

Western Australia and take jobs away from our people here. It is pertinent to remind members that that has not happened in the other States of Australia.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Mr. Woodfield suggests you are taking it out at his request.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I cannot be responsible for what Mr. Woodfield suggests. It is certainly not being done at his request. We are seeking to remove the section from the Act because it is considered to be an archaic law. It has been there for a very long time. The other States of Australia do not have a similar provision in their legislation.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: They have not the iron ore.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Has not Mr. Strickland heard of the Middleback Range in South Australia?

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: It is all taken up.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Of course it is; but South Australia does not have this provision which prevents an Asian from working in the mines in the Middlebank Range.

The Hon. D. P. Dellar: What mines are there in South Australia?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That interjection is not worth spending time on. South Australia, of course, has not anywhere near the same mineral wealth that we have. We all know there are mines in South Australia, as there are in Queensland and New South Wales, and to a lesser degree in Victoria. But none of those States has this provision in its Act. I believe that the criticism levelled at the section under consideration, and at the particular clause, is misplaced, particularly as it relates to the dire effects which members think it might have. As far as I am concerned I do not think it will have that effect. I do not intend it to have that effect.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I do not want it to have that effect.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Nor do I.

The Hon. J. Dolan: What good will it do?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I could of course keep on answering interjections of this nature. It should be appreciated that this provision in our Act is archaic, and certain people find it difficult to understand.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: A bit like the franchise for the Upper House.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: We will have an opportunity to deal with that a little later. I do not think the President will allow discussion on that subject now. There is nothing more for me to say on this matter.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: You have not answered us yet.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: All I can say is that the fears expressed by some members as to the effect which the removal of this section of the Mining Act will have are quite misplaced. It will not have the effect they think it will.

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

Ayes—16

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. G. C. MacKinnon
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. R. C. Mattiske
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. H. R. Robinson
Hon. J. Heltman	Hon. S. T. J. Thompson
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. J. Murray

(Teller.)

Noes—12

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery
Hon. D. P. Dellar	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. J. Dolan	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. P. J. S. Wise
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. H. C. Strickland

(Teller.)

Majority for—4.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

House adjourned at 11.7 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 18th September, 1963

CONTENTS

	Page
BILLS—	
Administration Act Amendment Bill—	
Intro. ; 1r.	1124
Albany Harbour Board Act Amendment Bill—3r.	1124
Bee Industry Compensation Act Amendment Bill—3r.	1124
Beekkeepers Bill—Returned	1142
Bills of Sale Act Amendment Bill—	
Receipt ; 1r.	1142
Bunbury Harbour Board Act Amendment Bill—3r.	1124
Firearms and Guns Act Amendment Bill—Returned	1142
Local Government Act Amendment Bill—	
Intro. ; 1r.	1124
Motor Vehicle Drivers Instructors Bill—Report	1124
Occupational Therapists Act Amendment Bill—Returned	1142
Pig Industry Compensation Act Amendment Bill—3r.	1124
Stamp Act Amendment Bill—3r.	1124

CONTENTS—continued

	Page
MOTIONS—	
Geraldton Harbour—Improvement to International Standard	1153
Koongamia-Darlington Railway—Reopening	1142
Onslow Town and Port—Rehabilitation	1124
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE—	
Aged People's Homes—	
Availability of Swan Hospital Grounds	1122
Provision in Eastern Suburbs	1122
Women on Waiting List, and Anticipated Vacancies	1122
Authorities with Borrowing Powers—Increase in Number, and Nature and Extent	1121
Bread Doughs—Action against P. A. Tolcan : Tabling of File	1121
Collier Pine Plantation—Overall Plan	1122
Education—Applecross High School : Admission of Students from Manning and Koonawarra State Schools	1121
Electricity Supplies—	
Bunbury Power House—	
Installation of Bulk Oil Tank	1120
Use of Coal	1120
Electricity Consumers : Number in Metropolitan and Country Areas	1121
Housing—	
Geraldton : Construction Programme for 1963-64	1119
Houses in Midland : Applicants, Erections, and Vacancies	1122
Mining Machinery—	
Availability to Prospectors Association	1120
Sale by Tender	1119
Police—Courthouse Building at Northam : Completion of Additions	1120
Public Works Department—North-West Section	1123
Railways—	
Railway Buses : Perth-Northam and Perth-Merredin—	
Number, and Passengers Carried	1121
Use of Diesel Electric Train	1121
Use of Panel Van	1121
Transport in Hills District—	
Reopening of Railways	1122
Report of Committee	1121
Use of Diesel Cars	1122
Timber Mills—	
Operation and Leasing by Forests Department	1120
Ownership and Construction by Forests Department	1120
Water Supplies—Canning and Serpentine Dams : Erection of Steel Gates	1119
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE—	
Papers Tabled—Alterations	1123
Railways—Rapid Transit Terminal : Establishment in Kenwick-Armadale Area	1124
Totalisator Agency Board—Prosecution of Former Agent W. G. Donohoe	1123
Water Supplies—Country Water Board : Establishment	1123

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

CANNING AND SERPENTINE DAMS

Erection of Steel Gates

1. Mr. HART asked the Minister for Water Supplies:
 - (1) Is it proposed to erect steel gates along the top of Canning Dam and Serpentine Dam?
 - (2) If so, when?
 - (3) What is the estimated cost?
- Mr. WILD replied:
- (1) It is proposed to erect steel gates in the overflow section of Canning Dam and to increase the height of the steel gates in the overflow section of Serpentine Dam.
 - (2) Before the end of next winter.
 - (3) Canning Dam gates: £20,000. Serpentine Dam gates: £1,200.

HOUSING AT GERALDTON

Construction Programme for 1963-64

2. Mr. SEWELL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:

How many homes are listed for construction in Geraldton for the year 1963-64—

 - (a) for purchase under the Commonwealth-State Agreement;
 - (b) for purchase under the State Workers' Homes Act;
 - (c) for rental;
 - (d) for two-unit flats for elderly couples?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (a) Sixty houses are listed for construction for 1963-64. Rental and purchase houses are now erected under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement in country areas including Geraldton.
- (b) Nil.
- (c) The houses listed for construction will be offered for rental or purchase to the applicants having the longest waiting period, except in the case of emergents.
- (d) Two pairs of 2-unit flats.

MINING MACHINERY

Sale by Tender

3. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:
 - (1) In respect of sales of mining machinery by tender, as referred to at the annual general meeting of the Amalgamated Prospectors and Leaseholders' Association, and reported in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* on the 19th August last, when tenders are called is it stipulated that the lowest tender will not necessarily be accepted?
 - (2) Is he aware of the sale referred to in the above news item, alleging

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

that equipment valued at £1,000 had been sold by tender for £100 (or figures thereabout)?

- (3) If a sale was made under these circumstances, was it not possible for the Mines Department to refuse to accept the low tender prices?

Availability to Prospectors' Association

- (4) Will he give consideration, in respect of similar disposals of mining machinery and equipment in the future, when tenders submitted do not reach the true or a reasonable value of the items concerned, to thereupon offer the machinery, etc., to the A.P.L.A. at a reasonable price, so that such machinery, etc., may not be lost to the mining industry?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The sale was of the balance of plant which was originally valued at approximately £1,000 in 1954 for insurance purposes. The sale was made in August, 1961, after tenders had been called. Before accepting a tender, the Inspector of Mines examined the possibility of obtaining a better price and subsequently recommended acceptance of the tender because of the poor market at that time for such plant, the prohibitive cost of dismantling and carting to Kalgoorlie, and the danger of plant disappearing. The plant was sold to a local operator. Somewhat similar plant to this was offered for sale by a private prospector for £130. Special consideration is often given to tenderers who propose to use the plant for local mining purposes.
- (4) The Minister is very conscious of the need for assisting prospectors; but it is desirable, in order to maintain the tender system, that the A.P.L.A. should tender for any plant it requires and consideration will be given to tenders received having in mind the concluding words of question No. (1).

TIMBER MILLS

Ownership and Construction by Forests Department

4. Mr. HAWKE asked the Minister for Forests:
- (1) Does the Forests Department own any timber mills at the present time?

- (2) Is the Forests Department having any timber mills built at the present time?

Operation and Leasing by Forests Department

- (3) In connection with Nos. (1) and (2), does the Forests Department operate or lease or propose to lease any timber mill?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes. The Forests Department mill at Dwellingup which was burnt down in the 1961 fire is being rebuilt.
- (3) The Forests Department has operated its own sawmills for over 40 years. No departmental mill is under lease, and there are no present arrangements for the leasing of any mill.

COURTHOUSE BUILDING AT NORTHAM

Completion of Additions

5. Mr. HAWKE asked the Minister representing the Minister for Justice: Will the proposed additions to the Northam Courthouse building which were referred to in the Minister's answer to my question on notice on the 11th instant be erected during the current financial year?

Mr. COURT replied:

No. The proposed additions have been included in the list of works for consideration when the 1964-65 loan funds programme is being formulated.

BUNBURY POWER HOUSE

Installation of Bulk Oil Tank

6. Mr. H. MAY asked the Minister for Electricity:
- (1) Is a 12,000-ton bulk oil tank to be installed in the Bunbury generating station?
- Use of Coal*
- (2) Will he inform the House why such a quantity of oil is needed for generating purposes to the exclusion of the use of Collie coal?
- (3) Why is it necessary to use oil at all when coal is so easily available from Collie?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) A 12,000-ton bulk oil tank is being constructed at Bunbury bulk oil terminal.
- (2) and (3) Oil is required for boiler lighting up and emergency purposes and is cheaper handled in bulk.

**RAILWAY BUSES: PERTH-NORTHAM
AND PERTH-MERREDIN***Number, and Passengers Carried*

7. Mr. HAWKE asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) How many railway road buses left Perth on the Perth-Northam run and the Perth-Merredin run last Friday afternoon?
- (2) How many passengers altogether were accommodated on the buses?

Use of Diesel Electric Train

- (3) Could all those passengers have been reasonably accommodated on an electric-diesel train?

Use of Panel Van

- (4) Did a road panel van also run on the same evening from Perth to Northam and Merredin?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) One bus Perth-Northam run.
Two buses Perth-Merredin run.
- (2) 93.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) Yes, between Perth-Northam and Kellerberrin.

BREAD DOUGHS*Action against P. A. Tolcan: Tabling
of File*

8. Mr. DAVIES asked the Minister for Labour:

With reference to question No. 17 on the 28th August, 1963, is the factories and shops file regarding P. A. Tolcan now available for tabling, please?

Mr. WILD replied:

No. The file is still in action, having recently been to the Crown Law Department which is giving consideration to the possibility of legislation to correct an anomaly in the Bread Act.

APPLECROSS HIGH SCHOOL*Admission of Students from Manning
and Koonawarra State Schools*

9. Mr. D. G. MAY asked the Minister for Education:

Will he advise if any pupils from the Manning and Koonawarra State Schools will be required to attend the Applecross High School at the commencement of the 1964 term?

Mr. NALDER (for Mr. Lewis) replied:

No. In 1964, first-year students from Manning and Koonawarra will attend Bentley High School.

**AUTHORITIES WITH BORROWING
POWERS***Increase in Number, and Nature and
Extent*

10. Mr. CORNELL asked the Treasurer: In view of his statement in the House on the 12th September to the effect that it was essential that the number of authorities with separate borrowing powers be increased, can he indicate whether the creation of any additional such authorities is in contemplation and, if so, the nature and extent thereof?

Mr. BRAND replied:

Additional authorities contemplated at this point in time are the proposed metropolitan water board and a Government employees' housing authority. It is also proposed to give separate borrowing powers to the Albany and Bunbury Harbour Boards—and the legislation relating to these boards passed through this House last night—and to extend the borrowing powers of the Midland Junction Abattoir Board and the Rural and Industries Bank. Each of the authorities herein mentioned could borrow £100,000 per annum without reference to the Loan Council provided, of course, that the terms of the borrowings conformed with the conditions laid down with respect to interest rates.

ELECTRICITY CONSUMERS*Number in Metropolitan and Country
Areas*

11. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Electricity:

- (1) How many State Electricity Commission consumers are in the metropolitan area?
- (2) How many State Electricity Commission consumers are in country areas?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) At the 30th June, 1963: 145,953.
- (2) At the 30th June, 1963: 27,930.

12. *This question was postponed.*

TRANSPORT IN HILLS DISTRICT*Report of Committee*

13. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) Has the report of the committee inquiring into transport difficulties in the hills district been considered by the Railways Department?

Reopening of Railways

- (2) Is the commissioner being given a free hand to determine action to be taken regarding opening up the Boya-Darlington section of the railways?
- (3) What would be the approximate cost of opening up the Koon-gamia-Darlington section for passenger traffic?

Use of Diesel Cars

- (4) Would diesel railcars be cheaper and quicker to run than steam trains?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) Yes, and some matters are being further examined.
- (2) In a matter such as this the commissioner makes a recommendation to the Government. He does not favour the reopening.
- (3) If it were practicable to reopen the Koongamia-Darlington section initial expenditure of £1,000 would be required to make the track suitable for the operation of diesel electric railcars without costs for buildings, etc.
- (4) Yes.

HOUSES IN MIDLAND*Applicants, Erections, and Vacancies*

14. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:

- (1) What number of applicants for the following types of houses are waiting in the Midland area—
 - (a) tenancy homes;
 - (b) purchase homes;
 - (c) McNess homes;
 - (d) Single-unit flats?
- (2) What number of homes of the respective types is being built in Midland?
- (3) What number of the respective types of homes is vacant in Midland?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) (a) There are 49 applications, but the vacancy rate is 71 per annum.
- (b) Two applications.
- (c) One application.
- (d) Twelve applications.
- (2) (a) and (b) Tenders have been called for five houses, rental or purchase.
- (c) Nil.
- (d) Nil.
- (3) Three vacant.

AGED PEOPLE'S HOMES*Women on Waiting List, and Anticipated Vacancies*

15. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Health:

- (1) What number of women are awaiting entry to aged women's homes in the metropolitan area?
- (2) what number of vacancies are expected in the current year?

Provision in Eastern Suburbs

- (3) Are any plans being made to provide for elderly people in the eastern suburbs?

Availability of Swan Hospital Grounds

- (4) Would grounds associated with the Swan Hospital at Middle Swan be available for a new aged men's and women's home?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) As advised previously, the number is difficult to evaluate, but it approximates 180 for Government homes, of which number 30 are urgent.
- (2) This figure is unknown and it would be impracticable to attempt an assessment of the number.
- (3) I mentioned in my reply some weeks ago to a similar question by the honourable member that the needs of the aged are always under consideration by my department, and that homes, as distinct from hospitals, are now being provided throughout the State by voluntary organisations and denominational bodies, with substantial grants from the Commonwealth Government, and by the State Housing Commission. Apart from the Methodist and Swan Cottage Homes, I am not aware of any others being constructed elsewhere east of the river. A hospital of 50 beds for the elderly sick is now being completed at Guildford by a denominational body.
- (4) Facilities for the nursing and medical care of geriatric cases (which are not of the type referred to by the honourable member) will be increased as may be necessary at this hospital, subject to funds being available.

COLLIER PINE PLANTATION*Overall Plan*

16. Mr. DAVIES asked the Minister for Lands:

With reference to question No. 15 of the 17th September will he advise—

- (a) whether any special endeavour is being made to develop an over-

all plan for future development of the Collier pine plantation;

- (b) If it is possible to estimate when a final plan will be developed?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

- (a) Yes. The Town Planning Commissioner is considering an overall plan.
(b) Not at present. The plan will be developed as the pines mature, thus enabling the land to be released for other purposes.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

North-West Section

17. Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Is the north-west section of the Public Works Department still in existence?
(2) If not, what department is now carrying out the work previously performed by this department?

Mr. WILD replied:

- (1) No.
(2) Following a reorganisation of the Public Works Department, work previously carried out by the north-west branch has been transferred to either the Country Towns Water Supplies, Harbours and Rivers, or Architectural Divisions.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

COUNTRY WATER BOARD

Establishment

1. Mr. W. A. MANNING asked the Treasurer:

Further to the reply of the 12th September, regarding the metropolitan water board, would not the facts brought out regarding additional loan funds indicate that it would be advisable to constitute a country water board with borrowing powers?

Mr. BRAND replied:

There would be little advantage in constituting a country water board with borrowing powers, as the very heavy losses incurred in the operations of country water supply, sewerage, drainage, and irrigation concerns would limit the scope for raising loans.

Such a board would have no capacity to meet the debt charges on independent loan raisings and the burden would fall on the State. In this respect there must obviously be a limit to the capital indebtedness which can be serviced from State resources.

The estimated deficiency for 1963-64 on country water supply, sewerage, drainage and irrigation undertakings is £3,200,000.

If, when the metropolitan water board has been established, experience shows that there would be overall advantages in setting up a country water supply and sewerage board, consideration could then be given to the matter by the Minister.

PAPERS TABLED

Alterations

2. Mr. HAWKE asked the Speaker:

I understand that in recent days alterations have been made to some of the papers which have been laid on the Table of the House, after they have been so placed. I believe the same has also occurred in the Legislative Council. I am not suggesting there is any ulterior motive in relation to this matter. My question is:

- (1) Can any alterations be made to papers tabled in this House, after they have been tabled, without your knowledge and approval?
(2) In such circumstances should information relating to such alterations be made available to members of the House?

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman) replied:

- (1) I am not aware of any alterations having been made to papers tabled in this House, so I cannot give the honourable member any satisfactory reply.
(2) As to whether papers tabled in this House should be altered, that is a matter to which I shall have to give further consideration. I can understand circumstances arising where that would be desirable; on the other hand, I think the House should be advised of the alterations.

TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD

Prosecution of Former Agent W. G. Donohoe

3. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister for Police:

On the 10th of this month I asked the Minister if he was then in a position to supply answers to some questions which I had asked some time previously. The Minister was not then in a position to supply those answers. In view of the lapse of time which

has taken place—now in excess of one month—can the answers be supplied?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

My answer is still the same, even though the period is now in excess of one month. I am not in a position to supply the information to the honourable member, but I will make it available as soon as it is possible to do so.

Mr. Tonkin: Will the Minister indicate what is causing the delay?

Mr. CRAIG: As far as I understand it is still a matter before the board and the police.

RAPID TRANSIT TERMINAL

Establishment in Kenwick-Armadale Area

4. Mr. D. G. MAY asked the Minister for Railways:

In view of the article which appeared in today's newspaper relative to the proposed establishment of a rapid transit terminal in the Kenwick-Armadale area, and taking into consideration that the distance between Kenwick and Armadale is 10 miles, could the Minister at this stage be more specific as to the exact location of the terminal?

Mr. COURT replied:

I could not be more specific at this juncture, not until the final details of the plan have been worked out by the Commissioner of Railways and the Metropolitan Transport Trust, and approved by the Government. The report appearing in the newspaper was given in answer to a query raised by the Press, so as to give some indication as to where the second phase of the project will occur. It will follow fairly quickly after phase 1, but the important thing now is to get phase 1 in action.

BILLS (2): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Local Government Act Amendment Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr. Toms, and read a first time.

2. Administration Act Amendment Bill.
Bill introduced, on motion by Mr. Evans, and read a first time.

BILLS (5): THIRD READING

1. Bunbury Harbour Board Act Amendment Bill.

2. Albany Harbour Board Act Amendment Bill.

Bills read a third time, on motions by Mr. Wild (Minister for Works), and transmitted to the Council.

3. Stamp Act Amendment Bill.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Nalder (Deputy Premier), and transmitted to the Council.

4. Pig Industry Compensation Act Amendment Bill.

5. Bee Industry Compensation Act Amendment Bill.

Bills read a third time, on motions by Mr. Nalder (Minister for Agriculture), and transmitted to the Council.

MOTOR VEHICLE DRIVERS INSTRUCTORS BILL

Report

Report of Committee adopted.

ONSLOW TOWN AND PORT

Rehabilitation: Motion

MR. BICKERTON (Pilbara) [4.54 p.m.]:
I move—

That in the opinion of this House, the Government should—

- (1) Reconsider the decisions made concerning the town and port of Onslow, namely—

- (a) that it intends to discontinue the shipping service to Onslow as from July, 1964, or when a road transport system is established;
- (b) that a townsite be established within the vicinity of Nanutarra Crossing and that the township of Onslow be rehabilitated only to the extent necessary to cover the transition period.

- (2) In view of the large sums of money already expended in the provision of town facilities at Onslow such as schools, native hostels and reserves, communications and postal facilities, electricity supplies, water supplies, Government buildings and depots, aircraft landing facilities, weather stations, port facilities, medical facilities, State houses, roads, shire council facilities, private buildings and investments, and bearing in mind the reliance placed on these facilities by the population of the surrounding district, and

the local development taking place in the mineral and fishing industries—

- (a) continue a regular shipping service to the port of Onslow and reinvestigate the reinstatement of adequate jetty facilities, utilising the remaining jetty section;
- (b) without further delay rehabilitate the town of Onslow by rebuilding damaged Government buildings and cyclone-proofing of all Government buildings against future cyclonic disturbances;
- (c) ensure the provision of a cyclone-proof shelter or shelters for local and/or itinerant people during cyclones;
- (d) take the necessary steps to move any buildings now built on areas susceptible to flooding from the sea, and ensure that all future construction is only permitted on land considered not susceptible to such flooding.

I would first of all like to apologise for the condition of my voice, which is a little bit croaky, to say the least. As we all know, that is probably one of the worst things which could happen to a politician.

I believe that the Government has made an error in its decision concerning Onslow. My motion therefore calls upon the Government to have another look at the situation rather than go ahead with its present plans. I feel Onslow should be rehabilitated, and the purpose of putting this motion before the House is to show the reasons for my belief. Quite a number of experts and committees have been involved in the report which was issued on Onslow, that report being, to the best of my knowledge, one of the reasons the Government made the decision it did in connection with the town of Onslow and, more importantly, the port.

I cannot help but feel that most of the deliberations of that committee and of the experts involved were directed along the lines of finding reasons for the extinction of Onslow and its port rather than finding reasons for its existence. This is rather important because it is well known that a decision favourable to that which is required can be reached if the inquiries are conducted along lines conducive to that required decision; and I believe that to be the case, in the main, as far as Onslow and its port are concerned.

The main arguments for the retention of Onslow must be based primarily on the retention of the State Shipping Service; in other words, on the retention of the town as a port, because the State Shipping Service is surely the lifeline of this area, and if it is to prosper as a trading centre and as a port, it is essential that it have a regular and efficient shipping service. A decision to retain the town of Onslow and, at the same time, withdraw State shipping from the port, would be tantamount to passing a death sentence on the town, as well as retarding the surrounding district.

The present Government's decision does just that; and it is that decision which I want withdrawn in the interests of the town of Onslow; in the interests of the port; in the interests of the surrounding districts; and, more important perhaps, in the interests of the north-west as a whole.

Onslow as a town and a port should be retained for many reasons. It should be retained for national reasons. We hear much these days about populating the north-west and our outback areas. We will not be able to do that if the object is to close them up. It should be retained for strategic reasons because, after all, population is part of defence. It should be retained for reasons of economy as outlined in my motion. The replacement of the facilities already existing at Onslow would be considerable in the terms of pounds, shillings, and pence if they were necessary. I think the figure given in the report approximates some £750,000 that would be necessary to replace these facilities in some other centre. I refer, of course, to such facilities as water schemes, roads, communications, schools, airfields, police stations, private buildings, and so on.

Onslow should be retained also for humane reasons. It is well known that in the north conditions on the coast are better than inland. This point again was brought out in the report of the committee on Onslow.

The town should be retained for service to the pastoral industry and the mining industry; because if we have State ships we need a port, and the obvious place for that port is Onslow, and the obvious method of transportation to the north-west at this stage is by ship; that is, if we are to consider costs to the local people.

Let us look at things in the right perspective. The majority of the local townspeople of Onslow favour the retention of that town and port. The majority of the pastoralists and mining people in the surrounding area favour the retention of Onslow at its present site. The members of Parliament representing that area favour the retention of Onslow as a town and port.

Most of the opposition to the retention of the town seems to stem from people who do not live there and, as far as I can ascertain, never have lived there. The Government's decision to cease the shipping service was based on a report by a committee set up by the Government for the purpose of making investigations. I have read that report very carefully and I can find as many reasons in it for retaining the town and port as I can for its extinction or, for that matter, for the alternative of moving it to that inland site of improbability: Nanutarra.

However, I will deal in more detail with the report at a later stage, but I would just like to say this now in connection with Nanutarra: If this town is to grow by the normal process of progress, then I am all for it; but if it is to be forced out of the ground at the expense of already-established trading centres and ports, regardless of expense and hardship, then I am against it.

The people of Onslow and district are like the people of thousands of other Australian towns. They desire nothing more than to earn a living in a place that badly needs population. They pay their taxes whether they work for the Government, whether they work for private enterprise, or whether they are self-employed.

Although it seems hard to convince some folk, the people of Onslow and district are human beings the same as everyone else, and they ask no more—indeed they expect much less—than a lot of other people. Their trials and tribulations are generally more, and rarely less than those of most people. The chance to exist in the area of their choosing—it is one in which they are badly needed—is all that they ask. Surely the natural causes mitigating against a peaceful existence in such an area as this are quite sufficient without the Government adding to the dilemma.

The people of the district accept philosophically the opinions of itinerant experts and committees. Many look upon them as a district hazard; and one could not blame those people on occasions if they viewed with benevolent contempt the opinions to which I have referred, because they have had plenty of them.

They are prepared to supply, as has been proved by the inquiries, accurate information to any committee or inquirer, and I have always thought that in this connection their co-operation was exceptional. They seem to be quite used to suffering the obvious dislike of inquirers in many cases to their way of life, and they hope for the best when the reports of the committees are submitted. I might add that they are also quite used to economists, accountants, and committees of experts; they are used to being investigated, devastated, and probably partly annihilated; and they

are used to being looked at, stared at; and—in some cases—treated as a tourist attraction, and—in many cases—classed as illogical for living in an area where we need them very badly.

They are not interested in sympathy or loving care, particularly in cans, because they get most of their other commodities that way. All they want is the same as any other group of Australians want—security and importance. They want a fair go with a capital "F", and I do not think that is demanding too much.

If it is necessary for Governments to set up committees and experts to decide how this fair go is to be dispensed, I suppose that is all right if we subscribe to that type of Government. Personally I feel that the Government knows no more, and indeed less, now—taking into consideration the committees and experts—than it knew before the cyclone struck Onslow. It could be, however, that the Government's line of action has been strengthened by the reports of these committees; and if that is what was required then indeed it has been achieved but at, I would say, the expense of much.

You will be pleased to know, Mr. Speaker, that in a town condemned to die, and in spite of the assistance graveyards that has been given by the executioner, the population since the last cyclone has increased by 10. That may not sound much to people in the city, but it is quite a bit up there.

Some of this increase is probably due to the arrival of new permanent residents, but some of it is due to the desire of the Australian to propagate, regardless of governmental hazards or climatic conditions, even including cyclonic disturbances. It is a great pity, probably, that the powers that be cannot have the same faith in the area that the local people do. Cyclones, we are told, are an act of God. I have often thought that is probably a phrase coined by insurance companies of the past for their own convenience.

If members could visit the Ashburton district they would see a pastoral, and potential mining, area supplied from the seaport of Onslow. This port and town has played its part much the same as many other towns have played their part in the development of this State; and Onslow has played a very essential part in the development of the north-west. Its lifeline is, and indeed always has been, a shipping service which plies between Fremantle and the port of Onslow—in this case the State Shipping Service, which was inaugurated to enable the area of the north-west to be developed through having a reasonable freight rate that was not prohibitive as far as the local people were concerned. That is what the Government wants to alter, and that is the alteration I oppose.

Cyclones affect the north-west from Wyndham to Geraldton, pretty well, in varying degrees of severity. Over the last six or seven years, Onslow has been affected particularly, in varying degrees of severity, by cyclones, and prior to that intermittently for many years.

The recent suffering seems to have resulted in the Treasury taking a lot more notice of Onslow than it would normally; and I would go so far as to say that it probably resulted in some small people taking a view of a very big situation, and bigger people taking notice of what they said.

The cyclone that went inland at Onslow could have gone inland at any other town on the north-west coast and could have resulted, possibly, in more damage than was caused at Onslow. The whole of the north-west coast is susceptible to cyclones. This is something that the people and industry there have to live with; and Governments have to assist the people and industry to live with it. Cyclones can be bested, and they must be bested.

The pioneers suffered these hardships and developed the area at the same time. Governments just have to face these problems and not endeavour to walk around them. Even costs do not particularly come into the question always, because very often the cost of providing an alternative is just as much as the cost of restoring the original. The destruction of the port by cyclone, to my way of thinking, was not the main reason for scuttling this town; it was the excuse that was necessary to withdraw the State ships, and that is what concerns me greatly.

If the Government is determined to use the State Shipping Service for the purpose for which it was designed, the problems of overcoming past cyclone damage, and indeed future cyclone damage, will not by any means be big ones. Cyclones may be an act of God; but the damage they do, without doubt, is the blame of man. We have illustrations of that at Onslow. The jetty has been blown away on many occasions, and that no doubt, was caused partly by design and partly by lack of maintenance.

We have another example of a hospital which I mentioned during another debate. The hospital was erected so that it reached a semi-stage of construction right in the middle of the cyclone period. We cannot blame God for that act. As I said, the dullest student at the Onslow school could tell us there is a time when people work on buildings, and there is a time when they do not. So there is no sense in calling the folly of man an act of God.

The public, as I have discovered—the average person in the street—seems to believe that the Government does not wish to reinstate Onslow owing to the cost of cyclone damage from time to time. I do

not believe that. I believe the Government's reason is that it wants to withdraw the State ships from certain ports and Onslow is as good as any other to start with. If the ships are withdrawn, they will be replaced by a costly system of road transport which would be detrimental to the area.

As I mentioned before, I believe the Government's decision was based, or partly based, upon a report by a committee which was set up to inquire into Onslow. The report is known as the *Report on the Onslow Situation*, February, 1963. On page 1 of this report—the numbering of this is my own because the pages of this report are not numbered—there is a section dealing with cyclones; and I think that, for the record, it would be well to read it. It says—

From the records and from the expert evidence of the Deputy Director of the Bureau of Meteorology (Mr. Mackey) the incidence of cyclones at Onslow is only slightly higher than at other centres on the coast between North West Cape and Broome.

Mr. Mackie affirms that it would be necessary to move from 90 to 100 miles away from the coast to be reasonably clear of cyclonic winds.

The committee decided that Onslow as a port has no particular disadvantage in regard to cyclones, despite occurrences during the past five years. There is, however, a number of unsuitable old wind-fatigued buildings at Onslow and the inevitable damage to these has accentuated the situation. Unless the design of buildings and the regular maintenance thereof is improved, we can expect similar damage and distress at other north-west coastal centres visited by a cyclone of equal intensity.

I read that for the sole purpose of showing that Onslow, according to the expert advice, is no more susceptible to cyclones than any other town on the north-west coast.

The report goes on, under the heading of "Shipping", to set out the decline of the tonnage of ships over the Portland wharf from 1958 to 1962, and the tonnage declined from 6,000 to 3,000. The whole point is that during that time the jetty was blown away, and Onslow had to wait a long time before a lighter system replaced it.

The jetty was not replaced, and it is obvious that the fall-off in tonnages is through no fault of the area to produce the goods; it is because the jetty was not replaced for the purpose of having the goods shipped. Therefore no blame can be placed on the area for any decline in

tonnages; indeed, it can be placed on those who are responsible for not replacing the damaged jetty.

On page 2 of the report we see this statement—

The provision of a new sea jetty cannot be recommended because of the high capital cost of the declining use of shipping service.

As I have just pointed out, the reason for the declining use of the shipping service has undoubtedly been the lack of facilities for shipping, and not so much the desire of local people to use any other method of transport.

Regarding the high capital cost of the replacement of jetty facilities, the information I have is that even at the end of the present jetty—some 600 feet was blown from the end of the jetty—there is approximately 20 feet of water. I understand the State ships draw about 17 feet of water, and therefore the replacement of the jetty is not the problem it would appear to be. From information I have, a "T" end on the end of the jetty, or an "L" end in a north-easterly direction would give sufficient water for State ships still to be able to use the services at the port. If that work were done it would considerably benefit the area.

Old soundings I have dug up from the Harbour and Light Department prove that this depth of water exists at the end of the existing jetty. So we cannot get around the matter so easily by simply making the straight-out statement that the high cost precludes the jetty being replaced when no cost is mentioned. I do not think the committee did itself credit in using such a general statement. The whole harbour is simply a very light dredging job from B.H.P. borings that are now there to ascertain whether it is a proposition for iron ore export. I understand about 50 holes have been bored and not more than three feet of very soft coral and some 40 odd feet of sand have been encountered, which shows that it is a simple dredging proposition.

If an "L" piece were put on the end of the jetty another advantage would be that it would not be affected by the tide or the weather; whereas in the case of the old jetty it ran at right-angles to both and obviously was a target for both.

Moving further down the report, on page 2 we come to paragraph 5, which is a classic statement. It reads—

Lighter Master Cooper proposed that ships call at Onslow only when a certain minimum cargo was to be handled, but the committee considered this undesirable mainly as this change would encourage road transport.

If the change to a minimum tonnage policy would encourage road transport, I wonder what the committee thinks would be encouraged when it was decided to close the port altogether? In parts of the report the committee's recommendation is for road transport; and yet in another portion it says it does not favour a minimum tonnage because that would encourage road transport. Another part of the report, on the same page, reads—

Nevertheless Ashburton residents, for either convenience or economy are turning increasingly to road transport.

They are not turning to road transport for convenience; they are not turning to road transport for economy; they are turning to road transport because the shipping facilities are not available. The report goes on—

The shipping service is of real value to the residents of Onslow, particularly during adverse weather conditions but this advantage does not generally apply to the station properties because approach roads to Onslow are also affected by rainfall.

That is not exactly correct, because I have figures to prove that when the north-coastal highway is closed the approach roads to Onslow can be used by local pastoralists for 75 per cent. of the time that the main highway is closed. The report goes on—

Provided freight transport charges are comparable the majority of Onslow residents consider a road transport service would meet the needs of the district. Except for seasonal convenience (principally wool) 50 per cent. of the Ashburton pastoralists do not support the shipping service and would prefer road transport.

That paragraph is absolutely incorrect. It is not a statement of fact but it is one of the main portions of the report, and it obviously influenced the Government in its decision. It is not true, and because of that I have every reason to doubt the accuracy of the rest of the report. I shall read it again because it is the main paragraph in the report and the one on which the Government obviously based its decision—

Except for seasonal convenience (principally wool) 50 per cent. of the Ashburton pastoralists do not support the shipping service and would prefer road transport.

Further down the report states—

There is an absence of general support by the pastoralists for the services and amenities at Onslow.

Let us see how true that statement is. With the assistance of the local authority I had all pastoral properties contacted to obtain from the pastoralists their views on whether or not they desired road transport.

The local authority sent this circular out to all pastoralists—

Two paragraphs within the report on the Onslow situation, February, 1963, are quoted hereunder—

Except for seasonal convenience (principally wool), 50 per cent. of the Ashburton pastoralists do not support the shipping service and would prefer road transport.

There is an absence of general support by the pastoralists for the services and amenities at Onslow.

The letter goes on—

Following a careful consideration of the report and other representations, Cabinet decided that the State Shipping Service to Onslow should terminate on a date to be decided after review of all factors including (a) road building time table and (b) organisation of an adequate road transport service. Many residents claim now that the paragraphs quoted above do not present a true assessment of Ashburton pastoralists who do not support the shipping service and would prefer road transport. Therefore this council desires an expression of opinion by all pastoralists within this district for or against retention of the State Shipping Service and Port of Onslow. The target date for State ships to be withdrawn from Onslow is 30th June next year, and from that date onwards you may have no alternative transport other than by road. Therefore will you please express your opinion by return post. Do you support withdrawal of the shipping service from this Ashburton district? Answer "Yes" or "No".

I received the first of the replies from the local authority on the 10th August to the question, "Do you support the withdrawal of the State Shipping Service from this Ashburton district?" and the following stations submitted their opinions:—

	Answer
Duck Creek Pastoral Co.	No
Uaroo Station	No
Minderoo Station	No
Nanutarra Station	No
Yarraloola Station	No
Mt. Minnie Station	No
Range Station	No
Urandy Creek Station	No
Red Hill Station	No
Mount Stuart Station	No
Yanrey Station	No

Some above mentioned pastoralists simply returned the circular duly endorsed "No" and signed whilst others replied by letter. Copies of these are attached for your information. Not one "Yes" opinion received up to date. However, I will keep you posted with all opinions as such arrive here.

Another letter from the same local authority, the Ashburton Shire Council, dated the 18th August, reads as follows:—

Further to letter dated the 10th inst. I now submit additional replies from pastoralists—

Yalleen Station: Answer, No.

Giralia Station: Answer, No.

Glen-Roy Station: Answer, No.

Warramboos Station: Answer, No.

Pastoralists supporting withdrawal of State ships—

Ashburton Downs Station: Answer, Yes (station 209 miles by road from Onslow).

Karoonah Pastoral Station: Answer, Yes (station 156 miles by road from Onslow).

Summary of replies to date—

Those supporting withdrawal of State ships from Onslow—2.

Those against withdrawal of State ships from Onslow—15.

I would like now to read, in connection with the same matter, an extract from the minutes of a meeting of the Ashburton shire on the 28th August, 1963, headed, "Withdrawal of State Shipping Service." It is as follows:—

Council considered a letter from the Minister for the North-West giving details of Cabinet's decision that the State Shipping Service to Onslow should terminate on a date to be decided after review of all factors. Council disagreed with certain factors arising from opinions expressed in Perth and included within the "Report on the Onslow Situation", particularly two paragraphs which read—

They are the same paragraphs to which I referred before, concerning support by pastoralists. To continue—

The opinion of pastoralists was obtained by this council with these paragraphs being circularised to all pastoralists, together with the question "Do you support withdrawal of the State Shipping Service from this Ashburton district?" Their replies comprise "Yes" (in favour) 2, and "No" (against) 18, and five had not replied.

Council is concerned also that statistics of freights do not reflect the total amount of imports and exports available to the shipping service at Onslow. To classify the use of road transport as being "preferred" is unfair when shipping space and/or loading facilities are not available. With minor exceptions the use of road transport during recent years was made compulsory because there was no alternative.

The target date; the 1st July, 1964, for withdrawal of the State Shipping Service, and the establishment of an organised road transport service is, in council's opinion, too hasty. Council suggests the programme should provide for—

- (a) construction of the Nanutarra Road and/or The Coastal Highway, and survey of small townsite if justified by the status developed by the Nanutarra Road;
- (b) port facilities and shipping service at Onslow be improved to cater adequately for all cargoes both imports and exports;
- (c) establishment of an organised road transport to be deferred until a reduced patronage of the shipping service indicates a substantial preference for road transport and a reliable road from Carnarvon is available.

Main Roads Department will be informed by Council that many serious interruptions to the passage of transport vehicles from Carnarvon northward occurred during this and recent years. Without sea transport available during such interruptions very serious chaos and hardship must have occurred, therefore considerable improvements are necessary before the Government is advised by the Main Roads Department that the road is suitable for a properly organised road transport service.

In connection with the same matter regarding the pastoralists' and the local residents' support of State shipping, I would read extracts from minutes of an ordinary meeting of the Shire of Ashburton held on the 10th July, 1963, at which members of the North-West Transport Enquiry Committee were present.

There was Mr. W. H. Howard (Commissioner of Transport), Mr. T. E. Owen (Manager, State Shipping Service), and Mr. H. L. McGuigan (Administrator for the North-West). The first part of the minute deals with the welcome to the North-West Transport Enquiry Committee and then continues—

Mr. Forrest requested the reading of this Council's submissions concerning transport and proposed withdrawal of the State Shipping Service as follows:—

It is acknowledged that development and progress must proceed, and, of necessity, types of transport will change to conform with future requirements.

However, local residents are concerned because unreliable statistics relating to freights shipped through

the Port of Onslow, together with an incorrect interpretation of what is desired by the majority or pastoralists and residents of Onslow may influence a Government decision for the State Shipping Service to be withdrawn from Onslow prematurely and without justification.

Statistics of freights to and from Onslow published annually by Harbour and Light Department very definitely do not reflect the total amount of imports and exports which have been and are now available from this Ashburton district through the port of Onslow during the years since 1955. Some of the reasons being that—

- (a) Cattle and sheep because of adverse seasonal conditions also shipping facilities unavailable, are no longer exported from Onslow.
- (b) Quantities of wool exported either through Point Samson or by road transport to Fremantle because of damage to the jetty by cyclones 1958 and 1961;
- (c) Likewise vast quantities of fuel, building, fencing, shearing and other supplies have been and are imported either through Point Samson or by road transport from Fremantle to Onslow.

An incorrect interpretation of what is desired by pastoralists and residents of Onslow may exist because—

- (a) A few local pastoralists absent in Perth immediately after the cyclone 1961 destroyed part of the jetty, during an interview with the Honourable Minister conveyed a preference for an inland road to serve transport requirements whilst reinstatement of the damaged jetty and the port of Onslow, to them, was not so important. In actual fact that preference was related to that small minority whilst the large majority of pastoralists desire and support retention of the State Shipping Service at Onslow.
- (b) Some residents in Onslow attending a public meeting immediately following the disastrous cyclone this year voted in favour of leaving Onslow. This vote also comprised only a small minority of all residents. Furthermore due allowance should be made for nervous reaction on their part following an ordeal made worse by insecure

buildings. Actually many expressed their vote in favour of safe housing either in Onslow or elsewhere.

Unfortunately the annual deficit incurred by the State Shipping Service together with the foregoing incidents may cause a precipitant withdrawal of the State Shipping Service from the port of Onslow. Therefore before such occurs either at the target date suggested, namely June of next year, or at any subsequent date, full consideration should be given to—

- (a) Sensible economies in State Shipping Service to be implemented where possible;
- (b) give due consideration to increasing imports such as fuels, oil, tyres and other supplies at present travelling by road;
- (c) give due consideration to increasing exports of fish, copper, and other minerals, surplus stock, wool, and other products;
- (d) give due consideration to adverse effect if increased costs such as the more expensive road transport should compel those pastoralists on poor class of country to give up and leave their properties; also mining, fishing, and other industry would be retarded;
- (e) give due consideration to the amount of increase in road transport haulage rates which undoubtedly will follow withdrawal of the State Shipping Service. Tenders by hauliers now seeking a transport license are no indication of their ultimate freight rates when competition by State Shipping Service no longer exists;

I do think that both these letters—the referendum of the local authority from the pastoralists, and the minutes of the local shire in connection with this matter—without doubt prove that the paragraphs on which the Government has obviously based its decision are not factual.

As I said before, if one can find, in a report, statements of that nature largely proved not to be factual, then one is entitled to have some doubt about the accuracy of the entire report. To say that the people of Onslow are not fussy whether they have a port or not; to say that the pastoralists are not interested in supporting it, and would prefer road transport; and to say that there is an absence of general support by the pastoralists for the service and amenities at Onslow, is entirely incorrect.

The report from this point onwards deals mainly with the alternative centre to Onslow—what I termed “this inland city of improbability: Nanutarra.” At this stage I should say that no-one in the Ashburton area, or in the north-west—or, for that matter, in Western Australia—is against better roads. We are all for them. If the road through Nanutarra gives a better road transport service throughout the area, then I am certainly not against it. I have always argued for better roads, not worse ones. But we do not want a costly system of road transport at the expense of State ships. Just how costly it is by comparison with State ships I intend to show at a later stage.

The only matter that I deal with in the section which recommends that an inland town be established some 60 or 70 miles from Onslow is that part of the report on page 5 which recommends that the town be established in this order: Transport depot, service station, cafe, general store, stock and station agents’ offices, machinery workshop, motel, public hall, hotel, police station, Government offices, local authority and public buildings, native hostel, and hospital.

We already have all those facilities in Onslow, and it would be much cheaper to the taxpayer to maintain them where they are, making them cyclone-proof, rather than go to the expense of building the additional facilities mentioned. If, of course, in the process of progress a town does spring up there, then it will have my blessing.

On the 13th of August I asked the Minister for Works a question in connection with the Nanutarra road as follows:—

- (1) What is the estimated expenditure in the next twelve months to up-grade the road north of Carnarvon to serve the Ashburton district and to carry out the intention, as stated, namely: “To proceed with the development of the Winning Pool-Nanutarra-Peedamulla section of road with the object of providing by July, 1964 a road suitable to the district?”
- (2) What type of crossing would be installed at Nanutarra and what would be the estimated cost?

The Minister replied—

- (1) Funds available during 1963-64 for first stage construction of the road between Barradale-Nanutarra-Peedamulla amount to £66,000. It is intended that by July, 1964, this road will have been cleared and lightly formed on final alignment throughout. This should result in a road suitable for all traffic during the period July to December, 1964.

I would like to interpolate that this is the Minister's information, not mine. The Minister's answer to the second part of my question was—

- (2) The type of crossing to be installed at Nanutarra is dependent on extensive investigations. At this stage it is not possible to advise an estimated cost.

Throughout the report we find that the cost of establishing the short-cut road would be far less than that of repairing Onslow. How that conclusion was arrived at I do not know, particularly when we do not know the cost of the crossing.

There is another point I would like to mention in connection with this report dealing with Nanutarra. I have here a nice map, nicely drawn, which shows the Nanutarra Crossing—according to this scale—to be about half a mile wide. After the last rains the crossing was, in fact, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide; so I would think there would need to be a lot of re-estimating regarding the crossing.

The next section of the report, No. 7, simply gives the constitution of the committee and its sources of information, where it met, and to whom its members spoke. There is only one comment I want to make on this section: Under the heading of "Meetings Held" it says—

The full Committee met at the Treasury Buildings on the following dates—

and then it gives the dates of six meetings, which were held at the Treasury Buildings. On the next page it states that three meetings of a subcommittee were held in the Treasury Buildings, making a total of nine meetings. The next subparagraph says—

A special sub-committee (Chairman H. L. McGuigan with Messrs. T. A. Cleave, H. H. Long, R. F. Johnson and W. H. Howard) visited Onslow on 26th and 27th February for the purpose of obtaining the views of local people and holding discussions with representatives of the Local Authority, the pastoralists, business people and residents.

Apparently this committee had nine meetings in Perth and spent two days in Onslow interviewing the people to whom I have just referred. One would have thought that a committee meeting to decide the fate of Onslow would meet nine times in Onslow and perhaps a couple of times in Perth. However, it did not see fit to do that.

We now come to part III of the report, which gives brief summaries—and they are rather important—of the various bodies this subcommittee interviewed. As I go through these, Mr. Speaker, you will note

that most of those interviewed were representatives of Government departments. The Department of Native Welfare said—

No objection to shift to an inland centre provided Department's policy of assimilation of the Natives with whites continues.

In other words, that department was not concerned whether the town remained or whether it was removed. It had, in fact, no opinion as far as the retention or extinction of the town was concerned, because it is a department that serves certain sections of the community, and it has to do that wherever a town is. So for the purposes of this report I regard its opinion as being a neutral one in connection with the movement or closure of any towns or ports.

The Medical and Health Department states—

Consider Hospital facilities will be necessary in the area between Carnarvon and Roebourne and must be located adjacent to the population, whether inland or coastal.

I classify that opinion as being neutral. The Education Department—

Education Act states that education facilities must be provided wherever a minimum of ten to twelve children of school age are in permanent residence.

Again, that department is neutral as far as a move is concerned.

The Transport Department is neutral. It says—

The Commissioner is of the opinion that the town of Onslow could remain in its present location until ultimately the town is served by road transport, after the withdrawal of the State Shipping Service.

The State Shipping Service states—

General Manager's opinion is that closure of the port is inevitable and would create no difficulties insofar as his Department is concerned. In fact, closure of the port would be beneficial financially to the State Shipping Service.

So we must consider, at this stage, that the General Manager of the State Shipping Service is for the closure of the port.

The Harbour and Light Department declares—

Activities would naturally cease when the State Shipping Service withdraw their services. Employment in the town would be seriously affected, but continuation of Harbour and Light activities of the port is not economically justified.

However, the only reason they would not be retained would be that there was no port. So, on the point of moving or closure the opinion is again neutral.

The Lands and Surveys Department states—

The Department is of the opinion there is no justification for continuance of Onslow as an administrative and distribution port if road transport is to replace shipping.

Again, it is quite a neutral opinion so far as the moving of Onslow is concerned. Town Planning—

In the Commissioner's opinion a new road system further inland would be of advantage to the whole area and would result in Onslow being retained only as a tourist resort.

Another neutral opinion. The Department of Agriculture states—

The Director considers Road Transport is likely to be able to satisfy the requirements of the pastoral industry which is not likely to expand greatly in the future.

I would say the Director would be in favour of a move. Public Works—

As with other State Government servicing departments, P.W.D. will be required to meet the demand according to population.

A neutral opinion. The department responsible for roads is equally neutral, and will supply roads regardless of where the centre may be. The Mines Department is neutral, and the report states—

It is not anticipated that Onslow will play an important part from a Mining point of view.

Shire and local residents—

In favour of retention of Onslow as an administration centre pending the establishment of an inland centre, after which Onslow should still remain as a minor centre with tourist facilities,

Shire and local residents against the move. Local Government states—

The district could be controlled as effectively from an inland centre, but the provision of amenities inland could be a serious problem.

Another neutral opinion as far as a move is concerned. The opinion of M.M.A. is—

Retention of Onslow strongly supported in view of:—

- The serviceability of the air strip.
- The existing D.C.A. facilities.
- The distance between Carnarvon and Port Hedland.
- Coastal location permitting better take-off and landing conditions.

So that company would be against any move of the town.

The Meteorological Bureau is against any move of the town. It says—

The Bureau is charged with many responsibilities such as marine services, flood forecasting, district forecasting, and aviation requirements.

Any proposed shift would depend upon the location of new site, but it is highly probable that the service could be more satisfactorily maintained in a coastal area.

The Postmaster-General's Department has given a neutral opinion—

Service will follow population.

The W.A. road transport services are for the move. I do not suppose one could blame them, as it would mean road transport as against shipping.

Members of Parliament who represent the district are against the move. In regard to the pastoralists, the report states—

Opinions divided, but majority favour road transport via inland road.

I think I have proved that that is absolutely incorrect, because the majority of them did not favour road transport as against State shipping. Indeed, the pastoralists and local residents are against the withdrawal of State ships.

Mr. Court: Could you say from inquiries you have made whether the district would now support a total ban of road transport?

Mr. BICKERTON: I am not suggesting a total ban of road transport. I am suggesting that if there is to be competition, we let road transport operate so that its costs can compete with State shipping, bearing in mind that State shipping is subsidised for the purpose of keeping freights down. Road transport may serve certain persons at certain times if they want something in a hurry; but if the State Shipping Service is run efficiently, and if roads from the ports are in a good serviceable condition, the State Shipping Service will certainly hold its own with road transport. I am convinced of that.

Mr. Court: That does not answer my query. No-one in the district was prepared to answer the question, "Would you agree to a ban on road transport so that the State Shipping Service could get the business?"

Mr. BICKERTON: Why put that question to them? The Minister has obviously decided to withdraw the State ships. If they were asked, "If the State ships are retained, would you agree to a total ban on road transport?" the Minister would get a reply of "No" to that question. No-one would agree that road transport should be banned. Road transport can operate but it should be controlled in the same way as the Minister controls road transport.

that is in competition with the railways. That same control should operate in connection with the State ships.

Mr. Court: They won't accept that form of control.

Mr. BICKERTON: I would not think they would accept a total ban. Would the people in the south-west accept a total ban on road transport?

Mr. Court: They would not accept that form of control.

Mr. BICKERTON: Only because it was put as a total ban on road transport.

Mr. Court: No.

Mr. BICKERTON: The Minister held a gun at a little thing above the ear. I have given the views of the various sections that were interviewed; and I find it works out this way: There were 12 with a neutral opinion, four for a move, and five against a move. Yet the committee comes up with the proposition to the Government that the State ships should be withdrawn and that a town should be established inland. How in the name of heaven could anyone come to that conclusion after reading the submissions contained in this report which I have placed before the House unless that conclusion had already been decided by the Government? That may be the case; I do not know. But it is quite ridiculous to suggest, after reading these submissions, that the answer is the withdrawal of the State Shipping Service and the closure of Onslow.

It has been suggested that it is uneconomic to supply State shipping to Onslow. The General Manager of the State Shipping Service said that the State ships would save financially if they did not service Onslow. Therefore I suppose we can say that as the State ships incurred an overall loss and are fairly heavily subsidised, money could be saved by closing down every port in the north-west. If the loss is £2,000,000 a year, and all the ports are closed, the State Shipping Service would not make that loss; but what a price that would be to pay so far as development is concerned!

I am rather surprised at the General Manager of the State Shipping Service being so eager not to supply this facility; because, after all, that was the purpose of that particular organisation being formed in the first place. I asked the Minister for the North-West the following question:—

What are the annual losses incurred by State ships for the previous three years for the following ports:—

- (a) Port Hedland;
- (b) Point Sampson;
- (c) Onslow?

The Minister's reply was a very general one. I think that from time to time he has criticised me for generalising, but the Minister is pretty good at it himself. His reply was as follows:—

Annual losses are sectionalised into ship operations and not port operations. The desired information is therefore not procurable with any degree of useful accuracy.

Cargo earnings and working expenses for each port could be supplied if desired but these figures cover only part of the operations in servicing a port.

I asked another question, which was as follows:—

In what way would the closure of the port of Onslow benefit State Shipping? The Minister was good enough to be general again. He said—

It would produce overall economic advantages in the operations of ships, including their scheduling.

It would also confer benefits on the State Shipping Service in the long term as it would influence future fleet planning.

Any decision about a port must, however, be made after taking into account many factors other than those related directly to the shipping service itself.

In other words, nobody knows what the losses are at Onslow. I do not mind that. Perhaps their methods of calculating costs do not go as far as the ports. But throughout this report we find that it is too costly to serve Onslow by ship, or it is too costly to provide a regular shipping service for Onslow. How, in the name of creation, do we know whether it is too costly or not, if we do not know what it is costing? That, then, is this report, pretty well from one end to the other.

It would be as well to record the summaries of the report. Here they are—

Retention of the town could be justified for the following reasons:—

- (a) Abandoning of the town must result in a number of families leaving the North permanently.

I agree; and I think that is a very important point. That is one thing which we do not want to happen. To continue—

- (b) Onslow's all weather airstrip is a valuable asset to North West air services for emergencies, refuelling and navigation aids.

- (c) Because of high road transport costs some goods are transported by ship, particularly in the cyclone season when the roads are closed for long periods.

- (d) Wool is a valuable backloading for the State Shipping Service.
- (e) Replacement cost of buildings, public utilities and other assets is approximately £750,000, and cannot be discarded lightly.

I would not think so.

- (f) Coastal climate is better.

The report goes on and gives reason why Onslow should be abandoned. It says—

Abandoning the town could be justified for the following reasons:—

- (a) Because of increased road transport facilities Onslow's use as a port is diminishing.

Interpolating there, whose fault is it that road transport is increasing? It is due mainly to the fact that the jetty facilities have not been replaced efficiently when they have been destroyed.

- (b) Because of its geographical position, it no longer serves as a Regional Centre.

I find difficulty in making anything out of that one. I know that a lot of things in Onslow have changed; but I do not know that its geographical position has changed. So far as I know it is still where it always was. If there was anything wrong with its geographical position, it would have been discovered years ago.

- (c) Its vulnerability to cyclones and sea flooding will prevent it ever thriving.

As I pointed out before, the whole of the north-west coast is vulnerable to cyclones, and they have to survive them if they are going to get anywhere. So far as the north is concerned, all towns must be cyclone-proof. We have to build to withstand cyclones. We now have large companies in the area which we hope will eventually be shipping iron ore from that coast. Those companies will be putting in huge installations for the purpose of loading ships, and those installations will have to be cyclone-proof, and they will have to stand up to weather conditions if the industry is to get going. The summaries continue—

- (d) An inland road situated centrally between stations would serve pastoralists better than the present coast road which runs around the Western and Northern perimeter of the area.
- (e) Road haulage of goods will replace shipping to and from Onslow.

Of course it will replace shipping, if we do not have any ships! We will then have the difficulty that local industry will come up against exorbitant road transport costs as compared with those of shipping.

- (f) The total cargo handled by the Harbour and Light Department during 1961-1962 was 1,977 shipping tons-in and 152 shipping tons-out. Two motor trucks per week could cope with this quantity of cargo.

The jetty was blown away, and there was no way of loading cargo into a ship, except when the lighter arrived at the end of the year and a limited amount of cargo was able to be shipped. What sort of a report is it which contains a statement of that nature, without an explanation as to why so little cargo was shipped?

- (g) Business people cannot afford cyclone damage repairs so regularly and consistently as in recent years.

I suppose there is a limit to what anyone can afford. I can assure the House that after the last cyclone, within two days of the blow the business people were already well under way with their repairs. They were a good deal ahead of the Government. They were tacking sheets of iron on the pub and other places as soon as the wind dropped. It is up to them to decide whether they can stand the cost of replacements after cyclones. In view of the fact that there have been many cyclones, they have not done too badly up to date; and in view of the fact that they are against the withdrawal of State shipping and the closure of the town, it strikes me that they are prepared to gamble with cyclones rather than with the Government. The final point is that reasonable amenities could be provided at an inland centre. No doubt we can provide anything if the cost is reasonable.

It does appear, at this stage, that it is the Government's intention to withdraw the State Shipping Service from Onslow and it will then be necessary for local people to use road transport. This will result in a considerable increase in freight rates.

Perhaps the best way to demonstrate the difference which is likely to occur is for me to read out certain figures. They are not my own figures; they have been supplied by the Government. They were given in reply to a question I asked regarding the cost of freight per ton from Perth to Onslow (a) by ship, and (b) by road.

I will go through these figures in more detail later, because I want them recorded. The figures are those for cement, chaff, dangerous cargo, timber, general cargo, and other goods. The average for those is about £12 per ton for State ships. That figure includes handling charges at Fremantle and Onslow. The charges for road transport are listed in various groups of tonnages. The charge for 10 tons is

£22 7s. per ton. There are not a great many loads of over 10 tons. The charge for loads between five and 10 tons is £27 17s., against an average of about £12 per ton for State ships. That is £12 as against £27. For loads under one ton—one might have 19 cwt.—the charge for road transport is £45 as against an average of £11 for State ships. Those figures apply at present; and no doubt someone will say that we will get better roads; that we will have more competition, so the charges for road transport will decrease.

Much of the road transport at the present time is operated by owner-drivers. They can drive as many vehicles as they wish for as far as they like, do their unloading, and so on. If these people become established as a road transport service, no doubt they will be brought under various awards controlling road transport, which lay down set hours for working, certain unloading facilities, and so on. Therefore any decrease which might be possible in road transport, as a result of better roads, will no doubt be offset by the better working conditions and higher wages which would be demanded by the drivers.

I particularly inquired about freezer cargoes. The charge for freezer cargoes landed at Onslow is £14 9s. The charge for freezer cargoes by road is £32 in ton lots. If the loads are under a ton one has to pay more than £32. We can understand why people on these pastoral properties are not too anxious to rush into road transport. These freights alone would be more than doubled at any one time.

Perhaps of interest to Country Party members is a letter which I received from the Duck Creek Pastoral Company concerning road transport. I know this is only one letter. One might say that one swallow does not make a drink.

Mr. Hawke: And one duck does not make a creek!

Mr. BICKERTON: The letter is addressed to the Shire Clerk of the Ashburton Shire Council. It reads as follows:—

Re your circular "State Ships v Road Transport" dated 30th July.

Duck Creek as a cattle station finds it impossible to continue operations under present road haulage conditions.

On the 29th April, 1963, we shipped 33 head of steers and bulls via road transport. These cattle brought a gross total of £1,040 12s. 6d. Haulage and handling charges paid to Dalgety & Company totalled £625 15s. 9d. This leaves us with a credit of £414 16s. 9d. From this we had normal station mustering and incidental expenses.

For cattle stations in this area to continue operations, not only is it necessary to retain State Shipping, but facilities must be provided to allow cattle and sheep to be transported to city markets.

There is a footnote by way of explanation, to the effect that two road hauliers charged £300 each to lift the cattle, which was a total of £600. Both trucks were filled to capacity. That would work out roughly to about £18 per head to transport the cattle south. I telephoned the State Shipping Service in regard to its costs for shipping cattle. The State Shipping Service rates are £8 10s. per head for fat cattle and £7 10s. per head for store cattle. It even has a concession over and above that. It will work out the capacity of a ship on a fat cattle rate and allow the transporter to get as many store cattle as possible into that ship. He may get 500 store cattle into a ship having a capacity of 400 fat cattle; and he would have a concession there. The road transport charge is £18 per head.

That could make a difference between a profit and a loss so far as the production of cattle is concerned. I doubt whether such people would ask for State ships to be retained if they felt that road transport would provide them with a better and cheaper method of transportation.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. BICKERTON: I was dealing with the difference in charges between the State Shipping Service and road transport in connection with cattle. I understand that recently a query was raised in regard to the transportation of sheep. The State Shipping Service rate, I am given to understand, is 12s. per head, and the road transport rate is 25s. per head, which is a considerable difference and must create much financial hardship to the pastoral industry.

I refer to a question which I asked on road transport and to put this matter in its proper perspective the question was this—

What is the cost of freight per ton, Perth to Onslow—

- (a) by ship;
- (b) by road transport;

for the following items:—

- (i) cement;
- (ii) chaff;
- (iii) dangerous cargo;
- (iv) flour;
- (v) wheat;
- (vi) freezer cargo;
- (vii) timber;
- (viii) general cargo?

The total figures for shipping charge, which includes handling charges at Fremantle and Onslow, were as follows:—

- (i) £11 13s. 3d.
- (ii) £15 9s. 6d.
- (iii) £15.
- (iv) £10 19s.
- (v) £10 19s.
- (vi) £14 19s.
- (vii) £15 1s. 3d.
- (viii) £11 1s.

In regard to the road transport costs, the answer was—

(b) Road transport rates vary but the following are quoted by a major operator—

Freezer cargo £32 per ton in ton lots.
All Other—

	Per ton*
Over 10 tons	£22 7s.
5-10 tons	£27 17s.
1- 5 tons	£32 17s.
Under 1 ton	£45 0s.

* By weight or measurement (at 140 cub. ft. per ton), whichever is the greater.

So members can see there is a considerable difference between the two freights. It is therefore understandable that the local people would, at this stage, be very much afraid of road transport costs. I have no doubt that in time, with good roads and faster methods of transport, road transport may become such competition to the State ships that it will be able to carry goods quite economically; but that is not the case at this stage.

I have always felt that we possibly concentrate too much on road transport along the coast, because we have a good shipping service. If the same energy were put into the supply and provision of good roads from the port inland, I feel that the problem of freights in the north-west would be overcome.

If any improvement is to be made to a road, the one to be dealt with is the road going up the centre of the State, because from Meekatharra north the people have no means of getting their products out other than by road. This road should, therefore, be the first priority; at least to my way of thinking. I consider that good all-weather roads from the port inland would maintain our shipping service and would give a reasonably cheap freight south for the products of the north-west.

We are inclined to think—from the reports that have appeared in the newspapers since the last cyclone, and because of the publicity that Onslow received at the time—that the place, to use a current expression, has had it. But that is not so. The people there have proved they are quite prepared to remain in the area. Many of them get their livelihood there. It is true

that the population has not decreased—it has, indeed, increased. This fact, I think, speaks for itself. The people naturally want secure jobs, and buildings which will withstand cyclones; but we cannot blame them for wanting those things. They are, however, prepared to remain where they are and do their bit in connection with the development of the area.

The town of Onslow is still a thriving trading centre; and that is probably the principal purpose of any north-west town, because very few of them are productive centres. Perhaps Carnarvon and some of the Kimberley towns would be the only ones; the others are purely and simply ports and centres of trade, and places where people can obtain supplies and ship their goods.

Onslow is not just a ghost town by any means. The figures I have at my disposal show that the annual turnover from trading in the town is probably £250,000 or more. That may not sound much if we think in terms of a large town, but for a small trading centre it is a considerable amount of money—a quarter of a million to half a million pounds. That does not include anything that is produced there—wool, or the like, but is simply the figure of the trading centre itself: the stores, food suppliers, and so on.

The population of Onslow is about 355. Again that may sound just a small number, but we cannot afford to lose that small number, particularly in the north-west. There would probably be 50 or 60 families there comprising about 120 adults and 88 children. At the native hospital there is an adult staff of four or five, and 56 children. On the native reserve there would probably be 19 adults and 10 children. The total population, taking into account the Public Works Department employees, the hospital staff, the hotel staff, and so on, is, as I said before, about 355, of whom 85 are natives and about 270 are whites.

To them Onslow is home. Quite a bit of prospecting is going on in the surrounding district, and we can hope that certain quantities of minerals will be exported through the port if the facilities are available.

I ask the Minister to have another look at the situation. It is a well-known fact that B.H.P. is interested in the area from the point of view of exporting iron ore. Onslow is comparatively close to the company's leases. A considerable amount of boring has been done in the harbour to ascertain its suitability for the export of iron ore, and such export could be a good lift to the area; but we still need a private jetty. I have no doubt it would be of great assistance to the iron ore companies if these facilities existed to enable them to bring stuff in, particularly during the construction period of any plant that they may erect.

As I have already pointed out, to my way of thinking the reinstating of the jetty would not be costly—not as costly, I think, as may appear initially to the Government, I feel sure that if proper investigations were carried out, Onslow could finish up with jetty facilities to serve the whole area at a very reasonable cost.

There was a popular belief—and much publicity was given to it at the time—that the people of Onslow wanted to get out as quickly as they could after the last cyclone. Earlier I read an extract from the minutes of that particular shire which mentioned that the nervous reaction of many at the time may have been due to the fact that they would like to leave. However, they were a minority, I assure you, Mr. Speaker, and I shall read now an extract from the minutes of that meeting which was held after the last cyclone. This extract gives a very different picture from the one given and publicised at the time to the effect that the local residents wanted to leave the town.

The meeting was held on the 11th February last and was presided over by Mr. McGuigan, the Administrator for the North-West. The extract from the minutes reads—

Mr. McGuigan explained the reason for his visit namely to investigate immediate requirements, including an estimate of the materials necessary, also estimate total personal losses.

Then the minutes go on to mention a couple of points brought up by local people, and further it is stated—

Several speakers, including mothers with small children, expressed concern about damaged and unsafe dwellings and the immediate risk of serious casualties in the event of another cyclone.

A vote was taken to ascertain the number desirous of leaving Onslow. A recount after instructions that only one from each family should vote resulted in fifteen votes on behalf of fifteen families being made in favour of leaving Onslow.

The total number of families in Onslow is 53. I know it to be a fact that of the 15 families who voted for leaving Onslow, disregarding at this stage the nervous reaction, four had intended to leave anyway and three of them had already sent their furniture south. So I do not think we could by any means say that a majority of the residents wanted to go away. That is a point that was not brought out in the report, but I think it should have been.

I would also like to read an extract from the minutes of a meeting held on the 10th July, which I referred to earlier. This was a meeting between the local shire and the transport investigating committee. A few questions were asked by the local shire

of the committee that was present and those questions and answers are appropriate to the motion before the House. The first question asked of the committee was—

Will shipment by sea be provided for emergencies when roads impassable during prolonged periods?

The answer was—

Mr. Owen thought shipping would be available to relieve emergencies due to road conditions. He suggested also council press for retention of port facilities at Onslow after withdrawal of State Shipping Service.

The last portion of that answer is most important. That is, "He suggested also Council press for retention of port facilities at Onslow after withdrawal of State Shipping Service."

First of all, it will be recalled that in the report it was stated there would be no need for the Harbour and Light Department to maintain these facilities when State ships were withdrawn from the service. Now we have the manager of the State Shipping Service telling the members of the shire that the retention of those facilities is necessary. We know very well that the Government would not go to the expense of providing facilities if there were no State Shipping Service. It would be foolish to expect that money would be spent on maintenance of those facilities if they were to be replaced by road transport.

Another question asked of the committee was whether any other ports were to be abandoned, and the answer was—

Such not decided: withdrawal from Onslow and many other recommendations were suggested with Mr. Williams's report.

Mr. Williams, or Captain Williams, was the person who investigated the economics of and the other matters relating to the State Shipping Service. The next question was—

Do ships depart Fremantle loaded to capacity or what is average actual freight compared with ship's capacity?

and the answer was—

Cargo ships are tied up when such warranted by seasonal conditions. Passenger ships carry usually between 60 per cent. to 80 per cent. of their capacity. Cattle shipment schedules often restricted full loading of outward cargo.

The next question was—

Would ships being loaded to capacity make possible reduced freight rates?

The answer was—

Full capacity cargo both outward and inward would improve the position.

The next question was—

What proportion of State shipping service overall annual deficit is attributed to Onslow?

The answer was, "Information not available".

In referring to the report again, I would point out that in one portion it is stated that the service will be withdrawn because of the annual loss involved, and in another portion it is stated that the information on the losses is not available.

Much play has been made on the point that road transport could do the job more efficiently than the State ships. On this point I must differ again from those who are supporting it. According to my figures on road closures during the wet season in the area, covering the years from the 31st January, 1960 to the 10th July, 1963, the north coastal highway between Carnarvon and Onslow was closed for a total of 126 days, or an average of some 42 days per year. In some instances this has been continuous, which means an almost continuous closure of roads. One can imagine the chaos that would result if the people in this area were relying on road transport only, when it is on record that closures for as long as six weeks occur over that period.

It must be borne in mind that these figures do not mention all the closures that have taken place; because, as pointed out by the shire clerk, the roads were not closed during several wet spells over this period because he was unable to communicate with the deputy president in order to comply with the Local Government Act.

So it would not be exaggerating to say that for at least 50 days per year the roads would be closed, and in some instances they would be closed for a continuous period of six weeks. Therefore, no matter what sort of motor truck a contractor was operating, or what sort of motor transport service he was using, if the roads were closed he would have difficulty in getting supplies through. If supplies were taken to the port by ship, whilst the roads to the port are closed from time to time, I understand from the shire clerk that for at least three-quarters of the time during those closed periods four-wheeled drive vehicles could travel from the stations to the port and thus transport the supplies in that manner, whereas they could not be transported from the south.

It is not a question of trying to submit a case against the provision of better roads. That is not the object. The object is to provide, at all times, the best method of transport, which is the State Shipping Service. That service must be retained for the benefit of the north-west and ships must continue to call at the ports in the north in spite of the report submitted by

Capt. Williams. I think he has recommended the retention of ports from Derby north and the withdrawal of State ships from all ports south of that port for a certain period of the year. No doubt Capt. Williams was an extremely efficient gentleman as far as his knowledge of shipping was concerned; but nevertheless his assignment was to ascertain whether the State ships were making a profit, and no doubt they were not.

I doubt very much whether Capt. Williams looked at this problem from a national point of view. However, it is the duty of Governments to look at it from the national point of view, and not from the point of view that the State Shipping Service is incurring a small loss over a period of 12 months when, in fact, the State is gaining in the overall picture as a result of the people in the north enjoying cheaper freights and cheaper houses which, in turn, to them means cheaper foodstuffs and cheaper accommodation.

In all fairness, I think Capt. Williams considered the problem from the shipping point of view and certainly not from the national point of view. There is no doubt in my mind that the north-west will be greatly disadvantaged immediately the State Shipping Service is withdrawn; and a review of the extent of the road closures that have occurred—particularly during this year—proves that road transport could not supply the area during the wet period. We have been told that pastoralists do not support the State Shipping Service as much as they might. I do not know how this point of view could be arrived at. No doubt some pastoralists have occasion to use road transport, but I am certain that in the past, and in the main, it is because shipping was not available at the time it was required.

I have been studying the figures on the cartage of wool by State ships from Onslow from 1952 to 1962. I have noticed that the average number of bales of wool per year put over the jetty at Onslow during that period was 4,340. I understand that this year, at least 4,000 bales of wool have been carted by shipping, even although only a lightering service is provided to the ship. So I cannot understand how it can be said that the State ships are not being supported by the pastoralists.

I was rather impressed by an article written by the Minister for the North-West, Mr. Court, which appeared in *The Sunday Times* of the 8th September, 1963. I could not help but think when I read it that the people of the north would be rather amazed when they read it. Personally, I thought the article was quite accurate, but I would like to think that the Minister practises what he preaches.

Mr. Court: We do.

Mr. BICKERTON: For the sake of the record, the article is well worth quoting to the House for the information of members, particularly those references that are made to pastoralists. The article is as follows:—

A Nation Steps into a New Era.

Almost overnight Australia has stepped into a new century. It is the century of the north.

After years of neglect, we have started a programme of development from which there can be but one result.

The northern half of Australia has water resources, rich soils, minerals and fisheries far surpassing those in the southern half.

I would like those members who represent the southern half to note how important they are. Continuing—

It can support far more intensive development and carry a far larger population.

That is why it is the duty of all our statesmen and all our people to see that the population it carries in the future will be our own.

To interpolate, I do not see how one can keep the people there if it is the Government's intention to close the ports down. The article continues—

Every nation today stands in the glare of international spotlights. Its private affairs are international affairs.

Predatory Instincts

Combinations of weakness and wealth arouse predatory instincts.

Failure to use vast natural resources while others are crowded in poverty inspires strong adverse moral judgments.

In today's international climate, the north of Australia is both dangerously rich and dangerously empty.

I might mention that it would appear the Minister wants to make it a little emptier. Continuing—

Self-interest alone demands that we develop it and fill it with our own kind of people.

But it is far more than a cold duty. It is a tremendously exciting challenge—the like of which is available to the people of very few nations in the world today.

Personal Stake

The primary challenge is to all the Governments of Australia. Every Australian Government must recognise that the development of the north is in the interests of all the people.

In practice this means mainly that the taxpayers of New South Wales and Sydney and of Victoria and Melbourne must be convinced that they have a personal stake in northern Australia.

They must be convinced that the strength of the north can vitally affect their future security and prosperity.

Only a fool today would argue that an empty, neglected north provides the defence barrier we need.

On the contrary, it provides an enticement—in terms of natural riches and an undefended coastline—for attack.

Digressing for a moment at this point in the article, I would say that our coastline will be much emptier if we start closing down the northern ports. Already there is a gap between Carnarvon and Onslow. If Onslow is closed down there will be a gap of some 500 or 600 miles between Carnarvon and Roebourne. Continuing to quote from this article by the Minister for the North-West—

But let's go back to another vital aspect of Australian self-interest in the north.

Quite simply, developing the north is "good business." A moment's reflection will reveal the greatly diversified economy that Australia will achieve when the north is fully productive.

Think of the tremendous mineral wealth yet to be explored and exploited.

The great agricultural potential.

I would like to interpolate at this point the words, "Pastoralists, please note!" Continuing—

The greatly increased wealth to be won from an improved pastoral economy.

The development of the great fisheries and a host of other things that await a bold and responsible approach.

The time has come when a searching appraisal must be made of these resources.

Without wasting too much time on the final details that will take a lot of assessing, it will be possible to press on with some of the more obvious projects without much delay—if we have the desire to do it.

We in Western Australia are probably more conscious of the need for early northern development than most other parts of Australia.

To that, I say "Hear, hear!" Continuing—

We in the western third of the continent, with an Indian Ocean outlook and with South-East Asia as our nearest neighbor, can see clearly what can and must be done.

Strangely enough, it is caution that costs money. Boldness usually cuts corners and produces remarkable results for a comparatively small outlay.

If ever we needed boldness, we need it now in connection with the port of Onslow. It is caution that has brought about the present situation. So I would suggest to the Minister, in reading that last portion of the newspaper article, that he does just what it says. I will repeat it, for his benefit—

Strangely enough, it is caution that costs money. Boldness usually cuts corners and produces remarkable results for a comparatively small outlay.

Let us be bold as far as Onslow is concerned by reinstating the facilities and restoring the jetty, and so retain the population there, because we cannot afford to lose those people.

The rest of the article to which I have just referred deals with the Ord River, but at this stage I am more interested in what happens to Onslow. The motion before the House seeks to do nothing more than to ask the Government—which I believe made a hasty and wrong decision—to rectify the position. It covers the necessity for cyclone-proofing in the town of Onslow, as well as for making the future buildings on such a site free from sea-flooding. Much of the damage has resulted from bad management, rather than from the effect of cyclones.

The Country Party in particular should be interested in the fact that a country centre is being closed. I am aware that Country Party Ministers of this Government have travelled far and wide over the State. One would have thought that some of them would go to Onslow to look for themselves, before making a decision on this matter. There is no doubt they relied entirely on the Minister for the North-West, and on the decision he made in respect of Onslow, when they reached their own decisions.

In recent times we have seen Ministers travelling far and wide in the State to attend many opening and commemoration ceremonies, and I am well aware of the many plaques which have been erected in places between Esperance and Wyndham. I am wondering who will conduct the closing ceremony in the case of Onslow, and which Minister will be named on the plaque to show that the town is closed. I suggest to them that it is not a bad idea to try to keep the town open and to retain the population there. The Minister should change his decision in regard to that town, and so allow the people to remain there and earn a living in the way they desire. He should encourage the people to remain.

Mr. Rhatigan: The Minister would probably send Mr. McGulgan to do that job.

Mr. BICKERTON: With all the talk which went on regarding the damage caused by cyclones, and the great cost to the Government to maintain the towns affected, I asked the Minister for the North-West a question in this House about the amount of money that had been expended on repair of Government buildings and facilities at Onslow since the last cyclone. In his reply the Minister stated that the cost of repairs, as a result of cyclone was approximately £12,000; and that for normal repairs, not as a result of cyclone, it was approximately £4,800. Of the £12,000 given as the cost of repairs as a result of cyclone, probably much would be spent on remedying the damage, and not much on repairs. At the time, the impression was given that the cost was very great to the taxpayer, and that it would be better if the town of Onslow did not exist.

During the Address-in-Reply debate I referred to the necessity to cyclone-proof houses provided by the State Housing Commission. I say again that the design has proved to be unsatisfactory, and the commission should spend more time in producing a suitable design for houses in the north-west.

Some day in the future we may have bituminous roads, and bridges over all river crossings in the north-west. When that stage is reached the time will be opportune for considering the withdrawal of the State Shipping Service from some north-west ports; certainly withdrawal of those ships should not take place before that time. The provision of an all-weather road will be a considerable problem, particularly one linking Carnarvon and Onslow. That will be a much greater problem, than one linking Northampton and Carnarvon. If effective all-weather river crossings are to be provided the cost will be very expensive, and the work involved will be extensive.

Road transport will not bring population to the area. We can visualise motor transport operated by a couple of drivers living in the suburbs of Midland Junction, Bassendean, or Victoria Park. They will, in turn, drive over the long distances to the north-west, perhaps to Port Hedland, and then back to the city. Their wages are paid in the city, and the money is spent down here. Road transport by itself will never bring population to the north-west.

On the other hand, if the State Shipping Service is run efficiently, and if good roads lead from the ports to the hinterland, then population will be attracted to the north-west, because the State Shipping Service does provide a good deal of employment. The other Government services which have to be established in north-west towns in conjunction with the

State Shipping Service enable those towns to operate and carry on. The north-west certainly needs every service it can get.

In conclusion, I hope the Minister for the North-West in particular—in fact the whole Government—will act as the Minister for the North-West, and not the Minister for the Ord River area. I hope he will have another look at this matter and will do everything possible to retain the services which are now provided by the State Shipping Service, and to retain the town of Onslow by rehabilitating it so that it can withstand cyclones. I am sure the people who are there now have no desire to leave the area.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Court (Minister for the North-West).

BILLS (3): RETURNED

1. Occupational Therapists Act Amendment Bill.
2. Beekeepers Bill.
3. Firearms and Guns Act Amendment Bill.

Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Industrial Development), read a first time.

KOONGAMIA-DARLINGTON RAILWAY

Reopening: Motion

MR. BRADY (Swan) [8.10 p.m.]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House, the railway service now suspended between Koongamia and Darlington should be reinstated.

It is more or less a calamity when a member has to move a motion such as this, in order that the Government and the Minister for Railways may have their attention drawn to a position which should not exist at all. It seems that the Government is swallowing an elephant and straining at a gnat.

This motion is necessary because the people living in the hills want about one mile of railway line to be opened, over and above the mileage that is operating at the moment. The Government has decided to spend about £41,000,000 on building the standard gauge line, and about £2,000,000 in taking over the Midland Railway Company. In the first case the length of line involved is 400 miles; in the second, the

length of line is about 277 miles. Yet because the people in the hills, who aggregate in all about 3,000, want a railway service, I have to move this motion and give reasons to the House why the line should be opened.

Mr. Court: Why did your Government close that line?

Mr. BRADY: I knew the Minister would ask that question.

Mr. Court: It is rather pertinent.

Mr. BRADY: I knew he would do that, because he asked when the line was closed. If he wants an answer, all he has to do is to peruse the report of the Royal Commissioner (Mr. Smith). He will find that the McLarty-Watts Government initiated the move to have this line closed, and it was left to a Labor Government to do the job.

Mr. Court: Your Government closed this line for six years, and you were one of the Ministers.

Mr. BRADY: The fact is that the McLarty-Watts Government made such a mess of running the railways that when the Labor Government took over in 1953 the railways were in a state of collapse. In order to save the transport system of the State the incoming Government had to take emergent action, and that was one of the moves—to close the line temporarily.

Mr. Court: You are dobbling yourself in. This is proving too much for the member for Mt. Hawthorn.

Mr. Brand: Usually he nods his head in approval, but on this occasion he cannot even do that.

Mr. BRADY: Before I finish, the Minister for Railways will have to show that he is not dobbling himself in.

Mr. Tonkin: The Minister for Railways should talk about dobbling someone in after what happened at Toodyay recently!

Mr. Court: I shall deal effectively with that matter at the right time.

Mr. BRADY: We have only to recall what the previous speaker told the House: that the Minister is not on top of the affairs of his department at all, either in his portfolio as Minister for the North-West, or as Minister for Railways. That being the position, I am compelled to move a motion of this description in order to obtain the opinion of the 50 members of this Chamber regarding the opening of a closed railway line.

Mr. Brand: A line which your Government closed down.

Mr. Court: And refused to reopen.

Mr. BRADY: So as to save the loss of between £16,000 and £17,000 a year the Metropolitan Transport Board recommended that services on this particular line be closed. Let the Minister live that down!

Mr. Brand: Wasn't the line closed four years before?

Mr. BRADY: We are hearing about this matter from the Premier, who has just returned from a world tour!

Mr. Court: Tell us why your Government closed this line in the first place.

Mr. BRADY: If the Minister wants to know who was instrumental in closing the line let him refer to the report of the Royal Commissioner.

Mr. Court: The Labor Government was responsible.

Mr. BRADY: This particular move was initiated by the McLarty-Watts Government in 1951. There was no Labor Government in office: it was the McLarty-Watts Government. In 1953, when the Labor Government took office, immediate economies had to be made in order to save a total collapse of the transport system.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You were a Minister of the Government at the time.

Mr. BRADY: Here is the Minister for Health sticking his chin out. He says that I was a Minister of the Government at the time. It shows he has no knowledge of who was in office. Apparently the Minister for Health is asleep, the same as he usually is. Now then, are there any more questions?

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman): Order! I think we had better hear the member for Swan.

Mr. BRADY: Quite right! I think you had better hear me too, and I hope you will hear me out. It is really ironical that the Transport Board—not a railway committee or a special committee set up outside to review this matter, but the Transport Board—recommended that the railway line be closed. That is like asking an aerated water company to close because the brewery wants to sell more beer. The Transport Board made recommendations that the line should be closed, and an adequate road service commenced. That was 10 years ago, and no adequate road service was commenced.

The board also made the recommendation that if the road transport was adequate, the line should be permanently closed. That was 10 years ago, and neither has an adequate road service been provided nor has the line been closed, because the Country Party members in the Government realise what a grave injustice would be dealt the people in the hills if the line were to be closed permanently.

Now let us study a little of the history. First of all I want to indicate to the House the history of the line; then its present position; and, following that, its future; and if the Minister for Railways can learn,

he will learn something from the information I have collated over a great number of weeks.

First of all, the Beam bus company was operating at the time this line was closed, and was conducting a service in competition with the railways. What was occurring was that the Beam buses were arriving at the Darlington railway station at the same time as the train, and both would leave together. That procedure was carried on for a number of years. There was no co-ordination or liaison. The public of the district were being held to ransom and were being provided with a shocking transport service.

Then the line was closed and it was agreed that the Railways Department would run a road service. It was found that could not be done without a lot of money being lost, and so the Beam bus company was asked to take over the service again. However, conditions went from bad to worse, and the people received a raw deal—people who, for 50 years, had been provided with a railway service. It was one of the first in Western Australia, having been commenced in 1884 to serve the eastern goldfields. It was closed down in order that an adequate road service would be provided. Yet, after 10 years, no adequate road service has been provided.

Mr. Bovell: What did your Government do about it?

Mr. BRADY: My Government has not been in office for the last five years.

Mr. Brand: What about the other five years?

Mr. BRADY: The Minister for Lands knows nothing at all about the position. He cannot see over the Town Hall clock.

Mr. Brand: I should think that fair enough!

Mr. BRADY: All he can see is the road to Busselton, and back to this House. I suggest he take off half a day to see what is happening to the people in the hills. They will tell him, as they told me this afternoon, that a shocking road service is in operation. An inquiry was supposed to have been made by the Commissioner of Railways but in response to several phone calls I made today I ascertained that at least a half a dozen prominent people in Darlington have not even heard of the inquiry. The Minister for Lands can go out and confirm that tomorrow if he so desires.

That is the position. We were told in 1962—and again this year—that a comprehensive inquiry was being made, and yet six prominent business and professional people in Darlington knew nothing of it as recently as this afternoon. So we can see what a comprehensive inquiry is being made and how the hills people are being treated by the Government members!

Mr. Court: At least we are trying.

Mr. BRADY: I hope I have answered the question as to what the Labor Government has done.

Mr. Bovell: You have embarrassed your own members to such an extent that they are not here to listen to you any more.

Mr. BRADY: It may be of interest to the member for Vasse to know that despite all the criticism that the line will not pay and that it should be closed down, for the last three years over one-third of the line—from Bellevue to Koongamia—has been operating.

Mr. Bovell: Thanks to the Liberal-Country Party Government.

Mr. BRADY: Of course it is! Let's be honest and admit that. Why not open the other $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles and really show what the Liberal-Country Party Government can do? This Government does not have its feet on the ground in regard to what is going on. It opened the line to maintain quarries and only another mile and a half is needed. At the moment all sorts of things are carried in and out for the quarry but those people who want the service between Koongamia and Darlington cannot get it.

All sorts of committees have been appointed and investigations made. The commission appointed a committee; the M.T.T. appointed one; and the Railways Department is making an investigation. But when members of the public in Darlington are asked if they have been interviewed in regard to the matter, they reply that they know nothing at all about it. Therefore I believe I was justified when I said that the Government is swallowing an elephant and straining on a gnat. It is spending £43,000,000 on 677 miles of line, and yet cannot open $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Darlington.

I now feel I should give some of the early history of this line; because while the members of the Government might try to ridicule the position, one Liberal member on the other side should take it more seriously, because I honestly believe that if the previous member for Darling Range—Mr. Ray Owen—had shown more interest in this matter when he was a Country Party member of this House, he might have been here today instead of the present member representing that electorate.

The first thing I think I should do is read a letter written to the Premier at the time in regard to the closure of the line, because certain things were said and certain statements made then which were of very doubtful veracity; and it would seem that in those days there were, as there are today, men in the Railways Department who did not want this line opened. The following was a letter written by the secretary of the progress association to the then Premier and it details

the early history of this matter. Dated the 18th January, 1954, it reads as follows:—

Dear Sir,

This Committee, appointed to represent various Associations and residents of Greenmount, Boya, Helena Valley, Darlington, Glen Forrest, Mahogany Creek, Mundaring and Sawyer's Valley, respectfully requests that the closure of the Mundaring Branch line be reconsidered after investigation and consideration of the views and facts presented herewith:—

In an endeavour to reduce annual losses incurred by the W.A.G.R. over many years, this Branch line is to be closed for the alleged reason that it does not pay working expenses, due to lack of support by the residents whom it serves.

These methods of overcoming the difficulty—

As I read on, it will be clearly indicated that the progress association went into this matter very thoroughly and it will be shown how it arrived at its conclusions in regard to the suggestions made in this paragraph. The letter continues—

These methods of overcoming the difficulty present themselves:—

- (a) By investigating ways and means of reducing operation costs.
- (b) By the introduction of a service which would commend itself to residents and so provide the patronage essential to economic operation.
- (c) If found necessary, by the introduction of a proportional surcharge on all fares by virtue of the steeper gradients involved.

It will be conceded that a Railway is not an end in itself, it is a public utility, whose purpose is the development of, and provision of transport facilities for the country generally. If privately owned, a discrepancy between operating costs and receipts, is usually met by an increase in freight rates if the Company is to avoid ultimate liquidation, but this system confining the cost of operation entirely to the users is considered politically inexpedient in respect of Government owned Railways, and losses incurred are met from funds to which the whole community contributes through taxation.

At this stage I want to provide further information which bears out that what the secretary of the progress association said in 1954 is correct. The Minister states that this line does not pay and that therefore it should not be opened. The report

of the Western Australian Government Railways for the year 1962 contains certain information which is very relevant to this matter. In 1959-60 there was a net operating loss in connection with Burekin-Bonnie Rock of £11,385. It was £6,223 in 1960-61 and £2,216 in 1961-62, which makes a total loss on this line of £19,824. The loss for the three years on the Lake Grace-Hyden line was £50,317, and on the Katanning-Nyabing line it was £19,988. That makes a total loss of £90,129.

If it is good enough for this Government to help the people in those three areas although a loss of £90,000 is made, surely it is good enough to open up a line for the people in the hills.

While I am on that particular theme, let me make the point that the service on this line would take only about a quarter of an hour each way. About 1½ miles of line is involved and certainly no more than 15 minutes in running time each way. Yet the Minister for Railways, the Government, and the commissioner, do not want the line to be reopened and give the people the facilities that they desire and require. At the moment a petition is being prepared to be sent to the Minister asking for the line to be reopened.

To continue with the letter the secretary of the Progress Association wrote to the then Premier—

It is contended therefore, that to close a section of the system which bears such a relatively small percentage to the total finances involved, inflicts a disproportionate hardship on a small section of the community for the following reasons:—

- (a) They cease to enjoy a facility already provided.
- (b) They will still continue to contribute their share of the annual deficit incurred by the Railways Department. In addition the Government is destroying an asset with no corresponding reduction in interest and depreciation charges.

I would like the Minister to take note of that particular sentence and I will repeat it because it is relevant to something else I will mention, and which I believe will be of vital interest to the Railways Department and the State of Western Australia in the next 10 to 20 years.

Mr. Dunn: What is the date of the letter?

Mr. BRADY: January, 1954. It was addressed to the then Premier of the Labor Government by the Secretary of the Progress Association. He said—

... the Government is destroying an asset with no corresponding reduction in interest and depreciation charges.

From the railway report 1951-52, the last complete yearly record available, it is found difficult to reconcile the figures given, with the statement made by the Hon. the Minister for Railways on 12th November, 1953, the discrepancy being so great as to seriously affect the issue. According to the Minister's statement the operating cost of the Mundaring line amounted to £41,000, while earnings totalled £6,000—

Those are the round figures I have quoted—

—showing a deficit of £35,000 inclusive of interest and depreciation charges. From the railway report total receipts are shown as £12,905, from which may be deducted £367 in respect of an item shown as "road motor service," and £136 received as rents, leaving a balance of £12,402 representing the amount received for the carriage of passengers, goods and livestock. From the figure of £41,457, deducting 30 per cent. representing interest and other charges not directly incurred in the actual maintenance of track and operation of trains, we arrive at a figure of £29,022 and deducting £12,402, the earnings, gives a deficit of £16,620 admittedly a not inconsiderable sum, but nevertheless, a microscopic percentage of the total annual loss incurred by the department.

Which at that time was approximately £2,750,000. Ironically enough the figure is about parallel with the one given in answer to a question asked by the member for Darling Range this evening regarding the loss on road transport. It is ironical when one considers that eight years ago the progress association showed that the approximate loss would be about £16,000.

Mr. Dunn: There is a different value in the pound, though.

Mr. BRADY: The letter continues—

As a result of the withdrawal of certain trains and the substitution of railway buses, revenue was diverted to the buses. A perusal of railway accounts and the Auditor General's report on the railway bus service, shows a gradual decrease in railway receipts, which is offset by a corresponding increase in bus receipts. It cannot be expected that railway finances will improve by the cancellation of trains, and even on the present method of operation if the cancelled trains were reintroduced (and they were more popular with the womenfolk than the buses) railway revenue should increase by £9,300, which sum represents the bus receipts given by the Auditor General for the year under review, and which, in turn, would reduce the deficit on railway working from £16,620 to £7,320. This apparent deficit of £7,320 is practically balanced by the

elimination of the loss incurred by the railway bus service, shown by the Auditor General to be £7,148. It would appear, therefore, that the alleged loss in operating this branch line arises largely from the bus service running in opposition to the railway, or in lieu of cancelled trains. It is hoped, after further investigation, that it may be found possible, by the adoption of any or all of the suggestions outlined in paragraph 3, not only to balance operating costs and revenue, but to show a profit to the benefit of the department and the community concerned.

In amplification of the suggestion outlined in paragraph 3 maintenance of track is not proportional to the number of daily trains, and an increase in this direction to provide an effective service, should entail no increase in maintenance of way or station staff costs. The possibility also exists, owing to the short run and limited service at present in operation—

This is more to the point today than it was then. It continues—

—that train crews might be more economically employed by an increase in daily trains, and that little or no increase in cost would be involved, other than fuel, etc.

Perhaps a stricter allocation of cost in respect of maintenance gangs, may reveal that this expenditure is not so great as indicated. It is known that work is frequently carried out at Midland yards by the hills gang, and rumour has it that the cost is not allocated to Midland. Further, it is said that a maintenance gang has frequently to leave Darlington for Glen Forrest by bus at an early hour in the afternoon, presumably to avoid payment at overtime rates, as there is no suitable train available at knocking-off time. These admittedly minor details are not raised in criticism of the administration, and the cost involved in instituting a strict costing system in normal circumstances may not be justified, but, before deciding to close a line, all factors should be given consideration.

Paragraph 3 (b). The introduction of a diesel shuttle service between Bellevue and Sawyers Valley at suitable intervals might, with advantage, be investigated, such a service to be fed by buses from areas to the north and south of the line to central points on the railway, or alternatively—

That is exactly what the Government has announced today. I will read the paragraph again.

The introduction of a diesel shuttle service between Bellevue and Sawyers Valley at suitable intervals, might, with

advantage be investigated, such a service to be fed by buses from areas to the north and south of the line to central points on the railway, or alternatively—

The only difference in the plan announced today by the Government is that the buses are to be run from Midland. Yet here the progress association, in 1954, put up a similar suggestion to service the hills areas. It is more practical to have a service for the hills, and for it to be fed from the hills than it will be to have the service operating from Midland. The proposition put up by the progress association would be of more benefit to the community, and to the State's economy, than the Government's proposition to use Midland. The letter goes on—

the introduction of a bus service on the south side of the line to serve Helena Valley and Leathdale, etc., and another along the Great Eastern Highway. This would give three services running parallel, and to be successful would entail prohibition of any bus running into the railway at any point, either from the north or south.

The former suggestion proved economically sound in other countries, might not in this instance prove so, owing to the short feeder runs and number involved.

It is thought however, that the latter suggestion would afford adequate transport to residents living at distances remote from the railway and that the population within half a mile on each side of the line is sufficient to provide the requisite density of traffic to ensure success.

That letter was written 10 years ago and the population of the State has increased considerably. Also, the population in the hills has increased reasonably since that date. To continue—

Paragraph 3 (c). The suggestion to implement a surcharge is admittedly unorthodox in railway practice, but unorthodox methods may justifiably be adopted if road competition is to be successfully met. It is considered preferable to destroying an asset, and would not involve fares any higher than is charged by the bus companies at present.

This afternoon I rang a lady who lives in Darlington and I asked her the fare from Darlington to Midland. She told me it was 1s. 3d. each way, whereas if the railways were running a service the normal fare would be approximately 1s. The railway service would be quicker than the bus service and probably would be cheaper. Even 10 years ago the people concerned were prepared to agree to a loading on the normal fares if the rail service could be continued. A Mr. T. G.

Stokes wrote the letter I have just quoted, and at the time he was the secretary of the progress association. He put up a very logical and convincing argument about what could be done.

Mr. Court: What did the then Premier say?

Mr. BRADY: I thought I would quote the letter so that members would have the history of the line, and also because a number of country members do not appreciate what the Government is doing about transport for the people in the hills, particularly when there is no occasion for such action to be taken. The Government is making it difficult; and this is not warranted, and it is wasting the time of the House dealing with subjects which are of lesser importance.

It is in the Government's best interests to open this mile of line, and it will also be of benefit to the people in the hills. The people in that area have not let up for 10 years in doing something about the matter. Over that period they have continually agitated to have the line reopened, and the fifth petition on the subject is being canvassed in the hills.

In 1957 the Midland Junction Branch of the Australian Labor Party took the matter up and wrote to various organisations. That body sent out a comprehensive questionnaire and about 400 people filled in the questionnaire and answered the questions that were asked. They fully supported the reopening of the line. The letter was written by a Mr. Darcy in 1957, and I only mention that to show that in addition to the protests in 1954 there were further protests in 1957, and again in 1958.

I have an extract from *The West Australian* which I think is worth mentioning. It is a letter to the Editor and it said—

At a large public meeting held at Mundaring on January 6, it was decided to protest strongly to the Government against the decision to close the Mundaring branch railway. An energetic committee was appointed to implement the decisions.

I could quote the cutting at length, but I shall not do so. It is here for any member who would like to read it.

Mr. Court: Are you going to give us the reply of the then Premier to the long letter from the progress association?

Mr. BRADY: I have the letter which I will quote for the benefit of the Minister later on. The gist of the Premier's reply at the time was that the line was temporarily suspended, and if an inquiry into the reopening of the line justified its reopening in the near future, that would be done. Those are not the exact words but, in effect, that is what the Premier said. I will quote the exact words for the Minister in a few minutes' time.

I feel, however, that I should quote something else for the edification of the Minister and his department. I daresay the Minister for Railways lets his staff read *Hansard* occasionally, and I daresay these copies are passed to leading officers in the railways. It will not do any harm to read a letter I received in April on outer suburban transport. The letter is written by Mr. Edwards who has given a lifetime of service to the railways. He is a highly respected employee of the railways and lives at Mt. Lawley. The letter is addressed to the Editor, "The Locomotive Journal", North Melbourne and reads as follows:—

The problems associated with transport in the Metropolitan area of Perth remain unresolved.

What is even more disturbing is that no plans have been adopted that will do much or anything worthwhile to relieve the overall situation.

The deterioration and the reduction in the services given by public transport and the failure to expand it, is the cause for much misgiving.

The planning required to expand and resolve our transport problems does not need to be bold or imaginative—

I hope the Minister will note that part of the letter. To continue—

but should be based on common sense so that transport is channelled where it is most suited, and where it is cheapest, fastest, cleanest, and safest. Consequently, where it is most efficient. Public interest in metropolitan transport in far too many instances is badly served by uninformed criticism, particularly when a suggestion is made to expand suburban railways.

How applicable that is at a time when the people in the hills are clamouring for a mile of line to be opened up! To continue with the letter—

There are many people who are greatly alarmed by the prospect of any proposal to expand or even continue the existing rail services. Often the opposition comes strongest from those who would benefit so much, namely the motorist and the city business men. Many people view an extension of the suburban railways in the light of that which we already have. They make no allowance for the fact that a modern suburban railway would be very different from the present one.

Briefly, a modern double-track railway would not take up much more space on the surface than it would if underground, because it would be operated by either diesel or electric

traction power. There would be an automatic electric signal system so that trains could travel at close intervals. There would be comparatively no disfigurement of the landscape, certainly much less than that required to build a modern road freeway and also a big reduction in the amount of smog caused by road transport. All roads and streets would pass either over or under the railway. Roads and streets would not be built to run immediately parallel with the railway. Railway stations would be spaced about two-thirds of a mile apart so that midway between would be within walking distance of a station.

I do not want to read the whole of that letter, but it points out that the handling of the metropolitan transport here today is far behind what it was in Melbourne, Sydney, and even Hobart, when the population in the metropolitan area of those cities was about the same as it is here. If the Minister wishes to read the letter in its entirety it is available to him. I am sure Mr. Edwards would be pleased to know that the Minister for Railways was sufficiently interested in his job to read the letter. Mr. Edwards is a practical man, whose views are very often sought by efficient railway officers. Accordingly I felt the House should hear what he had to say.

To return now to the people in the hills. There are people who will wonder whether the numbers warrant the opening of the line; whether there is any future for the hills areas. They will ask whether the reopening of the line is justified. The more we look at this matter the more we realise that the line should have been opened five years ago.

Let us see what is going on. As members know, there is a map on the Table of the House submitted by the Metropolitan Region Town Planning Committee. This will become law in a few days. It shows that in addition to the hundreds of new homes built in the hills in the last five years, there is set aside as urban area in that plan provision for hundreds—not one hundred, but hundreds—of new subdivisions, right alongside this line in the area from Greenmount to Helena Valley adjoining the Koongamia railway station. Further on the other side of the Great Eastern Highway, which is within half a mile of the line to Greenmount there is provision for several hundred more blocks to be subdivided in addition to hundreds that have been built on now. Further towards Darlington there is an area in Strittle Road, Greenmount, in which provision is made for another hundred subdivisions. Then again, between Strittle Road and North Road further provision is made for another 100 subdivisions.

In other words, in the next 10 or 15 years there will be a thousand blocks subdivided; and if I know the real estate agents in the metropolitan area they are planning the subdivisions now. There should be no necessity to move this motion at a time like this. A bit further on, at Glen Forrest, there is provision for another urban area between Newman Road and Bailey Road, east and west of the highway, where 100 blocks have been set aside for the purpose. I may be asked to supply some information about the population in the hills, and to give some up-to-date figures.

The nearest and most accurate figures I could get were those obtainable for the last State election in the Darling Range. We find that 196 people voted at Greenmount; 453 at Swan View; 186 at Boya; and 448 voted at Darlington. In Glen Forrest 283 people voted at the last State election, giving a total of, 1566 adults who voted. There are, of course, those people who did not vote. We all know that we do not get 100 per cent. voting. Accordingly it can be safely assumed that there are approximately, 1500 adults in the area, without all the new subdivisions that will be opened up in the near future. If we take the average family, as calculated for purposes of arbitration, or basic wage, we can say that there are two children to each family, giving an approximate total of 3,000 people who could use this railway.

I know the Minister is too busy to receive a deputation, and to read letters setting out these things, and accordingly I feel that matters as important as this should be ventilated now. While the Minister is here we should give him as much information as possible. The information I am giving is not a figment of the imagination; it can all be checked. There is a plan on the Table of the House showing the urban areas. The voting figures of the last election are also available to the Minister if he wants them. Quite apart from all this we know that the population of Western Australia is still increasing.

I am sure the Minister for Lands and Immigration would be proud to know that there are thousands more people in the State today than there were 10 years ago. There are probably 20,000 or 30,000 more people. In addition to that we have thousands of tourists entering the State. Only in this morning's issue of *The West Australian* we were told that 10,000 more people came to Western Australia by air than last year, and that 8,000 more came by road and 10,000 by rail. All this meant an extra £1,000,000 to the economy of the State.

Surely the Commissioner of Railways and his staff; the Minister for Railways and his staff; and the Government and its Ministers should be thinking ahead

with a view to catering for these tourists, particularly with emphasis laid on tourism in this State. We even find that the Premier has accepted the important portfolio of tourism. He is spending money right and left. He is even trying to encourage people to visit the hills, but when it comes to doing something actual and factual for the people in that area there must be a full-dress debate on a motion such as this to justify the position. The people in the hills have continued in their endeavours for over 10 years to have this line opened; and there is another petition going around now. In 1960 when the Minister was endeavouring to close this line permanently, I addressed the House at great length to try to prevent the line being closed, but I was unsuccessful.

The members of the Country Party in another place had this line excised from the Bill, and the line was only suspended. But the member for Darling Range (Mr. Owen) at the time, had something to say about this matter. It might be as well for me to read his remarks. He had this to say—

It is with rather mixed feelings that I regard this Bill;

I am sure his feelings would be far more mixed today. To continue—

because in the Darling Range electorate already two railways have been closed, and the lines pulled up. The line running from Boya to Mt. Helena, referred to in schedule 5, was first opened for traffic in 1884. It was then part of the main line reaching into the agricultural areas.

I mentioned earlier that what we call the Mundaring line was firstly part of the main line to the interior; but when the railway line was put through Swan View and through the tunnel, the Mundaring line became more or less a local line, and for many years brought goods and passengers to and from that area. Reading the evening news, one often notices Kirwan Ward refer to the "Mundaring Meteor".

That was a passenger train that came down from Mundaring every morning and returned every evening. It was well known, and everyone had a certain amount of affection for that old warrior of the hills. But the service was suspended six or seven years ago.

At that time, and ever since, there have been many local protests because the service was suspended.

I said that here tonight; and here is the member for Darling Range, at that time, saying it, too. Continuing—

Numerous deputations have been taken to Ministers and to departmental heads but all endeavours to have the service reinstated have been

in vain. It was arranged that Royal Commissioner Smith inquire into the closure of railways; and he called a meeting of those interested at Mundaring some two or three years ago. Of this meeting, Magistrate Smith said that none in connection with rail closures had been so well attended—

No meeting had been so well attended as that meeting at Mundaring when they were trying to reopen the line. Continuing—

—nor was any other meeting so enthusiastic about the reinstatement of a rail service. In spite of that, no action has been taken to reopen the service.

These remarks were spoken by a member on the Government side of the House—the member for Darling Range at that time, Mr. Owen. Continuing—

In fact, the commissioner did not recommend it, owing to the costs involved.

I could have quoted at length, but I will not weary the House. However, the Bill went through this House that that line be subject to closure; but what happened in the other House? One of the members presented a petition containing 300 signatures advocating the line be not closed permanently. Subsequently, another petition was received containing 200 or 300 signatures, but it was not presented to the House. Therefore, approximately 600 people are anxious to see this line remain open.

Tonight a member of the Opposition has had to move a motion with all this evidence available; and the time is overdue when this line should be reopened. I went to a semi-public meeting some time ago and heard a member of the Red Cross—a responsible officer—addressing the meeting and she made a statement something like this: That many of the calls made by the Red Cross were to the hills and the transport services were inadequate. I intended to ring up the Red Cross to see if that organisation had any statistics, but I did not have the time, seeing my day started at about 6.30 this morning.

Mr. Lewis: Too late!

Mr. BRADY: I thought I would have time, but I did not.

Mr. W. Hegney: I was having morning tea then!

Mr. Guthrie: A morning cup of tea in bed.

Mr. BRADY: I now wish to say something in regard to bus services. I know the Minister will tell me there is an adequate bus service and that the people are satisfied. I want the Minister to listen to what I have to say, because it will give him the people's views on bus services. This letter appeared in *The West Australian* of today's date—

J. Thomas, Willagee Park: I agree with C. Edmondson about railway buses. I had the misfortune to travel by bus from Pemberton to Bunbury and it was the most bone-shaking and ear-shattering experience I have ever had.

I do not know how much it costs to fit a new body on these rattle traps, but this one has had three and still the motor roars on. The drivers deserve a gold medal for being able to handle these buck-jumping demons.

I joined the much-criticised goods train at 11.40 p.m. and relaxed in comfort all the way to Perth.

The following is another letter which appeared in *The West Australian* on the 16th September:—

Railway Bus to Merredin

C. Edmondson, West Perth: The unrealistic attitude and unsympathetic approach of the Railways Department to the needs of passengers is causing great concern and misgiving to the travelling public.

The latest so-called improvement in the replacement of diesels by buses on the Merredin-Perth run is, in fact, a serious regression.

Even a trip to Northam in the department's smartest buses is always an endurance test. To find the slightest comfort in a marathon bus trip to Merredin would be difficult—except in the imagination of railway executives seated very comfortably in their office chairs. The most decrepit diesel is 100 per cent. more suitable for long-distance travel than the latest-model bus.

As both the engines and the rails are available and usable for the Perth-Merredin route, why not service some districts which have no transport services with the extra special buses?

Those are some views with regard to the road bus services. However, no doubt we will be told that they are providing an efficient service to the hills.

Instead of going to see Swans clean up East Perth at football, I visited the hills last weekend and spoke to the womenfolk, who told me they were in trepidation when driving behind the buses in the winter months, because when going up the hills the buses go backwards and these womenfolk do not know where the buses are going to finish up. The roads were never built to carry this type of bus and the womenfolk hold their lives in their hands when they are driving behind those buses.

I do not think the buses give the service that we were led to believe they would. I should mention this point, but I do not want to over-emphasise it: I know the Minister for Education is running buses to

the various schools along this road. I was in Greenmount, which is in my electorate, on Saturday afternoon, and on Monday, and the womenfolk told me that M.T.T. buses were bringing children down to school in the morning and taking them home to Darlington; and the buses also came back in the afternoon and returned to Midland Junction.

This is costing the State over £1,000,000; and I think it is appropriate I should read this article which appeared in this morning's paper, because the Minister is going to be asked to pay more money to the bus drivers and the people who run these buses. I feel the Government could effect an economy and at the same time make it possible to have a permanent rail service to Darlington if a number of students had to use the railway train both ways instead of using the buses. Somebody might say that they should use the buses because of the children who live half a mile away from the railway. However, we could run a limited number of rail trains and a limited number of road buses and be able to cater for the people who are away from the railway. The following appeared in this morning's paper:—

Increase In School Bus Rates Urged

The W.A. Government should increase its mileage rates to country school bus contractors, the secretary of the Road Transport Association, Mr. Pellew, said, yesterday.

Though the service costs the Government about £1,000,000 a year, contractors were underpaid.

The department paid them contract rates based on the cost of running the bus plus 8 per cent. interest on the vehicle's capital cost.

These items totalled about £3 a week.

The department added a driving allowance of 10d. a mile, and this gave the operator the basic wage if he travelled 70 miles a day.

The Education Department regarded school bus driving as part-time employment.

The average contractor worked from 25 to 30 hours a week, but had little chance of finding work for the rest of the time.

Contractors were paid for each school day, averaging 205 days a year. The remaining 11 weeks were unproductive.

The Minister for Education and the Minister for Railways could save themselves a headache if they got together to see whether they could use the railway service instead of cluttering up the main roads and the off roads with buses and cars.

I think I should bring the House right up to date in regard to how a responsible local governing body in the area views this matter. I wrote to the Shire Clerk of the Mundaring shire on the 5th September asking him if he could give me statistics in regard to my electorate and the hills so that I could place the facts before the House tonight. The Shire Clerk (Mr. Moore) wrote me as follows on the 16th September:—

Your letter of the 5th September was presented to Council at recent meeting.

There is no significant movement of population in Darlington-Greenmount areas—possibly a small gain in Greenmount, but not all in reach of the old Branch Railway.

However, I am directed to inform you that Council supports reopening of the Railways because of poor transport facilities in this area.

This is a letter from a responsible shire council over the signature of its clerk. That council says it supports the opening of this railway because of the poor transport facilities in the area. I hope the Minister for Railways has taken note of these comments by the Shire Clerk of the Shire of Mundaring.

I called to see another gentleman in the area who used to go into Midland Junction from Helena Valley. He did this for many years. He was an active member of the Australian Labor Party. I asked for his views, and he wrote me as follows:—

During the last few years, the main interest of the Local Progress Association comprising Boya, Helena Valley etc. together with Darlington, Greenmount, has been the transport position. Despite petitions, interviews with various authorities, nothing has been achieved. We had expected something to arise from the world tour of the Commissioner of Railways. But alas it seemed fruitless, as no report seems forthcoming. Speaking for myself, I would say that you can be assured of the complete support of all those affected. The Progress Association meets at the Red Cross hall on October 7—8 p.m.

Yours faithfully,

A. F. Goodman.

That letter was dated the 16th September, which was Monday. I went to see that gentleman but he was not at home so I left a note and asked if he would let me have his views on the matter. I mentioned that there are people at the moment in the hills taking around a petition and they are telling the people they speak to that there should be a fast service by diesels to the hills. As against existing bus transportation, the travelling time to Perth would be cut by about 20 minutes. The poor existing

services are to the detriment of wage-earners who have not their own transport; and they are subjected to long hours away from home.

I might say that the road buses are cluttering up the roads and ruining them, which is a charge on the local residents, and this should not be their responsibility. I would like to quote as follows:—

Experience has shown that many car-owners who live adjacent to railway stations in the metropolitan area have come to prefer travel to and from work by rail.

The service could break even economically, and even run at a profit. Its re-opening would add only 2½ miles to the Koongamia run, over an existing track which is in good condition and requires little rehabilitation.

That statement said that the track requires little rehabilitation; and the Minister for Railways, in answer to a question I asked today, said it would cost £1,000 to rehabilitate the line. My quotation continues—

It is already maintained as far as the Boya Quarry.

This is about one mile from Darlington. To continue—

The service would channel additional custom now lost to the Railway Department on to the existing route between Koongamia and Perth.

If it did nothing else it would be channeling work back on to the railways, which they will be looking for in a few years' time. I will read further—

One of the reasons the service was suspended in 1954 was that it was operated by costly and inefficient steam trains in competition with railways and Beam buses. Now the service would be economically served by diesels. Integration of the bus service with the railway would remove costly competition.

The final sentence in that paragraph provides the solution to the problem: "Integration of the bus service with the railway would remove costly competition." That is what ruined this particular line ten years ago, at a time when Government railway finances were going to the dogs. The McLarty-Watts Government had built up a loss worth somewhere around £2,750,000. Something had to be done. The petition goes on to say—

When the Government closed the line in 1954, it gave the people of this district an undertaking to reopen it when adequate diesel-electric rail cars became available.

Not only was that said in 1954, but it has been repeated several times since by responsible Ministers: that when the rail cars were available the line would be opened.

There is another point I wish to draw to the attention of members of this House; to the attention of Liberal Party members, Country Party members, Labor Party members, and to any other person who thinks about the matter. At the moment we are setting up a standard gauge railway, part of which will operate from Toodyay to Bellevue; and it has been said—perhaps logically—that when the line is functioning in about two years' time the line between Bellevue and Northam up to Swan View will be discontinued. People in the area will be without a rail service. I leave the thought with the Minister for Railways, with the Railways Department, and with anyone who is concerned in this matter, that this step desired by people who live in the hills to open up a line to Mt. Helena, down through Parkerville, through Sawyers Valley to Bellevue, is a logical step. There would then be a loop of about 15 to 20 miles, and the area would become an outer suburban railway centre.

As surely as day follows night, that area is going to be opened up for agriculture, horticulture, aviculture, the breeding of poultry, and for all sorts of stock. There will be many small holdings. People will be making a living from 5 acres, 10 acres, 15 acres, 20 acres, and 25 acres. Those people have a railway service at the moment. I hope all members will be seized with the necessity of keeping this line open, through Swan View up to Mt. Helena, down to Mundaring and through to Darlington, or *vice versa*.

I would not be doing my duty properly if I did not draw the attention of members to what could happen in a few years' time and to what will be clamoured for, asked for, and petitioned for by the people of those areas. The Government would be well advised to give some thought to this matter now. If this House decides not to carry my motion, it could be that the Minister for Railways might bring in a Bill to close the line between Bellevue and Mundaring, and that Bill could well be brought in before the end of the session. If that is done, the opportunity of having this line reopened—and the line existing for over 70 years—will be lost. No responsible Minister for Railways, and no responsible Parliament, would agree to the Bellevue-Mundaring line being closed without the matter being given a lot of thought.

Unfortunately—although it might be fortunate for people living in the hills—I cannot give the matter the attention I would like, because I have a full-time job looking after the 11,000 people in the Swan district. But the members who represent those areas—the members for Toodyay and for Darling Range, and the Upper House members—should give some thought to keeping this particular line open. The permanent way is there; the railway lines are there; the fastenings are there; the

buildings are there, and the people are there. The money for depreciation and interest has been paid, and nothing has been done for the line to be reopened.

I think the petitioners are telling the people of the hills that the operation of this line could break even. Even if the line made a loss, I think there is justification for its being reopened. The Government wanted to close three other lines, but members were vigilant and those lines were not closed. However, the Government is subsidising people in those areas to the extent of £90,000. The 3,000 or 4,000 people involved here are not asking the Government to spend £90,000. They are asking the Government to open up a mile of line which could break even. The line could provide greater possibilities for the railways, and it could provide better transport for people in the hills. It could encourage tourism and, generally speaking, it would help everybody, including people who operate the buses, because at present the buses are not a popular mode of transport.

There are many other things which I could say in regard to this matter, but I think I have said sufficient to justify the reopening of this line. I believe other members are going to speak on the subject. The Government has not done the right thing for people who live in the hills, or for the Railways Department, in not reopening this 1½ miles of line which has long remained idle, stagnating, falling to pieces, going into disrepair, when the Government could have reopened the line and provided a measure of revenue for the Railways Department and provided a service for which people in the area are clamouring.

The proposition which the Premier announced in this evening's *Daily News* and, to a lesser degree, in this morning's *The West Australian*, has some bearing on this service which is required for the hills. It would provide what the people required ten years ago. As the Government is about to take over the Midland Railway Company, it could well be that there could be a loop line running to the Swan Valley. That line could operate in conjunction with this particular line, and there could be a loop line into the Swan Valley. There is already a loop line into Helena Vale race course, and another through to Swan View. People in the outer parts of my electorate, around Middle Swan, and also in the Toodyay electorate, would appreciate a railway service rather than their having to rely on the buses, which do not provide an efficient service.

In addition to opening up this line to Darlington, some consideration might be given at this early stage to co-ordinating and integrating road and rail services along the Midland line up as far as Bullsbrook. I hope the motion will be carried;

that the Minister will have some regard for the wishes of people living in the hills; and that the necessity will not arise for another motion similar to this one being introduced next year because the line has not been reopened. An unanswerable case could be made out why the line should be reopened, and I look forward to its being reopened by Christmas of this year.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Railways).

GERALDTON HARBOUR

Improvement to International Standard: Motion

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) (9.27 p.m.): I move—

That in the opinion of this House very early practical action should be taken to deepen and improve the Geraldton Harbour and approaches to bring the port up to international standards, to enable large overseas ships to enter the port safely for the purpose of loading iron ore, other minerals and various primary products.

To ensure the successful financing of the required harbour improvements an immediate approach should be made to the Commonwealth Government by the State Government for substantial financial help on the basis of achieving further wide-scale national development.

In moving this motion, I fully realise its importance to the State Government, to the port of Geraldton, and to the district which the port serves. It is an attempt to decentralise the production and export of our main products, and if the motion is successful it will be of benefit to all outports in this State. Perhaps the announcement by the Premier on Saturday last in connection with the harbour and the exporting of iron ore from Geraldton was an attempt to kill this motion which has been before the House for two or three weeks. A statement by the Premier appeared in *The West Australian* of Monday, the 16th September, and I will deal with it later.

I would ask for your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, and for the indulgence of members, because it will be necessary for me to quote from various files so that members may be satisfied that this motion is not a political one. Its purpose is to get something done in the matter and it has the full support of the people of the district who are concerned at the shilly-shallying of the Minister.

I wish to thank the Press in the district which has been straightforward in dealing with the matter. It has been straightforward in presenting the propositions

which it considered worth while. These matters appeared mainly in the *Geraldton Guardian*, the *Geraldton Sun*, and the publication *Australasian Ports Cargo Handling Quarterly*.

The statement by the Premier on Saturday last was different from that which we have heard from time to time from other sources. I wish to emphasise that the export of iron ore from Geraldton is not the only factor which prompted me to move this motion. Geraldton will be handling food for the people of the world long after the iron ore is forgotten and some other metal or mineral has taken its place. A district such as Geraldton must have a port which is of international standard if it is going to progress. When Geraldton was established as a town and port, it did not have the best situation on that part of the western coast. It is hampered by a rock bed in the harbour, which will cost a considerable amount of money to remove, in order that the harbour might be deepened to allow the export of our products to become a financial proposition. As members know, this is not a new subject.

I refer now to a cutting from *The Geraldton Guardian* in 1961. Under the heading "Report on Harbor To Be Sought" it states—

A technical report on the deepening of the harbour and a plan showing the structure of the outer bar will be sought from the Harbour and Light Department by the Geraldton Chamber of Commerce.

In taking this step at its monthly meeting on Monday night last the Chamber decided to draw attention to the fact that so far this year at least eleven grain freighters which loaded at Geraldton had to proceed to Fremantle to top up because of the inadequate depth of water in the local harbour.

Fears were expressed that some of the grain export trade would be lost to Geraldton if the harbour deepening was not expedited.

That was early in 1961, and not only the Chamber of Commerce, but the trade union movement in Geraldton, the local authority in Geraldton, and even the shire councils in surrounding districts were pressing for improvements to the Geraldton harbour. The improvements sought at that time were visualised by the present Government; and, as members will see later, the improvements asked for have been proceeded with for the last 12 months. We find, however, that because of the size of the ships and the demand by certain people connected with the export of iron ore, the improvements now being effected will not be sufficient.

The next quotation is from *The Geraldton Guardian* of the 30th June, 1961. Under the heading "Wharf Likely" the report states—

Investigations are being made at Geraldton harbour in what is understood to be a preliminary survey for the construction of a new berth at the wharf.

Works Minister Wild said on a recent visit that if iron ore is exported from Geraldton a fourth berth would be required.

Japanese steel experts closely examined the harbour during their visit to the Talling Peak iron ore deposits near Geraldton.

The Premier, on the 21st July, 1962, was reported as saying—

The deepening of the Geraldton harbour was very important as far as the northern area is concerned. Bigger ships of 20,000 and 30,000 tons were vying for cargo throughout the world and it was essential that the Geraldton harbour be deepened to accommodate them and keep up with the development of the northern area.

Premier D. Brand made this point when addressing the conference of the Northern Ward Shire Councils' Association at Mingenew this week.

Basic Industries

Referring to basic industries—wheat, wool and meat—Mr. Brand said that planning was vital in a competitive world and, being on the western side of Australia, this State was well placed geographically for this purpose. He said we must get in and sell our goods to our neighbours just across the Indian Ocean.

Continuing, he stated this was possibly an answer to the problem of the European Common Market and contended that an economically strengthened Britain would be good for Australia. "We must get out, establish new industries ourselves, and stand on our own two feet," he declared.

The Premier referred to the export of iron ore, the talc from Three Springs, manganese ore and the possibilities of tourism. He spoke also of the colorful wildflowers and the need for protection and preservation of this great national asset.

We all agree with what the Premier said on that occasion, except that his reference to ships of 20,000 tons and 30,000 tons did not go far enough, because we will have larger ships coming into Geraldton.

In the same year a statement was made by Senator Sir William Spooner in connection with the export of iron ore from Western Australia; and the Minister for

Mines, in 1961, under the heading "Talling Peak Iron Ore Deposits" had this to say—

However the overall quantity and quality of the ore had yet to be proved.

If export went ahead from Talling, Geraldton could expect to gain in many ways including building and employment. The question of transport from Talling to Geraldton had not been resolved.

Road cartage would require the construction of a new major road. If the railway was used it could assist in the development of the extensive ore deposits near Cue, which had interested Japanese experts and where drilling was in progress.

That was in 1961—quite early in the piece. I have here an announcement which appeared in the *Daily News*. This announcement was made by the Government on the Bill that I have previously referred to—it is now an Act of Parliament—in connection with the Western Mining Corporation and just what it would do in respect of supplying machinery, material, rolling stock, and so on. Unfortunately what was suggested there has not yet come to pass. On the 10th August, 1961, the following appeared:—

An agreement which will provide W.A. with about £2,500,000 in income and assets in the next five years was signed by the Government and Western Mining Corporation today.

Hailed by the Premier as the beginning of a new era and mining boom for the State, it sets the pattern for the exploitation of the 2,000,000-ton iron deposit at Talling Peak, about 100 miles north-east of Geraldton.

Royalty

Western Mining Corporation has agreed to pay a royalty rate of 6s. a ton on the first 2,000,000 tons of iron ore exported from the field.

The company will provide a railway line, diesel locomotives and rolling stock (valued at £1,000,000), shipping facilities and an area for stockpiling at Geraldton (valued at £200,000).

The company estimates that its capital expenditure will be about £2,250,000.

That, of course, was quite early in the piece. The next quotation again is from the Premier. On the 17th August, 1961, the following appeared in *The Geraldton Guardian*:—

Provision has been made in this year's loan programme for £100,000 to be spent on deepening work in the Geraldton harbour and its approaches.

This was announced today by the Premier and member for Greenough, Hon. D. Brand, M.L.A.

Mr. Brand said that an amount of £75,000 had been allocated for dredging and rock blasting of the outer approaches and it was intended that the remaining £25,000 was earmarked for additional berth dredging.

Planning

The planning for the year in connection with the deepening of Geraldton Harbour is as follows:—

- Dredge "Sir James Mitchell" will transfer from Bunbury to Geraldton late January or early February, 1962, to commence the deepening of entrance channel and inner basin. Most of this work is expected to be performed under trailer operation of this dredge—that is, dredging with dredge under way.

- Grab dredge "Fremantle" will transfer from Albany to Geraldton in March, 1962, and will commence initially on grab dredging immediately adjacent to the wharf face and later in the outer approaches as blasting of shoal rock areas progresses.

- As weather permits, blasting of rock areas in outer approaches will commence early next year and continue on a pattern which trial blasting and advice from the technicians of the explosives division of Imperial Chemical Industries Limited will determine.

Discussions between the Government and I.C.I. Limited will take place shortly, Mr. Brand added.

Members will recall that I was certainly in favour of what is mentioned there, as far as it went, but the dredges referred to by me and spoken of by the Premier did a certain amount of work in the Geraldton Harbour, and a privately owned dredge, the *Throsby*, did excellent work in pumping sand and silt from the harbour; but the dredges concerned were more or less toys and not of much use for shifting any hard material. I wish now to quote again from *The Geraldton Guardian*—

About £110,000 will be spent on Geraldton harbour works.

Dredging and rock blasting of the outer approaches will account for about £75,000 and this work should start early in 1962.

Provision of £25,000 will be put towards the cost of an additional berth and the dredging for possible export of iron ore from Tallering Peak.

The new berth will only be constructed if a satisfactory agreement is reached between the Western Mining Corporation and the State Government.

Provision has also been made in the railway estimates for the improvement of the Geraldton-Mullewa section to permit the export through Geraldton of the Tallering Peak iron ore deposits.

As far as I know, nothing has been done about the money to be spent on the railway rehabilitation and the new railway, and that is one of the reasons why the people in the district are agitated and think that nothing much is being done.

I have another extract which is of great importance, and it is headed "Big Salt Export Scheme Plan." This report appeared on the 12th February, 1962, in *The Geraldton Guardian*, and anybody who knows Geraldton will know that the Hutt Lagoon is in the Port Gregory area near Northampton. There are huge salt deposits there, but things have not gone as expected by the firm concerned. I do not know the strength of what has happened, but I would say that if the scheme has been held up it would be because of the lack of port facilities for the handling of salt in a suitable way.

Again, I wish to quote from *The Geraldton Guardian* in fairness to all concerned, because this extract will show members that the newspaper recognises that something has been done in regard to the harbour. I referred previously to the suction dredge *Throsby* which did a very good job there in regard to pumping ordinary sand from the harbour. The newspaper has this to say—

There is quite a chance the dredge will return to Geraldton later—or a bigger one owned by the same company—for it hopes that it will be used if and when the further deepening of the harbour is required for iron ore deposits.

Seabed Rock

Rock in the seabed has caused considerable trouble to the *Throsby*. It is of a particularly solid formation and has done much damage to the cutter of the suction tube.

The cutter is used to loosen the silt and facilitate its removal by suction. In this particular task no less than six cutters have been damaged and required renewal.

I interrupt here to say again that the work the *Throsby* did in the first instance was excellent, but it was expecting too much to ask the *Throsby* to do work in regard to cutting the rock, and to do other work which a heavier and more powerful type of cutter or dredge should do. The report goes on—

No. 4 Berth

The immediate construction on the western end of the 1,535 ft. wharf covers an extension of 134 ft. with

provision for future extension for No. 4 berth, which will be needed when iron ore export commences. The present wharf is inadequate to handle cargo from three big ships at once.

Considerable progress has been made in this project which in itself is a work of magnitude, changing the face of the area. A retaining wall 184 ft. long—50 ft. further than the actual extension—has been placed in position.

This consists of interlocking steel sheet piling, each of the 150 sheets being 40 ft. long and driven 25 ft. into the ground. To do this required the services of an 80 ft. pile driver fitted on a pontoon 62 ft. long and 44 ft. wide.

Steam Hammer

The driving was done by a 6-ton McKiernan-Terry double acting steam hammer which is now being used with a heavy solid steel monkey to drive the octagonal 50 ft. steel piles which will support the wharf apron.

A considerable section of the steel retaining wall has been capped with reinforced concrete and the remainder will be treated in a similar manner soon.

Support for the wall is supplied by a series of 40 ft. steel rods of 3 in. diameter which in turn are moored by 18 massive concrete slabs, 9 ft. by 10 ft. weighing 6½ tons each. These have been covered by sand recovered in the dredging operations and later this will be extended to completely fill the area until it is level with the wharf apron.

Hollow Piles

About two-thirds of the 28 hollow steel piles have been driven. They will be filled with concrete and then steel plates an inch thick and 2 ft. square will be welded on top of them. There will be seven piers, each of four piles.

Across each pier will be welded mighty steel girders. Each will be 50 ft. long and 24 in. by 7½ in. of "I" section metal. Seven similar girders of the same dimensions will be welded to these to provide longitudinal spans.

The next stage will be casting a reinforced concrete deck slab which will have the necessary attachments to permit the fixing of railway and wharf cranetracks. The concrete for this task and for filling the piles will amount to 400 yards.

Cathodic Protection

All steel below the water or mudline will have cathodic protection. This is a method whereby a block of metal, which can be replaced when necessary,

attracts corrosion instead of the structural steel. Steelwork exposed to intermittent wetting will be protected by two coats of special paint followed by two coats of plasticised tar.

That will complete what we know as the first concrete wall of 134 ft. in length. I believe preparations are mooted or are in train for the next berth, but the trouble surrounding the whole situation is that we are not being properly informed on what is expected, and no proper provision is made for the deepening of the entrance channel to enable larger ships to enter the harbour. There is another newspaper article here taken from *The Geraldton Guardian* of Saturday, the 7th July, 1962, which reads as follows:—

Japanese Inspect Talling Peak

The iron ore deposit at Talling Peak examined by a mission of seven Japanese mining engineers and geologists yesterday looked "most promising" both in quality and quantity, the head of the mission, Mr. Mitsuo Kagawa, said in an interview this morning. The party left at 8.45 a.m. for an inspection of the Koolanooka Hills near Morawa which will complete their country trip.

However, it was stressed that no final decision regarding the purchase of iron from Talling Peak and other areas could be made for two or three months. The mission will confer with officials of the Western Mining Corporation in Perth, Melbourne and Sydney before returning to Japan where the decision will be made by the various steel companies they represent.

They have been accompanied by representatives from the corporation, including the managing director (Mr. W. M. Morgan), the general superintendent (Mr. L. C. Brodie-Hall), the chief geologist (Mr. J. D. Campbell) and the chief engineer (Mr. W. Blown).

Flying in four Cessna aircraft, the party inspected the Yilgarn area last Wednesday, Talling Peak yesterday and the Koolanooka Hills today.

Harbour Aspect

The necessity for further deepening of Geraldton harbour and its approaches was mentioned by both Messrs. Kagawa and Morgan. Mr. Kagawa pointed out that the Japanese preferred to use special ore-carrying ships which ranged between 20,000 and 30,000 tons and these had too deep a draught for Geraldton as it now was. However, he added that if need be smaller carriers could be used but these were not so economical to operate.

Last night Mr. Morgan said that the 30,000-ton carriers had a mean draught of about 30 feet, which meant that at least 35 feet of water was required for safety. This factor added to the attractiveness of the Yilgarn deposits, which were substantial and within range of the new standard gauge railway.

Big Tonnage

If the negotiations in connection with the Talling Peak and Koolanooka Hills deposits were successful, a minimum of between £3,000,000 and £4,000,000 worth of ore would be exported through Geraldton. This would entail about 500,000 tons per year, Mr. Morgan stated.

The mining and transport would lead to the employment of about 100 men by the corporation in this area. There would be an incidental increase of employment in the area in many other ways, he pointed out, for the addition of 100 families to the district work force would have a widespread effect.

If the sale was completed, he anticipated that the export would begin about the end of next year or early in 1964.

In concluding his interview, Mr. Kagawa expressed his personal pleasure in visiting this area. He said that he was impressed by the country and also by the cordial manner in which people had welcomed the party and the atmosphere of friendship.

In *The West Australian* of the 31st August, 1963, a report was published which reads as follows:—

Government Tells Ore Men Port To Be Deeper

One of the problems in Western Mining Corporation Ltd's. £29,000,000 iron ore export negotiations with Japanese steel mills—the deepening of the Geraldton harbour—appears to be solved.

The W.A. Government has assured the Japanese mills that it will deepen the harbour.

The directors of Western Mining Corporation revealed this in the company's annual report.

This would enable 20,000-ton ore carriers to handle the ore instead of 10,000-ton carriers—the biggest the port can take at present.

Freight costs, which the directors point out are a critical factor in the export iron ore market, would be reduced.

These had restricted the size of ships entering the port and had caused some wheat ships to top up cargoes at other ports.

Negotiations

Negotiations opened last December for the contract covering 5,100,000 tons of ore.

The company and its partners have continued testing the Koolanooka deposits for the contract.

During 1962-63, exploration and drilling were mainly concerned with developing reserves.

An airborne survey indicated continuity of iron formation beds over a considerable distance. Groundwork proved extensive formations, generally medium-grade, but with several high-grade occurrences.

The directors say they are testing the suitability of the medium-grade ores for upgrading by concentrating.

Exploration in the North Yilgarn area had proved the existence of big tonnages of ore containing more than 60 per cent. iron.

30FT. DRAUGHT

Works Minister Wild said the Government had agreed to do everything possible to increase the depth of water at Geraldton to accommodate vessels of up to 20,000 tons with a loaded draught of 30 ft.

Members will recall that the previous engineer stated that a 30 ft. draught would be needed and not 35 ft. Continuing—

Work was now being carried out to permit a loaded draught of 28 ft. 6 in. instead of the present maximum of 27 ft.

That is the draught we have in the Geraldton harbour at present. Continuing—

The cost of increasing this to 30 ft. was under review. An American expert visited Geraldton this month to advise on this.

Problems at Geraldton included a rocky sea-bed and the big swell which ran at the harbour approaches.

Members will recall that in June of this year an interested company had found quantities of iron ore near Mt. Gibson which is close to Wubin on the Wongan Hills line. At that time a report had been published in the Press regarding the ore being transported to Fremantle if and when a license were granted for the export of the ore. I forwarded an urgent telegram to the Minister for Works in con-

nection with the matter and I have here a letter in reply which is dated the 30th July, 1963. It reads as follows:—

Dear Mr. Sewell,

Further to your telegram concerning the proposed shipment of iron ore from Mt. Gibson, I can advise that in accordance with the Iron Ore (Tallering Peak) Agreement Act, 1961, the Government plans to construct an additional land-backed berth and deepen the existing harbour facilities to permit ore carriers with a loaded draft of 30 feet to use the port.

This planning, and indeed the whole question of exporting iron ore through the port of Geraldton, is dependent upon the economic feasibility of the rock removal involved in deepening the harbour.

An American expert will be arriving in Perth on 4th August and proceed to Geraldton on 6th August. Having received the advice of this expert, consideration will be given to inviting tenders on a world-wide basis for the necessary deepening to assess its economic feasibility.

Firm decisions will not be possible until towards the end of this year.

Members no doubt recall that we were going to export iron ore in 1963 and then again in 1964. Following on that, concern had been expressed on several occasions because the Government policy on the Geraldton harbour had not been announced and many rumours were abroad.

I now wish to quote an article taken from *The Geraldton Guardian* in May, 1963. Rumours were afoot; but the article, which was a report of a speech made by Mr. Court, the Minister for the North-West, at the Jaycee seminar at Geraldton, had this to say—

This is why the State Government, in the face of some uninformed criticism, is pushing the Koolanooka-Tallering Peak negotiations abroad. When an agreement is reached between Western Mining Corporation and Japanese mining interests, it will result in the mining, railing and shipping of about 500,000 tons of ore each year. Processing could follow.

The Government is examining the practicability of dredging the rock bottom of the entrance channel to the Geraldton harbour to enable 20,000 ton freighters to use the port.

In this article 20,000-ton freighters are mentioned, but in another instance 30,000-ton carriers are referred to. Continuing—

This would be an opportunity which does not end with iron ore.

If properly taken advantage of it could be the springboard by which Geraldton launches itself into further prosperity and expansion.

The deepening the harbour will greatly increase the trading capacity of the port. It will allow the entry of large refrigerated ships for the export of chilled and frozen meat. It will allow wheat and other ships to take on bigger cargoes at the port.

In other words, it would open up Geraldton port and its region for expanded world trade.

The only comment I can make on that part of the Minister's speech is that we are right behind him. However, we find that this is all we seem to be getting in regard to the harbour itself. On the Mt. Gibson deposits being discovered, following the discovery of our own deposits and the announcement in the Press that there was a possibility that the ore would be transferred to Fremantle, despite the fact that Geraldton was closer, and in view of the policy of decentralisation, we thought it was time the Government took a little more notice of Geraldton. I have said that I can prove there is no plan for the development of the Geraldton Harbour.

I have a further article here taken from *The Geraldton Guardian* dated the 27th August, 1963, the major portion of it dealing with a letter received by the Geraldton Town Council from the Under-Secretary for Works (Mr. J. McConnell). The first part of the article represents comments by the newspaper itself, and it reads as follows:—

Prospects For Beach Not Bright

State Government departments have taken a cold, calculating look at the recent claim by the Geraldton Town Council that the Government should provide a replacement beach for the West-End Beach which disappeared in harbour reclamation work. And the cold, calculating look does not appear very encouraging.

That is what the newspaper had to say. To this I want to add that I mentioned in the debate on the Address-in-Reply that those who had any association with Geraldton were worried that the wonderful children's beach known as Yanks Jetty would eventually have to go, and it disappeared this year, thanks to the good work of the suction dredge Crosby. The civic-minded people headed by Councillor Page held a public meeting and at that meeting it was agreed that the Government should be asked for certain things, and that the people of Geraldton should insist that the reclamation of the piece of land on the western side of the present breakwater where the fishermen's jetty is should be carried out. That is a quiet backwater and all that would be required would be the

levelling off of the ground to provide a suitable beach for children and people bent on picnicking. It was likely that the Geraldton Town Council would have some tenure over that land because it was considered it would be some time before it would be required for harbour extensions.

The whole of that land, even that part where the beach cottages are situated, has been reserved for harbour extensions and anyone obtaining a lease of any portion of it for any term does so only on the condition that he is likely to be evicted on a month's notice. The council, of course, had written to ascertain if something could be done to get the right of tenure over this part of the beach. This article said—

The Under Secretary for Works, Mr. J. McConnell, has officially informed the council that no decision has been reached on the pattern of future port development, which will be influenced by the decision yet to be made on the export of iron ore.

Absorbed

"Should an affirmative decision result, a further berth with associated dredging will be necessary westward of the existing berths," he wrote. "In such case it is certain that the area now occupied by beach cottages and the caravan park on Reserve No. 20606 will be completely absorbed in port development proposals.

"It would be impracticable to use any of the dredged material associated with this development for nourishment of the beach fronting Foreshore Drive eastwards from Fitzgerald Street," he continued. "Likewise it is impracticable to use any of the dredged material resulting from current harbour deepening work by the dredges Fremantle and Sir James Mitchell."

Mr. McConnell added: "At this stage, therefore, it is advisable to defer consideration of alternative sites for beach cottages and the caravan park until the pattern of future port development is decided upon, which is possible within the next six months."

The people in the Geraldton area have reason to be unsettled by the inaction of the Government, and have cause for concern because of the statements made by various Ministers over the years in connection with the export of iron ore.

When a new industrial plant is to be sited, one of the major considerations is the ease with which its product may be distributed. Equally important is the matter of facilities for receiving raw materials. In either case, because waterborne goods usually incur comparatively lower freight rates, property near ports and harbours is the first to be examined. However, some Australian ports, including

Geraldton, competing for this patronage, have sometimes found themselves to be handicapped too greatly to win.

This is not because the port authority or Government does not have the forethought required. In nearly every case the root cause of the difficulty was the lack of governmental finance to help to develop port facilities in anticipation of future trade needs for the particular area.

The withholding of reasonable finance for port development helps to hold back the State as well as the port, particularly finance from the Commonwealth Government. The lack of adequate port facilities tends to impair the reputation of the port concerned. It must never be forgotten that every port has a reputation, good or bad, for shipmasters; and shipping companies can scarcely be expected to keep a discreet silence regarding the disabilities or advantages particular ports may have. This is especially true of the port of Geraldton.

The average ship loading bulk grain in Geraldton, in order to comply with the loading regulations and attain an even keel trim condition is frequently loaded to the very limit allowed by the restricted depth of water. No small margin of error is allowed, either on the part of the harbour master pilot or the stevedore responsible for the safe loading of the vessel before proceeding to a port with an adequate depth of water to complete loading. Ship-owners and shipmasters avoid, where possible, ports which, due to restricted depth of water, will not allow the ships to load in safety completely.

The more up to date the facilities of the port are, the more trade there will be; and the more trade there is, the more rail and transport will be needed to get it into and out of port. And that means greater revenue for Governments in every department concerned. In this connection an incident occurred in the last month where a large wheat-carrying vessel had to proceed to Fremantle for 500 tons of additional loading of wheat, because the risk of taking the vessel safely over the bar could not be taken.

I now refer to the *Australasian Ports Cargo Handling Quarterly* of August-October, 1963, which contains an article on the Gladstone Harbour Board. I used the ports of Gladstone and Newcastle during the Address-in-Reply debate to point out the amount of money that had been made available by the Commonwealth Government to those ports to enable the export of various products to stimulate the economy of the nation. The main product was coal. The article states—

Gladstone Harbour Board in its 48th annual report for the year ended 30th June, 1962, records a remarkable increase in exports over the previous year and a record for the Port.

Exports rose from 75,677 tons to 350,979 tons—an increase of 275,320 tons or 363.8 per cent. This principal increase was in coal which rose from 46,868 tons to 292,145 tons. Butter, meats and grain sorghum all showed increases.

More Shipping

During the year 97 ships visited the port of which 81 were from overseas. This was an increase of 26 over last year's figures. The gross tonnage of shipping using the port totalled 757,571 tons. The increase is attributed to the varied types of cargo now being offered for shipment overseas—coal, pyrites, grain sorghum, meats and meatworks by-products.

Coal Handling Programme

To cope with the anticipated large increase in the coal trade through the port and to cater for the larger bulk colliers to be employed on the Japanese trade, the board investigated the provision of additional loading and storage facilities. Its consulting engineers, Messrs. Macdonald, Wagner and Priddle prepared preliminary plans for a scheme totalling £405,000. This has now been adopted and it is anticipated this will be completed late this year or early 1964. The scheme comprises:

Replacement of the existing fixed loader on the wharf by a travelling gantry load with travel of 354 feet.

Extension of the concrete paved area on the stock pile area for soft coking (Kianga) coal.

Extension of the concrete paved area on the stock pile area for hard coking (Moura) coal.

Increasing nominal loading rate from 300 tons to 600 tons per hour.

Improved mooring facilities.

During the year the Grain Sorghum Marketing Board, in conjunction with the Gladstone Harbour Board constructed a new storage shed for grain 300 feet long by 60 feet wide. The building was completed in March, 1962. Rail siding accommodation was provided for the shed and a 36 inch conveyor belt was installed alongside it to move the grain to the bulk loading plant when ships were being loaded.

The Queensland Wheat Board obtained full particulars of the port and decided to make Gladstone the port of shipment for Central Queensland Wheat.

What the Commonwealth Government can do for the port of Gladstone by providing assistance, it can also do for ports like Geraldton and others in Western Australia.

Geraldton is 300 miles approximately from Fremantle, and is situated on the edge of the known cereal-growing districts. There are many other products which could be grown in the Geraldton district if facilities for large refrigerated ships were available, to enable them to load the products.

Earlier I referred to dredging facilities at Geraldton Harbour, and to the amount of money which had been expended for dredging in other ports. I refer to the position in Newcastle, and the following Press report is relevant:—

The 2,000-ton diesel-electric rock cutter-suction dredger, W. F. Dillingham, of Hawaiian-Pomeroy Dredging International's fleet, berthed at King's Wharf in Newcastle Harbor on the afternoon of July 19 after a three months' 10,000-mile haul from the Suez Canal.

The 6,000-horsepower dredger will be used as the main operational unit when the Newcastle Harbor deepening project is resumed this month.

The huge dredger, biggest rock cutter-suction unit of its type ever to be brought to Australia, will be used by the joint venture of Haunstrup-Pomeroy-Dredging Industries Pty. Ltd. under the terms of a N.S.W. Government contract to remove about 1,400,000 cubic yards of rock and over-burden silt from the rock bar and navigation channels of Newcastle Harbor to provide 36 ft. depth of water at low tide to enable the movement of larger vessels to and from Newcastle Harbor.

The W. F. Dillingham (pictured), was hauled across the Indian Ocean and down the eastern coast of Australia by the Dutch N.V. Bureau Wijsmuller's 2,550 indicated horsepower diesel-electric tug Zeeland, and arrived off Nobbys Signal Station at the entrance to Newcastle Harbor soon after 3 p.m. on July 19.

It was met by the harbor tugs Nemo and Farm Cove, which escorted the dredger to a smooth berthing at King's Wharf soon after 4 p.m.

Even in a large port like Newcastle, which is used to big dredges and ships, the effect of a dredge of the size referred to in the article was quite noteworthy.

It has been said that the same thing cannot be done in Geraldton Harbour, and the expert, mentioned by both the Premier and the Minister for Works, indicated that the rock formation was too hard. I would like to know from the Government whether other authorities are to be consulted on this matter, or whether that person will be the only expert to be consulted. Has the Government given consideration to a dredging plant for Geraldton, similar to the one mentioned in the Press report?

Further questions I put to the Government are these: Has any further advice been sought, from even the Government's own departmental officers? Has thought been given to the provision of other channels for Geraldton Harbour? We are aware of the existence of two channels, and we know the northern channel was used by shipping in former days when bagged wheat was sent in small vessels to Japan.

On reading the shipping journals one finds that in relation to cargo handling in the ports of the Eastern States and Tasmania there is a movement on foot to deepen the ports and to extend the harbour facilities generally.

I would now like to refer to a further Press report on the Newcastle Harbour. It states—

A new 1,200ft long dual-purpose bulk cargo handling berth will be built in Carrington Basin (Newcastle Harbour) by the N.S.W. Maritime Services Board.

The new wharf is estimated to cost about £1,000,000, but no definite cost figure has yet been fixed because of the particular method of construction involved.

The berth, which will extend into Carrington Basin from the eastern side adjacent to the State Dockyard area.

The Governments in the Eastern States, and the authorities which control the allocation of finance, see to it that their States do not go short. I hazard a guess that the £1,000,000 mentioned in the article was part of the £2,500,000 made available by the Commonwealth Government to New South Wales last year, or was an additional grant.

The same remarks apply to the Tamar Channel at Launceston, on which £2,000,000 has been expended to provide shipping facilities for the Bell Bay works. I can give examples of similar developments taking place in other parts of the Commonwealth, but in Western Australia there does not seem to be the finance available for carrying out such necessary developments.

I now refer to the action of the local Press. Just to make sure members do not retain the idea that this is all my own doing, I will quote from several articles. The first is from a Geraldton newspaper of the 8th August, 1963, and reads as follows:—

Geraldton and regional representative bodies must leave no stone unturned to see Geraldton becomes the Port for the shipping-away of all iron ore produced in the region.

Development of the port is vital to town and surrounding areas.

The Minister for Industrial Development said in Geraldton, in May, that development of the harbour was tied up with iron ore deposits.

Mr. Court said harbour deepening for iron ore shipment would last for all time, would make the transport of wheat and other commodities more economic, with lasting benefits to the region.

Western Mining Corporation appears likely to conclude an agreement with Japanese steel interests for export of iron ore from Talling Peak and Koolanooka Hills within the foreseeable future.

Mount Gibson

But other areas have come into the limelight as iron ore producers.

Recent Press statements indicate that Mount Gibson, near Wubin, is a potentially-rich producer.

This deposit was discovered by a Perth man, Mr. Alan McDougall, who applied for a mining reserve in the area last year.

But the published statement goes on to say plans so far "envisage Fremantle as the logical export port" and that Mr. McDougall had already contacted the Fremantle Harbour Trust regarding a North Wharf stockpile site.

This ore should be exported through Geraldton if the off-heard talk of decentralisation is meaningful.

If plans were, in fact, formulated for harbour development in Geraldton, the outport would logically be regarded as the shipping point, being a couple of days' steaming closer to the market.

Spend Money?

Development of Australian ports seems closely allied with the spending of more Commonwealth developmental money.

Geraldton is now primarily a grain exporting centre with crayfishing, tomato growing and tourism subsidiary income producers for the town's 12,000 inhabitants.

But harvest failures, on sea or land, could adversely affect Geraldton's evergrowing population, especially the chances of the "post-war crop" of children being able to get employment locally.

The Aleppo recently sailed from Geraldton with 14,602 tons of wheat the biggest-ever wheat consignment to leave the port.

Famine in mainland China was a financial blessing to W.A. wheat-growers, cleared all surplus grain.

However, carry-overs could again become the rule.

Ore shipments will enable the harbour to be deepened to accommodate at a minimum, vessels of 20,000 tons. As Mr. Court said, this would be an all-time blessing.

Wool produced in the region bypasses Geraldton for shipment at Fremantle.

Crayfish and tomatoes are sent to Fremantle for export.

With a developed harbour, a larger and different class of ship will be attracted to the port, especially if export meat is available, via an abattoir and meatworks.

All these regional products could be shipped direct, and wheat ships could completely fill-up without the need to top-up at other ports.

A continual pressure for decentralisation, by all concerned, is nowhere currently needed so much as in Geraldton harbour development for ore shipments.

Geraldton should be the port of shipment for all the products of its region.

At the present juncture, the case is centred on iron ore, and constant vigilance is necessary in ensuring regional, as against metropolitan outlets.

The following is the leading article in *The Geraldton Guardian* of the 24th August, 1963:—

DECENTRALISATION

This is a vital question for Geraldton and the whole of this area. The region is progressing but in a lopsided manner, with the main burden falling on the man on the land.

Great potentials are being ignored because of lack of governmental foresight. Until Geraldton's harbor and shipping facilities are developed, the region cannot develop.

Much has been said of what will be done when and if the iron ore from Koolanooka and Talling Peak are exported, but the whole of that affair is bogged down in negotiations apparently without end. If the Government would say straight out that it definitely will proceed with work to give Geraldton a real harbour capable of handling all reasonable cargoes, then progress would be made.

As things are, it appears that Mt. Gibson iron is to be sent south to Fremantle, congesting that area more and more.

This area has lost its manganese exports. In 1957 65,000 tons were shipped through Geraldton. In 1960 it was down to the 20,000 mark and then fell away to a mere 5,000 tons or less. Last year it rose to 18,000 and 12,000 tons were exported in the year ending June 30th this year.

But that is the last, we have been told. Why? Because handling costs are too high. Africa, spending £4,000,000 on a new port, has captured the market. This is a national disgrace.

But it can be overcome—if we have proper facilities. Australia has lost this money and the remedy should be a Federal as well as a State matter.

An almost incredible tonnage of paper has been wasted, covered with official reports on how the inland must be developed. The cry is always the same—it is too far to markets.

Victoria showed how this could be overcome. Although it already had two major ports in Melbourne and Geelong, it spent £6,000,000 in developing a new deep-water harbor at Portland, 200 miles to the west. Now that town, formerly a seaside resort for retired graziers, is a booming centre for a vast area.

Wool sales have been started there and, instead of produce being sent 200 miles to Melbourne or Geelong, it now travels only a few miles.

Great meatworks have come into being, giving a market for district produce and employment to many. Other projects of a similar nature have followed the building of that port.

The same would happen here. When the shipping facilities become available, then the industries will hasten to take advantage. But it has been proved all over the world—not once but a thousand times—that industries follow harbors, not harbors industry.

Every branch of our present production would benefit. New industries would come. Markets would be established. The increase in employment would lead to increase in population and prosperity.

We cannot depend on land links 300 miles long, for the recent weather has shown the peril. Supplies could reach Geraldton only by air on several occasions.

If there is to be decentralisation as a fact and not a dream, then we must have a proper, modern and well-equipped harbor.

I do not think there is one person in Western Australia who would not agree with that leading article.

I will now read portion of a leading article concerning the motion with which we are now dealing, as follows:—

One of the most potent weapons that the member will have at his disposal will be statements by members of the Government. During the official opening of the Sunshine Festival, for instance, the Minister for Industrial Development, Mr. C. W. Court, pointed out that industry was attracted to ports with first-class harbors.

The Premier, Mr. Dave Brand, representative of much of the area served by the port of Geraldton, also has made it clear that he favours the creation of a first-class harbor for Geraldton.

In fact, the current Government has shown itself solidly behind the project, in deeds as well as in principle, having spent substantial sums in deepening work, in the provision of a fishermen's wharf to relieve congestion at the main wharf and in the extension of the third berth.

All this is to be good but Mr. Sewell—and not a few other local residents—feels that it is not enough. Excellent as the efforts of the Government have been, future development of the port appears to hinge too much on the export of iron ore.

If this occurs, of course, major works are inevitable. But, it may be asked, may it not be that the successful culmination of negotiations may well be dependent on the certainty, rather than the promise, of a port capable of handling in safety the big ships that will be needed for the transport of the ore?

Some recent aspects of plans for local harbor development have been somewhat disquieting. It had been understood that action in the event of an iron ore export agreement being finalised was firmly blue-printed. However, in a recent letter to the Geraldton Town Council, the Under Secretary for Works, Mr. J. McConnell, said that "no decision has yet been reached on the pattern of future port development."

Even though the report of the American expert who visited Geraldton recently has been kept under wraps, it is fully realised that the improvement of the harbor to a fully acceptable standard would be extremely costly. Naturally this must be a limiting factor as far as the State Government is concerned.

There is considerable merit, therefore, in Mr. Sewell's proposal that Federal financial aid be sought. Already precedents in this sphere have been created in the Eastern States and there is no logical reason why the aspect of national development should not apply to Geraldton.

Mr. Sewell's motion may create a piquant situation when it comes before Parliament, but it will have the backing of the people of Geraldton and—it is hoped—of members on his own and the other side of the political fence.

Needless to say, I agree wholeheartedly with that. The Premier opened the Chapman Valley agricultural show at Nanson, near Geraldton, on Saturday. An article appeared in *The West Australian* on the 16th September, 1963, appertaining to this event, as follows:—

The State Cabinet would consider today the possibility of reducing royalties on proposed shipments of iron ore from Geraldton harbour, Premier Brand said on Saturday.

An American expert flown out to inspect the harbour three weeks ago had told the Government it would be almost impossible to deepen the harbour enough to allow big ore carriers to use the port.

That is why I mentioned the machine earlier and also that other experts have been asked to advise on the position. The article continues—

The use of smaller ships would make it difficult for the Western Mining Corporation to compete on world markets.

The American expert, Mr. J. Groenendyke, had reported that a rocky bar at the entrance to the harbour would have to be removed before larger carriers could use the port.

Mr. Brand was speaking at the opening of the Chapman Valley agricultural show at Nanson, near Geraldton.

The time and heavy cost involved in deepening the harbour had made necessary today's Cabinet consideration of a reduction in the royalties.

The State Government and the Western Mining Corporation have signed an agreement for the mining and export of iron ore from Talling Peak, about 70 miles from Geraldton.

The agreement calls for the improvement of the railway facilities to bring iron ore to the harbour, the building of berth and handling facilities, and the deepening of the harbour.

It also calls for the corporation to pay a royalty of 6s. a ton on the first 2,000,000 tons and all other ore won by open-cut methods. The royalty for upgraded ore and ore extracted by underground mining methods would be 1s. 6d. a ton.

Mr. Brand said last night that no deep consideration had been given on how much the royalties would have to be reduced to allow Western Mining to compete on world markets.

He had denied rumours circulating in Geraldton that the Government was half-hearted about developing the port and that the iron ore deal might fall through.

I do not think it was so much a matter of rumour because some statements were made in regard to the continual backing and filling—if I may use the term—of the Government in this connection. There was never anything concrete resolved on this matter.

Last Friday one of the representatives of these companies visited Geraldton and the following article appeared in *The Geraldton Guardian* on Saturday, the 14th September:—

Expert Unhappy on Harbor Upgrading

A Japanese mining engineer said yesterday that he would be happier if he had seen more progress towards making Geraldton Harbor suitable for the shipment of iron ore and in the provision of the necessary loading facilities. He is Mr. Y. Kurosawa, of C. Itoh Co. (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. of Melbourne, a firm of exporters vitally interested in the shipping of iron ore from Australia to Japan.

He was making his second visit to Geraldton to investigate the shipping conditions from this port. "I have seen a little progress, but not much," he commented.

Export Contract

Mr. Kurosawa said it appeared almost certain a contract to export the ore from Talling Peak and Koolanooka Hills would be signed soon, the first of such an export from Australia overseas. This could prove the forerunner of a major trade item to this country, he pointed out.

There were only minor points to be cleared up regarding price and purity and he had no doubt would be solved quickly.

Steel Companies

The managing director of Western Mining Corporation, Mr. W. Morgan, had announced last Thursday that he would fly to Japan next month to

confer with the steel companies concerned, Mr. Kurosawa continued. He felt most hopeful that this would lead to the signing of the contract.

To carry out the terms of the agreement, the corporation—with Governmental aid—would have to do considerable work to bring the harbor up to standard and to erect the necessary loading facilities. This would take time.

The article then went on to quote what the Minister for Mines had to say in connection with the matter.

Members can see why the Geraldton people—and on this occasion the newspapers speak as one voice—are perturbed by the action of the Government in connection with port facilities. The man I have just quoted would be vitally interested in the whole business and, as he said, there has been a little progress, but not much.

The announcement by the Minister for Works, which I quoted previously, was a declaration of the Government's intention to deepen the harbour, but nothing much seems to have been done in connection with it. The main issue is no clearer now than it was before, as far as I am concerned. These things have been promised repeatedly, and with monotonous regularity, since 1961; but when will the work commence? The clearing of the sand and the silt lying on the bottom, to which I referred before, that was pumped up on the beach, really has nothing to do with the deepening of the harbour which has been promised.

The main questions now seem to be—

- (1) As these promises regarding the deepening of the harbour have been made since 1961, when is work likely to commence?
- (2) It has been repeatedly promised since 1961 that concurrent with the deepening of the harbour a fourth berth would be constructed for the export of iron ore. Are there any plans for the construction of this berth or is it intended to load and export the iron ore from the existing berths?

It was originally expected that iron ore would be exported from the harbour by the end of 1963 or early in 1964. The last information received was that export would begin in 1966. At the present rate of progress and planning, when can we expect to see the first shipment of ore leave Geraldton? According to a letter received by the Geraldton Town Council from the Under-Secretary for Works, regarding the beach, etc., there was a possibility that a decision would be made within six months—or as that was a month ago, it should now be within five months. But that

brings us into 1964, and if the rate of progress made since 1961 is maintained there does not seem to be much hope of being any further ahead by 1966.

Had we been further ahead with this port work we would probably have received some of the benefit of direct shipments from the United States in connection with the building of the United States base in our north. Most of the materials will now go through Fremantle and be dragged up to Geraldton by train. If that is done the goods will be off-loaded at Fremantle and taken through the railhead at Geraldton and from there the goods will be taken to the United States base.

But how much better it would have been if the port of Geraldton had been able to handle the ships bringing the cargo for these establishments in our north! It would be of benefit to Geraldton and to the State as a whole. I can assure members that everybody in the Geraldton area is concerned with the position, and realises the vital necessity for the port to be deepened, extended, and developed to allow larger vessels to use it to take our products to the world markets. These products include wheat, wool, iron ore, salt, manganese, livestock, tomatoes, crayfish and other fish, lead, copper, and frozen meats.

Members can see we have a much better case for assistance from the Federal Government than had the Government of Queensland for development of a place like Gladstone. The only difference is that Gladstone had large coal deposits and the coal was to be transported to Japan. With Geraldton developed quickly as a major port it will, because of decentralisation, obviate congestion at other main ports. That would be of considerable advantage to the general progress of the State. We must expect Fremantle to become congested in the future, and the ports of Bunbury and Albany cannot be considered when discussing projects in the north.

Geraldton is situated 265 miles nearer than Fremantle to main Japanese ports. This results in a shorter steaming distance of 430 miles each round voyage for every ship employed on the run, and would amount to nearly two days saved each round voyage, which would in turn amount to nearly 30 days saved each year; and, assuming there was a quick discharge at Japanese ports, 30 days saved each year would be equal to almost 1½ extra cargoes carried by each ship on the run. Less steaming costs also result in less operating costs.

The Mt. Gibson ore deposits, which have been mentioned before, although in a hush-hush way, are nearer to Geraldton than Fremantle, and a rail route to Geraldton would not pass through congested areas. Iron ore from Koolanooka will be

shipped through Geraldton, and Koolanooka is not far from Mt. Gibson. We know that the Koolanooka deposits are in the electorate represented by the Premier. The deposits are more or less east of Morawa, and so a line from Mt. Gibson, which would be more or less north-east from Wubin, would open up a considerable area of country which, although considered to be a dry region at present, could be of great benefit to the State's finances. This route would certainly be better than the one through Kalannie.

With the combination of Talling Peak, Koolanooka, and Mt. Gibson ore being shipped through Geraldton, it would be possible that capital outlay on loading facilities could be halved by any two companies or, as an alternative, the loading facilities could be extended to allow maximum loading rates. Any company interested in exporting through Geraldton would receive every possible co-operation from everyone in the area—the Geraldton Town Council, the Chamber of Commerce, retail traders, waterside workers, and all other workers. There is no shortage of labour in Geraldton; we are free from industrial troubles; and any disputes that may arise are settled by discussion before they become serious. Geraldton has the best waterfront record in Australia.

If and when our harbour, with all facilities, is completed, there will be ample room to stockpile iron ore, manganese, salt, lead, and any other minerals that would need to be exported.

I should like to mention manganese. As members know, there is a huge deposit of manganese out from Peak Hill. I gave figures in regard to this deposit previously and I stated the quantity that had been shipped through Geraldton by the company concerned. Unfortunately, because of the poor loading and unloading facilities—the unloading facilities when the manganese came up by rail from Meekatharra—the people in Tasmania who were buying the manganese found that they could buy it cheaper from South Africa. I understand that was mainly because of the better facilities which were available at the South African port to enable the manganese to be handled. That was a considerable loss to the town and port of Geraldton.

As members would know, too, there are lead deposits in the Geraldton area, but at present the price for lead is not sufficient to warrant large-scale production. There are also copper deposits in the district, but I think everyone realises that our main hopes must be pinned on our primary products, and Geraldton is recognised throughout Australia as one of the leading

areas in the Commonwealth for the production of all types of cereals, meat, and wool.

The question of iron ore should be kept in its proper perspective and at the present time it is only a means to an end. It means we will have an export trade with our Asian neighbours; but those who have been privileged to see the work being done in the metropolitan markets in regard to vegetables produced in the Geraldton area will realise the enormous potential there is for the products of the district. They will be of benefit not only to Geraldton but also to the State as a whole once we can establish markets in the east and if ships can call regularly at the port of Geraldton.

Geraldton is a port with a hinterland of potential wealth in many fields of production, but it is imperative that we have better port facilities of every kind. This, in conjunction with a reliable water supply, would be a real help with decentralisation. I repeat: The money spent at Gladstone in Queensland could have been more profitably spent, in my view, at Geraldton, and the benefits would be twofold. Once we established an abattoir in Geraldton, and the port facilities were improved, we would be able to export considerable quantities of meat and other produce.

I commend to the State Parliament the motion I have moved, and I consider a vote for it would be a vote for progress and prosperity not only for the Geraldton district but also for the State as a whole. To my mind there is a principle attached to this; and that is, we should have more financial assistance from the Commonwealth Government to help develop the State. The Commonwealth controls the purse-strings and the State Government, which is always in the forefront in talking about what it is trying to do about decentralisation, has an opportunity to prove its sincerity in this respect by making Geraldton a bigger, better, and busier port. It is looked upon as the gateway to the north. The Minister for Industrial Development has used those words time and time again over the last two or three years, and the Government has an opportunity to prove its worth in this regard by supporting the motion I have moved.

I hope I have made myself clear with the quotes I have read from the newspapers, and I have tried to point out to the Government what should be done. This is not a political move but one which is designed to help the district of Geraldton and the State generally.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Wild (Minister for Works).

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 19th September, 1963

CONTENTS

	Page
BILLS—	
Albany Harbour Board Act Amendment Bill—2r.	1177
Bee Industry Compensation Act Amendment Bill—2r.	1179
Bunbury Harbour Board Act Amendment Bill—2r.	1177
Companies Act Amendment Bill—Com.	1186
Constitution Act Amendment Bill—Intro. ; 1r.	1176
Constitution Acts Amendment and Revision Bill—Intro. ; 1r.	1176
Criminal Code Amendment Bill—2r.	1185
Motor Vehicle Drivers Instructors Bill—Receipt ; 1r.	1176
Offenders Probation and Parole Bill—2r.	1180
Pig Industry Compensation Act Amendment Bill—2r.	1178
Prisons Act Amendment Bill—2r.	1186
Stamp Act Amendment Bill—2r.	1178
METROPOLITAN REGION PLAN—	
Alterations to Maps after Tabling—Ministerial Statement	1169
MOTION—	
Legislative Council Provinces—Redistribution and Adult Franchise	1174
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE—	
Assembly and Council Districts—Enrolment Figures	1167
Mentally Disturbed Prisoners—Accommodation and Supervision on Release	1167
Psychiatric Clinics—Establishment in Prisons	1169
QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE—	
Local Government Act—Rectification of Anomaly	1166
REGULATIONS : PRECEDENCE OF MOTIONS FOR DISALLOWANCE—	
President's Ruling: Reconsideration	1176

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT

Rectification of Anomaly

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY asked the Minister for Local Government:

In view of the subject matter raised by The Hon. R. Thompson as recorded on page 185 of the *Parliamentary Debates* of the 13th August, 1963, in regard to the anomaly existing in respect of sections 45 and 109 of the Local