to say—contrary to what the member for Nedlands believes—it has decided to increase its commitment, £ for £, up to a total of

£10,000,000, and that is the estimated cost of the comprehensive water scheme.

Mr. Bovell: You must give the Commonwealth Government credit for doing that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I give full credit for that, and I also give it credit for at last removing the annual limit which it had previously imposed on the subsidy.

Mr. Bovell: I wanted you to admit that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is no difficulty at all for me to admit it and give the Commonwealth its just dues.

Mr. Roberts: It is a good Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That does not prevent me from complaining that it deliberately slowed up work in previous years, and that is what led me to make the promise, which I will carry out, to produce the letter in which it was stated. It was a most amazing stand for the Commonwealth to take, but apparently it believed that the economy of Australia required that procedure even though it did not apply in the Eastern States.

Mr. Bovell: It did not have the loan funds.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Now we are getting the same story again.

Mr. Bovell: Loans were under-subscribed at that time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Commonwealth did not raise that point at all. Had the Commonwealth said to the State Government, "We are sorry we cannot match your expenditure on this scheme; we cannot keep up with you because we are short of money," we would probably have laughed about it, but we would have accepted that statement. But the Commonwealth did not put that forward as its reason. It put forward as its reason the necessity to slow up public works.

Mr. Bovell: Naturally they would be slowed up if it did not have the money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so, but it did not slow them up in Victoria.

Hon. D. Brand: Didn't it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. There was no slowing up of Commonwealth expenditure in connection with the Snowy Mountains scheme.

Hon. D. Brand: Are you sure?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Hon. D. Brand: There was a slowing up.

Mr. Bovell: I do not want to defend the Commonwealth Government but you must give credit where it is due.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think the Commonwealth is entitled to credit for imposing a limit on the annual subsidy, the result of which was to throw an additional burden on the State.

Mr. Court: Why can't you accelerate the work now? Wouldn't that be possible now the Commonwealth has agreed to reimburse you on a more equitable basis?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am surprised at that question coming from the member for Nedlands, who is an accountant. The State set itself out to step up the rate of progress on that scheme and achieved a rate which, in all the circumstances, was regarded as satisfactory; because there are other Ministers in the Government with departments to administer who expect to get some portion of the funds available to the Treasurer.

Hon. D. Brand: The Minister for Housing took his on one occasion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are not prepared to allow the Minister for Works to have all the cake.

Hon. D. Brand: That could have been so in my time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Leader of the Opposition had just as much of the cake as I had.

Hon. D. Brand: Oh, no!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh, yes!

Mr. May: And a bit more of the icing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Within the limits of the funds available to me, I have been able to achieve what has been generally regarded in the country as a satisfactory rate of progress. I would like to accelerate that, if possible, but I can do it only at the expense of other works in other departments, and I believe we have already reached the limit without State expenditure. As we were up against the annual limit of the Commonwealth subsidy, I was most reluctant to slow down with the work on that scheme, but it looked as if I would be forced to do so, because the position was getting progressively worse every year to the extent that the State spent more money than it received in subsidy. The position became worse, and subsequently, had the Commonwealth not changed its policy, it would have reached the stage where I would have spent in the previous year, the following year's subsidy.

Mr. Court: I think you missed my point.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. The hon. member wanted to know why I did not achieve more work on the comprehensive scheme.

Mr. Court: You are allocating less State money and I would have thought that the Commonwealth Government, when it adjusted the reimbursement, would have had arrears to catch up which would have given you more money this year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I spent £200,000 more of State money last year than I was entitled to get under the limited subsidy. That would mean that a further £100,000 could be expected from the Commonwealth to cover that £200,000 worth of work. That is State money already spent, and having been spent, it is no longer available. Now, I will receive that £100,000 from the Commonwealth, which was lagging, and on top of that such State funds as the Treasurer is able to make available to me for the purpose. As we previously strained every nerve to attain a certain tempo on the comprehensive water scheme, I am struggling to maintain that, and I will not go back. We have speeded up on the pipeline to Katanning, and when we get there, I think it will be proved that we have speeded it up and accomplished more work. But the target is to maintain the same rate of progress as we were able to achieve last year, which we think, in all the circumstances, is highly satisfactory.

Mr. Court: Would it be correct to say that you could achieve the same rate of progress this year as last year with slightly less money than you spent last year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, that is true.

Mr. Court: In other words, if you spent the same amount, you could go faster.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But I would have placed myself and other people in difficulty by being obliged to spend more State money last year than we had budgeted for, because the basis on which we were proceeding required more money than would have been available from the Commonwealth and State combined. In order that the work would not slip back, we had to use money which in ordinary circumstances would not have been available for the job.

It could not be expected that we would maintain that because other work that is held up must be done, and for that reason we will not go much beyond the work we set out to do. But we are keen to maintain the schedule that we were able to achieve. The North Kellerberrin extension was completed in March, and the supply position at Waddouring Reservoir was made safe. The Cunderdin-Minnivale main-laying is proceeding.

Hon. D. Brand: Are the pumping stations for that area being ordered?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; all the necessary machinery in accordance with the plan set out to improve the pumping capacity and meet the requirements of extended pipelines has been placed on order.

Hon. D. Brand: What is the cost of the pumping station?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot say off-hand. Pingelly has been provided with water from the Wellington Dam, and work is in progress in the laying of the Narrogin-Katanning main, which calls for an expenditure of £468,000 this financial year. No less than £355,000 will be spent on the Cunderdin-Minnivale main. Reticulation north of Kellerberrin on the Yorkkrake spur is estimated to cost £58,500 this year, and the provision of a main southward from Merredin to the West Narembreen tank will cost £62,000. Substantial renovations are to be carried out on the Kwolyin extension at a cost of £20,000, with a further £18,000 allocated for similar work on the South Doodlakine and the South Tammin extensions.

Funds have been provided to the extent of £318,500 for the renovation programme for the Goldfields Water Supply enlargement of mains and work generally on that scheme. That is made up as follows:—

	£
Renovations	87,400
Enlargements	57,300
Improvements to town water supplies	20,000
Improvements Goomalling extension	19,000
Improvements York-Beverley extension	41,000
Salmon Gums area catchments	14,600

The towns of Bridgetown, Cranbrook and Mt. Barker have been provided with new supplies this year, and small extensions of reticulation at Williams are to be opened shortly.

Hon. D. Brand: Are there any other country towns to be reticulated in this financial year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We expect that we might be able to open up Wagin most certainly this financial year—maybe this calendar year. We will be at Katanning this financial year.

Mr. Mann: When do you expect to complete the Brookton area?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is a leading question.

Mr. Bovell: In the case of townships like Augusta and Flinders, it is only a matter of doing something about it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is only a matter of getting a few pounds. The hon. member seems to think there is no difficulty about that.

Hon. D. Brand: That was not a reason but an excuse.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I thought the hon. member had enough on that subject without trying to bring me back.

Hon. D. Brand: No, I have not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then he is a glutton for punishment.

Mr. Johnson: He does not understand the subject.

Hon. D. Brand: I understand it twice as well as you do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Leader of the Opposition wanted to know whether there were any other schemes coming up. I can appreciate his interest because they have been very frequent. I am pleased to be able to say that we have other schemes coming up. I have just referred to the Williams scheme which I will have the pleasure of opening in a few days, and before long the Lake Grace scheme will also be opened.

Mr. Nalder: Dumbleyung?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Hon. D. Brand: They have had water at Dumbleyung for a long time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No less than £237,000 has been set aside for country towns water supplies. The main items are: Geraldton £33,000; Lake Grace £50,000; and Albany £37,000. Operating costs for other hydraulic undertakings under Item 4 are £67,730, a decrease of £23,199. This item covers such operations as investigations, surveys, maintenance of dams, boring investigations, tanks and wells, stock routes and trucked water.

Hon. D. Brand: Will you be able to take advantage of any vacated railway tanks along the Wongan Hills line for the purpose of reticulation?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We are in the process of taking over a number of railway water supplies which are no longer required by the railways. Country towns sewerage items have increased because of salaries. The department is always hard-pressed to maintain existing works from revenue—I am referring to drainage and irrigation works—which this year is expected to require £100,121. The works programme will provide in the Collier district for the extension of facilities to increase the present irrigation area from approximately 29,000 acres to more than 40,000 acres. A settler is entitled to irrigate one acre of every three acres of holding.

Irrigation works in the Harvey district carried out during 1956-57 have completed the extension of facilities to serve a district area of approximately 37,000 acres. Drainage improvement works have been carried out in the Lake Saide-Nenamup area for the benefit of potato growers. The current loan programme provides for an expenditure of £340,000 on irrigation and drainage works, and the raising of the Wellington Dam will entail an expenditure of £250,000 this financial year. Major expenditure will be incurred to the extent of £60,000 on the Collier main channel enlargement.

Mr. Bovell: Is any consideration being given to the Preston River irrigation project?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Is the hon. member really searching for information? Is he throwing a spanner in the works or does he want to create a brawl?

Mr. Bovell: No, not any of those three things.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think the hon. member should persist with that question.

Mr. Bovell: It is a district which I have represented for a long time, and I have a close interest in its progress.

Mr. May: Accept the brawl.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It won't affect Busselton anyhow.

Hon. D. Brand: Why not?

Mr. Bovell: I cannot quite follow the Minister's reply to my interjection.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member knew as much as I know, he would. He should talk quietly to the member for Blackwood, who might enlighten him.

Mr. Bovell: I am referring to the Preston River area and the Boyanup-Elgin districts.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I refuse to be drawn, but will say this in connection with the matter, for the information of the hon. member: No firm decision has yet been made, nor can be made until certain experiments, being carried out, have been completed.

Mr. Bovell: That is fair enough.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member is more easily satisfied than I thought he would be.

Mr. Bovell: It is something to work on, and I am going to make inquiries into the experiments to see what they are.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the true position.

The Minister for Education: So long as the Government is doing something towards that end.

Mr. Bovell: It is always doing something.

Mr. Roberts: Even if it is bad.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In connection with the Metropolitan Water Supply Department, I refer to an item of expenditure of £1,104,900, which is an increase of £91,642. This department has embarked upon a major project to serve the metropolitan area and look after the expected growth in the population which must take place. The department is engaged on the construction work in connection with the dam on the Serpentine. The pipehead dam has been completed and will store something in excess of 800,000,000 gallons. The pipeline is well

on the way and is as far as Forrestfield. It is expected to be down to Victoria Park towards the end of next year.

Water will be available from the pipehead dam to feed into the mains in the Fremantle area and it is expected that, no matter what the temperature or conditions, there will be no necessity to impose restrictions upon people south of the river, nor do I expect that we will be obliged to have restrictions on the consumption of water in other parts of the metropolitan area. It will depend on conditions, because we experience some difficulty in high levels and when the draw is abnormally high it may not be possible to bring down from the hills a quantity of water sufficient to meet demands.

However, most certainly by the end of next year when the pipeline comes down to Victoria Park and we are able to connect up with the mains on that side, there will be an adequate supply of water to meet requirements in the metropolitan area. If the construction of the Serpentine Dam is completed in accordance with schedule, that scheme should look after the requirements of the metropolitan area for the next 20 years.

The main Serpentine Dam will have a capacity of 39,000,000,000 gallons, which is roughly double the size of Canning Dam. Some idea will be gathered from that comparison as to the magnitude of the dam we are constructing. Last week Cabinet approved of the work on Stage 2 proceeding, and Stage 2 is the construction of the main dam.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: When that work is completed, are you able to say at this stage whether any water will be available for irrigation; that is, a limited supply?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think it is quite likely that a limited quantity will be available.

Mr. Ackland: At the end of 20 years, where do you expect to get the next supply of water from if you have absorbed all the water in the dams you have now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Thought has been given to that question. However, it is not likely to worry me.

Mr. Ackland: It should be planned ahead.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is true, and it is being planned. We will probably have to go further afield as the population grows in the metropolitan area. It is possible we will have to go further into the South-West portion and pipe our water longer distances. I think it is very well known that unless some economic process is discovered to desalt water, the water supply will be a limiting factor for the growth and development of this State.

Mr. Ackland: That is obvious.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We are not happy about the water supply position generally, because we have such a long dry summer and even towns which experience a considerable rainfall, are in trouble and will, in fact, this summer be in trouble.

Mr. Ackland: Have you given any consideration to encouraging people in the metropolitan area to find their own supplies?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, quite a lot of consideration has been given to that question, but there is more involved in it than is obvious on the surface. It would take far too much time to explain the position, but briefly we must first recognise the quantity of water in the artesian basin in the metropolitan area is not limitless and a heavy draw on that would soon result in a shortage of supply from that source.

Mr. Ackland: Won't it percolate to where it came from?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, it does not; the position is not as simple as that. If we bring up 10,000,000 gallons and pump it on the ground, 10,000,000 gallons will not go back.

Mr. Ackland: I never suggested that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The reason is that we lose a tremendous quantity of water by evaporation and much of the water put upon the top of the ground and that which we conserve in our dams, is lost in the air. I am advised that there is a very definite limit to the quantity of water available in the artesian and subartesian basins, and that is why we are careful in considering applications from people who desire to put bores down in the subartesian area. People cannot just do that, because we are drawing on it ourselves for our supply.

Members will know that some bore water is now mixed with pure water to meet the needs of the metropolitan area, and if we gave unrestricted right to people to draw on that subartesian water, we could leave ourselves short of the water which we require to augment the hills water supply. If there were an unlimited quantity of water in the artesian and subartesian basins, the proposition would be more attractive. There is also the financial aspect. Everybody would not be in a position to put down bores, and the only way to encourage them to do this would be to leave them free of water rates.

Then we would be in this position: When there is a number of people in a street who could not be expected to put down a bore, they would want a supply of water from the department, and the people in the same street who would be

prepared to put down a bore would expect not to be rated. We would still require the same length of main and the same capital costs would be involved in establishing dams, but we would reduce our revenue potential to such an extent that we would be obliged to put the rates up for those people who were forced to take supplies from the department.

Mr. Ackland: Most places already have a main, and it would not be necessary to increase it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The same policy would have to be applied to new districts as to old ones. The new districts would have no mains, and we would be up against the problem of not having sufficient money if we reduced the amount of rates received from the old districts in order to allow people to put in their own supplies. The department would be that amount of revenue short and would be obliged to recover the shortage by increasing the rates of the users.

Mr. Heal: The only advantage of a bore is that you do not use excess water.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was referring to the Serpentine scheme which has been designed to look after the requirements of the metropolitan area for a considerable time, and I mentioned that the pipeline was almost to Forrestfield and it was expected that towards the end of next year it would be down towards Victoria Park. It was then suggested that we should encourage consumers to put in their own water schemes in order to save the draw on the department's supplies. I intimated that there was not time to go into the question thoroughly, but briefly it was not attractive because revenue would be lost and also because there was not a limitless supply of water in either the artesian or the subartesian basin.

Mr. Court: The point is that in a few years' time you will be more concerned about the availability of water than the financial side of it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I believe that will be so.

Mr. Court: Does not that make it worth while to consider the proposition that if people put in their own water supply they would be put on a lower rate?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I feel the present policy is the wiser one to follow now, and that is to develop our storages in order to meet the maximum draw. If we reach the stage where we find difficulty in providing water, I have no doubt the Government of the day will hold out inducements to people to use less water or put in their own supplies. But I come back to this point that there is a limit to the amount of water

which can be taken out of the ground, and the department is already drawing heavily on that source of supply.

In the time of the Leader of the Opposition a bore was put down in my electorate, and it is used to augment the supply of water to the Attadale, Palmyra and Bicton areas. The department wishes to conserve that source of supply of water and does not consider it is wise policy to encourage a lot of private consumers to draw on it. It would be a different matter if the supply were considered to be more than adequate, but it is not.

Hon. D. Brand: The bore you are referring to is a subartesian bore going down to a depth of about 3,000ft., while the water we envisage being used by a domestic housewife is subsurface water at 30ft. or 40ft.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but there is even less of that than of artesian water.

Hon. D. Brand: But this source of supply, refilled each year after the winter rains, could be used by those consumers who put a well down in their backyard.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The officers of the department have had a good look at the question of following that course, but they do not recommend it. The pumping expenses on the metropolitan supply have increased considerably, due mainly to extensions to new areas—largely State Housing Commission areas. Operating expenses have increased by £50,466. The operation of new drainage areas necessitated increased expenditure amounting to £5,646. Additional operating expenditure will be incurred through the operation of the new Serpentine main and the Serpentine pipehead dam. The growth of the department and the age of some of the older sewer mains makes necessary substantial expenditure on these works.

Increased revenue is derivable from water main extension, new sewerage and drainage areas and from reviews of rating. The revenue we expect this year is £2,140,000, or an increase of £137,065. Provision has been made in our Loan Estimates for this year, for £1,430,000 to be expended on metropolitan water supplies, and the actual expenditure in 1956-57 was £1,252,000. Of these amounts £38 for 1956-57 and £1,000 for 1957-58 relate to the Kwinana area, the provision for the current year being for settlement of land resumption claims.

Reverting to the Serpentine scheme, expenditure during 1957-58 will amount to £900,000 and will enable the continuance of construction of the 48-inch main from the Serpentine pipehead dam to ensure a supply of water as far as Forrestdale, by November of this year, and to Victoria Park by November, 1958. It is proposed to make a commencement this financial

year with the diversion stream—the Serpentine stream—preparatory to the construction of the main dam. An amount of £120,000 is included to enable the commencement of, and sufficient progress with, the 42-inch trunk main in time to supply Serpentine water to the Mt. Yokine reservoir by November, 1958.

The availability for consumption of much additional water from Serpentine will be lost unless this main can be constructed on time. The provision of £91,000 has been made to extend an adequate water supply to the high level Mt. Yokine-Nollamara area where some 300 houses exist and where a further 500 will be erected by the State Housing Commission during 1957-58.

A total of £158,000 is required for minor extensions, improvements and reticulation in State Housing areas. This sum includes an amount of £106,000 for reticulation main extensions, and £52,000 for the State Housing areas of Nollamara, Cloverdale, Mt. Pleasant and elsewhere. The sum of £160,000 was expended for this purpose during 1956-57.

On sewerage works, a total of £271,000 has been included in the 1957-58 Estimates. The amount spent in the year 1956-57 was £180,000. The current year's provision includes the following:—£150,000 for the Subiaco treatment works amplifications so that an immediate start will be made with improvement by installing secondary treatment, using the high-rate activated sludge process; £43,000 for the West Midland rising main extension and permanent pumps to relieve the overloading of the Guildford main sewer occasioned by current connections at West Midland and the contemplated connections of the railway workshops during 1957-58; and £28,000 for the Inglewood area 53 sewerage reticulation facilities to a built-up area at present unsewered and subject to wet conditions, and £25,000 for requisite minor sewerage extensions within sewerage areas.

The sum of £185,000 was spent on drainage during 1956-57 and the amount included in the current estimates is £98,000, which provides for main drainage respecting work in progress, £60,000 for the Bentley-Welshpool area and £36,000 for the Victoria Park-Carlisle scheme. New works amounting to £34,000 at Bayswater and South Belmont are also provided for.

In connection with the Main Roads Department the expenditure on works carried out in the financial year 1956-57 was £8,381,000, which was the highest figure on record for the department, as was also the mileage of roads that received bituminous treatment. Altogether, 487 miles of road were primed and 674 miles were either sealed or re-sealed with bitumen. In addition, some thousands of miles were either cleared, formed, gravelled or stabilised. The average work force employed by the department was also the highest on record

in the postwar period and altogether 1,725 men were employed on works covering the whole of the State.

Of major importance in the history of this State was the letting of a contract for £1,325,000 for the construction of a concrete bridge over the Swan River at the Narrows. Work on this structure is proceeding satisfactorily and the Main Roads Department is handling the design and construction of the extensive road approach system. For the current financial year, a programme of works involving upwards of £6,500,000 is in train, the proposals providing for the priming of 409 miles and the sealing or re-sealing of 445 miles of main and rural roads. These figures do not include the bituminous treatment proposed on road sections to be widened or given a bituminous enrichment.

In the North-West part of the State the Main Roads Department has again planned expenditure on a large scale. The proposed allocation of petrol funds in this area for the year 1957-58 is £745,390. The contributory bitumen scheme operating between the Main Roads Department and the local authorities is being continued and in the current year, in addition to general allocations, a total amount of £150,030 has been provided by the Government for bitumen work on a 50-50 basis in 46 local authorities' areas.

Financial provision has also been made during the current financial year for the construction of roads to serve new land settlement areas, including the large area being developed in the Esperance region. Road construction is proceeding, I think it must be conceded, very satisfactorily and our road surfaces are favourably commented on by visitors from other States. I do not think we are making any fantastic claim when we say that Western Australian roads are second to none in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Court: How is the 50-50 bitumen scheme working out?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Remarkably well. We are very pleased with it and the response from local authorities has been excellent. Forty-six local authority districts have taken advantage of the money available under that scheme.

Mr. Court: Has it produced any disparities between the road districts with regard to the work done?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I suppose it must be said to have resulted in some local authorities being able to construct a greater mileage of roads as compared with some of their neighbours, because some have taken advantage of the scheme and others have not, but I do not think that can be said in any way in disparagement of the scheme. The scheme is one which local authorities have welcomed and which they have taken advantage of in many instances.

Mr. Nalder: Does not the Main Roads Department generally do the work?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but the local authorities find half the money involved in the work, on a 50-50 basis.

I desire next to make a short reference to the State Electricity Commission, which also comes under my control. During the last financial year the commission brought into operation the first unit of the Bunbury power station and completed the work on the No. 15 boiler at the East Perth power station. As the result of that, the commission is now in a position to meet all normal increases in the demand for electricity. The construction of the next two 30,000 kilowatt sets at Bunbury is proceeding satisfactorily.

The two metropolitan stations are now interlinked with Bunbury and the Collie power station and the Wellington Dam hydro electric plant. This has given the commission additional security of operation. At the same time, the commissioning of the first unit of the Bunbury power station will increase the capital charge to be borne by the commission to the extent of about £260,000 per annum. The commission's accounts, subject to audit, disclose an overall profit of £103,065 on the operations for the 1956-57 financial year. The metropolitan section showed a total profit on its electricity and gas operations of £187,690. The country undertakings showed losses but at this stage those losses are to be expected in view of the nature of those undertakings—

Hon. D. Brand: Are you referring to the South-West scheme and Albany?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. It is argued from time to time that there should be a flat rate for electricity in town and country. As a matter of fact, for commercial purposes there is a flat rate. The current being made available in the country is at the same price as that in the city, so metropolitan consumers are making a substantial contribution already to the cost of current in the country.

To repeat those figures, the total profit for the year on electricity and gas operations in the metropolitan section was £187,690, but when we take losses in the country districts into consideration, that profit is reduced to £103,065, so there we have a subsidy of something over £80,000 which metropolitan users are paying towards the country consumption of electricity. That is something which should be borne in mind by those who claim that not sufficient consideration is being given to the needs of country people and the need to reduce their costs.

Hon. D. Brand: That rather replaces the £72,000 subsidy.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, instead of the Treasury bearing the cost of the subsidy, the metropolitan consumers are paying it. The increased interest rates charged by the Treasury cost the commission £120,000 per annum. These higher

charges, together with increases in margins and the basic wage have been carried by the commission without any variation in the tariff of electricity or gas.

I think it is pertinent at this stage to mention that, despite increases in the cost of coal which took place until the recent agreement was signed, and despite increases in the basic wage and the provision of margins and increases in other costs, there has been only one increase in the price of electricity and gas during the life of this Government and that was in the first year of its office, when the increase was .01d. per unit. Despite those increases in costs that have taken place since, we have been able to continue to supply the consumers of electricity and gas in this State without any increase in the cost, and I think that is a noteworthy achievement.

During the 1957-58 year, the commission estimates that it will operate at an overall profit of £88,000. Some savings in fuel costs will be offset by higher capital charges and other cost increases. During the year the commission will carry on with normal increases to its high tension and low tension systems to meet the demand for electricity from domestic, industrial and rural consumers. Work will commence on the second 132,000 volt line between Bunbury and Perth. In addition, it is hoped to build a high tension line from Collie to the Great Southern area. The work of changing the frequency of the metropolitan system from 40 to 50 cycles is nearing completion. It is estimated that only 5,600 consumers now remain to be changed over. More than 90 per cent. of the units from the metropolitan power stations are sent out at 50 cycles.

Mr. Nalder: What progress is being made with the extension from the South-West to the Great Southern?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member must know that that work is proceeding and extensions are being made as they are economically possible; but they are limited by the amount of funds available to the commission. Unfortunately, the loan which was recently on the market was considerably under-subscribed and one must take heed of that. Unless the funds are forthcoming for developmental purposes, the commission will inevitably be forced to reduce the volume of work which it desires to undertake.

Before I conclude I want to prove a couple of statements I made earlier. I made reference to the fact that when the debate was taking place on the Kwinana establishment, I raised the point with the then Minister for Works, now the Leader of the Opposition, as to where the money was to come from. He assured me that there were no worries on that score. That was early in 1952; and yet a few months before the Government had cancelled contracts for steel, and we were informed

this evening by the Leader of the Opposition that that was because the Government had no money.

During the tea suspension I had an opportunity to find the reference in Hansard. I intend to read it so that the Leader of the Opposition can see that what I said was correct. In order that he can check it for himself, I shall quote from Hansard No. 3 of 1951-52 at page 1968. The Leader of the Opposition, who was then the Minister for Works, was speaking in connection with the Bill, and I asked him how he was going to get the money, and this was his reply—

That is a question which might be asked year by year. The Premier has told me that we may optimistically face up to the expenditure that must be met over the three years, especially that relevant to the agreement made with the company.

My reply to that was—

I wish he would tell us.

At that stage the Leader of the Opposition had no worries about the shortage of money.

Hon. D. Brand: He had plenty.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He was proposing to undertake this great task and now he interjects, "We had plenty." How can he, during the same evening, say that he had plenty of money and then advance an argument that the cancelled contracts prevented him from proceeding with the comprehensive water scheme, and that the contracts were cancelled because he did not have any money? When I chided the Leader of the Opposition with the fact that the progress made by the McLarty-Watts Government with the comprehensive water scheme was a very poor effort, the Leader of the Opposition said that the reason was they had no money. Yet within the last 20 seconds he says that they had plenty of money. I leave the Committee to work that one out.

Hon. D. Brand: I said I had plenty of worries about money.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You do not really believe that our effort was a poor one.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Which statement am I to believe?

Mr. Ackland: Was not the real reason for the cancellation the fact that the cost of the steel from England was excessive?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know, but the Leader of the Opposition said earlier that because he did not have the money—

Hon. D. Brand: We did not have the money to buy steel at £100 per ton.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Why did you let the contract in the first place?

Hon. D. Brand: For the simple reason that we were working on a programme of £25,000,000 of loan money at the time and it was cut to £17,000,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So it was a question of money.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: All the States were in the same boat.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So it was a question of money.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: There was a cut in the amount of money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yet a few moments ago the Leader of the Opposition said that he had plenty.

Hon. D. Brand: Plenty of worries.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: The Minister is wilfully misunderstanding the Leader of the Opposition.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A little further on, dealing with the same subject—because when one is on a good thing one should stick to it—

Mr. Johnson: Is money a good thing?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —the Leader of the Opposition, who was then Minister for Works, on the 12th March, 1952, at page 1967 of Hansard, said—

Therefore at this stage, at the beginning of the journey, we have to take certain risks, and certain risks we have taken. Unlike the member for Melville, I believe the Government, with the co-operation of the people of the country and the willingness of everybody to work to that end, should be able to meet its obligations and commitments.

He was not worried about any shortage of money; he was quite confident that if the people worked, and we were optimistic we would meet our commitments and obligations.

Hon. D. Brand: I said we had to take that risk and it has proved to be all right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At the very time the Leader of the Opposition was taking a risk, he slowed work on the comprehensive water scheme down to a walk because he cancelled the contracts for steel, and left himself without it. Dealing with the same subject, I had drawn the then Premier's attention to the fact that the Commonwealth had stated it was embarking on an austerity plan. What I had to say on the matter, on the same debate, can be found on page 1958 of Hansard, the 12th March, 1952. I said—

The Premier will not smile at the statement I am about to read regarding the Commonwealth Government, as follows:—

The Cabinet is planning an austere Australia in the next 18 months on the theory that by

1953-54 there will be stability unless a major drought or a world catastrophe intervenes. The Federal Government has already decided that it will not guarantee the loan programme next year.

That was said at the time when the Leader of the Opposition was optimistic about the future and was prepared to take risks.

Hon. D. Brand: Thank goodness, we have some optimists about the place!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But one needs to have a sound basis for one's optimism.

Hon. D. Brand: It was well based, as events proved.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Leader of the Opposition, as Minister for Works, was so short of money that he had to cancel the steel contracts.

Hon. D. Brand: We got Kwinana and the water supply scheme.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The reason why the Commonwealth Government placed an annual limit on the subsidy made available for the comprehensive water scheme was because the Commonwealth Government did it deliberately. When I was challenged on that matter, I said I would prove it by quoting from a letter written by the Prime Minister. At that stage I did not think I would have the opportunity of getting the file so quickly; I thought I would have to wait until next Tuesday to quote from it. But we have a pretty efficient organisation and we can spring to it where necessary.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Before the tea suspension, you did not think you were going to talk as long as you have done.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We might as well have the full story so that the Leader of the Opposition, who is not aware of the position, can be properly advised.

Hon. D. Brand: I should know; you have told us three times tonight.

Mr. Ackland: The Leader of the Opposition looks forward to it with anticipation.

Mr. Court: I think it would be quicker if the Minister tabled the file and we could go through it next week.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would not be nearly as effective.

Mr. Lawrence: Does the Leader of the Opposition think that Kwinana is a success?

Hon. D. Brand: I have an idea that it is. What do you think about it?

Mr. Lawrence: The Leader of the Opposition should go and have a look for himself.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have so many letters from senators and members of the House of Representatives and members of the Rural Water Committee that it is not easy to locate the letter on this file.

Hon. D. Brand: I thought that this matter was so important and the file would be so dog-eared that you could pick it up at any time. Did the Prime Minister write only once?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, and we did not write only once either.

Hon. D. Brand: I suppose you are clearing up some of the misunderstanding about Dr. Evatt.

Mr. Lawrence: We will put him in the satellite; that is what we will do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Mt. Marshall has a very good knowledge of this letter I am seeking, because he introduced a deputation to me and it was then that I read it to him. It surprised a number of those people who accompanied him at the time.

Hon. D. Brand: Read the full letter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot read it until I find it.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That does not say much for your efficient organisation.

Hon. D. Brand: Well, come on!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Leader of the Opposition should not get the impression that it is not here.

Hon. D. Brand: Read the full letter when you do find it.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Read us another one while we are waiting.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As is well known, Mr. Chairman, the estimates provide an opportunity to deal with all those matters that enter one's mind.

Mr. Roberts: Read through the file until you come to the letter that you want.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am sure that if I had the opportunity and the inclination to read the whole of the file, it would do the Leader of the Opposition a great deal of good.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: It wouldn't do your voice any good, though.

Mr. Court: The Minister for Transport is getting anxious; he is afraid you might start.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will lead the Committee up to the letter. To the deputation to which I have referred, I quoted from a letter that was sent from the Premier to the Prime Minister, dated the 4th April, 1955. This letter was inquiring as to the prospects of the State Government borrowing money from the British Government following a suggestion by the United Kingdom Chancellor of the Exchequer that money might be made available to assist developmental schemes

in Australia having as their objective the increased production of food for export to Great Britain.

The reason I mention that is to indicate that we were most anxious to get the maximum funds available in order to enable us to proceed with this scheme. As the Commonwealth had deliberately limited its subsidy to us, we thought that it would perhaps help us to get the money in this way. To the letter forwarded by the Premier on the 8th August, 1955, the Prime Minister replied that the Commonwealth was prepared to increase its contribution from £2,150,000 to £4,000,000 subject to certain conditions. But the Commonwealth limited the amount to be made available during 1955-56 to £618,796, and during succeeding years to a maximum annual contribution of £462,500.

It was also stated that the Commonwealth Government was unable to agree to the request that Western Australia be paid immediately the balance of the Federal share of the estimated cost. The Prime Minister added that his Government would seize every opportunity to obtain loan funds overseas but that any money so raised would have to be applied towards the general loan programme and could not be allocated in total to Western Australia.

I then pointed out to the deputation that the Prime Minister's decision was most disadvantageous to Western Australia. Firstly, the comprehensive water supply scheme could not be completed at a cost of £8,000,000 and therefore the State would be obliged to meet the whole of the cost in excess of £8,000,000. That decision has now been rectified because the Commonwealth Government has decided to increase the amount to £10,000,000. Secondly, we had intended to make every possible effort to ensure the completion of the comprehensive scheme by June, 1960, at the latest, and to do this a total expenditure of approximately £1,400,000 per year would be required.

We had planned to make such progress with the work this year as would have brought the total expenditure on the scheme to £4,670,000, which amount would be £370,000 more than the original estimate. This would have involved a payment from the Commonwealth this year of £185,000 over and above the amount to which it was already committed and would have required it to make available to us £866,796 this financial year. It has, however, limited its payment to £681,796, and this can have no other result than to effect a reduction in our programme for this year.

I then suggested to the Premier that he again communicate with the Prime Minister pointing out the retarding effect on the comprehensive scheme of the decision to limit payments this year and also to request assistance on a £ for £ basis.

for the whole cost of the scheme, namely, £10,000,000. The Premier wrote to the Prime Minister accordingly and received a reply dated the 15th September, 1955, declining to increase the Commonwealth contribution of £681,796 for the current financial year. Also the Commonwealth was not prepared to increase the annual limitations advised in the Prime Minister's letter of the 8th August, 1955. This decision was very disappointing.

Hon. D. Brand: Give me the file and I will find it for you.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am afraid the Leader of the Opposition will not because the file has been divided into two parts, and I have the wrong part here.

Hon. D. Brand: Your efficient organisation does not function after 5 o'clock, that is the trouble.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am afraid we will have to wait until next Tuesday after all, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. D. Brand: Will the Minister for Transport get the call now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Maybe.

Mr. Court: As a matter of interest for the Minister for Transport, I will undertake to raise the matter on Tuesday so that the Minister for Works can read the letter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is nothing like whetting the hon. member's appetite, because there will be more satisfaction later on. I had hoped there might have been a second copy of the letter on this file, but the file has been divided into two parts and the letter does not appear to be here.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We do not doubt your honesty of statement. The only thing is that you are inclined to get led astray so often.

Hon. D. Brand: Can we not proceed with the debate, Mr. Chairman?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On the 4th July the Premier wrote to the Acting Prime Minister, Sir Arthur Fadden, in connection with this matter, and said—

Being most anxious to make good progress with the comprehensive water supply scheme, towards the cost of which your Government has agreed to contribute on a £ for £ basis up to a limit of £4,000,000, my Government has planned to spend £570,000 on the project this financial year out of the Loan funds available to it, with a view to providing for an expenditure of the scheme comparable to that which was expended during 1955-56. However, your Government's decision to limit its annual contribution to £462,500 will mean that the funds available for the work will be £107,500 less this year than last year.

My Government has accorded the highest priority to the comprehensive water scheme and, as a consequence, other urgent works have necessarily been deferred. It is therefore clear that it will be impossible to allocate from State Loan funds an amount greater than the £570,000 which was provided for 1955-56.

The need for the water scheme is so great that it would be deplorable if the rate of construction achieved during 1955-56 could not at least be maintained, and I therefore request that your Government reconsider its decision to limit its contribution in any one year to £462,500 and agree to contribute on a £ for £ basis up to at least £570,000. If your Government could see its way clear to do this, the total sum available for expenditure on the scheme this financial year would be equal to that expended during 1955-56.

I am very pleased to say that, following a reconsideration of the matter, the Commonwealth Government saw the wisdom of permitting the State to proceed, and it lifted the limit it had previously imposed. I apologise to the Committee for not being able to produce now the original letter of the Prime Minister but I again give members an assurance that it does exist on the other section of the file, and I will produce it on Tuesday next.

Mr. Ackland: Can you give us the approximate amount the Government will spend in the metropolitan area and the country areas this financial year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot give the exact figures but I am safe in saying that more will be spent in the country this financial year than in the metropolitan area.

Progress reported.

BILL—METROPOLITAN (PERTH) PASSENGER TRANSPORT TRUST.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [8.16] in moving the second reading said: By no means can this be called a very small Bill; in all, there being 58 pages. At the same time I express the hope at the outset that it will not be a controversial Bill so far as its main principles are concerned. There may, however, be room for considerable difference of opinion in the matter of certain detail. This measure embodies probably the most important decision made by a Government of Western Australia in respect of passenger transport.

If it becomes law, it will give effect in broad terms to the accepted practice in the capital cities of the other States of the Commonwealth and the cities and large towns in other parts of the world of an alternative to a system of multi-operation, which I do not think can be regarded as satisfactory in the long term, and I am having regard to the present situation and the tremendous growth and development of the greater metropolitan area. If that is accepted—and I shall say some more in connection with this presently—then there will be several alternatives open to a Government which shapes up to this question. One would be the formation of a trust or union of all of the existing operators, each one to have a share in that organisation.

That course, I hasten to say immediately, was not welcomed or endorsed by the operators. Secondly, there could have been a Government departmental set-up. In other words, the Western Australian Government Tramways becoming the sole operator—it being used as the foundation and the other services being attached to it. I do not think that that would appeal to the majority of members as being a satisfactory approach to the question. The third alternative is that of an independent authority created by Parliament, charged with a certain responsibility and clothed with powers to take over existing operators and operate the service itself; and, what is perhaps basic to this proposed set-up, that it should be as free as possible from political control.

Apocryphal of that point I have on another occasion said something in connection with the Western Australian Government Railways, namely, that a great deal of the trouble confronting that government instrumentality, can be sheeted home, not as I say to its own commissioners although I do not exonerate them, but to political decision. If members will listen to my remarks, and if they make a close study of the Bill, they will see that there is a minimum of political interference. It will not be found anywhere, if the proposed trust comes into being, to be subject to the Minister; it will be given a charter by this Parliament. Perhaps the only controls exercised will be on the part of the Treasury, and this is inescapable, by way of making funds available to the trust from time to time; and, of course, Parliament itself will be able to measure up any situation which may develop.

Mr. Nalder: Is it expected that the trust will pay its way?

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: We can have all these niceties later on. Let us learn about the trust first. The present position is that of all the operators in the metropolitan area conducting the regular passenger services—that is in the main, conveying people to and from work, and shoppers from and to their places of residence—there are 12 in number. Of that

number some, but a very few, are doing exceedingly well; some are doing moderately well; others are just able to make the distance; whilst there are some at the other extreme who are in dire financial straits.

In one or two cases, indeed, it has been to me as Minister for Transport almost a wonder that they have been able to continue up to the present time. So far as one of the larger operators is concerned, I understand it is conducted more or less on a week-to-week basis. The Government is standing by in case the worst happens, which, of course, nobody wants. I venture to suggest that were it not for the prospects of this trust being formed, the concern I have in mind would by now have been out of business.

It is interesting to pay some regard to the trend of affairs over the past few years in the metropolitan area. We might inspect the figures for the years from 1951-52 to the year ended the 30th June, 1956. The latest figures are not available from all the concerns, and accordingly that is the most recent date for which full information is available. During those five years the population of the metropolitan area has increased by about 50,000 but the number of patrons of the metropolitan passenger transport system has not been reflected in this increase in population. So far as private operators are concerned, the number of passengers carried by them in the aggregate has been getting less and less each year.

In the year 1955-56 the number of passengers was 4,700,000 less than in the earlier year 1951-52. The Fremantle Municipal Transport Board operating in its zone during that period experienced a falling off of 340,000 passengers per annum; and the Government Tramways Department experienced a falling off of 5,200,000, so the total falling off for the combined services in the metropolitan area amounted to over 10,000,000 passengers. In the year 1951-52 there were approximately 80,000,000 passengers carried by our road transport system, but in the year ended the 30th June last that number had fallen to 70,000,000 passengers per year. So we can see what is happening.

That experience is not confined to Perth, Western Australia. I have before me a cutting from "The Sydney Morning Herald" dated the 2nd October, 1957. It says—

Government transport services carried 87,000,000 fewer passengers during the past financial year, 16,000,000 fewer on the railways, and 71,000,000 fewer on trams and buses.

I repeat that that is the trend. It is true that the metropolitan railway system has carried more passengers, and over the period mentioned earlier the number of passengers has increased by approximately 3,000,000. But if we place that opposite

the falling off of the road services in the metropolitan area, that still leaves—notwithstanding an increase of 50,000 in the population of the metropolitan area—7,000,000 fewer passengers carried on all forms of metropolitan transport.

The answer is, of course, this: During that same period the number of motor-cars registered in the metropolitan area increased from 37,000 to 67,000. It would appear that here in our own State, as in other parts of the Commonwealth and in other parts of the world, more and more people are choosing to use their own private means of transport. So it has been found in very many places that in respect of public transport services—let us be fair, whether owned individually or by a number of operators, or whether they be conducted by a single operating authority, governmental or municipal—the patronage on a percentage basis per capita of the population is falling. But in addition in Perth, not only is the percentage falling but also the numbers.

That interests me to a very great degree so far as traffic problems entirely removed from those of public transport are concerned. In order to meet the situation, it must have been evident, particularly over comparatively recent years, that something had to be done about rationalising the public transport system. The metropolitan area has been divided into a number of zones, and there are seven of them. There was a hope that certain adjustments and modifications between operators would be made; that they should have their own spheres of influence; that as districts extended in the locality, so the services would be extended to cater for the need, instead of an entirely new operator coming in, or one adjoining cutting across the territory already served by an existing operator.

So far as I am concerned, I have noticed no practical results from that conception. There have been attempts made by certain of the operators, with the assistance of the Transport Board on occasions, to see if it might be possible to bring about amalgamations between certain of the private operators. Again, the efforts—and I criticise no one—have proved unsuccessful and we are confronted with the position we have today, which is the same as 10 years ago, only in a more aggravated form.

Certain steps have been taken by this Government in recent times for the purpose of enabling the bus operators to continue until this matter is resolved by Parliament. It might be recalled that there was—perhaps belatedly—an attempt made to introduce legislation last session, but it was not to be. Therefore, in the interim, certain steps have been taken. Members will recall that when the Traffic Act was before Parliament for consideration, the wheel tax—a small matter but indicative of efforts—previously imposed upon passenger vehicles was removed.

Members will also recall the doubling up on licence fees on diesel-operated vehicles. After the legislation became effective, I requested the Transport Board to reduce the maximum tax, which was 6 per cent. imposed on the gross takings of the bus operators, to 4 per cent., and where operators were paying less than the maximum amount their tax was reduced so that they would have returned to them—or rather be granted—a concession at least equal to the increase caused by the double licence fee imposed by Parliament last session. Therefore, none of that increased burden was borne by any of the operators.

In addition to that, the percentages have been reduced in other cases, and we have the position today where the amount of tribute being paid to the Transport Board is as low as 1 per cent.; as low as one-half of 1 per cent. and as low as nil; and in one case a subsidy is actually being paid monthly to enable a concern to continue. That gives some idea that the Government is alive to the situation and has endeavoured to keep the pot boiling, if I may use such a term, until such time as Parliament has dealt with the matter to obtain the results I hope will be achieved.

At this stage I wish to pay a tribute to the Omnibus Proprietors' Association and to the several unions most likely to be affected by this projected move, for their cordial co-operation and the excellent spirit which existed throughout all the protracted negotiations. I do so also for their practical appreciation of the problem and willingness to do something to help the Government resolve it. I might mention, in a few words as a matter of historic interest, that after I was appointed Minister for Transport last year, on my first call at the Transport Board, I was introduced to members of the board by Mr. Styants who was that day bowing out of office.

On that occasion, I indicated to the Transport Board that the traffic problems in the heart of the City of Perth and other congested areas, and the transport problem itself could not be resolved unless there was a single operating authority. There are many reasons why that should be so. Within two months of assuming this portfolio, certain proposals were submitted to Cabinet by myself as Minister for Transport, and on the 12th June a conference was held in my office of all the private bus operators, together with the Fremantle Municipal Transport Board and the Tramways Department.

It was there, as far as I am concerned, that the first seeds were sown in respect of this idea of a single operating authority. I was most impressed by the attitude of the gentlemen representing the various concerns, and it was at that conference that each one of them was asked in turn

whether, if the Government agreed to this unitary form of transport in the metropolitan area, they would prefer that it be taken over by the Crown and operated by it, or, on the other hand, would they like to become shareholders, as it were, in a gigantic concern. In all cases they indicated that if they were to cease operating in their own right, they would prefer the Crown to undertake the task and assume the full responsibility. Accordingly, as we see this evening, a Bill has been drawn up.

There were a number of conferences and discussions with groups large and small and throughout, these happy relations continued. It was more recently that I had talks with the industrial unions and there were some differences—as there were indeed with the bus operators—but I think I can say that practically without exception, these difficulties were ironed out and this Bill represents to the Government and to the parties most affected by the projected change, a fair and realistic approach to this matter, if something is to be done by way of setting up a single authority.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Does this include the Fremantle municipal buses?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Yes. Perhaps at this stage I should, in anticipation of some objections, refer to just a few people who expressed themselves in connection with this matter. First of all the then president of the Omnibus Proprietors Association, Mr. W. Hebiton, said this in "The West Australian" of the 25th June, 1956, and the article is headed, "One Control for Perth Transport." It reads as follows:—

The president of the Omnibus Proprietors Association (Mr. W. Hebiton) said last night that the move had the full support of his association. For one thing, he said, many bus companies are in difficulties because of the increase in costs.

A co-ordinating body will be able to arrange for a much better service for the public.

When the matter had been announced in the Press, the then Leader of the Opposition expressed himself in connection with the matter and had this to say, which is an exact copy of a statement that was submitted by him to the Press as follows:—

If, for the purposes of co-ordination and rationalising passenger road transport it is decided to absorb private companies, then in fairness to the companies, an early decision should be made. Companies should be compensated on a full and proper basis and the services should be operated by a trust. By this means, many of the inherent weaknesses of an ordinary Government department could be avoided.

Such a trust could be given its own borrowing powers and management independent of normal Government departmental interference. For example, the State Electricity Commission operates on these lines and has progressed because of being conducted as a business undertaking. Furthermore, the directorship and management of the trust should be constituted from the best transport and business brains available, and not the plaything of political favours.

With the increasing use of private transport and the development of new suburbs, the operation of passenger transport is going to call for a high degree of co-ordination and sound management. A properly constituted trust authority should be able to achieve this.

I could not have compiled it better myself. Let me say that the Bill seeks to carry out—it embodies this—the very principles enunciated by the member for Murray who, at the time, was Leader of the Opposition. In fact, I think I can say that the measure goes further in that as a result of it there will be less political interference with this trust than there is or could be in connection with the State Electricity Commission.

It might be of interest to members to know that Professor Stephenson, in his report of the plan for the metropolitan region, stated—this can be found in extenso on and about page 129 of his report—

Public road transport services should be united in one system.

So far as the Perth City Council is concerned, whilst it has not necessarily declared itself in favour of the Bill, it was largely on account of its knowledge and my intimating to it, at its meeting place, that it was the intention to proceed with legislation along these lines, that it agreed to rescind an earlier resolution which placed a ban on the erection of passenger shelters for bus patrons in the heart of the city. The council felt that if there were to be a single operating authority, there would be a prospect of either all through-routing—that is to say, going from one suburb to another—or trans-city routing, meaning that instead of waiting and turning in the city itself the buses would go beyond to some point where they would put in their waiting periods or carry out their turning operations as the case may be.

So it would appear that from political and entirely independent sources there has been almost a demand that something along the lines of what is embodied in the Bill should be attempted and put into operation. Over the past 12 months some attempts have been made by a mischievous section of the Press to create the impression that there are fears and suspicions in

connection with what is going on. I could quote from the Press cuttings but I will spare members that ordeal. Suffice to say that on every occasion these inspired news items appeared, the responsible members of the Omnibus Proprietors' Association got in touch either with my office or with the Transport Board to give assurances in connection with the matter. In other words, at no stage was there any violent disagreement on the part of the omnibus proprietors and myself representing the Government.

Turning to the Bill itself, as members will appreciate, the measure envisages the setting up of a trust to take over and operate all the road services in the metropolitan area operated by private concerns, the Fremantle Municipal Transport Board and the Western Australian Government Tramways. In what order they will be taken over will be for the trust itself to decide. The total cost of the take-over is roughly estimated at a sum between £2,000,000 and £2,500,000.

Mr. Bovell: Where is the money coming from?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I ask the member for Vasse to be a little patient, and if he is, he will find that all the various aspects have been well covered in the notes which I spent up to about midnight last night preparing. This sum will include the fleets, plant, land and so forth of the private operators and the Fremantle concern. In addition, there is the capital value, if I can put it that way, of the Western Australian Government Tramways, which is in the vicinity of £2,000,000.

So it would appear that when the trust comes into operation it will be handling assets valued at somewhere between £4,000,000 and £5,000,000. The position is as vague and indefinite as that because it is possible that considerable proportions of the business of certain concerns may not be needed so that they will either be left in the hands of the existing operator or will be sold on the open market if the existing operator has no use for or interest in them. Furthermore, the Bill makes provision for such aspects as goodwill, loss of profit and all the rest of it; and anyone's guess is as good as mine as to what sums might be involved under these headings.

Mr. Court: Does your previous comment mean that you are not taking over all the companies?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: No.

Mr. Court: Or just not all their plant?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: That is so. In one or two cases the people are anxious to retain their premises in order to engage in a somewhat different type of business, but perhaps allied to what they are conducting at present. To be more specific, but without necessarily indicating

anything, it perhaps would not be very difficult to switch the depot from a bus depot to one for road haulage vehicles of a different type—that is, for the transport of goods, etc.

The Tramway Department has a total of 262 vehicles, and all of the other operators together, 340. The trust, therefore, will commence with approximately 600 vehicles. I think I can say, however, that certain of the existing fleets will have to be scrapped and new vehicles purchased. The number of employees of the 12 operators—Government, municipal and private—is 18 salaried and 1,549 wages staff or, in other words, a total of 1,733.

When commenting on the public statement made by the ex-Leader of the Opposition I made mention of the fact—initially at any rate—that this legislation has been based largely on that covering the State Electricity Commission. I repeat and emphasise that the whole concept of this Bill is to remove the trust as far as possible from politics. What I have in mind is the T.A.A. type of set-up; one in which all concerned have a pride in being associated with it; an esprit de corps commencing from an uncertain basis and being able to generate goodwill and gain the respect of the public through the giving of service right from the top managerial ranks down to the humblest worker until—contrary perhaps to the usual concepts—we have in Australia the spectacle of a socialistic concern knocking private enterprise into a cocked hat.

Let us not enter into a debate on the merits of either aspect, so far as this Bill is concerned. I mentioned that in an air way, merely to indicate that that is the type of organisation I want to see in order to do the job properly and what I do not want is the type of thing which we see in so many instances and which is disrespectfully referred to as "possessed of the Government stroke," because if we do have the latter in evidence, this fine conception could become simply another burden or millstone around the necks of the Government and of the people of the State—and that is the last thing I want.

The trust will be comprised of three members and I hasten to assure the House that this is not a form of administration under three persons. It will be virtually a small board of directors. The administration and control under the trust will, of course, be in the hands of a single figure—the general manager—and, naturally, his staff.

If my will prevails in connection with this matter, I think the general manager should be chairman of the trust and the two members should be part-time members only. That, incidentally, is the form of set-up of the Western Australian Transport Board. The chairman is the full-time officer, the head of the department, and there are two other parties who meet with him at frequent intervals to deal with

questions of high policy or important matters where three heads are better than one. But under no circumstances would I have anything to do with the Bill if there were any possibility of there being more than one nominal head in charge of the undertaking.

In regard to the members, I wish to point out that it does not necessarily follow that either the members of the trust or the chairman or general manager—if they be different persons—will be people who have necessarily graduated through the Public Service and who will be appointed on the grounds of seniority. Rather will they be the best talent available from whatever source they might come. They will be approached or applications will be sought in the hope and trust that they will be interested and will offer their services.

If we can secure the best in this way, I believe that, given a fair trial and a little time into which to run into form, we will have an organisation of which all of us could feel proud. The qualifications in the Bill lay down that the members of the trust shall be persons of wide experience who have shown capacity in transport, industrial, commercial or financial matters or in the conduct of public affairs. I think that is wide enough to embrace all those persons who many of us might think would qualify as suitable for the job.

The term of appointment for members of the trust is five years and they will, of course, be eligible for reappointment. The remuneration will be determined by the Governor and here I express the hope that it will be generous. I remember, after Trans Australia Airlines had been in operation for a few months only, having discussions with the vice-chairman of the commission and he indicated to me his thought and that of other members of the commission, that if a person was doing a really good job it would be cheap to pay him £1,000 or £2,000 extra. He said that if men of that calibre were not paid the extra money, there was every prospect that they would be attracted to other positions.

I would prefer that a man be paid £10,000 per year—if he did the job properly—rather than we should pay some £3,000 or £4,000 for a mediocre person, with a resultant cost to the State of perhaps £1,000,000 per year as against what otherwise might be the case. However, that is something to be determined by Cabinet and perchance I have gone further in that respect than I should have.

Members of the trust may be removed by suspension, and here I should explain that in the Bill it is proposed that a member of the trust can be suspended. Then the matter is reported to Parliament and it requires a resolution of both Houses before he can be removed from office. Unfortunately, I was concentrating on other aspects and allowed that provision to pass through, but it is my intention to include

a provision similar to that in existence—I did not say identical with—in the railways at present, under which the Governor may suspend, the reasons then being submitted to Parliament, the dismissal becoming effective at the expiration of a certain period unless each House of Parliament passes a resolution otherwise.

Apart from anything else, I do not think it desirable that if a situation is serious enough to warrant suspending a highly placed public official, there should of necessity have to be a public washing of linen in both Houses of Parliament. With regard to the member of the Railways Commission who was recently suspended, I think it would be a most unenviable task and responsibility on the part of the Minister for Railways in another place and me in this Chamber to have to submit all the details and reasons as to why a certain course of action was taken.

Far better that after the bare reasons are presented to Parliament, the suspension should become effective after the passage of a certain time unless there be a deliberate motion to the contrary. The boundaries within which the trust will operate are not specifically defined in the Bill and the metropolitan area is an area which will be proclaimed. I know some member might draw on his imagination and say this is the thin edge of the socialistic wedge and that, by simply proclaiming the metropolitan area to extend from Wyndham to Esperance and from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, we could embrace the lot.

Similar wording is used in the Traffic Act. In other words, what some members opposite fear, that the police may be put in charge of traffic administration throughout the State, could probably be achieved by proclaiming the metropolitan area as being of far greater radius than it is at present. But I think there is some honour in the Western Australian Parliament at any rate, and the basic intention and purpose is to deal with those forms of transport which serve the heart of the city, or cities, and which go comparatively short distances from that centre—in other words, where there are daily and frequent services. There is no intention to interfere with any private service that might be operating over long distances, such as the tourist omnibus service, and that sort of concern. Perth, somewhat naturally, would be the terminus for country road passenger services operating from various points.

The functions of the trust are to acquire, provide, maintain and operate passenger road services. Here, too, there will probably be an amendment. There has been such a great concentration on road services that we almost completely overlooked the little stretch of water which is essentially part of the overall transport system; I refer to the Swan River ferry. In this

case, too, there is no intention of doing anything about the ferry system to Rott-nest, or other places, but as regards the Swan River ferry, there will be no tram-way department to operate that service. It is such a small concern that it would be ridiculous to set up a separate administration; and in any event the question of fares, timetables and so on are surely the concern of a trust such as we are discussing at present.

After the matter has been further considered, there will probably be an amendment to include the little ferry system that operates, although some people hazard the opinion that when the Narrows Bridge is in operation, within the next 18 months or so, the ferry service, as a regular service, will disappear. They believe it will probably be used only by families for pleasure purposes.

So far as the acquisition of these businesses is concerned, it can be done in the first place by negotiation and agreement with the individual operator. Such being the case, the trust could take over either the whole of the business or portion of it only; that would be a matter of agreement between the two parties. If no agreement can be reached, action can be taken for compulsory acquisition, not by the trust of its own volition, but first of all with the approval of the Governor. This phase of governmental interference, if I can call it such, is only in the early days because action will be taken, I would estimate, within three years.

It is not very pleasant to be standing on the edge of a precipice and any owner may serve notice upon the trust requiring it to take over the business within a period of three years. In such case the owner can require the trust to take over the whole of his property. It is considered that that is a fair proposition.

In the matter of claims for compensation, where acquisition is compulsory, they have to be made within 120 days of the acquisition. The question has to be examined by the trust within a period not exceeding 120 days and then the offer of the trust, arising from that examination, has to be accepted or rejected within 60 days. At this stage it may be possible to arrive at a little give and take and the matter be satisfactorily settled; if not, it has to be determined by arbitration in accordance with the Arbitration Act, 1895.

Compensation may be made either by payment of cash—and it is anticipated that this will be on some limited basis, for obvious reasons, to cover the payment of outstanding accounts or certain commitments which operators would be anxious to rid themselves of, and the trust would pay that amount in cash to enable it to be done—and the balance, or wholly, the trust may acquire by the purchase of shares, by the creation of inscribed stock or by the issue of debentures having a life

of 21 years. That is the answer to the question asked by the member for Vasse as to how payment will be made. If the debentures or stock are issued in payment there will be an interest commitment each year, and if we take an exaggerated case, 1/21st of the amount owing would be redeemed each year.

Mr. Bovell: That is a rather precarious method of finance.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I do not think so. I would say it is almost identical with the procedure adopted by local authorities. If I remember rightly, they pay back over a period of 21 years. In that case a certain sum goes into the sinking fund; in this case, instead of going into the sinking fund, it is paid back.

Mr. Bovell: But they get the original funds through the normal channels; they don't create a debenture or something else.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: That is all right, too, because in a similar way the S.E.C. and the trust will be borrowing on their own account instead of having to plunge into loan funds.

Mr. Bovell: That is a different matter.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: It is a different matter in detail or bookwork only.

Mr. Bovell: No; the public are asked to subscribe their own money to finance the State Electricity Commission.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Would it be all right with the member for Vasse if I tell him that this arrangement is acceptable to the Government on the one hand and the omnibus proprietors on the other; and such being the case, who is there left to complain?

Mr. Potter: The member for Vasse.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Interest will be paid on this script and it is proposed that it shall be 1 per cent. in excess of the long-term bond rate of Commonwealth loans and to be reviewed annually in accordance with the money market. So these paper assets of the erstwhile private operators will not lose their value in any particular because their rate of interest will fluctuate with the loan interest, as demonstrated by Commonwealth loans, but they being 1 per cent. in excess. To explain that, I have some actual examples worked out and I am prepared to show them to anybody interested. Having regard to the taxation concessions in respect of interest on Commonwealth loans, the result to the investor would be almost identical to the £, whether it be 5 per cent. on Commonwealth bonds or 6 per cent. under the trust fund proposed in this Bill.

Mr. Bovell: Will permission from the Loan Council be required for this transaction?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I do not think so. In fact, I am certain it will not be required. I do not think there will be any difficulty in that regard. Perhaps the member for Vasse can consult his legal adviser on that point, but I am prepared to back mine.

Mr. Bovell: It is not the legal adviser, but the financial adviser that would be concerned in this case. It is creating something for nothing.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: A committee of three was responsible for the preparation of this Bill. They comprised the chairman of the Transport Board, the Chief Parliamentary Draftsman and the Assistant Under Treasurer, the latter having attended Loan Council and Premiers' meetings and who holds a most responsible position. I would therefore suggest that those three men should know where they are going.

Mr. Bovell: Is there any precedent?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I hope there is not. If there is one thing I like about Western Australian politics, it is the fact that we can pioneer a few ventures.

Mr. Bovell: This is not a party political matter; it is a financial proposition.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Of course, it is not party political. This is not being done in accordance with any political platform but because of sheer necessity and to achieve results.

Mr. Bovell: I want to make sure that the financial set-up is sound.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Is the member for Vasse prepared to accept my assurance?

Mr. Bovell: I am still not sure.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Perhaps we can have some interesting interludes later if it be the wish of the House that the Bill goes through.

Mr. Bovell: This proposition does not conform to established banking practice.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: This Bill is designed to establish a transport trust, not a bank.

Mr. Bovell: That may be so, but the proposition should be a sound one.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Perhaps it might be as well if I proceeded to explain the provisions of the Bill. Assessment of compensation will be on the basis of the market value of the property at the time of the acquisition and also an allowance may be made for loss of profits, goodwill, etc., this to be entirely in the hands of the arbitrators unless it is possible—and I think I can express the hope that it will be possible—in many cases that, on the one hand, the omnibus proprietors—who are sensible and realistic businessmen—and, on

the other hand, the members of the trust—who similarly would be businessmen with a sense of responsibility—will be able to effect a compromise and to do the fair thing by one another. I think that that will be the spirit of their negotiations, at any rate.

It is possible for this trust to enter into an agreement with other operators, particularly with regard to timetables, fares or exchange of tickets and so forth. For example, if there is a country service operating, the trust could enter into an agreement to make it a practical proposition for a ticket to be purchased to make a journey from, say Quairading to terminate at Perth and that a ticket may be bought at Quairading by a passenger wishing to travel to Fremantle and the extra journey from Perth to Fremantle would be recognised on a reciprocal basis by the trust on the one hand and the private operator on the other. I am merely quoting an example of the exchanges that could be undertaken.

One of the most important matters is that relating to the staffs. When this proposition was first announced there was a certain degree of consternation among the employees of some of the private companies because I suppose they felt that they were to be swallowed up by the Government concern and would be regarded as being superfluous—and that would be that. Under the terms of the Bill it is laid down that so far as practicable the trust shall appoint persons who have been employed for at least 12 months prior to the acquisition of any particular undertaking. In other words, every person in the employ of any of those concerns at present is likely to be on the new payroll. In some cases, of course, there will be a few employees who will not want to be on the new payroll.

I am referring chiefly to the wages and operating staff. If a single authority means anything, surely it means—apart from the impact on the services—a more streamlined administration. As I have already said, there are 12 operators and it is obvious that we do not want 12 general managers, 12 chief staff clerks, 12 chief accountants, 12 traffic superintendents, and so on. So with regard to some of the administrative staff and probably in regard to some of the clerical staff it may not be possible to employ all of them.

On the other hand, there are birds of passage in all fields of employment. There is the natural wastage with retirements and so on and together with the 12 months period that I mentioned earlier, it may be possible to accommodate all of these people. As far as the operating staff is concerned, although it does not appear in the Bill, I would be prepared to give an undertaking on the part of the Government that every single wages worker in the employ of the private operators will have jobs made available

in accordance with the terms I have already outlined, with perhaps one qualification.

As members know, there are, at the moment, two awards; one applying to Government transport employees and the other applying to those who are employed by private operators. Also, there are female conductors to be considered. I do not know what the award applying to the trust will be—it may be the Government award, the private award, a combination of both, or an entirely new one. I am speaking principally about those workers who are drivers, inspectors, cleaners, mechanics, and so on. In other words, the wages staff in the broadest sense. None of those workers need have any fears in regard to his employment.

Mr. Oldfield: What about the clerical staff of the Tramways Department? What about their superannuation benefits and long service leave?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I will come to all those points in turn.

Mr. Oldfield: As you are dealing with staff, I thought I would mention the Tramways Department. We must think of the worker.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: At all times. We, on this side of the House, are constantly doing that. Those employees who are employed by the Government—including the servants of the Tramways Department—and also those employed by private operators who have any accrued rights by way of superannuation, long service leave, sick leave, annual leave, benefits under endowment or benefit schemes of any type whatsoever, will have their rights retained. They will be taken over by the trust. Then, having regard to the wishes and desires of the employees, these forms of benefits will either be continued or the trust can apply to be recognised under the Government family and superannuation benefit scheme, so that the employees of the trust will be eligible to come within the ambit of that scheme.

However, this will not be compulsory; the employees can please themselves. On the other hand, the trust itself could, if the employees agreed, start an endowment or benefit scheme to suit the wishes of its staff. I daresay that the trust will do that, because I understand that with modern vehicles and modern traffic hazards, the break of shift and the rest, many drivers have reached the stage where they have become virtually useless—and I use that term with the greatest respect—at the wheels of these large omnibuses after these drivers have reached the age of 50 years.

If they are no longer available for their ordinary calling, having given long and valued service, then it is necessary for some special provision to be made for

them. But I will not go into details. That will be a matter between the trust and the employees. Here I might mention that whilst in the initial draft there was a considerable amount of verbiage in connection with controls, penalties and other things pertaining to the staff, after deliberation and consultation it was decided that those should be eliminated; that the workers—the servants of the trust—should be subjected only to the conditions prescribed in their award or industrial agreement; or, on the other hand, to the law of the land.

In that particular, we depart to some extent with regard to what obtains in Government employment. I think it will be agreed, therefore, that so far as existing employees are concerned, they have no fears whatever. In the matter of the salaried officers in the Public Service—those attached to the Tramway Department—if all of them are not required for the trust, then there are opportunities—or no doubt will be opportunities—available to them in other departments of the Public Service, with, of course, a continuation of their superannuation, long service leave and other rights which they enjoy.

Moneys, or funds, available to the trust will be such as are appropriated by Parliament, or the income the trust receives from its business operations, or money it has borrowed on the open market—which authority it is given under the terms of this measure—or by the issue of debentures or inscribed stock as mentioned earlier, will be placed in a general account to be kept at the Treasury, and to be operated upon by the trust from time to time. If at any time there is insufficient money in that account to meet the expenses of the trust, then the Treasurer may make a loan to the trust to assist it to meet its commitments.

The repayment of all the loans and any interest in respect of the many matters I have mentioned, are guaranteed by the Government. So this is merely putting a little more gilt on a gilt-edged security. Debentures issued, and inscribed stock created, are securities for investment of trust moneys by friendly societies and similar bodies. I mention that because a question was asked of me by one of the members outside the Chamber.

I would now like to come to the question of profit and loss. Nobody can hazard a guess as to the results of the trading of this concern. There are some pointers to it being able to balance the budget. I am hopeful that it will be able to do that and that it will indeed be a little in front; though the experience in other parts is against that. However, I regard that as a challenge. If we go about this matter in a businesslike manner, we can perhaps achieve better results than have been obtained elsewhere.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Will it mean an increase in fares to reach the state to which you refer?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I do not think so; but if there is an increase, it will be very slight. It is appreciated that the Government tramways are losing in the vicinity of £250,000 per annum at the moment; and that leeway has to be made up. The private companies, and the Fremantle Municipal Tramway Board, from memory—putting the pluses and the minuses together—finished up, I think, about £70,000 in front; that is, on the credit side.

It is not a terrific amount. I do not want to go into this aspect, because there are all sorts of other considerations such as exemptions from sales tax which could be of benefit to this trust, and which is something that is not enjoyed by the private operators at the present moment. But on the other hand, as a general rule, the working conditions are better for Government employees—as a general rule, I say—than they are for those in private employment. I have already referred to superannuation, and long service leave which do not have general application outside Government service. In addition to these, there are certain other privileges as well. But let us not start an argument about that. Where there is a loss sustained by the trust in any year, it will be dealt with as the Treasurer of the State directs, but he, of course, if there is no money in credit, will be required to finance the loss as is the case, for instance, with State trading concerns.

I hesitate about bringing that term in because, I repeat, that my conception of this trust is something on an entirely different basis. Where a profit is made, any moneys which, in the opinion of the trust, are not required for its purpose, shall be paid into the Treasury. At first glance it may appear that there is some justice in that, and at second glance that there is none. But the Treasury will be making up the losses, if any, and therefore it should receive the profits, if any. Where that operates, however, it tends to create irresponsibility, and I say that, without implying any criticism of any public officer.

If a person is in charge of a Government instrumentality and it is making profits, and there is nothing to be achieved by that instrumentality making greater profits, there is no incentive for it to go ahead and do that, so it becomes wasteful. On the other hand, of course, where it is a matter of retailing certain goods, it is possible to reduce the prices, and the public get the benefit of that. But, generally, they do not like doing that because the following year's trading might not be as successful, and it might mean putting the price of the goods up again; thus their accounting and the rest goes to rack and ruin.

If these bodies can retain some of the profits, then they feel that the extra exertion is of some direct benefit to them, instead of benefiting something far distant, known as the Treasury, a more or less bottomless pit. While the clause in the Bill relating to this aspect sounds almost as if any profits made will go into the Treasury, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will agree with me that there is ample opportunity for the trust to make provision for anything it requires, before any money finds its way into the Treasury.

Hon. D. Brand: Why was that provision included?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: It is a generous provision.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: It is all right as it is. I was wondering on which side the Leader of the Opposition stood. Estimates of revenue and expenditure are to be submitted to Parliament every year, together with an annual report and an audited balance sheet. I daresay, in order to give members in this House an opportunity of discussing the affairs of the trust, an arrangement could be made, if so desired, to place an item on the Revenue Estimates for that purpose; in the same way as there is an item of £5 against the State Housing Commission expenditure, which is not used but is merely inserted to enable a debate in this House to take place. If it be the wish of members, the same can be done in connection with this trust.

Whilst it is not set out in the Bill, the trust will not be in a position to impose its own fares, increase fares or, for that matter, decrease fares. Actually, the Government felt there should be an independent authority. If we were setting up this sole authority in Western Australia, it could become reckless, inefficient or wasteful, and then it could attempt the simple expedient of putting up the fares, with very little in the way of competition or opposition. So it has been decided, as there is already an authority which does that sort of thing, namely, the Transport Board, that the trust will have to make out a case to the Transport Board, and substantiate it by the submission of accounts and an explanation of certain of its activities before an increase will be allowed.

Mr. Court: How is the trust to be protected from unfair competition from the railways?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition can rest assured that slowly, bit by bit, this Government is attending to important matters pertaining to transport, and that one will be looked into, and very shortly.

Mr. Court: You will not have a single authority.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Not in connection with the trust, but the Government will be the authority in connection with the railways.

Mr. Court: I am very mindful of what the Premier has said in regard to railway fares, when somebody suggested that they be increased.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I do not want to be distracted in connection with this particular matter because it is a most interesting study. I think I said something about it before. I admit that there is, at the moment, what is known as unfair competition as a result of the lower fares charged by the railways. That might not matter so much if there was a trust. Whilst it is desired to run it as a business concern, there are many factors to be taken into consideration, and one of them very definitely is the traffic problem. It is a much better proposition, from that aspect, that there should be numerous trains disgorging thousands of people, rather than have a multitude of buses stopping and interfering with the flow of normal traffic in the heart of the city. I mention that for the time being. How close the road fares should be to the railway fares can be a matter of further debate. It is not appropriate to an explanation of this Bill and the facts connected with it.

Mr. Wild: Can the Minister tell us whether the trust will be able to determine where buses shall or shall not run?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I should say that very largely it will.

Mr. Wild: I am thinking that where they now run parallel to the railways, they are competing uneconomically.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Perhaps I can say this: I am certain there will be some initial criticism of the trust when it comes into being. If members have regard to the map which has been placed on the wall of this Chamber; and realise the number of routes, the twists and turns which many of them take, the services running in competition, and being parallel and almost touching, and in cases criss-crossing, and so on; they will see that what is required—it is possible only with a form of unit control and operation—is a reshuffling of existing bus routes. Obviously, somebody who is served by a bus 25 yards from his door will be perturbed if he has to walk a block or a block and a half to the bus stop. By the same token, somebody else will score an advantage in having the service closer to his residence.

I should say very definitely, indeed it is basic to this whole proposition, that there will have to be a recasting of the existing bus routes, and in certain cases I envisage that some buses will act as feeders to the railways. Again that will be a matter for the trust to determine in collaboration and consultation with the administration of the railways. It will be seen that, whilst we can imagine a lot of things and have ideas on them, the determination is to be left largely to experts who, we hope, will be appointed to the principal positions in the trust.

As a matter of interest, in Singapore there exists a situation almost identical with our own. It will only take me a few moments to read a short report I have had prepared in connection with the situation there. An almost identical set of circumstances has developed in Singapore since the war. The city of Singapore was served by trams until replaced by trolley-buses in 1926. These were operated by the Singapore Traction Company Ltd. which operates under a special ordinance and has in recent years switched substantially to motorbuses.

In the meantime 11 privately-owned bus services have developed and they conduct about half the total business on routes which overlap those of the Singapore Traction Company. If we substitute the Tramway Department in Perth for the Singapore Traction Company Ltd. we would have an identical set-up, with exactly 11 operators in both cases, if we include the Fremantle Municipal Tramway Board in that category.

Thus, in both Perth and Singapore, approximately half the business is conducted by a Government or semi-government organisation running a mixed fleet of trolley-buses and motorbuses—trams also run in Perth—the other half by 11 private operators running motorbuses. The same difficulties of private car competition apply in both cases. The Singapore position was made the subject of inquiry by a Royal Commission, some of the members of which were men with sound experience of London passenger transport.

The commission was appointed in October, 1955, and its recommendations included the following:—

That in our view the policy should be the unification of Singapore's passenger transport services into a single undertaking, with a common management and a common ownership.

The commission also reached the conclusion that the common ownership should take the form of a body corporate specially constituted for that purpose, rather than direct government ownership or municipal ownership. All the conditions related to Singapore are duplicated in Perth, and the present Bill is along the lines of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission for the future operations of the city transport system of Singapore.

May I here and now express the hope that there will be no moves made in this House and in another place for the appointment of Royal Commissions or select committees and the rest of it. I fear it would be a tragedy to certain of the operators. Such inquiry could teach us nothing that we do not know at the present moment. It would merely be a process of procrastination; that and nothing else.

Some of the expected benefits are that both revenue and costs will be more evenly spread with one operating authority. In other words, the more populated, or densely

populated and better paying portions will be able to carry some of the slack of the more far-flung and less thickly populated areas, without it being a burden on one authority in the area being developed, as against the one sitting comparatively on clover where there has been heavy development and the area has been completely built up.

In other words, there will be a sharing of the burdens and benefits on a complete and co-ordinated basis. There should definitely be a reduction of administrative costs and expenses and also in connection with the workshops and servicing depots. There would be the advantage, too, that plant and vehicles could be standardised. I have already indicated that there would possibly be benefits in the direction of purchases being made without having to pay certain duties to the Commonwealth Government, which private operators are compelled to pay at the present moment.

By rearrangement of routes and services, it should be possible to reduce or eliminate duplication and overlapping. There will be a greater co-ordination of services and through-routing, and trans-city routing should be a practical possibility, instead of something spoken about but never attempted. I know, too, that these ideals, or objectives if members like, are not quite as simple of achievement as they seem on the surface, but I am confident that a great deal can be done to ease the pressure on the city streets at the present moment.

Apocryphos of that phase, I have not the latest figures, but no doubt members are aware that there are many hundreds or thousands of feet of precious kerbside space in the city set aside for bus stands. I am battling with a few authorities to have "stand" eliminated as a step in the direction of having these places in the heart of the city used for a temporary bus stop by public transport to allow a few passengers to alight and others to board and the bus proceed on its way. If there is any waiting to be done it shall be done elsewhere where it will cause the least inconvenience to the business community generally.

It might be mentioned that at the present time during the peak hour between 4.30 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. there are no less than 450 buses which leave the heart of the city. These buses are operated by quite a number of concerns working on anything but a co-ordinated basis. What is to be the position in a few years time with the metropolitan population increasing at the rate it is? Surely the Transport Board cannot request a Subiaco bus company to start in the city and terminate in Victoria Park, and another at Bayswater, because these areas are in the franchise of other operators. So of necessity, they are coming to the heart of the city where they are stopping for these protracted periods. We have difficulties occurring on account of this, which I feel

cannot be overcome unless we are prepared to take steps along the lines envisaged in this Bill.

I have already indicated that it might be possible to help the bus services and also help the railways by using a lighter type of bus in the outer districts to bring the people into certain railway stations in order to continue their journey. It is far better to have that process than the buses come to the city half empty, and a train running parallel beside it, also half empty.

Mr. Hearman: Do you visualise interchangeable tickets between the buses and the railways?

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Apparently the member for Blackwood was not in the Chamber when I spoke earlier because I indicated that it would be possible for the trust to enter into agreements in respect to tickets and so on, and I gave an example using Quairading to Perth and Fremantle.

Mr. Hearman: I did not know you intended it between road and rail.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I said other operators, which would include the railways. It would be a matter for arrangement between the trust and the various concerns.

I hope and trust there will be a constructive approach to this Bill—and that is the whole problem—by members of the Opposition both in this Chamber and in the Legislative Council; that there will be no indulging in political catch-cries, and that there will be—I repeat—no move to stultify the intentions of the Bill by suggestions that there should be select committees or Royal Commissions.

The provisions of the Bill are exceedingly generous. In practically every particular the Government agreed with what was sought by the Omnibus Proprietors' Association. I do not want that to be misconstrued in that they stood over us with a big stick or anything like that. However, I repeat that the most friendly relations were maintained throughout the negotiations and the Government feels—and I am certain the others do—that it is far better that there should be a continuation of this friendly basis in the passage of this legislation—that the trust would prefer to take over the operators on a basis of agreement, rather than use any compulsory powers which might be vested in them by Parliament.

Such is the whole thought and principle underlying, first of all, the negotiations and later the drafting of the Bill. Indeed, some have said that we have been too generous; that this could cost the trust many thousands of pounds. However, rather than we should have a first-class political dog fight and afterwards a business dog fight, I think it would be better if the trust paid a few more thousands

of pounds here and there so there will be a measure of goodwill and friendliness from the inception.

I want this goodwill to exist in every respect, from the top administration—the chairman of the trust—down to the humblest workman; and I want the public to feel the same way in regard to them, and that they will have the respect—earn and deserve the respect—of the community. I am certain if there is an honest endeavour on all sides, that will be achieved. This is a great problem, and it is the responsibility of the Government and Parliament to shape up to it. It is an urgent problem.

If we do nothing but sit idly by, we can be confronted with this position that the Government will be compelled to take over one by one these concerns as they collapse. All of the benefits to be derived from a streamlined administration and a single operating authority will be denied to us. All that will happen will be that the old crocks will become the responsibility of the Government. The fleets, plants and everything else, including perhaps the morale of some of the staffs, will have broken down, so that there will be a greater jumble than there is at present; and, of course, the owners of the bus companies will get nothing, or practically nothing.

A bus might be worth £1,000 or £2,000 while it is operating, but the owner would be lucky to get £50 or £100 for it when it ceased to operate on an authorised route. Evidence of that is to be seen not very far from here. If the Government is to take over first one and then another as they get into difficulties, as assuredly the majority will, because that is the experience practically everywhere, the position will eventually be reached where the remaining operators will be squeezed out by the Government and will have no equity that could be sold.

I do not think that would be fair because whatever we might say of the present concerns—and in some respects and in some areas the vehicles, perhaps, are not as roadworthy as they might be or as comfortable for the patrons as they could be—throughout the years—approximately 30 years on the average—they have done a good job and have rendered excellent service to a great and growing population. The Government feels that they are entitled to some sort of consideration. At the same time, I stress that there is no sense of irresponsibility in connection with this.

For my part, I am describing the position perfectly frankly, and what I am saying is not to be misconstrued by anyone—the bus proprietors, the arbitrators or anyone else including the trust itself—as meaning that a blank cheque is being signed by the Government, or that the Government feels that the sky should be

the limit. What I say merely indicates that in order to get something done, which requires doing, the Government is prepared to go a little further than perhaps might be regarded as absolute business prudence.

The Bill is merely to provide the necessary machinery, and if Parliament agrees with it or agrees substantially with it, then the job will be placed in the hands of the trust. In other words, the politicians bow out and the experts take over and they will be free to operate in the interests of the public. With one or two exceptions they will be free to continue in that way and will be interfered with only if it is found that there are certain fundamental weaknesses or they have not been doing their job. In that event Parliament will be compelled to give consideration to effecting some changes.

The Bill represents many hours, days, weeks, and months of thought, hard work and negotiations on the part of many people, and I trust that Parliament will agree with the proposition so that it will come to fruition before very long. The taking over will be a gradual process. Where the trust will start, I know not. It will be left to the trust to determine that question after exploring the situation. Which will be first, second or third to be taken over by the trust, we know not; and what will be the colour system, type of uniform and all the rest of it, will be left entirely to the trust.

A tremendous amount of work and investigation will have to be undertaken before the trust actually becomes the operator. Therefore the passage of the Bill does not mean that a week after it is passed, our metropolitan passenger transport system will be under new management. If persons of the type I have in mind are appointed to the senior positions, they will study carefully all the implications and ramifications of what the trust will be involved in. I think their judgment will be sound and they will lay foundations that will ensure a continuation of the transport service for the metropolitan area that will be satisfactory to the people and one that can keep abreast of the times. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [9.55]: For reasons that will become apparent to members in a few moments, I do not intend to speak at great length, but it is important that on behalf of the Opposition I make our position clear in connection with the Bill, and assure the Minister that it is our intention to be most co-operative in connection with its passage.

Consideration of this legislation brings with it a degree of sadness to some of us because many of us have grown up with this particular system of metropolitan

passenger transport that we know so well. As I look around the Chamber I can imagine that most members can go back to their boyhood, youth or early manhood as the case may be, and remember the struggles of some of the rugged individuals who set out to establish the metropolitan passenger transport system, each according to his own lights.

There were not only commercial struggles but in some cases physical struggles in the establishment of some of those early services. These conditions were well known to the member for North Perth who smiles with approval. It cannot be denied that in the main these systems have, throughout the growth of the metropolitan area, served the community extremely well. No system is perfect, of course, and there have been complaints, but in the main they have served this growing area well and they have produced a great degree of flexibility which is so important in a growing community. In addition, it cannot be denied that they have established and operated their business without making financial demands on the taxpayers.

When these people commenced their undertakings it was a question of succeed or get out, because they could not go to the Government of the day—except in the most isolated cases, and then only in a minor degree—and ask for financial assistance. On the contrary, they have made to the revenue a contribution which, over the years, must amount to an enormous figure. In the main this contribution has been made through such items as road licence fees, transport board fees, sales tax, income tax and payroll tax. In fact, they have paid the lot because, unlike a Government operated show, if a private concern makes a profit, not only does it pay all of the taxes that are coincidental to operating a business but, in addition, income tax.

The Minister for Transport: And now the diesel tax.

Mr. COURT: I was going to mention this latest impost, which I do not like, in connection with road transport, but the Minister has saved me the trouble. My main object in rising immediately after the Minister, and not seeking the adjournment that the Opposition would normally take, was to explain to the Minister that we hoped to facilitate the passage of the Bill. From remarks he made it is apparent that the proposition I have to submit will not be acceptable to him, although it may be acceptable to the Chamber. We appreciate that this session is galloping along and, if rumour is correct, the Government hopes to terminate it by the 30th November. With the host of important and contentious Bills yet to be introduced, the Government will need the utmost co-operation from the Opposition to achieve the target date, if the 30th November is, in fact, that date.

When I resume my seat the member for Blackwood will endeavour to obtain the adjournment of the debate on behalf of the Opposition, and he, I hope, will deal with the Bill in great detail. Having seen the measure for the first time this evening as the Minister was explaining it, obviously it would be impracticable for me to discuss the details of it. It is a lengthy and important Bill and I commend the Minister for the lucid way in which he introduced it and explained its ramifications in the light of his own attitude towards this matter. I also congratulate him on the tight-lipped negotiators he has had around the town for the last few months in connection with the measure. Never either in my ordinary public activities or in my parliamentary career have I found it so difficult to discover what was going on, and, of course, the answer has been given this evening as there has been a great degree of consultation and co-operation between the omnibus proprietors and the Government.

The result of that was that the utterances in the Press in connection with this matter and the information that one could glean through normal channels have been practically nil and so we are all considering this measure—with the exception of Government supporters—from a standing start this evening. The question is one of great magnitude. The Minister has outlined some of the problems leading up to the present situation and those that will exist in the future.

This Bill involves on the one hand a vital principle as to who will operate our road transport services in the metropolitan area, and, on the other hand, what could be a very heavy potential demand on the Treasury for capital or for operating losses and this Parliament would be failing in its duty if it treated either of those factors lightly. Parliament therefore has the responsibility of satisfying itself on both the long and short term views. It is one thing to hand this proposition over to a trust and say, "Thank goodness we have got rid of that problem," and another to look ahead and see the terrific difficulties that will confront the trust. Let us not be deceived in that regard.

The problems of the trust will be tremendous in view of the growing population and the world-wide experience of road passenger transport. It is therefore our intention at the appropriate stage to move—and with this in mind we want to facilitate the passage of the Bill through the second reading—for the appointment of a joint select committee from both Houses.

The Minister looks with horror on that suggestion but on reflection he will realise that it could facilitate greatly the passage of the measure and save a tremendous amount of debate and, with all due respect

to some of the utterances that will otherwise be made—a tremendous lot of hot air in connection with the matter. The points to be dealt with by such a select committee would be to examine and report on—

(1) Potential cost to the State of the proposed metropolitan passenger trust—

(a) in capital over the next ten years;

(b) in operating losses over the same period.

(2) Legislative, administrative and financial disabilities under which passenger transport operators labour in the metropolitan area.

(3) Rearrangements needed of present system of control, taxing and spheres of operations of metropolitan passenger transport, if any private operators are to continue on a sound and profitable basis without financial demands on the State.

(4) The practicability of privately operated passenger transport services continuing in conjunction with Government owned and operated services.

(5) The practicability of cutting heavy railway metropolitan passenger transport losses by replacing existing railway passenger services with road passenger services for a minimum period of, say, 10 or 15 years until the regional plan develops sufficiently to determine the desirability of the use of selected railway metropolitan passenger facilities.

(6) The practicability of operating metropolitan passenger services on a contract basis for the whole or part of the system.

(7) Trust proposals and compensation provisions in the Bill.

(8) Matters incidental thereto.

That would appear to be a very searching inquiry, as it would be in certain respects. However, at least two-thirds of the information necessary for the answering of those questions would be readily available from a comparatively few witnesses and those people could place before the select committee, if appointed, the information required and the committee could quickly come to a conclusion and make a recommendation.

The Minister for Transport: Do you not think all these investigations have been taking place—investigations and negotiations with the only people who know the answers to most of the questions?

Mr. COURT: It may be that these people know all the answers.

The Minister for Transport: Nobody knows what will be the position in 10 years time. We might then be travelling on satellites instead of on buses.

Mr. COURT: Perhaps they would know most of the answers. If the Minister wants this measure to go forward with goodwill it is important that both Houses should fully understand the situation and accept it completely.

The Minister for Transport: Where is the bad will?

Mr. COURT: If the Minister says to the House, "This is the situation. Those are the facts. I have said so and that is the end of it," he immediately starts the thing off on the wrong foot. He has stated his case very well tonight and from that point a select committee could take over and examine the matter quickly. He can take it that if the select committee agreed entirely with the position for all time the trust would be entitled to expect—and I think would get—the support of Parliament as long as it did its job properly.

The Minister for Transport: Is there anything to prevent the hon. member and colleagues consulting with the operators tomorrow?

Mr. COURT: We could do that, but I must confess that up to date they have been the most tight-lipped lot of people that I have ever met in my career.

The Minister for Transport: I think that is quite proper, seeing that they were negotiating with the Government. I have negotiated with them, together with a couple of colleagues, on behalf of the Government and if the hon. member were to negotiate with them, together with a couple of his colleagues, I think he would reach the same conclusion.

Mr. COURT: Would it not be better for them to come before a select committee and state their predicament?

The Minister for Transport: They have already given the facts to the Transport Board.

Mr. COURT: The Minister is assuming that we are doing this to cause frustration and delay, but that is the last thing we want to do. If the Minister will co-operate in connection with this matter I have the permission of the Leader of the Opposition to say that, without using any pressure, but by voluntary arrangement, we will produce the minimum number of speakers during the second reading debate in order to facilitate the passage of the Bill.

If these people can come before a select committee, as they have before the Minister, the facts will become known to committee members of both Houses and that will facilitate the passage of the Bill, if the Bill is indeed the only solution to the metropolitan passenger transport problem. I would suggest, if the House agrees to such an inquiry, that it be given a very tight date upon which to report back. It could be made clear to the committee that it could not expect any extension of time, as I do not think it should need any.

Mr. Norton: How long do you think it would take?

Mr. COURT: Certainly no longer than until the 12th November, and it could be done before that with a zealous convenor and conscientious committeemen. I think the matter could be handled in three weeks. I am allowing for the fact that the information would be easily obtainable—

The Minister for Transport: First of all you pretend that this is such a serious and weighty matter and then you suggest it could be resolved in three weeks.

Mr. COURT: I can substantiate that and prove the logic of it. The Minister knows this matter has been thoroughly investigated and all these people have been in consultation with him; the Transport Board officers, the bus operators themselves and the one or two other principal witnesses who would be involved. Surely that would not take very long! It is not as though we were starting from scratch and would have to advertise for witnesses who might be reluctant to come along.

Surely there would be a great degree of co-operation in connection with the taking of evidence! I do not imagine any great difficulty at all. I envisage a committee like this sitting on days on which Parliament was sitting, and the only thing under our Standing Orders is that it would not be able to take evidence while the House actually sat. But it would still leave a fairly generous amount of time to a committee anxious to arrive at a quick result.

Mr. Potter: Would it not be covering ground which has already been covered?

Mr. COURT: Apparently I have not made my point clear to the member for Subiaco. It has been covered to the satisfaction of the Minister.

Mr. Potter: And other parties. That was his assurance.

Mr. COURT: And the Government; but we here represent the whole of the public.

Mr. Potter: I understand that.

Mr. COURT: We are setting up a system of finance, for instance, which to my mind is new to this State. I might be wrong in that, but a quick glance at the Bill shows that the finance necessary for the capital of this trust will be granted under a system new to this State. That needs examination on behalf of the people.

There are other things such as the potential capital demands, and one or two others, which need examination; and I think it is our duty as a Parliament to examine them. If the Minister says, "You can go and talk to these people and examine all these matters," presumably he means that we can examine the departmental files on the subject. But in point of fact he is only achieving by unofficial means what we are trying to achieve through official means.

Mr. Potter: Can it be achieved in the time you have specified?

Mr. COURT: I am sure it can, given the goodwill of all parties; and I can assure members of our intention to co-operate in this matter to facilitate the passage of this Bill.

The Minister for Transport: Are you speaking for your corresponding numbers in another place?

Mr. COURT: Yes, so far as I can commit the hon. gentlemen. I am certain that the Leader of the Opposition would be prepared for me to go this far and say—and I can almost guarantee this—that we will get equal co-operation, at least so far as the Liberal members are concerned; we will do all we can to expedite finality on this inquiry.

Mr. Lapham: If you do not get the select committee, what about the goodwill?

Mr. COURT: I am not holding it out as a threat. If the Minister says, "I am not going to have a bar of this thing" then it is obvious that the debate has to take the usual course, and we will have to be much more searching in our personal inquiry. The very thing the Minister is trying to stop could arise. In a House like this, when we start to debate a matter such as we have in front of us now, anything can happen. Look what happened this afternoon, over a stupid little side issue, when we had a rumpus on our hands. We are trying to avoid that.

We are not trying to stand the Government up or be difficult. One of the reasons why I suggest that we should invite the other House to join us on this issue is that if they have five representatives on the committee, or whatever number the House nominates, it should cut short the argument in that House, because they will have an informed opinion of their own and should quickly be able to make a decision on the Bill.

I think it will save days and days of argument if we can get some co-ordinated action between the two Houses in regard to this measure. We on this side of the House view with some misgivings the eclipse or proposed eclipse of private operators. It is not pleasant to any of us; even the most hardened socialist on the other side of the House, I should imagine, will have some feelings about some of these companies going out of existence because they represent a part of this State. They represent an era.

Mr. Lapham: Do you call this socialism?

Mr. COURT: We are not going to get involved in that sort of argument tonight because that was not my mission. I did not intend to go into details but my main object was to put forward this proposition as quickly and as simply as I could so that when the House next assembles the Government will have had ample opportunity to consider the proposition, and there will be no need for the second reading debate to be unduly delayed.

At this stage we do not accept the proposition that it is impracticable to hammer out a system which would be fair and equitable to all concerned, for private operators and Government operators, to continue. It is patently obvious, from what the Minister said this evening, that the present conditions are grossly unfair and no business can continue under them. The task of Parliament is to address itself to the question of whether the root causes of this unfairness can and should be eliminated.

The Minister for Transport: It is not a question of unfairness; it is the motor-car age.

Mr. COURT: I suggest that irrespective of motorcars if there had not been unfair competition between the rail services and the road operators, the road operators would be doing reasonably well. They would have their problems, but they would be doing reasonably well.

The Minister for Transport: But they would still be very much below what they were five years ago.

Mr. COURT: Maybe, but if the unfairness were removed I think they would be able to rehabilitate themselves.

The Minister for Transport: I think the services in the worst position are those not affected by the railways.

Mr. COURT: I do not want to get involved in such detail tonight. That was not my intention or desire. It is important that the committee should deliberate on the question of whether we accept this new state of affairs of a Government operated transport, whether it is called a trust or by any other name. In point of fact, with the passage of time it will come back to the equivalent of a Government operated transport. It could start off tomorrow with selected people of the highest possible order running it, people with all the vim and vigour and new ideas. Probably it would get off to a flying start and establish itself quite successfully within the next five years. But what after that?

The Minister for Transport: That has not been the experience of the Commonwealth Bank.

Mr. COURT: Surely the Minister would not compare the running of the Commonwealth Bank with the running of this concern. The Commonwealth Bank has sources of profit available to it which are not available to any other concern.

Mr. Lapham: What about T.A.A.?

Mr. COURT: History has yet to prove that that is all it appears to be. As yet T.A.A. is in its infancy. The Minister well knows all the problems that will beset this trust. He even blotted his copy book when he made reference to the one fare fixing authority. I was almost going to applaud him because that is part of Liberal Party policy.

The Minister for Transport: I must have a second look at it.

Mr. COURT: He referred to the possibility of traffic considerations overriding considerations of fares as between rail and road. Had it not been for the unfair competition of the railways, many of these operators would not have been forced into their present position. This unfair competition has resulted only from the desire to keep the railways operating.

The Minister for Education: Since when have you had a policy?

Mr. COURT: I have heard the Minister say that before and I must remember to send him a copy of it.

Mr. Johnson: Send me one too when it is printed.

Mr. COURT: I heard that the hon. member had received one and we were duly impressed to think that he was interested in it.

Mr. Johnson: I went to a lot of trouble to get it and when I did, it was eight years old.

Mr. COURT: The person who was told to give it to the hon. member must have done his job better than we thought. It seems inevitable that in any Government operated transport certain losses will take place. It does not matter how much jam we try to put around the pill, the fact is that when we have a big Government operated department there are certain pressures and stresses that arise which cannot be divorced from such a concern. To all intents and purposes, no matter how much we tried to divorce this from the Government, the fact remains that at some point of time it will become subject to Government policy. The present Minister might avoid it like the plague; but his successors might not.

The Minister for Transport: That is true, but his successors cannot in this instance; only Parliament can do that.

Mr. COURT: Let the Minister wait until the trust wants to put up the fares the first time, or if some extra money is wanted. He will see what the Treasurer of the day will say and he will find the pressure of Government control coming into it. It is inevitable. That happens whatever party is in power.

The Minister for Transport: The Rural & Industries Bank, the State Government Insurance Office and other Government undertakings are doing marvellous work and that aspect does not enter into it. Yet there is more political interference there than there is in this proposition.

Mr. COURT: If one reads the Bill one would get the impression that the Minister has done his darndest to make this legislation free of political control. I realise that. However, in practice what will happen? We cannot establish a trust

and then say that the Government will have no influence over it; that the Government will not make the appointments or that the Government will not fix the salaries.

The Minister for Transport: Only of the officers of the trust; not of the employees themselves.

Mr. COURT: That is so, but the Government of the day must keep some link with this concern and the power of the purse, as we know from our experience of the Commonwealth Government at this point of time in Australia's history, is terrific. The man with the money calls the tune. Is the Minister going to suggest that, in ten years' time, when there is some controversy on passenger transport, the Treasurer will not use his financial power to enforce a degree of Government policy on the metropolitan transport trust?

I am not sure of the details, but I understand that there is one trust in Australia at the moment which has had a succession of losses. When that trust was created it was indicated that it would be free of Government control. However, it cannot finance its losses from thin air and it has had to come back to the Government for financial assistance.

Mr. Lapham: Has it ever made any profits?

Mr. COURT: Yes, I believe it did make a profit in one financial year.

Mr. Lapham: What happened to the profits?

Mr. COURT: I do not know. I can well remember that one trust which made more than was permitted in one financial year put its fares down. In the following year so many people used its services that it made more money than ever in that year. However, apart from that information I cannot answer the hon. member's question. We must accept that the present situation is so unfair as to be indecent. Therefore, we must accept the fact that something must be done with the unfair competition that exists and the unfair situation that has developed.

The Minister for Transport: You are making too much out of that. The same trend has developed in other parts of Australia but the same circumstances do not apply.

Mr. COURT: There is no reason why we should fall into the same errors as other States. The Minister is aware of the position in Brisbane. The Government there would sell out its transport interests to private operators tomorrow if it could. The Queensland Government has tried this system of transport.

The Minister for Transport: There are a few operators in this State who would sell out to the Government tomorrow if they could.

Mr. COURT: Yes, because of the situation that has been created. However, if one could get behind the scenes I am sure one would find that many operators are not favouring the creation of a trust for the love of it. Most of them are fairly rugged individualists.

The Minister for Transport: I think they still are.

Mr. COURT: Many of them would still wish to run their own show but this unfortunate state of affairs has been forced on them. One of the reasons for the advisability of appointing a select committee is to enable Parliament to satisfy itself that there is no alternative to the creation of a trust. If the select committee arrived at that conclusion, the Minister's job would be as good as over. The problem would be solved for him.

The Minister for Transport: Suppose it arrives at some hotch-potch solution? What then?

Mr. COURT: The Government is still the Government of the day.

The Minister for Transport: And you have the thick end of the stick to use on the Government in another place.

Mr. COURT: It is a responsible majority. I would be quite prepared to leave a decision on this matter to it after we have thrashed the matter out here.

The Minister for Transport: I am aware that your colleagues have agreed to measures on their merits in that House at the second reading stage but subsequently, on the third reading, on the ground of high principles or socialism or something else, they have voted against the measures.

Mr. COURT: How often does that happen?

The Minister for Transport: How often do we introduce legislation such as this?

Mr. COURT: How often has the Legislative Council, in the past, opposed legislation and then, later, in the light of further argument, allowed the legislation to go on the statute book?

The Minister for Mines: We do not get many surprises.

Mr. COURT: I think the Minister has had more than he expected even during his last few years of office. However, I am not here to argue the merits of the Legislative Council and I do not want to be sidetracked. I want to make my position clear. I do not want to debate the Bill tonight because I am not in a position to do that. Other members will do that when the measure is again brought forward. I support the Bill with the intention of moving, at the appropriate time, that the Bill be referred to a select committee for investigation along the lines I have indicated this evening.

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

House adjourned at 10.26 p.m.