

sengers of private services are paying. Those figures indicate that persons fortunate enough to be catered for by Government transport obtain a better service in proportion to cost than do those who are catered for by the private transport. That is something to which I feel they are entitled. If there is any overlapping of bus routes, it is the duty of some co-ordinating body to eliminate it, for the benefit not of the operators but of the passengers. I would like to impress on the Committee the necessity for co-ordinating traffic routes under the services which give benefit to the people carried; that is, the Government services. It is a duty we owe to those we represent to see that they get the best possible service at the cheapest price. There is no doubt that the report indicates where it comes from. The report also indicates in the same manner that Government enterprise, even under a Government that does not believe in it, can produce a reasonably good service for the people. It is probable that in the near future, under a Government that does believe in State enterprise, we will do something better.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.52 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 12th November, 1952.

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

QUESTIONS.

NORTH-WEST.

(a) *As to Water Supply, Denham.*

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Transport:

Will he state what action, if any, the Government proposes to take to provide a water supply for the residents and industry at Denham, Shark Bay, where recently another shortage was experienced owing to the failure of local wells?

The MINISTER replied:

The possibility of providing a potable water supply for Shark Bay has received consideration. There is no prospect of providing a water supply within reasonable financial limits and, in fact, there is considerable technical difficulty in providing a water supply at all. The matter is still under consideration by departmental officers.

(b) *As to Slipway, Denham.*

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Transport:

What stage have arrangements reached regarding the promised slipway for fishing boats at Denham?

The MINISTER replied:

No promise has been made that a slipway would be provided. The proposal has been investigated and details, together with estimates, are under examination.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Education Act Amendment.

Returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

2. Plant Diseases (Registration Fees) Act Amendment.
Transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—PRICES CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [4.36]:
I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [4.37]: I cannot let the opportunity pass without drawing the attention of the Minister to the debate that took place on this measure, more particularly from the point of view of a Bill being introduced with several features mixed up in it. I hope the Government will take notice of what was said in that regard and that in future the question of putting two or three items in one Bill will be avoided. I am referring to Bills of a continuing nature, and I hope that henceforth only the continuing clause will be included in them so that fair and reasonable debate can take place on that particular phase only.

We have had two other items included in the Bill now before the House, and whilst I am not going to recapitulate the views expressed during the course of the debate, nevertheless it seems to me that the Government has resorted to what might be termed a very shrewd move to get these proposals accepted. We do not like shrewd moves in Parliament; we like things to be straightforward. I know that action could have been taken regarding one of the items and I have heard expressions of surprise that I did not adopt that course to delete portion of the Bill.

I want to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that it is quite possible that we would have been successful in deleting that provision from the Bill. If we had, then the Government would have run a serious risk of losing the Bill when it went to a conference of managers. It is a dangerous precedent to follow and one which might lead the Government into serious trouble in future. I also want to remark to the Minister that had it not been for the support of the people of my own political kidney, the Government would have been in serious difficulties.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Even though it was a complete loop-the-loop.

Hon. G. FRASER: I was the only one that looped-the-loop, and I was happy to do so. I admit that my action was similar to that of a clown in a circus, but then the clown gives a certain amount of enjoyment and serves his purpose, whereas had I adopted the donkey attitude of some members, it would have served no useful purpose at all. However, I wish to impress upon the Minister the need for informing his colleagues in another place, who were responsible for the drafting of the Bill, that this is a dangerous precedent which I hope will not be followed in future. If we are to have a continuance Bill, let it be such and then we can discuss the merits of continuing the particular piece of legislation, but the passage of such a measure should not be jeopardised by including in it what I might describe as foreign matters.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. C. H. Simpson-Midland—in reply)
[4.41]: I shall bear in mind what the hon. member has said and convey his remarks to the proper authority. Had the positions been reversed and had I been in that of the hon. member, I would probably have spoken in the same strain.

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

| | | |
|--------------|------|----|
| Ayes | | 11 |
| Noes | | 9 |
| Majority for | | 2 |

Ayes.

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Hon. C. W. D. Barker | Hon. F. R. H. Lavery |
| Hon. E. M. Davies | Hon. C. H. Simpson |
| Hon. G. Fraser | Hon. H. C. Strickland |
| Hon. Sir Frank Gibson | Hon. F. R. Welsh |
| Hon. W. R. Hall | Hon. H. S. W. Parker |
| Hon. E. M. Heenan | (Teller.) |

Noes.

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Hon. N. E. Baxter | Hon. A. L. Loton |
| Hon. J. A. Dimmitt | Hon. J. Murray |
| Hon. H. Bearn | Hon. H. L. Roche |
| Hon. A. R. Jones | Hon. H. K. Watson |
| Hon. L. A. Logan | (Teller.) |

Paired.

Ayes.

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Hon. Sir Chas. Latham | Hon. L. C. Diver |
| Hon. C. H. Henning | Hon. J. McI. Thomson |
| Hon. L. Craig | Hon. J. Cunningham |

Noes.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Minister for Transport in charge of the Bill.

Clause 18—Section 16 amended (partly considered):

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Progress was reported last evening in order that I might obtain an opinion on the question of penalties as provided in subparagraph (iv). As was pointed out, this provision simply gives power to make regulations, but does not state what form the regulations might take. The opinion supplied to me reads—

The Nurses Registration Board considers that some purpose would be served if a daily penalty was prescribed for offences against the regulations as this is always a severe deterrent against breaches. The class of offence against which it would apply is limited.

The intention is to cover offences committed by pseudo nurses masquerading as trained nurses. This is the only note that has been given to me and I hope members will be satisfied with it. The board would exercise discretion in making the necessary regulations, which could be challenged in Parliament and which, in any event, would be administered discreetly.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I am not at all happy about the continuing penalty. I believe that if anyone masqueraded as a trained nurse, she would not be charged under this Act, but would be proceeded against under another code. For an ordinary breach of the regulations, a fine of £20 plus a continuing fine would represent a very substantial penalty for a nurse. I suggest that the reference to a continuing penalty be deleted.

Hon. G. FRASER: I think the penalty of £20 for these breaches is much too heavy. The Minister when he spoke just now did not give us any indication of what the offences are.

The Minister for Transport: I was not satisfied myself, but I did not have time to get anything more.

Hon. G. FRASER: I would like to make the penalty £5, but being in the dark I shall allow some latitude. I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of subparagraph (iv) the word "twenty" be struck out and the word "ten" inserted in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: If the amendment is agreed to and no further alteration is made, there will be a £10 penalty for the first breach and £20 subsequently.

Hon. G. Fraser: We will look after that later.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: This provision does not deal only with the contents of the Bill, but all the regulations. The regulation could provide a penalty of £1, but not more than £20.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I move an amendment—

That in lines 3 to 8 of subparagraph (iv) the following words be struck out:—

or in the case of a continuing breach, a sum not exceeding twenty pounds and an additional sum not exceeding one pound for each day the breach continues after the board serves notice of the breach on the offender.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland—in reply) [4.56]: I was pleased with the generally favourable reception accorded the Bill in the House. Certain members, however, appear to have fallen into error in interpreting its provisions, and I take this opportunity to correct their misconceptions. Mr. Bennetts, in announcing his intention of voting against the Bill, submitted his opinion that it would tend to slow traffic on main highways, and that it was not required either for the city or for Goldfields areas. I would like to relieve the hon. member's fears.

There is no intention of converting present highways into controlled-access roads as the cost would probably be prohibitive and an excessive readjustment of normal routine would be necessary. These will be roads of the future, mainly traversing uninhabited areas and connecting one built-up area with another. So far as possible, present roads will not be used at all. One of the virtues of the scheme is that they will not run through built-up or cultivated areas. Therefore they will not disturb landowners or remove from them amenities they have been enjoying. The cost of compensation or resumption therefore would be very small.

The roads will be used principally by industrial and business traffic and, to an extent, by social traffic. Mr. Henning, while supporting the measure, wondered whether it might not be preferable to promulgate a regulation creating a road as a "controlled-access road" rather than by proclamation, as provided in the Bill. The principal reason why this latter procedure was adopted was to ensure administrative conformity with the parent Act under which a main road, or a developmental road, has to be proclaimed as such. It would be inadvisable for one type of road to be specified by regulation under the Act and other types to be proclaimed.

It was postulated during the debate that the greater all-round speed of vehicles using controlled-access roads would conduce towards more accidents. This is most unlikely. Information from overseas shows that accidents are greatly reduced on controlled-access highways, as most of the hindrances responsible for accidents are not present. It is not likely that the carrier of goods or the private motorist would be inconvenienced or caused to take circuitous routes as the limited access system was developed. Local-access roads would be provided as necessary, and these would be connected up as required with an adequate system of service roads, which might run parallel to the controlled-access road and join the local-access road, thereby obtaining access to the controlled-access road.

While admitting and even extolling the virtues of the system, Dr. Hislop was not satisfied with the compensation provisions of the Bill. I would inform the House that these were prepared very carefully and after considerable discussions between the draftsman and the appropriate authorities. The hon. member considered that the Government would have to pay a fabulous sum in compensation as the city grew, to persons who would apply for compensation on the ground that they were deprived of access to the main road. The Government does not agree with Dr. Hislop in this regard.

The scheme will be such that it is expected that the compensation paid will be comparatively small. For example, con-

trolled-access roads, as I have already indicated, will be laid through what might be described as virgin territory, areas where there have not been roads before. Therefore no persons owning land in such areas will be deprived of road access, as this will be an amenity they have not enjoyed previously. Dr. Hislop was also wrong in postulating that many landowners in the area of the road would seek compensation. The Bill lays down that the only persons who will have any right of compensation will be those who own properties that abut on existing roads which are converted into controlled-access roads, and who would lose the right of access to the road that they have enjoyed previously.

This is important for, as I have already said, it is not contemplated that existing roads will be used to any extent in the formation of controlled-access roads. Therefore the proportion of people entitled to compensation will be comparatively few. They will be confined to those who already have a right of access to a road which is converted into a controlled-access road, and their properties must adjoin or abut on that road. Dr. Hislop has suggested that the compensation provisions of the Bill be withdrawn until they have received the consideration of the new Town Planning Commissioner.

This suggestion made by the hon. member was based on the assumption that the Government would pay large sums in compensation, while landowners in the vicinity, the value of whose properties have been enhanced by the construction of the roads, would reap the benefit of the increased values by no effort of their own. It would not be practicable to adopt Dr. Hislop's suggestion. In view of the industrial growth in the State, it is considered advisable to take the preliminary steps without delay to create controlled-access roads, and the compensation provisions are an integral part of the measure.

As I have said, the Government does not envisage the payment of substantial compensation sums and as no building frontages will be allowed on the controlled-access roads, and there will be only a limited number of local-access roads, it is not considered that the values of properties will undergo any great increase. The Government's legal advisers consider it essential at present that the compensation clauses stand as drafted, without any betterment provisions. If future conditions alter circumstances, the provisions can be suitably amended.

I would also refer the House to paragraph (j) on page 6 of the Bill. The portion embodied in lines 20 to 39 provides that if any benefit accrues to an applicant for compensation as a result of the proclamation of a controlled-access or a local-access road, then the estimated value of the benefit

shall be taken into account by the court when it assesses the amount of compensation to be paid. The paragraph goes on to specify that details of the benefit shall be included in the court's award, when made.

I was pleased to hear Mr. Watson's comments on the deplorable, if not disastrous situation which has occurred in Great Britain owing to the developmental or betterment provisions of the British Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. I, too, was recently advised that it would appear that the British Government will endeavour to repeal these betterment provisions owing to the complete impracticability which experience has shown they possess. My advice is that it would be most inadvisable to include betterment changes in the Bill.

Is it not a fact that wherever a road is built or development occurs, the value of properties are enhanced? Should the owners of these properties be required to pay betterment, and if so on what basis would such charges be assessed? The advice I am given, and it appears sound, is that we should heed the example of Great Britain and avoid betterment charges. Mr. Lavery laboured under similar misapprehensions to those of Mr. Bennett. He, too, feared that controlled-access roads would be of negligible value in the city area, and I trust I have cleared his mind in that regard. The hon. member submitted seven questions which he asked me to answer.

The first query was—"Are the members of this House to be told where these or any of the suggested access roads are to be designated?" In answering Mr. Lavery, I would say that no definite plans have yet been made in regard to the routes of the proposed roads. It is probable that the first road will serve the projected new industrial areas. Immediately a definite decision is made, the information will be released. The object of the Bill is to authorise the commencement of arrangements to put the controlled-access roads scheme into operation. Included in the early work that will be necessary will be the selection of suitable routes and the resumptions that are necessary for the construction of the roads. If this is done at an early stage, the cost of resumption will be small.

The second and third questions asked whether the new roads would be controlled and if so whether by manual or mechanical means, such as lights or automatic devices. This again is another matter on which no definite conclusion has been reached. Whatever control is instituted will be dictated by the circumstances associated with each road junction. For instance, land contours or some other reason may perhaps almost eliminate the need for local-access roads for a consider-

able distance. It might be preferable to have mechanical devices at some junctions and traffic circles at others. It will depend on the circumstances peculiar to the area. At present we have controlled-access on gazetted major roads by traffic being required to stop before entering from side streets.

The next three questions put to me by Mr. Lavery sought information as to whether the Royal Automobile Club, the Traffic Department and the Traffic Advisory Committee had been consulted with regard to the Bill. The Royal Automobile Club and the Traffic Department were not consulted prior to the Bill being submitted to Parliament. Actually, there is no obligation on the Commissioner of Main Roads to consult either of these bodies when he proposes to construct roads under the provisions of the parent Act. These are purely matters concerning the Commissioner and the local authorities through whose areas the roads run. However, the secretary of the Royal Automobile Club, Mr. Mortimer, and the inspector in charge of the Police Traffic Branch are both members of the Traffic Advisory Committee, which, at its last meeting, fully endorsed the proposals in the Bill. Mr. Mortimer was present at this meeting as was Inspector Richardson's deputy, Inspector Huelin. As members may be aware, the Commissioner of Main Roads is chairman of the Traffic Advisory Committee.

During his speech Mr. Fraser stated that he was unable to understand the implications of controlled-access roads and local-access roads. I was under the impression that I had explained this matter as fully as possible when introducing the Bill. Also, the definitions of the terms on page 2 of the Bill, to my mind, give an adequate interpretation of them. I would inform the hon. member briefly that a controlled-access road is one in which side roads or local-access roads enter only at certain specified points, which may be a considerable distance apart. As a result, the traffic on the controlled-access road is not being continuously hindered or slowed by traffic entering from side streets. Also no person is allowed access from a controlled-access road to his property—that is, there are no building or property frontages on the controlled-access road. This also will obviate hindrance to traffic as there will be no vehicles entering or leaving properties on the road, nor will there be parked vehicles, tradesmen's vehicles, etc., along the road.

Certain exemptions to this rule may be made, for instance, amenities such as service stations, tea-rooms, etc. might be permitted at approved points along the road, but these can be so situated as not to delay traffic. Any controlled-access road that will be constructed in this State

will, in the course of its route between built-up areas, traverse what is now unimproved country. As time passes, built-up areas may emerge in the vicinity of these roads. These would be served by a system of roads which would have access to the controlled-access road only through the few local-access roads which join the controlled-access road. I think this is an adequate explanation and trust that it has provided Mr. Fraser with some information.

The hon. member was also concerned as to what, in his own words, was to be done to rectify existing mistakes. In discussion this morning with Mr. Leach, the Deputy Commissioner of Main Roads, I was informed that a great deal of road improvements had been carried out in the past two years. Major works of this nature include the widening of Canning Highway, which is of considerable importance, the widening of the Great Eastern Highway and the Albany Highway, as far as Nicholson-road. In addition, the new Causeway has created a great improvement for traffic travelling east of the city.

I hope the information I have given will satisfy members. If further details are required, I will endeavour to supply them during the later stages of the Bill. If the measure receives the sanction of the House, as I hope it will, the new roads will be proclaimed as and when necessary. Unless comparatively unforeseen circumstances occur, such as some sudden industrial development, any proclamation will be made on a long-range basis, that is, it will give due and ample warning to all interested parties.

One important reason for introducing the Bill now is the fact that it will assist in keeping low the cost of constructing these roads. It is a vital principle of town planning that the future must be planned for, and with the undoubted developments that will take place in this State, it is essential that plans be laid for a suitable system of roadways, for roads are the skeleton on which town planning schemes are built. To carry out this project, adequate reservations must be made as soon as possible in virgin areas so that the traffic needs of the future may be catered for. It would not be practicable, owing to the heavy cost, to convert our existing arteries, such as the Canning, Albany and Great Eastern Highways, to controlled-access roads.

The principle behind the Bill is to plan for the future and at the same time to take what steps are possible to obviate the ribbon development which has caused so many town-planning and traffic problems in the United States of America and in the United Kingdom. It is not expected that those engaged in the cartage of goods or private motorists will be inconvenienced or caused to take circuitous routes as the controlled-access system is developed. Local-access roads

will be provided where necessary and these will be connected as required with an adequate system of service roads.

In compliance with requests from members, I secured a drawing from the Department of Main Roads. It is a sketch of a present highway system and a proposed highway system, as designed under this scheme, for controlled-access roads. Members will note that the controlled-access road takes a line right through, and local-access roads come in at various points. For instance, they would mostly come in T-shaped and there would be no cross-roads. In that case, motorists need fear only the risk of traffic entering from one direction at a designated point. This sketch shows one road coming in from one direction and one from another. At another point, where there is a cross-road, a circus is provided, so that would be an added safeguard against possible accidents by reason of vehicles attempting to go straight through. As I assume that consideration of the Bill in Committee will be taken in various stages, members will have an opportunity of viewing this plan and reading the explanations given.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [5.15] in moving the second reading said: Owing to the restriction upon loan moneys, the Government is unable to make funds available during this financial year for building purposes at the University. In view of this, the Government is therefore agreeable to a proposition which has been submitted by the Senate of the University, namely, that the University obtain a bank overdraft, using its investments and trust funds as security, and by this means finance the construction of those buildings which are most vitally required.

In the normal course of events, building at the University is financed from loan funds, but owing to the present financial problems, no programme of this nature can be approved this year. This has caused considerable concern to the University Senate, as it has already submitted to the Treasurer a building programme which it considers represents only its urgent requirements. The Senate has stated that unless the most necessary of these buildings are commenced without delay, the University will not be able to function with the efficiency which is required of it.

The proposal that I have already referred to was then submitted by the Senate. It is that the construction of the most necessary of the buildings could be financed from a loan obtained by the

University on the security of its investments and trust funds, provided that the Government would guarantee to meet the annual interest on the loan, and to repay the loan itself within a specified period. I might say that this suggestion has two precedents. In 1931, when, as members will recollect, money was painfully scarce, legislation was passed enabling the University to obtain a loan to build the physics and chemistry buildings, the Government agreeing to meet the interest bill and to repay the principal over a period of years. Again, in 1938, a similar course was adopted in order that the Faculty of Agriculture's buildings could be erected. The sums of £6,215 and £630 have been included in the Estimates for this year to cover the Government's liabilities in regard to those two Acts.

Since the Government agreed to the present proposal, it has been thoroughly discussed by the Treasury and a subcommittee of the Senate, and their decisions are the contents of this Bill. The measure provides that the University may raise a maximum sum of £100,000 by borrowing on the security of its trust funds and investments, or by the sale of all or some of its investments, or by a combination of these means. What the University proposes, if this Bill is passed, is to obtain the money by means of a bank overdraft. No building financed by these methods may be commenced without the approval of the Treasurer who will agree only to projects that he would have approved had loan funds been normally available for their construction.

The Government will pay the interest due on the amount borrowed, and the rate of interest to be paid will be reviewed every 15 years. For the first 15 years the interest rate will be similar to that fixed for the first long-term public loan floated by the Commonwealth after July of this year. Periods of 15 years to review the interest rate have been chosen as most of the University's trust investments are in Commonwealth bonds or loans which usually have a term of 15 years. It is not considered that it would be equitable to fix an interest rate to cover the maximum period of 50 years over which the Government may repay the loan.

As I have indicated, most of the University's investments are in Commonwealth bonds and loans. As these mature the University intends to apply the proceeds to the reduction of the overdraft. The Government's annual repayments will also be devoted to this purpose and it is estimated that the overdraft will be liquidated in about five or six years. Once the bank loan is repaid, the Government's annual repayments of principal will then be utilised to rebuild the University's investments. The Bill provides that every three months the Senate will submit certified reports of the progress or completion of

the buildings, and a statement from the Vice-Chancellor detailing the expenditure incurred during the three months. The Government will then pay interest on the quarterly expenditure.

When the buildings are completed, the Government will continue to pay interest every quarter until the total amount spent by the University to the maximum of £100,000 is repaid. This principal may be repaid by annual instalments of 2 per cent., or more, of the total. I trust that the Bill will receive the favourable consideration of the House. Its entire proposals are agreeable to the University and to the Treasury and it will enable the immediate building requirements of the University to be met without any drain on the Government's reduced loan funds. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Heenan, debate adjourned.

BILL—MARKETING OF BARLEY ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Suburban) [5.22]: I cannot see any sound reason for prolonging the life of the Barley Board for another three years. Indeed, since Government restriction upon production and price-control of the commodity have been removed, there seems to be very little in future for the Barley Board to undertake. No doubt members will remember that the licensing of growers was discontinued several years ago, and during the passage of this particular legislation in the Legislative Assembly, price-control was removed from barley.

Let us look at the position as we find it today. There is an unfilled market for all barley grown in Western Australia. The oversea market can absorb every grain of six-row barley that the State can produce. As a matter of fact, it can also absorb the two-row barley, but the latter type can be completely used by the maltsters in Western Australia. Thus the grower has nothing at all to fear with regard to the disposal of his crop, and in these circumstances I say again that the Barley Board appears to me to be surplus.

I want to take the minds of members back to the position as it existed pre-war; I mean to the period before marketing control was exercised by the Australian Barley Board. At the time I am speaking of, the maltsters in this State greatly encouraged the growing of barley by farmers and went so far in their encouragement as to provide seed barley to farmers on credit and in turn undertook to pur-

chase the whole of their crops, provided the grain was of good quality and true to type.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Who dictated the price to be paid?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I will come to that phase. Many farmers were quite happy under that plan and during a number of years grew substantial quantities of barley. The maltsters met their obligation to buy anything from 80 to 98 per cent. of the barley grown under this arrangement and the quantity purchased varied according to the quality of the barley. Therefore, I say, let us get back to free markets, to the point where the grower and the buyer have the opportunity to sell and buy on the normal basis of supply and demand.

There is no need for growers to be at all apprehensive with regard to the opportunities to sell and buy. There is no need for them to be concerned at all as regards the absorptive capacity of the markets nor need they be concerned about the price for their product in the grain-hungry world in which we live today. The position is that if the maltsters do not offer a sufficient monetary inducement, then the grower has the opportunity to sell his product on the Liverpool market. On the other hand, if the maltsters—this answers the question put to me by Mr. Jones—do not offer the world parity price for barley available here, they cannot buy it and so would be compelled to purchase their requirements from some other market; thus barley is marketable at a world parity price. An ugly feature of the Bill is the fact that it is based on the principle of compulsory pooling.

While that system may be reasonably satisfactory in handling some types of grain, it is far from satisfactory from the point of view of local maltsters. From the information I have been given it would appear that the malting of barley is a highly technical process and requires a great deal of care as regards the types of barley used. For instance, I understand it is not possible to use more than 10 per cent. of six-row barley to 90 per cent. of two-row barley in making a suitable malt for the local market.

I am also told that there are several different types of the two-row variety of barley. There is one type that has a very high nitrogenous content and it is very important that just the requisite amount of that highly nitrogenous type of barley shall be used in the blend with two or three other types to produce the malt that is acceptable to brewers here. Members can appreciate by that statement that bulk-handling would be entirely unsatisfactory as regards the local maltsters because under bulk-handling every type of barley is put into the common bin and

it would not be possible in the circumstances for local maltsters to accept an f.a.q. supply of barley.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: The Minister said last night that they would not be mixed.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Two-row barley is always kept separate.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: If that is so, there still remain several types of two-row barley which have to be blended in certain proportions, and so the method of grading and bagging is essential and bulk-handling is entirely unsuitable. I suggest that those members who have considered supporting the Bill might take those aspects into consideration and might even vote against it. Let us vote for a discontinuance of these controls in much the same way as some of us voted for a discontinuance of other controls during last night and today. Let us return to what I think most of us agree should be the state of affairs—that is, a free market where the best price is obtained for the best product. I intend to vote against the Bill.

HON. L. C. DIVER (Central) [5.31]: I rise reluctantly to support the Bill, for I do not like compulsion. I do not like it because in the regimentation of any industry efficiency is lost. The compulsion we have in this measure allows one organisation to be a law unto itself; and without competition, that efficiency for which it was created will in course of time disappear, together with the advantages of bulk-handling. I think that on the next occasion a similar Bill comes before the Chamber it will be found that the growers themselves will be seeking amendments.

At present, I can conscientiously say that not one grower has approached me to oppose the Bill. I am sorry to make that statement, because I think that in their own interests growers should have done so and bagged barley should have been allowed to compete with bulk barley. Those disgruntled growers in the industry who want to sell their wares in their own way would serve the purpose of policing the efficiency of bulk-handling.

I cannot understand the opposition of the maltsters. If they are not satisfied to get their requirements here in bulk, they could purchase some of the best malt-ing barley procurable in the Commonwealth from South Australia, where it is produced in the renowned barley-growing districts of Yorke Peninsula. They could obtain their requirements in bags in various quantities. The people there have not bulk-handling facilities and have to buy cornsacks. If a certain amount of bulk barley were bagged in this State, the maltsters would have to pay 5s. for each sack at present.

Consequently, when our bulk barley and the South Australian barley are sold overseas on a competitive market, the South Australian growers are at a disadvantage in having to buy cornsacks. If the Western Australian maltsters bought barley from South Australia, they would, when they emptied the sack, have something to pay the freight in the second-hand value of the sack. On today's market they would obtain from 3s. to 3s. 6d. for the empty sack and that would go a long way towards paying shipping freights. If our barley is not of the quality claimed, the gate is wide open for the maltsters to rectify the position.

Hon. H. K. Watson: That would be a poor lookout for the local barley growers.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: They are quite happy; that is the sorry part of it. I can see the whole picture quite plainly and I realise that the day will come when they will want the local market. But seeing that no opposition is being raised to this legislation at present, how can I, as a growers' representative, oppose it? I am telling the maltsters the way out. If my people are happy with the circumstances, well and good. All I can say is that "Hansard" will have recorded my remarks. I do not want to be in the position of being able to say, "I told you so" later on. Actually I will be sorry, because I can see the whole picture. I intend to support the Bill.

On motion by Hon. H. Hearn, debate adjourned.

BILL—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South) [5.37]: We have lately had considerable publicity given to the position of aborigines and half-castes in this State. Some people, possibly quite sincere, have been responsible for a good deal of irresponsible tripe in connection with the half-caste problem as we have it in the southern part of the State. I know nothing of the conditions in the North, but I do claim to know something of those in the southern areas.

"The West Australian" has indulged in a bit of newspaper stunting, doubtless hoping to be on the side of popular opinion, without conveying in any of its editorials, to those of us who know anything of the position first-hand, that it has much practical knowledge of the problem as we see it. Two years ago in this House, speaking on the Address-in-reply, I referred to this subject and expressed the hope that the Government would take some early action to review the position as it applies to the half-caste problem. I suggested that one of the few means of ap-

proach was on the lines of providing houses for such of these people as it was considered might develop into satisfactory citizens.

This is not only a problem that affects the half-castes, but it is a growing problem that will affect the white people in the areas concerned. I would like members to bear in mind that so much of the gratuitous advice and, in my view, utter rubbish that has been written in recent weeks, has been directed towards the people who have the half-caste population in their midst; and it would seem that many of these sentimentalists and, in some cases, humbugs, can see virtue in certain action and policy that other people will have to carry out. My remarks are not directed towards members who are supporting this legislation, but towards some of the people who are making confusion worse confounded by their ignorance and their efforts at publicising this problem about which they apparently seem to know so little.

They appear to think that the people who live in the country and have this problem at their doorstep, are the ones who should carry the whole responsibility for over-coming it. I would suggest to those people, as I have suggested before, that they could help very considerably if they were prepared to take some of these adolescent children into their own homes and marry some their sons and daughters to them. That would be a big help in dealing with this problem, but I do not expect that we will have a very enthusiastic response to that sort of suggestion. These people who are giving some of us so much lively concern are unfortunately not fitted either by heredity or the environment in which they have developed over the years to accept the responsibilities of citizenship.

When it is considered that before the coming of the white men their forebears lived a nomadic life for thousands of years, that they had no homes as we understand them and no idea of cultivation or of providing for themselves, and when we are told that we took their homes away from them, we realise that that is utter rubbish. They had their miasmas and wurries and when their surroundings became so contaminated that they could remain there no longer, they moved somewhere else. That characteristic still largely identifies many of the half-caste population.

I would say to those people who so vociferously champion the so-called rights of the half-castes, that they cannot have it both ways. If they are entitled to their opinion that these people are fitted to be given such benefits and to carry such responsibilities as the granting of citizenship rights would confer on them, there was no need for the recent outcry when the Government proposed that certain alterations should be made in regard to the admis-

sion of evidence from natives or half-castes who might be questioned or apprehended by the police.

They cannot have it both ways. I believe members of Parliament and others are trying genuinely to find a solution of this problem, but, to my mind, the granting of citizenship rights and the raising of the half-caste population to a standard where we can, with some degree of safety, give them such rights is the ultimate end to be aimed at and not a means to an end. Under this legislation we seem to be treating that objective more as a means to an end and if we do that I feel strongly that we will simply make confusion worse confounded.

I still hold the view that the vast majority of our adolescent and even adult half-castes have at best the mentality of a wayward child, together with an absolute irresponsibility as regards the making of any provision for their own future or the shouldering of the responsibilities of full citizenship. Admittedly they have not been given much chance, but from my own experience and discussions with people who have had far wider experience than I have had, I believe that this is a problem that the Government cannot overcome or even ameliorate to any degree by one piece of legislation.

If we are to achieve anything in this regard it must be done by looking a long way ahead. I feel that it is a three generation job to raise these people in our community to a stage where we and they can all be Australians living together. We must accept the fact that in the intervening period they will have to be under strict supervision and control. My view in that regard may differ from that of others who seem to think that by exercising such controls we are treating these people differently from white people.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Even our own people are controlled.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: When speaking to the debate on the Address-in-reply, I said that I could not see that the granting of citizenship rights to these people would contribute in any way towards a solution of the problem. I said then and now repeat that politics and plonk will do nothing to resolve the problem. To achieve anything we must gradually raise these people to a stage where they can accept citizenship rights with a reasonable chance of being able to live up to them. When they have reached that level, if they cannot then conform to the rules of society, the white man's law must operate. We will get nowhere by simply granting as a blanket provision citizenship rights to all natives. That would be an entirely wrong way to approach the question.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: Do you think not any are qualified?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: On the contrary, many of them have qualified and I do not doubt that others could, but to grant citizenship rights lightly, or even in a generous way, would simply make the position worse. If it were done in a wholesale way, such as would be the case if the Bill were passed in its present form, the whites in certain districts would have to organise to protect themselves against these people who do not know how to use and appreciate the benefits of citizenship. Mr. Craig last night put the position as plainly as it could be when he illustrated the utter lack of responsibility of these people. By their action in opposing as strongly as possible the proposal of the Government to amend the law relating to the admission of evidence, many citizens who do not agree with me have conceded the same point.

We have recently heard of the activities of a man named McLeod in the North and I understand that anything up to 400 natives owe him allegiance or have some sort of understanding that permits of his leadership. I am subject to correction here, as I do not know the North-West or the conditions existing in that area, but it is possible that there are 300 or 400 natives there on whom we could confer the right to vote and who then, on election day, would be taken to the booth and shown how to mark the ballot paper. That would apply wherever there was any considerable number of half-castes and I do not think we should contemplate giving them these rights until they are ready to shoulder the responsibility of citizens.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: They are full-bloods, and the Bill has nothing to do with them.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: To me that seems to be an anomaly that should have been corrected long ago.

The Minister for Transport: It could be adjusted, on application.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: There are odd ones among them that can take their place in the community. I know of one who is a steward at a club and he is just as good a steward as is any white man. We have to give them the chance to show whether they can carry the responsibilities of citizenship and, if they can, have the machinery ready to grant it to them. I believe that belatedly and timidly the Department of Native Affairs is now perhaps proceeding along the right lines. I discussed this matter two years before anyone started stunting with it—I do not refer to Mr. Strickland.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: Before "The West Australian" seized on it.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: If the hon. member is concerned about what "The West Australian" says, he is welcome to be. The department is on the right track with its

idea of providing homes for these people, but the programme will have to be accelerated considerably if reasonable progress is to be made. I understand that two homes are to be built at York and I think 20 homes could safely be built in half a dozen centres south of Perth.

I admit that at one time I believed that if homes were built for these people they should be built in groups, but latterly, as the result of my own observations and discussions with those who know much more of the matter than I do, I have changed my opinion and I now believe it is far better that the homes should be scattered among the homes of white people rather than that they should be built in colonies. We will have to discipline and control the natives and half-castes, and my mind is exercised as to how that is to be achieved.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Through the Health Department.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: If we put them in homes and laid down rules to be observed with regard to hygiene and some degree of citizenship, we would have to insist also on the regular attendance of their children at school, but what could we do if the whole family walked out and went perhaps 50 miles away and stayed there for two or three months, as they would be likely to do? I believe that the only way in which adequate control could be exercised would be through the Department of Native Affairs, which should be given some discretion over the payment of child endowment to them. Many of these families are living on the proceeds of child endowment; nobody in the family is anxious to work.

However, if control could be given to the department or, at least, its recommendations could be accepted by the Department of Social Services, we would take a big step forward in obtaining supervision over the movements and general attitude of these people, which would tend towards a better class half-caste population. I have no great hopes of doing anything more with the adolescent and half-caste native of today with the exception of those few who are qualified and also the few more that will qualify in the near future as good citizens. We would have to concentrate our attention and activities upon the children; and to do that, we must have some control and supervision over their movements.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: What is the policy in regard to intermarriage?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: As far as I am aware, there is no opposition to intermarriage. If anyone wants to marry a half-caste—provided he or she is a reasonably respectable citizen—the Department of Native Affairs will not raise any objection.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: Provided he is qualified.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: What!

Hon. H. C. Strickland: The white has to qualify for permission to marry the native.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I was greatly interested to see in this morning's Press that the Federal executive of the A.L.P. had taken this matter up and among the representations made by it for the amelioration of, and improvement in the welfare of the aborigines of this country, is the advocacy of full citizenship for a native who is self-supporting and educated. I would suggest that all of us are not altogether out of step.

However, I think that possibly the recommendation, or policy, of the Federal executive of the A.L.P. is perhaps asking a little too much when the question of education is brought into it. An educational standard might be set far away in the future but at the moment not a great percentage of these people could attain it. If it were insisted upon, we would thus limit their opportunity of gaining citizenship. If we can get them to the stage where they are to a great degree, self-supporting and can conduct themselves reasonably well and we try to establish them in homes, I would say that the attainment of that objective might still be far away.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Would you not regard the establishment of homes for them as part of their education?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I am speaking of education literally.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: It is compulsory for them in the schools now.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Yes, but I do not know how it can be enforced.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: Well, it is.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: They are subject to the same conditions as are white children.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: But they do not attend. They attend school for one week in one place and then the family moves off and for two or three weeks the children are not being taught. Then when the family settles down in another place, the children attend school again for a short while.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: That is only in the cockyng districts.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I am only referring to those districts I know.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: They are casual workers.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: They would make reasonably good casual workers if they would work, but we have reached the stage where people will only employ them as a last resort. Even as regards shearing, in which work quite a number of them are fairly proficient and at which they can make anything from £5 to £10 a day, they may shear for only a week and then go walkabout for a fortnight.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: They would rather be out of the district altogether.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I would not say that. These people remain in the district which is native to them—

Hon. H. C. Strickland: I thought they were a nuisance.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: —but if we can bring them under a measure of control, they will cease to be a nuisance. I do not think that we can contemplate passing the Bill at present. The one Minister we in Western Australia have in the Commonwealth Government might do a better service to this State, to the half-caste population and to the people in the country that have a half-caste problem, if he devoted some of his endeavour to getting the Commonwealth Government to view this problem as it really is and if he used whatever influence he may have to induce the Commonwealth department responsible for paying child endowment, to co-operate more closely with the State Department of Native Affairs so that greater control could be exercised over the half-castes who received payments of that description in this State.

On motion by Hon. J. Murray, debate adjourned.

BILL—BROKEN HILL PROPRIETARY STEEL INDUSTRY AGREEMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th November.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [6.10]: The Bill has for its purpose the amending of the Constitution Act to extend the franchise of certain people who are called upon to elect their representatives in this Chamber. We have to take into consideration that it is usually the province of the Legislature to improve the franchise. Unfortunately, we have members debating the question from the point of view of how many people record their votes or whether they are old enough to vote or whether they have sufficient property to entitle them to record a vote.

One of the fundamentals warranting the enjoying of the right to vote is citizenship. To have that right, people must live within the boundaries of this State, have accepted the responsibilities associated with citizenship, have endeavoured to recognise the laws of the land and have reared their families as responsible and respectable citizens. It would seem that they are the people to whom we look to express an opinion as to those who should be elected to the legislative halls of this State.

I would say that that is the foundation upon which the British Empire was built and the greatness which it reached was due to the fact that the British Constitution was amended from time to time to improve the method of voting and to make provision for a larger number of responsible people enjoying the privilege of having some say in the Government of their country. So I believe that the British Commonwealth—and I venture to say that we are all proud to be members of it—owes its greatness to the fact that those who were elected from time to time to its legislative halls in the various countries agreed it was necessary that amendments should be made periodically to their respective Constitutions.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Before the tea suspension I was referring to the question of the franchise and pointing out how the greatness of the British Empire as a whole had been built up, largely because the component nations were prepared to review from time to time their Constitutions to make provision for the people generally to have some say in their representation in the legislative halls. The Bill provides for certain improvements in the franchise for this House. The first proposes to reduce the age of a person seeking election to this House from 30 years to 21 years, and personally I do not see that there should be any great objection to that because the law of the land provides that a person attaining the age of 21 reaches adulthood and takes upon himself the responsibilities of adulthood and citizenship.

It appears to me that in these times, when the generation of today have the opportunity of attaining a higher standard of education than perhaps was possible for those of a few generations ago, people have fitted themselves to take up the responsibilities of the government of this country. Even in the other Parliaments of Australia, in both Houses of the Federal Parliament and in the Legislative Assembly of this State, the age of 21 is sufficient for the election of any person to Parliament. I feel that in view of the general standard of educational attainment today, a person of 21 years should be just as eligible to take a seat in the Legislative Council as in the Legislative Assembly.

I do not want to reiterate what has been said previously, but I remember when I was in France during World War I that servicemen who had attained the age of 18 years were permitted to vote, and indeed they were assuming responsibility for the defence of their country. Therefore I fail to see why objection should be raised to anybody of the age of 21 being eligible to be a representative of the people in the Legislative Council of the State.

The other proposal is for the wife or husband of a property-owner to have the opportunity of recording a vote. If the property is in joint ownership, the wife would have the right to vote. If she were lucky enough to own property herself, she would naturally enjoy that privilege. The other proposition is that the wife or husband of the householder should likewise be eligible to exercise the franchise.

My support of the Bill is based on those two principles, because I believe the question of eligibility to record a vote for the election of a representative to the Legislative Council of this State should not be on the basis of what property is owned but, as I previously stated, should be based on citizenship. I believe the very foundation of our nation is built on the home. It is quite useless to have bricks and mortar if there is no one to live in the house so constructed, because its value would be nil. That applies to business, too. If there was no population in a particular area, it would follow that there would be no need for the business. So I feel the proposition that a wife should be eligible for the franchise of this Chamber is sound, because, in my opinion, she is the homemaker and, as I have remarked, the home is the basis on which the nation is built. She shares her husband's prosperity and his pitfalls and is, of course, jointly responsible with him for the conducting of the home and the rearing of the family. I believe that is a sound basis on which the franchise should be allocated.

We now come to the question of plural voting, as it is termed. Under that provision, a person who owns property in each of the ten provinces in the State is permitted to record ten votes, if an election is held in each province. There again it is a matter of placing property before citizenship. As a matter of fact, in England many years ago—I believe it was over 60 years ago—plural voting in connection with local governing bodies was abolished. Here we still have the possibility of plural voting for the election of representatives to the Legislative Council.

What I want to impress upon the House is that, since the granting of Responsible Government, there has been periodically a review of the franchise for those elected to this Chamber. In the days of Colonial Governments, when the first representatives were appointed to this House, it was done on a basis of partly nominees and partly elected representatives. But, in the belief that the ability and the education of the people who would be called upon to represent the people here has improved, so gradually has the franchise been liberalised a little more compared with what it was at the outset. Therefore, if we, as part and parcel of the British Commonwealth, feel that we are able to tell the rest of the world that we believe in the

democratic principle of representation of the people by the people, then it is time the franchise was further liberalised for this Chamber.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: And made compulsory.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I would not have any great objection to that, if the hon. member would agree to it. So far as my knowledge goes in that respect, whether there is provision for compulsory voting or not, there are always some sections of the community not able to record their votes. But at least it can be said that the laws of this country do demand of the people that those who are able and have the necessary intelligence should consider it their duty, as citizens, to record their votes. If I remember correctly, when he was a Minister in this House, Mr. Parker introduced a Bill to liberalise the franchise. The other night I heard him say that the Bill he introduced was to make provision for flat-dwellers to enjoy the franchise. From memory, I believe he introduced a Bill not only to provide for the franchise being extended to flat-dwellers, with which I agree, but also to give the wives of householders the right to vote.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: That is correct.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The hon member, of course, has every right to express his opinions in this House. Though he has apparently changed his mind, that is his prerogative.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I have not changed my mind.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I do not cast any reflection on him in that respect, but I believe the time has arrived when the people generally should take a greater interest in the election of their representatives to the legislative halls of this State. To my mind those whose responsibility it is to manage the home and to rear families are the very basis and foundation on which the Empire was built. We should show other countries that, perhaps unfortunately, decide on some other system of government for their people, that we believe the people themselves should elect their representatives. If we do that, I feel we could say to those countries who desire to govern their people by other methods than those we adopt and with which we do not agree, that the people of this State, which is a portion of the British Commonwealth, believe in the democratic principle of one-man one-vote and the eligibility of every adult, particularly those who are householders, to have some say in the election of their representatives in this Chamber. I support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Hon. H. Hearn, debate adjourned.

MOTION—RAILWAYS.

As to Discontinuance of Wiluna and Laverton Lines.

Debate resumed from the 15th October on the following motion by Hon. E. M. Heenan:—

That this House urges the Government to give the gravest consideration before agreeing to any proposal to pull up the existing railway lines between Meekatharra and Wiluna and between Leonora and Laverton.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS

(Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [7.45]: This motion merely requests the Government to give the gravest consideration before agreeing to any proposal to pull up the existing railway lines between Meekatharra and Wiluna and between Leonora and Laverton. I can not only tell the hon. member that the Government will give the gravest consideration to this matter, but I think I can also indicate that the Government has already done so and will continue to do so.

When I visited the Meekatharra area about the middle of last year, I was approached by the local authorities on this question because they realised that, with the closing down of the goldmines at Wiluna and the obvious falling off of traffic on that line, there was a danger to those who remained of the line being abandoned and possibly pulled up. Many residents travelled quite a long distance to present a case for the retention of the line. They pointed out that Wiluna was unique in the possession of water supplies and a well-laid-out town which was equipped with a reticulated water supply, with well-paved roads in the town itself and good road leads from various parts of the district, and that it had a satisfactory electric light supply. They said that if anything could be done to develop settlement in that area, instead of having to start from scratch as most new areas had to do, there would be a ready-made town available to supply all those amenities that towns generally desire.

I went out to look at the water area and felt that the matter was deserving of examination. Following on my return to Perth, I arranged to send the Government Geologist, Mr. Ellis, to that area to examine its potential for development from a mining point of view. There was a gold and copper show within striking distance of Wiluna that we felt required some further examination. I may mention that the Government Geologist is one of the finest men in the State to report on the water potential of any area. In due course he presented his report, which I passed on to the Department of Agriculture so that the information furnished by him could be examined and that that

department could then report on what use might be made of the water supply in an attempt to develop agriculture. At a later stage, my colleague, the Minister for Agriculture, also paid a visit to the area to see whether something along the lines I have indicated could be done.

Subsequently—and having regard not only to the Meekatharra-Wiluna line but also to the Leonora-Laverton line—I asked the Railway Department to examine the question whether a light diesel traction unit travelling at a moderate speed and with a light load might be a practical proposition for serving those areas where traffic was extremely light. The reason for my action was that lines deteriorate whether there is traffic running over them or not. There is weathering of the sleepers and of the rails, and to keep a line maintained to carry the previous volume of traffic would entail considerable expenditure in the matter of building up the track and replacing sleepers and in some cases rails.

This would also entail the keeping of gangs on the line to maintain them in a condition for carrying heavy traffic. That report is still in process of preparation and has not reached me, but it is something that the Government has in mind as a means perhaps of keeping the lines in being and giving the people breathing space to face the prospect of having to make other transport arrangements or, in the case of mining areas, to see whether the district could be developed from a mining point of view.

In regard to the Laverton line, we did not even begin to examine the matter or proceed along the usual course of investigation and report before coming to a decision. We simply did not tackle the problem at all. We have in mind the possibility—and of this we are very hopeful indeed—of a revision upwards of the price of gold. Now that the American presidential election is over, we have grounds for the belief that the United States Government will consider a revision of the present price of gold. This, to our mind, is the most important consideration to the mining industry today, because if the value of gold can be increased, it would represent the greatest single cause for a revival of interest in the mining industry. It would enable the industry to stand on its feet.

I may mention for the benefit of members who may not know that the price of gold previous to 1942 was about 20 dollars per oz., and President Roosevelt, by the necessary administrative action, raised the price to 35 dollars per oz. There has since been a considerable upward adjustment of prices of almost all other commodities in use in the world and a feeling exists that the time has come—in fact is overdue—for a revision in the price of gold. We in common with other gold-producing countries have lost no opportunity

of adding our quota to the total pressure which is being applied to the United States Government to bring this about. It would mean so much, particularly to the British Commonwealth of Nations. Africa produces over one-half of the total gold output of the world. Australian production in relation to world production is only four per cent. and, of the Australian quota, 70 per cent. is produced in Western Australia. The other States of Australia have always looked to us to take the lead in any measures designed to assist the gold-mining industry.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Would not a reduction of costs amount to the same thing?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is one of the most important matters to which we have given consideration and one of the reasons why we have tried to keep freight rates as low as possible. I think members will appreciate that, under a telescopic system of rating, any adjustment of freight rates is lowest at the end of the very long leads to the city. In any event, the condition of the mining industry was one to which we had to give special consideration in regard to the application of freight rates. We have all along believed that the best help that could be rendered to the industry would be to press with others for what we regard as an equitable adjustment of the price of gold.

I can say, therefore, that we have been just as anxious about the existence of these two lines—as well as other lines—as members have been and have tried to show that our interest has not been academic, but has been accompanied by a good deal of practical effort to improve conditions and help the mining industry generally. We have always taken the view that, in a rapidly-developing State like ours, the time must come when the volume of traffic on the railways would build up considerably, and it is by volume of traffic that the lines can be made to approach a payable point. The more traffic we can get, obviously the greater will be the increase in the earnings of the lines. We recognise that in all railway systems there are certain lines that pay very well and other lines that the good ones have to carry, but here again we take the view that the value of a line is not to be judged merely on its economic assessment as a line; it is to be judged on its economic value to the State as a whole.

When a line is pulled up and dismantled, we believe that there can be only about 15 per cent. of recovery of the value of that line, and if there is a possibility of developments along the route served by the line that might conceivably mean the construction of another railway within a measurable period, the construction of that line might cost 10 or 20 times the original cost of building the first line. That is one of the reasons why we have to

be particularly careful before we take a decisive step to dismantle any line. These considerations apply with respect to mining areas, and I can assure members they also apply to other areas where lines have been laid down.

We believe that, unless we are forced, a policy of dismantling some of our lines would be a policy of defeatism. We are anxious to build up the State by development so that the railway system will, within a measurable space of time, become self-supporting. That is the attitude of the Government towards railway lines generally, and I believe it is an effective answer to the questions raised by Mr. Heenan to which some members have also contributed. The Government certainly will give very grave consideration to the pulling up of these and any other lines.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East—in reply) [7.59]: I thank members who have spoken to the motion and also the Minister for the most satisfactory answer he has just given. My motive in moving the motion was to bring to the attention of members the grave view that is being taken by the people in those areas of the suggestion that these lines should be pulled up. It also gave members an opportunity to discuss the proposition in a general way. Their contributions have been enlightening and helpful. I am quite satisfied with the Minister's reply, and I think the people in the areas concerned will be grateful for it, because as recently as September last the road boards at Wiluna and Laverton were—and they still are—deeply concerned about the rumours that the lines were to be pulled up.

It can easily be imagined that as the tide is running so strongly against people in these areas in many respects, rumours such as these tend to worry them as well as further aggravating the difficult situation that they are in. When moving the motion I pointed out that there was an excellent water supply at Wiluna. On referring to my notes I find that for many years while the mine was operating and supporting a town of about 8,000 people, one and a quarter million gallons of water daily was pumped from the water supply. It seems to me that Nature placed that wonderful asset in Western Australia's most inland town for some reason.

There are a number of stations around Wiluna. In the Wiluna-Meekatharra district there are about 120,000 sheep and 15,000 head of cattle. The world is crying out for food, so I am of the opinion that the people who are exploiting this area, in the pastoral sense, should have all the support that can be afforded them. I also firmly believe that new mines will be found in these parts, but once the population leaves, the possibility of new mines being located is greatly minimised.

I hope the Minister's reply means that for some years, at any rate, these lines will not be pulled up. We realise, of course, that the railways cannot go on throwing money away, but it seems to me the answer might be to use lighter rolling-stock and, perhaps, diesel rail coaches. At all events, I feel it is necessary to maintain the railway services so that they will serve the people in these parts. I agree with the Minister that there is every indication that before many months elapse there will be a rise in the price of gold. If there is such a rise, new mines will be located because prospectors will go out, and there will be every possibility of that part of the State coming to life again. If it does, it will be a good thing not only for the districts concerned, but for the State in general. Again, I thank the speakers who supported the motion and also the Minister for the outline of the position he gave on behalf of the Government.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Are you going to withdraw the motion now?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: No. I intend to persist with the motion. I think it will give an opportunity for members to express their views. It cannot be regarded with offence by the Minister or the Government.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

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

That the House at its rising adjourn till 3 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.6 p.m.