

sure that it will be of great benefit to the workers. These are not the days when the community can afford strikes; these are not the days when there should be strikes. Unions can ensure that each member gets justice, and if any particular organisation is swayed by its emotions for the time being, there must be some remedy to fall back on in the interests of the community.

Today the State is suffering huge losses which will rebound on every citizen and, in particular, the strikers are suffering. It is not right that this should happen in a civilised community. Yet no Government could yield on a question that ought to go to arbitration because to do so would be the end of that Government. So I hope that this measure will assist to prevent a repetition of the tragedy that has occurred on this occasion.

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

Ayes	23
Noes	18
Majority for	5

Ayes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Oldfield
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Read
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hartman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Yates
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell
Mr. McLarty	

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Graham	Mr. Moir
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Needham
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. May	Mr. Kelly

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Brand	Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Mann	Mr. Coverley
Mr. Totterdell	Mr. Rodoreda

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 3.58 a.m. (Friday).

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 12th August, 1952.

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

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

As to Wiluna and Laverton Connections.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN asked the Minister for Railways:

In view of rumours that are current to the effect that it is intended to pull up the railway lines between Leonora and Laverton, and between Meekatharra and Wiluna, will he give an assurance that no such action is contemplated?

The MINISTER replied:

The question of pulling up the railway line between Meekatharra and Wiluna has been examined and the Government has called for further reports concerning this proposal. The general question of a survey of uneconomic lines is one which is being carried out at departmental level, but any proposal affecting the line between Leonora and Laverton has not yet been fully examined. The Government attitude in regard to the Leonora-Laverton line was fully explained by me at a public meeting on the occasion of my recent visit to Leonora, at which the hon. member was present.

TOWN PLANNING.

As to Printing Honorary Royal Commission's Report.

Hon. H. HEARN asked the Minister for Transport:

Will he inform the House whether the Government intends to have the report of the Honorary Royal Commission on the Town Planning and Development Act Amendment Bill printed for distribution to members of both Houses, and for the information of the public generally?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes. I might add that a copy of that report has been laid on the Table of the House today.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Standing Orders Suspension.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [4.43]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill to pass through all its stages at any one sitting, and the aforesaid Bill to be dealt with before the Address-in-reply is adopted.

I feel that in this instance there is justification for a departure from the custom in this House of not speaking to a motion for the suspension of Standing Orders to allow the expeditious passing of any Bill. I therefore propose to follow the example of the Premier in another place and outline to members why the Government considers it necessary to treat this legislation with urgency. There is, however, this difference: When the Premier moved for the suspension of Standing Orders in another place the Assembly members did not know what the Bill contained. Now that the Bill has been introduced members in this House will have a fair idea of its nature and purpose.

There is no doubt in my mind that all members of this House are cognisant of the developments affecting the course of the metal trades strike, but in view of the many misrepresentations that have been made and misconceptions that exist, I propose to recapitulate the principles involved. The first move in the present dispute was made when representatives of the metal trades unions approached the Railway Commissioner for marginal increases in excess of those awarded by the Arbitration Court in this State to metal trades workers in private employment, and by Conciliation Commissioner Galvin in the Federal Court to the same class of workers. As the Government was not prepared to accede to the union's request, the next statutory step was for the unions if they wished to take the matter further, to submit their case to the Arbitration Court.

While two of the four unions concerned were prepared to follow this legal and usual procedure, the other two refused and called their members out on strike. As members know, this course was condemned by the State Executive of the Australian Labour Party and by the trade union movement generally. In the Eastern States, where the strike was initiated as a means of remonstrance against the Galvin award, the men have long since returned to work, but in this State, where the Galvin award does not apply, the strike, with its ever-increasing disruption of industry still drags on.

This is so, despite the fact that the Jackson award gives metal tradesmen 12s. 1d. more than comparable tradesmen receive under the Galvin award. Mr. Gibson, when asked why the strike still continued in Western Australia replied that it would be bad policy to have the whole of the metal trades unions on strike. So the people of Western Australia and its economy are being made the guinea-pigs.

There is no doubt that the strike is actively supported by members of the Communist Party and is in line with their schemes to create discord and schism within Australia, and, according to the communist paper "Tribune," is an attempt to destroy the system of arbitration. The Government has taken every step within its power to end the dispute satisfactorily, but it is adamant that, so far as margins are concerned, the lawful responsibility to make a decision is that of the Arbitration Court.

In this regard the Government will accept the outcome of an approach to the court, but will emphatically not usurp the prerogatives and obligations of the court. Following a period extending over many weeks of negotiation, a proposal was submitted to the Government that a mediator should be appointed to assist in securing a settlement of the strike. The Government accepted this offer and the secretary of the disputes committee of the A.L.P. was advised, on the 15th July, that the Government had appointed the Conciliation Commissioner of the Arbitration Court, Mr. S. F. Schnaars, to mediate on all points contained in the dispute, exclusive of that of margins, which, as I have emphasised, is, the Government considers, a matter for the court.

Six days later, on the 21st July, the disputes committee resolved that the Government's offer be accepted. Subsequent discussions took place before the Conciliation Commissioner, who late last week submitted his recommendations to the Premier. In accordance with its expressed statement, the Government is prepared to accept these recommendations without dispute or qualification.

Mr. Schnaars' advice was that if the strikers were prepared to return to work pending the hearing by the Arbitration Court of their claim for increased margins and without raising any other issues, the Railway Commission should reduce to a maximum of three days the accrued leave the strikers would lose under the penalty clause of their award, and should reinstate the 12 men dismissed. The mediator felt that the strikers should not fully escape the consequences of their illegal action, as this would be inconsistent with the penalty provisions of their award and with recognised arbitration policy.

The final paragraph of a report from Mr. Schnaars dated the 5th August, 1952, will interest members. These are the Conciliation Commissioner's remarks—

It has been and is being asserted that the main difficulties preventing a settlement of the strike are those matters arising out of the dispute, namely, holiday penalty clause and reinstatement of dismissed men. I cannot accept this as being correct. In my opinion the primary obstacle is still the fact that the striking unions have not yet acknowledged that the margins issue must remain one for the Arbitration Court. Once this acknowledgment is made, and the unions are prepared to negotiate on the other matters arising out of the dispute, then I can see no reason why a settlement should not be rapidly effected by negotiations between the employers and the unions.

These, too, are the views of the Government, and, I believe, of all well-disposed people. The consequences of this ill-conceived strike have been widespread and manifold. The transport activities of the Railway Department have been very seriously curtailed. Many people have been thrown into unemployment or on to part time, and as the days pass the threat of unemployment grows larger, particularly in the Railway Department, the monthly losses of which are imposing a very severe strain on the State's economy.

As members will have learned from the Press, the Government last week requested the Railways Commission to apply economy measures, and many railway men are now working part-time only. Further retrenchments may become necessary. My Cabinet colleagues and I, and particularly the Premier, have attended many conferences and have given a great deal of our time in an effort to settle this unfortunate strike on a statutory and reasonable basis. Our efforts to the present have not been successful and as each day passes the economy of the whole State becomes increasingly affected.

Even should the strikers return to work at once, it is estimated that it will take at least nine or ten months before the railways can return to normal activity. The usual rail services have been completely disorganised. People—particularly in the country—have been inconvenienced and have suffered tremendous losses because of reduced services and higher transport costs by road. From all parts of the country, however, have come demands to stand firm and not to concede victory to the strikers.

Locomotives have been reduced from 354 at the commencement of the strike to a present total of 90. The availability of fewer locos means reduced coal consumption, with the result that Collie miners are now only

working six shifts instead of the usual eleven shifts per fortnight. Many commodity costs are higher and each resident of the State is becoming adversely affected by the strike to an ever increasing degree. It thus appears that to give protection to the greater part of the population of Western Australia, the industrial laws of the State must be strengthened without delay.

I refer the House to a remark made by that outstanding exponent of Labour principles, the late Mr. Alex McCallum, who, during a debate in the Legislative Assembly in 1924 on the principal Act said—

My experience in industrial matters has taught me that all methods and systems of conciliation or conference are in the main useless unless they have behind them the power of compulsion.

The Arbitration Court was set up as an independent authority to decide upon all matters in industrial dispute, but the whole principle of arbitration is lost if one party refuses to accept the decision of the court. So the matter resolves itself into the question: Is industrial arbitration to continue? If so, the action of the metal trades strikers indicates with the utmost clarity that the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court must be strengthened.

The Bill is aimed at no particular body of employees. Whatever its merits or demerits, it has one particular purpose, and one only—to protect the interests of the law-abiding people of Western Australia. The widespread and damaging effects that the action of a small body of men have had upon the well-being of the people of the State, the ease with which they are defying the processes of law, call attention to the immediate and vital necessity of placing before Parliament the proposals of the Government to restrict the possibility of any future similar action.

It is, in the Government's opinion, imperative that these proposals be regarded as urgent and that their consideration must not wait until the debate on the Address-in-reply is completed. As members are aware, it is usually early in September before that debate ends. The discussion in another place of a similar motion to this was very protracted, one important reason for this being, as I have said, that members in another place were not aware at that stage of the provisions of the Bill, a circumstance which does not apply to members here. For that reason, I trust that this motion will receive the early and favourable consideration of the House.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [4.56]: For the first time since I have been a member of this Chamber I have heard a Minister make a second reading speech on a motion for the suspension of Standing Orders.

It was very pleasant, I suppose, to hear the excuses made by the Minister for introducing it.

The Minister for Transport: The same thing was done by the Premier in another place.

Hon. G. FRASER: That does not make it any better, or any worse, either. I regret that this procedure is becoming the usual thing. I think, from memory, that for the last two or three sessions I have objected to the suspension of Standing Orders in order that legislation might be rushed through. We now find, to an even greater degree, the rush taking place at the beginning of the session instead of at the end. That is not good policy.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is very wise, I think.

Hon. G. FRASER: It is desirable that members should be permitted to speak on the Address-in-reply because there are some important matters to be raised by them before we get down to urgent legislative business.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do not you think that this is more important to the country people than members' local matters?

Hon. G. FRASER: I think it is a matter that could easily be dealt with during the ordinary course of the session and after the Address-in-reply debate has been concluded. As a matter of fact, if the hon. member who interjected only knew, the Government used the metal trades strike as an excuse to bring this Bill down. Further, if my information is correct, it would not have known that it did not apply to the metal trades strike if it had not been pointed out to the Government by members in another place. The Bill is one that requires long and careful consideration by members of this Chamber. When moving the motion the Minister said that it was not aimed at any one section of employees in this State. I agree, but it is aimed at the whole of the workers of the State.

The Minister for Transport: It is to protect the workers.

Hon. G. FRASER: It is aimed at the whole of the workers—

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Only those who resort to drastic action.

Hon. G. FRASER: —and if Mr. Baxter studies the Bill he will find that out, too. So it is a matter that we require to discuss calmly and coolly. Members of this House should not take the word of Cabinet that the Bill is the beginning and the end of all disputes as far as arbitration is concerned. Again, if my memory serves me aright, this legislation was not discussed by the members of the Government parties, but Cabinet alone.

The Minister for Transport: That is not true.

Hon. G. FRASER: As I say, if that is the position, I am going to ask all members to study every word of the Bill, compare it with the Act and ascertain whether it will secure the objective which the Government seeks to achieve. It is a serious Bill and it is one that should be given the longest consideration possible. Yet, we are asked, by means of a motion for the suspension of Standing Orders, to carry the Bill through all stages at one sitting, if necessary! That is the reason why I rose to my feet. Will the Minister tell me just what his intentions are in this matter? It is all very well for him to say it is a matter that has been made public. It has, in a garbled sort of way, but not in the sense by which a member of Parliament can judge the Bill. We get measures before us from time to time that contain matters of which we do not approve.

The Minister for Agriculture: In this instance, no doubt, you will remedy that defect.

Hon. G. FRASER: We shall endeavour to do so. We desire to know what this particular Bill contains. The measure, as introduced in another place, will probably not be as printed when placed before this House. That is why we desire a proper opportunity to examine its contents. For that reason, it should not be rushed through, and members should be given a proper opportunity to examine the clauses. That is why I desire to know from the Minister what his intentions are in that respect.

The Minister for Transport: The intention is to pass the Bill as quickly as possible.

Hon. G. FRASER: We could do that too quickly. Possibly, the Minister would like the Bill to be passed in the form in which it is placed before us, word for word, but members might desire to secure the passage of various amendments. They should certainly be given time to consider the position. Neither the Minister nor his colleagues in the Government have a monopoly in respect of a desire to do the best to promote the welfare of the people. They have no monopoly in that respect any more than we have.

There is one phase about which we have heard much in past years, and it is that employers and employees should get together as much as possible to iron out their difficulties. Here is a striking instance where the representatives of employers and employees should get together and, by combined consideration, do what is best in the interests of those concerned.

The Minister for Transport: Dr. Evatt, as Attorney General, passed somewhat similar legislation through the Federal Parliament in 24 hours.

Hon. G. FRASER: That does not make the position any better! At any rate, that was the concern of Dr. Evatt.

The Minister for Transport: It should be a guide.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not responsible for any action that may have been taken by Dr. Evatt in the Commonwealth Parliament. For my part, I like to know something about measures of which I am asked to approve. I do not take any notice of what Dr. Evatt or anyone else did in some other sphere. I have to satisfy my own mind, and I want other members to be in a similar position. I do not want to take a lead from someone else, and so I want the Minister to inform the House just what his intentions are. I am hoping that when we get the Bill before us, he will adopt the policy of giving members ample opportunity to consider the Bill in a satisfactory manner. A day or two will not make all that difference. I trust he will allow the adjournment of the debate after he has moved the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. H. Hearn: But you said he had already moved it!

Hon. G. FRASER: It appears that the Minister is to have two bites of the cherry, whereas we are to have only one. However, I trust he will agree to the adjournment of the debate after he has moved the second reading of the Bill, at least until the following sitting so that members will have an opportunity to examine the legislation as it reaches them.

The Minister for Transport: Consideration will be given to that point.

Hon. G. FRASER: I trust not only consideration but acquiescence. If the Minister adopts the policy of attempting to rush the Bill through too quickly, we may later on find the same situation arising as applied to other legislation passed under similar circumstances, members not having been given an adequate opportunity to consider the measures.

HON. R. J. BOYLEN (South-East) [5.4]: I support the attitude adopted by Mr. Fraser. I cannot accept the Minister's suggestion that we are conversant with the contents of the Bill to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act. It is presumption on his part to make such a statement, because by the time the Bill reaches this Chamber it will doubtless have been amended. In those circumstances, we should not be too hurried in our consideration of the measure but should have a proper opportunity to study its contents. If that opportunity is not afforded us, the legislation might be passed and become an Act in a state similar to other measures that have proved unsatisfactory. In this instance, we know that when similar legislation dealing with industrial matters was submitted by another Government and when the people had an opportunity to challenge the Government's attitude, the Bill did not find

a place in the statute book. As I said, it was presumption on the part of the Minister to say that we understood the contents of the measure. We should be given a reasonable opportunity to study the Bill.

HON. C. W. D. BARKER (North) [5.5]: I cannot help but agree with previous speakers. The Bill in its present state consists of 36 pages and embodies 31 clauses. No member can be expected to be acquainted with the provisions of such a measure in five minutes, or even in a day. Ample time should be available to enable members to study the Bill and to give it true democratic consideration. I would like it understood that I personally am in favour of the Arbitration Court.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Good.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: But I cannot agree that the Bill has been submitted with the intention of ending the current strike. There was nothing embodied in the Bill to that end and, until some of my colleagues in another place pointed out that it could not possibly affect the position regarding the current dispute it was not clear that the measure was put forward for another purpose, namely, to suppress the working class.

Hon. H. Hearn: On a point of order! I would like to ask, Mr. President, if the Bill is before the House?

The PRESIDENT: That is a point I was about to take up with the speaker. The hon. member cannot discuss the Bill but only the motion for the suspension of Standing Orders. He can refer to the Bill only in passing.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: My intention was to point out the reason why the Bill has been submitted. However, I will waive that intention, and merely emphasise that I desire to have reasonable time to enable me to study and discuss the measure before it is passed by this Chamber.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [5.7]: The measure referred to by the Minister is of sufficient importance to warrant our requesting that ample time be given for its consideration. Recently I have received a number of complaints about the Licensing Act Amendment Act which was passed last session, and also about the rent legislation. Those measures were passed towards the end of last session, when we had ample time to consider them, yet I am informed that each of them contains a number of imperfections.

The Bill now in question is of vital importance, and I am sure other voices than ours will be raised in proffering a request to the Minister to provide ample time for consideration of the measure so that what is right may be done to the

best of our ability. I am grateful to the Minister for the indication he has already given us in that respect. In the past he has always met our requests as far as he could, and I am confident that on this occasion he will do so again. The point I make is that the measure is of such transcendent importance that it becomes an obligation on all members of the House to study its provisions and apply all their intelligence and ability to its consideration in order that right may be done. We cannot do that unless we are given adequate time to deal with the Bill.

I presume that the measure, which is before another place, will be amended and, in the light of that fact, we will require proper time to enable us to consider the Bill in its altered form. I do not think the position is so vitally urgent that a day or two will make very much difference. In the past, we have had weeks and months for the consideration of measures before they were passed, and in this instance another few days should be neither here nor there. Certainly, it should be worth while giving members an opportunity adequately to apply themselves to the projected legislation.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [5.11]: I associate myself with the remarks of the previous speakers. I believe the legislation that is to be submitted to this House later on is of great importance and will affect the interests of a great majority of the people of this State. In past years, towards the end of a session legislation has been rushed through and members were not given the requisite opportunity to give proper consideration to measures that materially concerned many of our people.

As regards the Bill to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act, which is before another place, I have not seen it, but I believe the measure represents a great departure from ordinary legislation introduced for the purpose of dealing with the industrial laws of the State. Therefore I join with my colleagues in asking the Leader of the House to afford members ample opportunity to study the Bill after he has made his second reading speech. Frequently when the second reading of a Bill has been moved and members are asked to debate it, they have not a proper appreciation of what is embodied in the clauses that may require amendment and therefore cannot give a proper expression of their points of view regarding the legislation. I appeal to the Minister to give members adequate opportunity to discuss the Bill.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East) [5.13]: I desire to add my support to the requests of previous speakers that adequate time be given for the consideration of the projected legislation. We have the spectacle of what happens when Bills are not

adequately considered and frequently towards the end of a session Bills are rushed through in one day, with the result that they have to be amended in the following sessions, so that mistakes can be rectified. That applied to the rent Bill.

From time to time provisions are passed in legislation only because proper consideration was not given to the Bill. In this instance the Bill that is to be submitted is very important and members should give it their fullest consideration. The legislation will strike at the very roots of the trade union movement and, as a member of a party that is part and parcel of the industrial and political Labour movement, I urge that the Minister agree to the request put to him, particularly as, if what I have been told is correct, it has not been brought forward because of the present industrial trouble. So I raise my voice in protest against this or any other Bill going through Parliament in one day.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland—in reply) [5.15]: I have listened to the speeches that have been made requesting time to study the Bill. I judge from some of the remarks that have been passed that members are already familiar with the main features of the measure, and I assure them that it is not as has been stated, a threat to the Labour movement but, rather, is it designed to protect the Labour movement against the influences which are creeping in and of which the men are becoming victims. It is to protect the rank and file from those who are getting them into trouble.

In the area where I live, many of the men who are most concerned, reside, and they are anxious that the principles incorporated in the Bill should be carried into effect as quickly as possible. I explained that one reason why the session was a bit late commencing was because we had hoped, right up to the last moment, that the strike would be settled, and then this necessary legislation could have been proceeded with and considered at our leisure. I do not think anyone will deny that the state of affairs which has developed renders it imperative that we should give the Bill our urgent attention.

I promise members that when the second reading speech has been made they will get an adjournment, but not for too long, in order to study the provisions of the Bill. I agree that the measure might possibly be amended in another place so that no one, not even ourselves, knows exactly what it will contain until it comes here. But in view of the statement made by the Leader of the Opposition, that he was agreeably surprised at the Bill being milder than he expected—

Hon. G. Fraser: He did not say "milder." He said it was better in some parts but worse in others.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Like the curate's egg.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: My reading of his speech was that he was agreeably surprised to find it was so mild. He has placed only four amendments on the notice paper, which shows he does not anticipate much change will be necessary.

Hon. G. Fraser: You do not know what is coming yet with regard to amendments. Have a look at tomorrow's notice paper.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I say again that it is very necessary to give the Bill urgent consideration so that we will then have the powers which the Arbitration Court must possess if it is going to deal effectively with the present state of affairs.

Hon. G. Fraser: A couple of days will not make that much difference.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: In view of the assurance I have given, that members will have at least from one sitting to the next in which to study the Bill, I now submit the motion.

Question put and passed.

BILL—STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION ACT AMENDMENT.

Standing Orders Suspension.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [5.20]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the State Electricity Commission Act Amendment Bill to pass through all its stages at any one sitting, and the aforesaid Bill to be dealt with before the Address-in-reply is adopted.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.21]: I am sorry the Minister was silent when moving this motion. He was vocal on the other. I am aware of the principle behind this, but I do not know that there is any great urgency. I would have liked the Minister to state some reasons for the necessity to suspend Standing Orders. This is something we have been wanting to get for years, but why rush it through at this stage? Is there any particular reason for it?

The Minister for Transport: Yes.

Hon. G. FRASER: I would like the Minister to let the House know those reasons so that we can judge whether or not Standing Orders should be suspended. If there is some particular reason for dealing with it now, instead of in a month's time, the House should be told.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [5.22]: I support the motion. I think the reasons why the Bill is so urgent are quite obvious to people who know the trend of modern events. We see it day by day with other

governmental, and semi-governmental institutions that are calling for loans. I understand the underlying principle of the Bill is to enable money to be raised so that the State Electricity Commission can continue to proceed to do the work on which it has embarked. Every day is a day when we consider the present tendency of the money market. Therefore I can quite understand the Government's anxiety to get the legislation in the statute book so that it can endeavour to raise the money so necessary in order to keep the Commission's programme of work going ahead; and also to assist the Labour movement generally, by continuing to employ workers.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland—in reply) [5.23]: Mr. Fraser's question has been partly covered by Mr. Hearn's remarks, but I might explain that there is urgent necessity to have money available in order to meet certain commitments that we have to face. Normally they would be met as part of our loan programme, but, as members know, that has been cut very severely.

There is no authority in the State Electricity Commission Act giving the Commission power to borrow money on the open market and in order to provide that right, another small amending Bill is necessary. In connection with the "A" class station, certain payments are still due. I might explain that when material for a station is ordered, or work done at the station, the commitments are met to the extent of 80 per cent. when the material is shipped, another 10 per cent. when the actual plant is taken over and the remaining 10 per cent. when the period of maintenance has finished.

We have arrived at the end of the maintenance period, and the remaining 10 per cent. is due on that count. Then, as members know, we duplicated the plant because of the prospective increase in demand for power: and that machinery was ordered two or three years ago. It is now on the way, and some is arriving. The 80 per cent. on that commitment is now due, and when construction commences, 80 per cent. of the cost will become immediately due.

In addition, there is the need to provide for certain work at the East Perth power station and connections with consumers being linked up, together with certain work on the South-West power scheme. We have been assured that the prospects of raising the money in the immediate future are favourable, and it is because of that and in order to allow work to proceed to relieve the problem of unemployment that the urgent presentation of the Bill becomes necessary.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day.

Debate resumed from the 5th August.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [5.25]: It was not my intention to speak on the Address-in-reply debate this week, but there are a few matters I would like to put before the Government, although some of the information I have at the moment is not as complete as I would like it to be.

A subject I wish to put before the Minister for Agriculture is one which has been brought to my notice, and that of members, during the past 12 months to two years—it is the question of assistance for clearing not only virgin land, but partly developed land throughout the State. A scheme has been started recently for assisting the owners of substandard dairy farms, but no effort has yet been made to render assistance to primary producers in other places such as in the wheat areas and the semi-urban areas in the hills.

Even though the prices for wheat and wool have been good in the past few years, some people have taken up new land, and they have not a great deal of finance. They should be assisted in connection with clearing—particularly in the lighter country where a bulldozer could be used. I assure members that there are large areas which would grow good crops of wheat and thus increase our production, if those who are holding them could obtain assistance.

I did submit to the Minister some months back a letter from one district where there were at least 7,000 acres to be cleared by bulldozer if the settlers could get some assistance. Unfortunately, no plans have been made in this direction. Also, in the hills adjacent to Perth—within 40 miles—much country could be used for dairying, fruitgrowing and other types of primary production, but we find that the people on the properties there have not a great deal of money.

The majority have small holdings, and quite a few work in the metropolitan area in different Government jobs in order to get sufficient money to carry on. They cannot, at the present stage of their undeveloped properties, eke out a living from them; but with assistance, those holdings could become a large source of food supply not only for the metropolis, but also for export. I submit this matter to the Government for its grave consideration. I know it is not the time to branch out on lavish schemes, but I do hope it can do something in this way to assist in food production.

As members are well aware, the world is crying out for food. The Prime Minister is asking for it, and Cabinet members, not only in the Federal but the State Houses too, are asking for it, and I feel that something should be done. Another matter I wish to speak on is the cost of our comprehensive water schemes—particularly the one going through from Wellington dam to the Great Southern areas at the present time. Unfortunately, through lack of steel, it is not going ahead very quickly.

Hon. A. L. Loton: It is not going ahead at all.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am glad to hear the hon. member say that. Mainly through the lack of steel, and possibly through want of a certain amount of finance, this scheme is not progressing. Some 20 years ago we had installed in our Goldfields water supply system some 50 miles of wooden piping.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The piping is still good.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: As the hon. member who represents the district says, the piping is still good. I have discussed this matter with quite a few of the persons who have been employed on the maintenance of the line, and I am assured by all of them that the work necessary to maintain the wooden pipe is not as expensive as that required to maintain the steel pipe. This is a big feature when considering such services as our water supplies and so on. My point is that we have the timber within the State to construct these wooden pipes and probably only a small quantity of steel, for the banding, would have to be imported. Naturally, like all pipelines, this type of construction would need a bitumen coating, but I earnestly ask the Government to give the matter further consideration.

Works have been established at Wundowie to produce a certain quantity of steel for use in our local foundries and we have even set up a large timber mill at that centre. This mill not only supplies timber for the charcoal iron works, but also cuts it for sale. Even if the mills already established cannot produce sufficient timber to cope with the quantity required for wooden pipes, it would not be beyond the bounds of possibility to set up new mills which could cut all the karri required for this work. I had hoped to get some further information on this subject in order to give members a complete picture of my ideas, but this question could be given a good deal of consideration by the Government, not only from the angle of conserving the use of imported materials, but also from the point of view of economy.

We must realise that we have to economise in the future and if we have in this State material that can be used, why not use it instead of importing other materials? I do not know what pressure these wooden pipes will stand, but I have been informed that it is fairly considerable and consequently they could be used in large sections of the Great Southern scheme. If I can do anything to help further a scheme of this nature, I will be only too happy to oblige.

Hon. G. Bennetts: They have withstood a pressure equal to that taken by steel pipes on the Goldfields main.

The Minister for Agriculture: Not in the low places. The hon. member has never seen them in low places.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I have seen them there.

The Minister for Agriculture: They are all on the high spots.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Even if they will not stand a pressure equal to that taken by steel pipes, they could still be used in all the low pressure areas on the Great Southern and other water supply schemes. The idea of using wooden pipes was first introduced in 1932 and I understand they are used a good deal in South Africa—that is where the idea came from. These pipes were used in Western Australia, but considerable opposition came from the water supply engineers. I do not know whether that is the reason why they have not been more widely used, but the Government could give further consideration to the question in an endeavour to see if there is anything in the idea.

There is only one other small matter I wish to discuss and this concerns the Cattle Trespass Act. I think the last principal amendments to the Act were passed in 1928. Upon looking at the schedule we find that some of the penalties are inadequate. I cannot quote the actual figures because I have not the Act in front of me, but let us take the case of horses. If horses are impounded it costs a good deal more to feed them, advertise the fact that they are impounded, and carry out all the requirements laid down in the Act than it did in 1928.

Consequently road boards throughout the State find themselves out of pocket if they pay a poundkeeper to impound horses—that is the ordinary type of hack or farm horse, which has a low value on the present-day market. It is time the Government gave consideration to amending the Act, particularly with regard to the penalties prescribed in the schedule, because road boards and other local authorities cannot recover the cost of advertising and of feeding impounded animals.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It costs 28s. for a bag of chaff in Kalgoorlie.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It costs 23s. in Beverley.

The Minister for Agriculture: You cannot force an owner to take his horse out of the pound if he does not want to pay the costs.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: If the name of the owner is known, certain penalties are provided under the Act, and that is my reason for wanting to amend it. If we increase the penalties, the local authorities will get full remuneration for all costs involved, instead of being forced to work at a loss. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.37 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 12th August, 1952.

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