

time to time apply for and be accepted for the scheme. The Act was amended last year when employees of the Parks and Reserves Board were brought under its provisions. To do this a special Bill had to be introduced and now, knocking at the door and asking to come under the provisions of the Act, are employees of water boards.

There is not a great number of these boards left, most of them having been taken over by the Government. However, there are half-a-dozen such boards still controlled by local authorities, and Bunbury is a case in point. It happens to be the Bunbury Board that is now submitting an application for acceptance for these benefits and, at the same time, to assume the responsibility attached to membership of the fund. Already quite a number of vermin boards come under the Act, that is, where the employees of the board come immediately under the control of the local authority. Others likely to apply are cemetery boards, but of these there would not be many.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That would be the dead end.

The MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT: I suppose it would, and if the hon. member can think of another joke along those lines, probably members will laugh at that, too. There are cemetery boards likely to come under the provisions of these funds, and I have no doubt that as time passes there will be others, though at the moment I cannot think of any other than the Stirling District Drainage Board.

The framing and submission of Bills involves the expenditure of time and money, and that is the reason why the Government brings down only such Bills as are absolutely essential. If we continue to introduce a separate Bill when each application for membership is received, probably one a year will be needed during the next five or six years. Each application made by a would-be member body will necessitate a fresh Bill. The object of this measure is to avoid the need for introducing all those small Bills and to bring applicant bodies into the scheme by proclamation. That is the one purpose of the measure and I hope it will appeal to members because it will be the means of saving a good deal of time in future. The Bill is deserving of ready support and I feel sure will receive it. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 18th October, 1950.

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

### MOTION—MINING.

*As to Government Advance to Prospectors.*

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [4.37]: I move—

That this House is of the opinion—

(a) that the weekly amount of 30s. per week advanced to prospectors under the Government prospecting scheme is quite inadequate for present-day requirements; and

(b) that with a view to assisting bona fide prospectors and reviving interest in prospecting, the scheme generally should be revised and in particular the weekly advance of 30s. should be substantially increased.

In the first place, I want to assure members that I bring forward this motion—which I am confident will receive the wholehearted support of my colleagues from the Goldfields—not only at the instance of a large number of prospectors, supported by their official body, the Amalgamated Prospectors' Association of Western Australia, but also on behalf of the people on the Goldfields who are directly dependent on the great goldmining industry which has done so much for the State in the past and which holds out prospects of achieving further triumphs in the years that lie ahead.

At present the industry is passing through a most difficult period. Fortunately, a year or so ago, by more or less fortuitous circumstances, the price of gold was substantially increased, and that gave the industry a much-needed filip. But rising costs of materials and commodities have almost caught up with that increase. Although conditions on the Goldfields can be regarded as being reasonable, there is not that air of prosperity or that optimistic outlook which is almost an essential aspect of life in a goldmining com-

munity. I would remind members that practically every goldmining town of consequence in this State owes its existence, in the first place, to the efforts of prospectors. It is unnecessary for me to relate to the House the story of the discovery of Coolgardie. There were few, if any, big goldmining companies in Western Australia in those days and it was the prospector who, by facing the rigours associated with his calling, was responsible for the discovery of gold at Coolgardie.

Subsequently—without relating what are now in this State household names—it was the prospectors again who discovered gold at Kalgoorlie. Norseman, Menzies, Leonora, Wiluna and Laverton—Laverton being forever associated with the name of the late Dr. Laver, who was typical of thousands of other courageous men—all owed their discovery to the humble prospector, as did also Murchison towns such as Meekatharra, Cue, Big Bell and other centres. When we are considering any question bearing on the welfare of prospectors we should have that background in mind, because it must be remembered that, in the final analysis, the goldmining industry of this State has contributed over £300,000,000 to our wealth in a period of little over 50 years.

I need scarcely refer to the great number of men who have obtained employment in the industry, or the happy families that have had their livelihood on the Goldfields. I would remind members of the railways that have been built and the revenue that in countless ways has directly or indirectly been contributed to the economy of this State by the goldmining industry during the past 50 years. I assure members that at present all is not entirely well with this industry, and I ask for sympathetic consideration of the point of view I am trying to put forward on behalf of a group of men who, I think, are deserving of more assistance than they are receiving.

As an instance, I could cite Mt. Monger, a district that for years has been dependent almost entirely on prospectors. A considerable number of men have been prospecting in that area. It is a rich field where a lot of gold has been discovered, but there are now very few prospectors left in that district. Menzies and Leonora are still mainly dependent on the goldmining industry and Kanowna has almost ceased to exist. Leonora depends solely on the Sons of Gwalia mine and the pastoral industry. Laverton is passing through difficult times and Agnew has almost vanished from the map. The hotel that stood for 50 years at Murrin Murrin was pulled down the other day. Morgans has a wonderful record in our goldmining history, but I doubt whether there are a dozen men left there today. The hotel at that centre, a substantial two-storey building that was licensed for at least 50 years, was recently

dismantled. The prospectors have left Agnew and the hotel there was recently pulled down and moved away.

There is no necessity to recall to members the history of Wiluna. Most of the centres I have mentioned supported considerable communities, but they are now fast fading from the map of this State. The condition of our prospectors should give grave concern to all members here, and particularly to the Minister in charge of the Mines Department. What I have proposed might not supply a complete remedy for the present unhappy state of affairs, but at least I—and many others who are competent to express an opinion—feel that my suggestions, if adopted, would be some contribution towards attaining that end.

During the depression years the Government of the day formulated the State prospecting scheme, the idea being to assist men who could not find employment in other fields. The motive behind the scheme was to encourage men to go prospecting, and a weekly allowance of £1 per week was advanced to them. They were assisted also by the provision of tools and prospecting equipment. A great deal of organisation went into the scheme and the man appointed to supervise it—he knew the Goldfields, had been a prospector and was highly respected by everyone who knew him—proved a great success.

The Minister for Mines: What was his name?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I cannot for the moment recall it. However, the scheme made a great contribution towards solving the problem of those times and was directly responsible for a large quantity of gold being discovered. In the year 1939 there were between 700 and 800 men receiving assistance under the scheme and they were scattered all over the various goldfields. Of course, when the war years came no body of men joined the Forces with a higher percentage than did the miners and prospectors on the Goldfields. After the war we then reached the year 1948 when there were only 43 men receiving assistance under the prospecting scheme. By then, the allowance had been increased to 30s. a week.

Then we come to last year, 1949. The 43 who had been prospecting had had their numbers reduced to 23 and apart from the provision of certain equipment, the total Government expenditure for making allowances to prospectors from July, 1948, to June, 1949, was £2,670. The Minister for Mines at the time, in answer to a proposition which I put forward to increase this assistance answered by saying, "Owing to the higher value of gold, prospecting should be more attractive to prospectors." That answer might seem logical on the surface, but it entirely loses sight of the fact that one just does not go out prospecting without due regard to other factors.

Certainly the high price of gold would induce a prospector to venture out but one does not find gold very easily. A man may be working for months and months before he sees even a trace. His occupation is prospecting; trying to find. When he does find something he has to sink a shaft, get out a crushing and then wait for the State battery to crush it. During the whole of that time he and his dependants have to live. So, although gold might go to £30 an ounce, the price of gold in itself cannot carry a man through the lean periods before he lights on to something.

In August of this year, in answer to a question, the Minister for Mines informed me that there were only 18 men now receiving assistance under the State prospecting scheme. Three of them are on the Murchison and 15 are on the Eastern Goldfields. I want to make it clear that every prospector does not require assistance. There are prospectors at a place called Linden and also at many other centres I have mentioned who have made money in the past, or who have their own private means and are able to use this capital. However, there are lots of others who are ready, willing and anxious to embark on a prospecting career but are without the wherewithal to do so. A truck today is probably a necessity and there are, of course, a number of other requirements which I need not mention.

I have quoted figures to show how the numbers have dwindled during recent years and I have moved this motion in an attempt to remedy that situation. I sincerely believe that now is the opportune time for the Government of the day to show a real, live interest and make a tangible effort to revive the goldmining industry. Today the State is prospering because of the high prices being received for wool, wheat, timber and other products of secondary industries, but if history repeats itself the time will surely come when this State will again be largely dependent on the goldmining industry.

In any event, I am sure that we would be lacking in acceptance of our responsibility if we idly sat by and saw these towns which I have mentioned and their communities dwindling away. I do not claim that my proposition is a complete panacea for the solving of the problem, but I do make a strong appeal that it will make a considerable contribution towards arresting the drift of population from the Goldfields. People in almost every sphere of life speak of this drift to the cities not only in Western Australia, but also throughout the whole of the Commonwealth. One has only to note the rapid growth of the suburbs in and around Perth. One has only to drive a car and attempt to park it anywhere around the city to realise the alarming growth of Perth and its environs.

What a great contrast to the picture on the Murchison and Eastern Goldfields! That is something which should cause a great deal of concern and if we can do anything to remedy that tendency, it is our bounden duty to do so. There is no doubt that the allowance of 30s. a week offers no inducement to men to go out prospecting, although there are plenty of them offering. One does not become a prospector in one, two, or even 10 years. These men who have lived on the Goldfields for many years are possessed of knowledge which is invaluable even when they reach the stage when they are entitled to receive the old age pension. One sees them living in little camps and humpies and they refuse to leave them to come down to "Sunset" Home.

Their life and outlook belong to the Goldfields and a number of them have knowledge which could be of great benefit not only to themselves, but also to the State generally. What would it mean if one of them could find another Norseman? What would it mean if a centre such as Laverton could be revived? Mention could be made of what that would mean to the people there, to the railways and, in fact, to the whole State. It would not cost such a tremendous amount to give this proposition a trial for a few years. I am sure such a course would be greatly appreciated and the funds would be wisely used. It might be said that people abuse schemes of this description; but that is no answer. Unfortunately, people do abuse everything that is good in this world, but that does not apply to the great majority of those affected. I am sure the Minister could easily secure good men who would be able to supervise the scheme. The applicants could be carefully scrutinised.

I assure the House that the genuine prospector is a man who would pole on no-one. The present allowance is quite unattractive to them and, in fact, one could hardly live for a day on the amount allowed. Prospectors are just like the rest of the community. They have wives and children to support. They are men who are prepared to give up their permanent jobs with a view to going to the bush in an endeavour to secure the awards that await stout hearts in return for the efforts they are prepared to put forth.

It is my earnest hope the House will agree to the motion, which is not entirely my own proposition. It has the whole-hearted backing of the Amalgamated Prospectors' Association, which represents the prospectors in all parts of the Goldfields. It is fully supported by everyone on the fields to whom I have spoken about it. I am positive that other members representing mining areas will be able to express views more capably and comprehensively than I have done in submitting the motion, which I commend to the House. I hope the Minister will be able to do something

about it. He has been on the Goldfields himself and has already given proof of his great interest in the goldmining industry.

I fully appreciate the enormous responsibilities resting on his shoulders and I sincerely trust that, per medium of the effect he may give to the motion, he will make a name for himself in connection with the industry. Should he accede to the wishes I have indicated in the motion, I hope he will be completely vindicated in the years to come. Recently the Mining Act was amended with the object of facilitating the operations of a large company which, we all agree, is making a great contribution to the mining industry of Western Australia. It is a company with millions of pounds behind it and with the advantage of the services of technologists in the various branches of science applicable to goldmining. As a result of its operations, the company has opened up the Norseman field and is engaged in mining operations in and about Kalgoorlie, while it also has a splendid scheme for the development of the Yilgarn field. Such a company deserves every encouragement. In common with other Goldfields members, I have given what assistance has been within my power.

The company is operating in a large way in the development of low-grade propositions. As members are aware, it takes a lot of capital to develop a large mining proposition. Up-to-date machinery has to be installed and geologists, chemists and so forth have to be engaged. That, however, is only one aspect of the industry. It is the prospector who will perhaps find other rich mines. It is possible that he may find one at Burtville or at Widgiemooltha. It will be the prospector who possibly will locate gold at Bulong. If my hopes and beliefs have any foundation, it will be a company like the Western Mining Corporation that will then play its part and exploit the discoveries of the prospectors. I, therefore, submit the motion to the House.

**HON. W. R. HALL (North-East) [5.7]:** I would be lacking in my duty as a representative of the North-East Province if I did not support the motion. During the years I have been a member of this House I have during each Address-in-reply debate entered a plea for help for the prospectors in the goldfield areas. Mr. Heenan has covered the ground quite fully and has submitted a very good case in support of his motion. Every encouragement should be extended to the prospectors to explore the auriferous areas of Western Australia.

The motion deals in the first place with the amount of sustenance payable at present. Members generally will agree that 30s. a week is not much use to anyone these days, let alone to prospectors who

go out into the back country and endeavour to find payable gold deposits. Such a small payment offers no inducement to them. Prospectors today—this applies also to men who have been engaged in this form of activity for very many years past—are of a type that seems to be more suitable for battling with the elements in the outback areas. As such they should be given every encouragement. A sustenance payment of 30s. a week is just a pittance.

Despite what the Minister stated when he referred to the fears expressed by Goldfields representatives during the course of the Address-in-reply debate, our words have proved only too true. We have only to contrast the position as we find it today with the conditions that obtained ten or 20 years ago to realise what is happening. It is true that every mine, as a result of which a town, large or small, has sprung up, has been developed as the result of the initial work of the prospector. It is with much concern that I view the industry today. It needs fostering to the fullest extent possible.

With that end in view, we must offer every inducement to the prospector to use his skill in order that new mines may be located. Unless that is done and further mining development takes place, we will not be able to look upon the future of Western Australia, and particularly of the goldmining industry, with equanimity. For instance, the Big Bell is a low-grade proposition, and what will happen to the township there if that one big mine should close down? The people will be scattered all over the State and the houses will be demolished. It has been truly stated that a goldmining township disappears overnight. In such circumstances, the whole of the people's assets are more or less given away, or, at any rate, left behind.

Then there is Wiluna. What is likely to happen there? Some prospector may find a show in that locality that will prove really worth while. Goldfields members are indeed perturbed regarding the position of the industry and appreciate the necessity for some of these men to go out into the backblocks in the hope that another field may be discovered and more big mines developed.

The Minister for Mines: I wish they could find us some sulphur.

**Hon. W. R. HALL:** Who knows what will be found in this State? Gold is where it is found, and it takes both skill and luck to discover it. I repeat what I have said on former occasions during Address-in-reply debates: Every inducement must be offered to men who are willing to go out prospecting. In that regard, as I have urged repeatedly, the first 50 tons of ore brought to a State battery by a prospector should be treated free of cost. Today, should a prospector

be imbued with the idea that he has found gold-bearing ore carrying low values, he is confronted with the problem of transporting that ore to the battery.

I admit that in that respect the Government has assisted by granting a subsidy, which helps to some extent. Then the prospector is faced with a bill for crushing costs, and I am sorry to say that probably nine out of ten of the prospectors are unlucky in that respect. That in itself has a detrimental effect on a person who is desirous of trying his hand at prospecting. To my way of thinking, prospecting is a skillful occupation, and we have only a small percentage of men who would know what a payable lode was, or could tell by costeering whether dirt was payable until it had been assayed. As a result of towns in the North-East Province, such as Malcolm, Murrin Murrin, Morgans, Reedy and Wiluna, going by the board, we find that the people who used to reside in those places have gone elsewhere. The movement of those people had, I think, something to do with the redistribution of the boundaries of the North-East Province, because there were not sufficient electors. The province today extends from Kalgoorlie to Mt. Magnet.

You, Sir, Mr. Heenan and I represent the North-East Province, which is more or less a goldmining constituency as there are not many pastoralists in it, and we have to try to impress upon the Government the necessity of inducing men to go prospecting under the State scheme. It is true that the Government has contributed something towards transport, machinery, explosives, tools and other things required by prospectors, but that is not everything. A prospector must have some backing. In the past, there were plenty of business people and others who were only too pleased to do this, and there are still some such men today, although not as great a number.

There must be some inducement for a man to go prospecting because if he has a backer, a certain proportion of what he finds must go to that person, which is quite right. I say it is a pity that when a prospector ultimately finds something that is payable, another person participates in the proceeds. If the Government gave enough assistance to enable a man to go out without private backing, more men would go prospecting. I feel, too, that we would have more prospectors if they could have the first 50 tons of ore treated free. I believe, also, that if a man is lucky enough to strike something payable, the Government requires reimbursement for whatever it has outlayed, although it does not take much risk.

The person who goes out to find payable dirt is the one that takes the risks, and he should be entitled to the greatest proportion of the proceeds. It is a pity that the Government wants reimbursement from the crushings of prospectors because, after

all, very few men go out today. Prospectors are the salt of the earth. Their life and occupation are hard. I hope members will support the motion. For 12 years I have been interested in this subject, but there has been little alteration in that period. Times have changed, and although the price of gold has increased, men still have to go out to find it. I support the motion.

**HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM** (South-East) [5.21]: I add my support to the motion, and compliment Mr. Heenan on the case he put up. I think he covered the position pretty thoroughly, but I would like to express my ideas, because I am firmly of the belief that the future prosperity of the mining industry depends a great deal on new finds, and by new finds I do not mean small shows in known areas. Of latter years there have really been no new fields discovered, although we know of plenty of new shows.

We have as an example Bullfinch, which was discovered many years ago. Owing to the tenacity of the prospectors in the district, who ultimately impressed on a company the importance and value of this low-grade area, there is the possibility now of a township arising there that will take the place of some of those that are dying in the north. I am familiar with Wiluna, Meekatharra and the other towns that have been mentioned, as I have lived in them and worked in the mines as a miner, and I have also been prospecting at Wiluna, Peak Hill, Reedy, and so on. The thought of these towns dying out is somewhat sad, because they were once thriving communities.

To think that young men will not go out to try to discover new fields is disheartening. The 30s., even when it was inaugurated, was not intended to be complete sustenance—I do not like that term, as it has unpleasant associations for me—but some sort of encouragement. The prospectors need a few shillings to buy the necessities of everyday life. The general procedure is for a prospector to find some friend or businessman who is prepared to back him in a show although not necessarily in prospecting for a show. A man generally says, "I am on a good thing," or "I know where I have a chance of getting on to a good show."

To get backing from a friend or merchant is the limit of what the prospector can get in the way of credit. If he had a farm, he could go to a bank which would carry him over until his returns started to come in, but that does not apply to a prospector. He must have something concrete to put forward before he can get substantial support from a business firm or bank. We admit that in many cases the reward may be greater than in other occupations, but we think the prospector is entitled to it. I agree with Mr. Heenan

that if greater encouragement by the provision of an increased subsidy were available to prospectors, it would encourage young men—and that is the point—to go out and try their luck in new areas. Of the 18 men who are receiving sustenance, most are old people. If they are not pensioners, they are probably very close to it. This payment is not in the form of a pension, and could not be so considered. A prospector is prepared to go out and help himself. He asks for assistance only until he can find something, and when he has found what he is looking for, the assistance ceases.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: It is paid back.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: That is so. He is not after a pension, but a little larger grant from the Government to make it worth his while to go out and try to discover new fields. Mining is different from almost all other industries inasmuch as it is a wasting industry. Once something is taken out of the ground, nothing goes back in its place to carry on the mine. After we have taken a crop off a farm, we work the land again and get other crops, and the same thing applies to almost every form of industry except mining. Once a ton of stone or a dwt. of gold is taken out, it is gone for ever, and the life of the mine has been shortened to that extent.

If no new mines are discovered the time will ultimately arrive when the industry will finish. Yet there are probably more mines still undiscovered than have ever been found, despite the fact that the industry extends from the far north to south of Ravensthorpe. The prospector today is not the hit-or-miss type of person that many people think. It is amazing to know that the old prospectors, without scientific knowledge, were able to work out where their chances were best. A most striking example of that can be found in Norseman today. One of the Western Mining Corporation's shows extends three or four miles into the bush, and today steel poppets are erected over a shaft being sunk on an underlay. About 50 or 60 feet from the mouth of that shaft, there is an old prospector's shaft, sunk to a depth of 150ft.

It was not until recently that I learned that one of the original prospectors was a relation of mine—an uncle. In those days, he said they would have to sink at least 300ft. to get what they were after. This shaft was one of several in a line where prospectors were looking for gold. That shaft, sunk to a depth of 150ft., has been there for 30-odd years. It is now included in one of the Western Mining Corporation's leases. That organisation sunk drills in its search for gold as directed by their geologists, and the amazing part of my story is that at a depth of 308ft., and directly below the shaft sunk by prospec-

tors so many years ago, they found values of 17 ozs. to the ton. The company's shaft is directly below the old prospectors' shaft which will, in future, be used as an air vent.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I thank the House for its kindness in permitting me to continue with the debate. However, I will not keep members very much longer. All I intended to say was that I support the hon. member in his motion and I agree with it wholeheartedly. I trust that what has been said by members here today will impress the House. Mr. Heenan made a most sincere and genuine appeal for relief for a very worthy group of men—the prospectors of Western Australia.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [5.31]: I wish to speak in support of this motion because we not only have to consider the effect on the goldmining industry but also the effect on other mining industries such as lead, copper and others which we know the Government is anxious to foster in Western Australia. One commodity which is desperately needed in this State is sulphur. As Mr. Hall said, who knows what may be found when prospectors go out in search of minerals? I support this motion also because I have some knowledge of the goldfields and have met many prospectors in those localities.

Then again, I am also aware that prospectors are men of mature age, as a general rule, and are approaching the time when they may become a liability on the State and have to receive pensions. I venture the opinion that a large percentage of the money we might spend in connection with a proposal such as this would be an offset against pensions, because these men will go on prospecting. Most of the men engaged in this type of work have been doing so for years and if they do not have to apply for pensions the State will be saved that amount of money. If they can be kept in their natural surroundings, and in the employment with which they are familiar and have been carrying on all their lives, they will be quite happy and there will still be a possibility of their finding new fields, as has been mentioned by other members. Having had experience on the fields, I feel that we will be doing a great service to the Goldfields and the men engaged in prospecting work if we all support this motion.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

#### BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

- 1, Railways Classification Board Act Amendment.
- 2, Plant Diseases Act Amendment.  
Without amendment.

**BILL—ACTS AMENDMENT (INCREASE IN NUMBER OF MINISTERS OF THE CROWN).**

Read a third time and *passed*.

**BILL—FAUNA PROTECTION.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. H. TUCKEY** (South-West) [5.36]: It would not be unreasonable to expect that some members may find it a little difficult to discuss this measure because they have not had much personal or practical experience of the history or habits of game in this State. My experience does not cover all the State but I have had experience in a very large area and have always assisted in the protection of game. While I intend to vote for the second reading, I am not fully in accord with all the provisions of the measure. It would appear that it is mainly a repetition of the existing Game Act plus a few clauses dealing with minor matters such as skins and so on, with one or two dragnet clauses that will authorise individuals to take drastic steps without parliamentary sanction.

This Bill is the result of advice received from a committee of four which was appointed in 1944 and had four years to investigate and make recommendations. The existing Act has never been properly policed and this legislation will cause a further drain on the Treasury. It will probably incur heavy expenditure and care should be taken to see that the results likely to accrue will be justified by that expenditure. I have heard some very erroneous ideas about the habits and scarcity of certain game in the State. Discussing the Bill in another place, a member said that he intended to vote for the second reading because the wallabies had been shot out and it was high time something was done to stop it. I disagree with this view.

I can remember wallabies for a great number of years. In fact, 50 years ago the coastal areas, including the forests, were full of wallabies and apart from a few places, there has been no demand for wallaby skins, or wallaby for food purposes. I can remember large areas where they were very plentiful but for some reason or other they appear to have just died out. I know they have not been destroyed. One used to be able to go to any of these swamps along the coast and find them. As a boy I used to go through the bush around Rockingham and further south; particularly in the lowlying areas around the swamps, where there was dense undergrowth, it was possible to find wallabies in large numbers. They were very difficult to shoot because they made tracks under the rushes and they used to be able to go long distances and still be concealed. However, they were found not only in areas around Rockingham but one could also go

to Mandurah and find them in the coastal hills right away from the swamps. Around the valleys and hills near Pinjarra they were very plentiful; especially in the gulleys where there were large bulrushes. It was possible to find them in almost every thicket in the valleys.

All down the country between the estuaries and the coast the wallabies were permitted to remain untroubled. No-one wanted to shoot them. In those days not many people went hunting and they did not need to go looking for wallabies if they were out for a day's shooting. However, for some reason or other the wallabies have died out. This has not been brought about by shooting, as was suggested by a member in another place, but may have been caused by disease or some similar affliction. When one hears statements like that—such as those made in another place—it goes a long way towards getting the legislation through even though the statements are not correct. So, if we talk about these matters it is important that we should have some personal knowledge or some advice from a reliable person.

I would remind members that because certain game or fauna disappear in some places, it does not mean that those areas have been shot out. Would anyone say because we find no swans on the Swan River today that they have been shot out? Would anyone say that the large numbers of ducks that used to frequent the Swan River have been shot out? Of course no-one would. It is very important to understand that their habits change and very often they come and go in cycles. I remind members, also, of the acres and acres of Rottnest snipe that used to appear on the Peel Inlet. Would anyone say that they have been shot out? It would have been impossible for such a thing to happen. They came there only because of the very low water and they could not live there today because the water is too deep. In the summer time they used to sit on the banks in the estuaries, well out from the shore. We used to see those white patches about four miles away, right across the estuary, but they have disappeared and we very seldom see Rottnest snipe down there these days.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: It is a pity something like that could not happen to the rabbits.

**HON. H. TUCKEY:** Yes, it is. It is no use a young inspector going to such a place and saying, "We have to do something; we will make this estuary or strip of land a sanctuary." That may be just a waste of time. I know another fairly large lake, not far from the same district, which two years ago was black with musk ducks. It was not usual, and I do not know why it happened during this particular year. But, nobody could get near them because it was a fairly large lake and rather difficult to approach as there is no road and it is

fairly rough even to walk to it. So that the old musk ducks were safe. There have been none there for the last two years. They did not come last year, but not because they have been shot out. These matters ought to be thoroughly understood by people dealing with the problem.

While I fully agree and support the idea of protecting the natural game of the country, let us be reasonable and sensible, and not be stupid and create difficulties perhaps for some of the settlers and local people when there is no need for it. Whilst stressing the need for knowing something of the job one is dealing with, I would like to remind the House of legislation passed last year. It will be remembered that an Act was passed to restrict the size of crabs that may be taken for food purposes. Because a few people walked about the Swan River up to their waists in shallow water spearing a few crabs, it was thought that this was depleting the supply of crabs, so legislation was brought in to restrict the size of crabs taken to five inches.

In my opinion that was very silly. It is well known that a few hundred female crabs could in one year stock the Swan River with small crabs. The ink had hardly dried on that legislation when fishermen approached me to see if something could not be done to help destroy crabs. I know from experience that in some places where crabs are plentiful the catch is so heavy that it is difficult to clear the nets at night, and they have to be left till the next morning before they are cleared, and during the night the crabs bite the twine and damage the nets.

This idea emanated from a junior who did not know his job. If we have such people submitting legislation like this to the Minister who swallows it hook, line and sinker, thus making it a nuisance, could it not occur in some other legislation? This Bill provides for all sorts of things to be done by proclamation. Is it not an easy matter for a man who does not know his job or does not take the trouble to ascertain all the particulars, to recommend that a particular strip of water should be declared a sanctuary? Who is to check on it? The Minister does not know. This particular legislation he is introducing shows that. Before these tracts of water and land are reserved, I think the local authority should be consulted with a view to getting its opinion. It is only a matter of co-operation.

I do not think laws should be applied by proclamation, irrespective of the rights of the people and consideration of the local authorities. I hope that in Committee something will be done to straighten this out a bit. It is not an easy matter to decide what water or what land should be declared a sanctuary. It is rather difficult to do it sensibly. I do not think I am far out when I say that a good many of our experts could go to the

lake country and say we should be very careful of these areas and preserve them for breeding purposes.

The other day I was speaking to a man who had been shooting on one of the largest lakes in the district for over 40 years. He told me he had never seen a clutch of young ducks on that lake in the time he had been shooting there. But there is nothing to indicate to a stranger that they do not breed there. It is not generally known that ducks nest in the higher country and not in the swamps. I have an old redgum tree in which a pair of ducks nest every year and only a few days ago there were some ready to come down. The nest is about 25ft. off the ground and one of the small ducks fell out of the nest.

A workman standing by saw it and he thought that that would be the end of it. He would not interfere with it but thought he would leave it for the mother to take it back to the nest. In less than two minutes, however, a hawk dived and took it away. That will show what happens to ducks that go away and build their nests in high country. There are numbers of wild cats and foxes around and where there is shallow water and little protection, there is a good deal of mortality. I have disturbed ducks in blackboy rushes. One would think that duck would go to the swamps to nest but these nested on high ground. There was a very well concealed nest, full of eggs, not 20 yards from the water in swamp land 100 acres in area.

When it comes to protecting these fauna we ought to know something about it. Of course, there is a closed season when they are breeding; but if it is desired to create a sanctuary to cover the area where ducks breed, it will be necessary to take in the whole country, not only the swamps. I know of very good swamps where we should be able to shoot duck, but though thousands of shags are bred there, practically no duck can be seen at all. These matters are difficult to understand and it is certainly difficult to know where to create sanctuaries. Some members may have been down along White Lake on the main road opposite Rockingham. It has a long frontage to the road and in its time has been a very good lake for birds. Four or five years ago it was declared a Class "A" reserve and shooting was prohibited on it. But the authorities have not even put up a notice protecting the game.

We are asked to pass all these extra laws. What for? Are they going to be dealt with in the same way? That is a place where it would not be at all difficult to create a sanctuary because, in my opinion, this lake alongside the main road should be strictly preserved. All the game there should be preserved, irrespective of whether it displeases some people or not.



If it were tucked away in some isolated corner I would not take the same view. This is the kind of thing that has been going on for quite a long time, and I think we have to be very careful in creating sanctuaries and we should be well advised by people who know something about the history of game life in that district.

People do not know what has happened to the birds I have already mentioned, such as swans, Rottnest snipe, and so on, but we have others, like a member in another place, saying they have been shot out, when that is not so. What about the kangaroo rats? I do not suppose members know very much about them. There used to be tens of thousands of them in the forests. As a boy I went out near Dwellingup. We had a fairly good kangaroo dog and it was amazing to see the numbers of these rats and the way they could run. They could quite easily beat the kangaroo dog where the country was thick. They were a bit smaller than a wallaby, and rather the shape of a brush kangaroo.

What caused them to die out? They were not shot out. I do not think they are edible but they have gone, every one of them. What is the use of my telling the House that they have been shot out and something should be done about it? What caused the opossum to die out? I know there was a certain amount of trapping and snaring, but I also know that in large tracts of country where they were plentiful there was no trapping done. Nevertheless they died out. The only 'possums I know of are those in the roof of the Pinjarra hospital. To discuss something outside the question, what caused the black bees to disappear? The place was full of them.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Perhaps the other bees ate them.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: The bush is just as full of the new variety of bees as it was of the black ones, but nobody can account for the disappearance of the latter. These things go on and they cannot be attributed to the action of people shooting them. It is very important to realise that. I do not know that very much can be done if sanctuaries are created. We get very few ducks here, but in the back country they are more plentiful, particularly during the winter period. They only stay on the local lakes until the first rains come and after that they clear out and go to inland lakes. The ducks down here are not a very big item.

The problem of the kangaroo is another matter that should be considered. I pointed out that with young ducks there was a big loss, but with young kangaroos it is not so and that is the reason, to some extent, for their being about at the present time. Only the other day there was quite a noise at Boyup Brook about the damage caused to property by kangaroos.

The people wanted the right to shoot them and to have them declared vermin. It is proposed, I understand, to declare a forest sanctuary. What for? In order to breed kangaroos?

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Only a portion of it.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: The kangaroo rats have gone; wild pigs have gone—there might be one or two here or there, but they have practically gone. Apart from kangaroos, I do not know what there is in need of protection. We have the parrots which, in the South-West, have been declared vermin. Time and again this matter has been discussed and we have tried to get a bonus paid for the killing of parrots.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: The road boards could pay that bonus.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: But why protect them? Then we have the crows, which are a menace to farmers, and the same applies to the cockatoos, which are as bad as, if not worse than, the parrots. We ought to be very careful lest we provide a harbour for these creatures which I call vermin. As to kangaroos, one must have a permit to shoot them, and this proposal to establish sanctuaries gives cause for concern because opportunities will thus be provided for them to breed. Young kangaroos are not get-at-able by foxes, because they grow on the teat and, by the time the mother gets rid of them, they can run fast enough to beat a fox. During the whole of the time the mother is carrying the young one, it is absolutely protected. Young kangaroos grow on the teat—

Hon. R. M. Forrest: That is a debatable question.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: Perhaps not from the beginning, but the fact remains that they do grow on the teat. One of them I pulled off the teat, and when it had stopped bleeding at the mouth, I placed it in a small essence-of-lemon bottle and covered it with spirits. I have that specimen at home and it reveals the creature partly formed. The head and forequarters are formed, but not the hindquarters, and yet, when a kangaroo is fully grown, the hindquarters are the larger part. Every doe kangaroo produces a young one each year and there is not much mortality amongst them. I consider that this is the reason why they are so plentiful.

In the Pinjarra district, there are still quite a number and without doubt they are proving a positive nuisance. I have a paddock a few miles from Pinjarra enclosed with a six-wire fence, and time and again kangaroos break through the wires. I send a man over periodically to check up and effect repairs, but the kangaroos soon break it down again. As they are a nuisance to the primary

producers, we should be very careful about making reserves for them. At present a person is permitted to take only one kangaroo for the purpose of food and so they are already protected. The skins cannot be disposed of without the seller producing the number of his license, so that if anybody were collecting skins for sale, the department could easily check up on his actions. The position already is fairly watertight in relation to those seeking to make profit from game.

Another objection I have to this proposed legislation is the intention of operating without parliamentary sanction. In recent years, we have had quite a number of experiences of regulations, some of which experiences have not been at all pleasant, because we have discovered a nigger in the woodpile. Somebody has had a hand in having those regulations introduced.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: You do not want parliamentary authority for the close season dates, surely!

Hon. H. TUCKEY: No. In the winter months, nobody could shoot ducks on my property without my knowledge because of the check I keep. As regards the creating of sanctuaries for fauna, I point out that there is a large area south of Mandurah usually referred to as coastal land. When one travels down the coast some distance, the position regarding game is rather different. There is an area of land between the sea and the estuary, which is of no earthly use for a natural game reserve as there is not a lake on it. This land has been more or less vested in the Fisheries Department, and I am assured on good authority that that department has been responsible for the rejection of certain applications for the purchase of some of that area. It seems to be going too far when the Fisheries Department is given control of a strip of land like that, consisting of a good many thousand acres, when it should have no interest in the area.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Has that been taken for a game reserve?

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I understand that at present it is only a temporary reserve. However, it is a reserve, and any proposal submitted regarding it has no chance of being passed unless the Chief Inspector of Fisheries approves. When the Lands Department vests authority of that sort in the Fisheries Department, it is time we looked into the matter. Fancy a man desirous of taking up land having to run the gauntlet of the Fisheries Department! To me, that seems to be quite wrong. This coastal land is good only for grazing purposes.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: It could grow lucerne.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: Yes, but I am speaking of the coastal plain. I have found it very valuable for grazing purposes. I have about 4,000 acres of it, and that is only a small portion of the whole area. When I applied for a part of my lease, I received a severe shock on learning that it was under the control of the Fisheries Department. We ought to avoid the perpetuation of that sort of thing under this new legislation. We do not want proclamations or declarations constituting all sorts of reserves for fauna when we know they will do no good.

Whenever action is taken to reserve areas of land, particularly large areas such as the one to which I have just referred, the opinion of the local authority should be obtained. Surely to goodness that would be only fair! People representing the district and residents of the locality understand the conditions and should be given a say in the matter. Nobody would advocate leaving the position wide open so that one could slaughter the fauna at will. Far from it. I am satisfied that quite a lot of people would not think of shooting a duck in the close season.

Provided the measure is framed on reasonable lines and those responsible for its enforcement co-operate with the local people, all that is required in the interests of the protection of fauna can be achieved without much trouble. I hope that before the Bill emerges from the Committee stage, amendments will be made to bring it more into line with what I consider is the proper way to deal with the problem. Undoubtedly it is a problem, and the matters I have mentioned indicate that there is something wrong.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Well, make it right.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: Can the Honorary Minister put the swans back on the Swan River?

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: No.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: Of course not. Unfortunately they have left the river. We would all be pleased to see the game life reappear in such places as that. Take White Lake, which has been declared a Class "A" reserve. This is a fairly good lake for bird life, but not even a notice is exhibited to inform people that shooting there is prohibited and, of course, people do shoot there. Perhaps they do little harm, but the fact remains that shooting is done there.

One would expect that every effort would be exerted to improve any sheet of water and make it ornamental and attractive from the point of view of tourists. This is where the Government might take action and do something to encourage bird life to reappear. It is one thing to declare a sanctuary and quite another thing to

cause the ducks to go there. I shall support the second reading. I hope that the Bill will not be rushed through Committee, but that members will be afforded an opportunity to devise ways and means of improving its provisions. I would strictly limit the number of fauna that could be taken in one day and prevent the taking of it for profit.

On motion by Hon. R. M. Forrest, debate adjourned.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

# **BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading—Defeated.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. H. TUCKEY** (South-West) [7.30]: This Bill is to amend one of the most important Acts on our statute book. I remember that, when the original measure was before the House, there was a good deal of opposition because practically every country member felt that it would cut into the rights and privileges of farmers and other people living in the country. Country members had to make considerable sacrifices in accepting this legislation. It was mainly due to the ministerial explanation of the Bill that some members voted for it, after considerable opposition.

I realise that for some time the Act has required an overhaul. Recently, when I was visiting the North-West, I felt that something could be done to amend it with a view to helping that part of the State. Only a few days ago I was rather upset at the restrictions the Act imposes, when I was prevented from taking two or three beds out to shearers in a new truck which I had purchased. If I had obtained a permit from the Transport Board, it would have been all right, but I felt that I would rather pay 10s. or 15s. freight than go to all the inconvenience involved. In instances of that kind, I think that primary producers should be allowed a certain latitude and should not be subjected to so much red tape.

When Mr. Loton introduced the Bill, I had intended to support it, because I have not been satisfied for a long time with this legislation, and I felt that this measure would go some way towards improving the situation. But I have been thinking it over and I have realised that this is not the only question that needs to be dealt with. There are other points to be considered. Further, I am given to understand the Government's intention is to bring down an amending Bill at an early date, and I think it would be better to await that measure and treat the matter as a whole, rather than to pass this Bill and then have to consider the entire Act later on.

I know the idea Mr. Loton has in mind, and I am sorry that I cannot do what I had thought of doing in the first instance, namely, vote for the second reading. I shall oppose it, however, purely on the ground that it would be more business-like to await the larger amending Bill. That would be of assistance to the Government, too. I think it would be better for us to await the comprehensive Bill, and I make that explanation in order to clear myself in voting against the second reading.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE** (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [7.35]: In the interests of the railway system generally, the Government has to oppose this Bill. While I am against these controls and certain pinpricks mentioned by Mr. Tuckey—and I know they exist—I think the House should look at the position as a whole and from the point of view of the welfare of the railway system. After all, the railways do not belong to the Government but to the people and the people should take a personal interest in their welfare.

Reference was made by Mr. Roche to maladministration in the Railway Department. I do not think there is any such maladministration. I am ready to admit the railways have not done all we expected them to do, but I do not believe that is the fault of the heads of the department, or the employees, or anybody else. It is a matter of inadequate rollingstock, including engines. I myself have been very disappointed in the railways. Only today I had to authorise the transport of superphosphate by road—something I did not anticipate having to do.

Hon. A. L. Loton: That is the second time this year.

**The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: I hope that will be only a temporary measure. Mention was made by Mr. Strickland of the transport of bananas and beans. They do not come into the picture. Under the Act, anybody can cart beans and bananas from Carnarvon.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: Not past Geraldton.

**The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: Yes, right to Perth. No-one can prevent a primary producer carting his produce where he likes.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: We always have to get a permit.

**The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: I am surprised! I think somebody has already read the schedule to the Act which refers to the cartage of primary produce and stock, wheat and oats.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: In his own vehicle.

**The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: The producer can also engage in back-loading. He can carry

anything back which will further production on his property. That is very definite in the Act, and I am surprised to hear Mr. Strickland say that banana-growers cannot cart bananas.

Hon. G. Fraser: You mean in their own vehicles?

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Hon. G. Fraser: The hon. member was referring to contractors.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I see. Then we were at variance. Here we are dealing with the farmer's own vehicle. Any banana-grower or bean-grower can cart his goods to Perth without asking for a permit, and he can take certain things back to his farm. For the benefit of the producers, the railways are being run at a very big loss.

We expect that the State basic wage will be increased, following the new award made by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court and that will cost the Railway Department something like another £500,000. I have here a list of items on the cartage of which the railways makes a loss. The anticipated railway deficit for the current financial year is in the vicinity of £4,000,000, and these are some of the items which will contribute to that loss. Perhaps the cartage of wool by a few farmers will not make much difference. But where will this sort of thing stop? We have to protect the railways.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Have you carted wool by road?

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, many years ago, when the railways could not do it. Any farmer, by ringing up the Transport Board, can obtain a permit.

Hon. A. L. Loton: It is not as easy as that.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is not right to say that it takes a week. The Transport Board knows perfectly well where the railway trucks are and will give a permit when necessary. With regard to superphosphate the earnings of the Railway Department per ton mile are 1.14d. The actual cost of service is 3.4d., leaving a loss of 2.26d. to the railways and a similar benefit to the customer. Here are some other figures—

Commodity.	Earnings per ton mile.	Actual Cost of service per ton mile.	Loss to Railways, Benefit to Customer.
Wheat, Grain, Chaff, Flour, Bran, etc.	1.74	3.4	1.66
Fruit and Vegetables . . . . .	2.32	3.4	1.08
Coal . . . . .	1.76	3.4	1.64
Firewood . . . . .	1.25	3.4	2.15
Wool . . . . .	3.80	3.4	.4 (profit)

That .4d. on wool represents a profit to the railways and not a loss. I was surprised at the little that wool earned

for the railways. I thought the profit would be a lot more. A profit of .4d. is not very much. I know what Mr. Loton will say. He will say, "Why worry about that small profit? Let the farmers carry the wool." But that is the only item or which a profit is being made, and I do not think it fair that the railways should be deprived of it. The other item on this list is timber, the earnings being 2.35d. the actual cost of service 3.4d. and the loss 1.05d. There is a tremendous rehabilitation programme in regard to the railways and we have appointed new Commissioners to do the job. I do not think it is fair to them that the cartage of any profit-earning goods should be taken from them.

Farmers are doing very well today and I do not believe it will hurt them to patronise the railways. It is not only a question of the freight on wool to Perth but they take back goods the freight on which yields a high profit, such as oil. The service rendered by the railways in regard to the transport of oil is very good. It is only natural that if the farmer is allowed to bring wool down to Perth he will take back oil. I cannot see him carting much super. If he can load goods on which higher freights are chargeable

Hon. A. L. Loton: What was the increase in private carting last year that was not subsidised? It was 5,000 tons over the previous year.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will admit that. I cannot see people carting wool from the northern pastoral areas, as was suggested. I do not think that is much of an argument. It is not likely to happen. While I am prepared to admit that it might mean a great deal to the railways, it would be a step in the wrong direction, and I would not like to see even a small amount of profitable freight taken from the department. I hope the House will not support the measure.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [7.46] Having listened to many members during the course of the debate, I feel I would not be doing my duty to the people of the State if I supported the measure. Over a long period of years, our railways have been the main means of developing the State, and it will be generally agreed that most of them have been built almost solely for the purpose of opening up the hinterland, the idea being to establish farms and, if possible, industries also, in order that the railways might eventually become payable. Many of them were built with the full knowledge that they would never pay, and they were constructed simply to serve the people who had gone to the outback parts of the State to assist in its development.

Industries and farming and pastoral properties having been established, surely it is only reasonable to assume that the

railways that were built and maintained in the early days without earning sufficient profit even to pay for the axle-grease used on the rollingstock should not now be deprived of that small percentage of freight that is proving profitable. This is particularly so when we bear in mind the number of concessions made to the people served by the railways, by means of other freight which is carried at a loss to the department.

I would remind members of the railway that was built from Hopetoun to Ravensthorpe to establish an industry there; that which was built from Kamballie to Boulder, to serve the goldmining industry, and the railway to Sandstone, all of which have been pulled up. Tonight we have heard also that the line from Port Hedland to Marble Bar is about to be dismantled. Those railways were all built out of loan money and today the taxpayers of the State are still paying interest on the capital cost of those lines, which now no longer exist. During the war period, it was not possible to obtain sufficient locomotives or rollingstock to operate our railways properly, and it is therefore more difficult than it would otherwise have been for the railways now to provide an efficient service to the people served by them.

If application is made to cart wool by road, I presume that, in extenuating circumstances, the permit is granted, particularly if rollingstock is not available. A lot has been said to the effect that, if agreed to, this Bill would mean nothing but adding wool to those other commodities set down in the transport Act, but we find that, in addition to wool, there are mentioned "all goods which need to be transported." Where are we to stop in this regard? Are we to draw the line at perishables, at machinery, or where? To my mind, "goods which need to be transported" means all classes of goods.

In view of the great amount of capital that has been invested in our State railways and upon which the taxpayers have to pay interest, I feel it is only right and proper that railway transport should be utilised wherever it is available. It will be agreed that there is probably no statute under which there is not some anomaly, but if it is the intention of the Government in the future to bring down a further measure in this regard, it could, by that means, rectify some of the anomalies existing under the present State Transport Co-ordination Act. I oppose the Bill.

**HON. W. J. MANN (South-West)** [7.50]: I feel in something of a quandary with regard to this Bill because I have always advocated that the man on the land should have granted to him every possible facility to market his produce in the cheapest and most expeditious way and, while it must be realised that he is entitled to such consideration, it must not be forgotten that

in this instance we should take into account the broader aspects of the economic position. I view the condition of our railways as being extremely serious.

In spite of great efforts to remedy the position, our railway deficits have been growing year after year. The figure given during this debate by the Minister as the estimated deficit is nothing short of colossal. I was astounded at the figures just quoted by the Honorary Minister for Agriculture, who pointed out a number of commodities that are carried by our railways at a substantial loss. When concessions on super, wheat and other freight of that nature were made, the returns received by the farmer for his produce were very much lower than they are today. They would never have been made had the same degree of prosperity existed throughout the State then as exists now.

We should do everything possible to assist industry, and particularly primary industry, when it is passing through periods of stress, but we must also be fair to the Railway Department if we are to be fair to the taxpayers as a whole. The return for wheat today is very high compared with that of ten years ago, and the concession on super freight has existed for a number of years. Perhaps the freight on vegetables does not come so largely into the picture, though vegetables are being carried at a loss of 1.08d. per ton mile. I do not see why the State should lose 1.64d. per ton mile on the haulage of coal over our railways, as the return to the collieries and the wages of the men employed in the industry have risen considerably in recent years.

The railways are losing 2.15d. per ton mile on the carriage of firewood, yet I am informed that those who are supplying firewood to the city are making small fortunes today. I do not know how such fortunes are measured, but I understand that it is a lucrative business, and that some young people engaged in it today say they will not leave it so long as present conditions last. We must also remember that heavy road transport is doing enormous damage to the roads of the State. The Bunbury-Perth highway, from as far down as North Dandalup, is used by a number of large trucks each day carrying heavy loads of firewood. They are cutting up the roads in an alarming manner, but are making bigger profits than they would if they utilised the railways for the carriage of firewood.

I cannot speak of other arterial roads in the State, but I know that those in the South-West require tremendous expenditure to keep them in good repair. I am informed that the timber mills are doing remarkably well these days, and those with any knowledge of building know only too well what they have to pay for timber, yet timber is, to all intents and purposes, being subsidised by the railways

to the extent of 1.05d. per ton mile. We are living in a period of the greatest prosperity this State has ever known and yet these and many other items of freight are being carried by our railways at a loss.

It was pleasing to hear that the Government intends to bring down a comprehensive measure dealing with transport. I hope, when that is done, that the measure will be flexible enough to be applied to circumstances as they exist. If that is so and we then experience again a period of depression, it will be possible for assistance to be granted where it is required, but while we still enjoy high prices in almost every field, I do not think the State railways should be asked to carry so many classes of goods at a loss. I would like to support Mr. Loton in this matter, because I believe he is sincere in his desire to do what is right, but I cannot conscientiously subscribe to the proposal with regard to wool, which today is one of the few items of freight showing the railways a small profit. I must vote against the measure.

**HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [8.01]:** The figures which were quoted by the Honorary Minister showing the losses incurred on the carriage of various commodities have been a severe shock to me and I can hardly believe that the 3.4 pence per mile cost to the railways is an economic one. I cannot believe that when the railways are placed in proper order a charge such as that will have to continue.

**Hon. A. L. Loton:** It must continue.

**Hon. L. CRAIG:** If it does so, then I think the last two Governments have been grossly neglectful in allowing it to continue. If I had a manager who submitted a statement to me such as that I would sack him.

**The Minister for Transport:** The charge has risen very steeply in the last two years.

**Hon. L. CRAIG:** Two years is a long time. We should adjust these charges within months. Surely to goodness with the State enjoying the prosperity which it has never enjoyed before and with people obtaining concessions never obtained before and with the railways carrying commodities which are necessary to the primary producers after concessions being granted to them, in two years something could be done to restore the normal charges.

**The Honorary Minister for Agriculture:** How do you know that no effort has been made?

**Hon. L. CRAIG:** It has not been a successful effort because it has been resisted by people who have no right to do so. I do not think hon. members fully realise what incomes farmers are enjoying today. Not one farmer in 20, engaged solely in sheep raising, is producing less than 20 bales of wool today.

**Hon. A. L. Loton:** That figure is a long way out. It would be one in 30.

**Hon. L. CRAIG:** Well, one in 30 would be producing less than 30 bales of wool. I am talking of a farmer engaged in sheep raising only and not a farmer engaged in mixed farming. The income from a large farm today is approximately £20,000 and yet we are carrying for these men requirements such as superphosphate and other things at a tremendous loss and it must be remembered that this has been going on for a long time. The position should be flexible in regard to these things and when people are able to pay these charges in a time of prosperity, they should pay them. I am really shocked about this. The reason why these lower charges were fixed was because the State was going through a time of stress.

**Hon. N. E. Baxter:** You are only quoting this season's wool prices; not the prices for other seasons.

**Hon. L. CRAIG:** I am speaking of prices obtained last season by woolgrowers only. I have not yet touched on wheatgrowers. A wheatgrower is nearly as prosperous as a woolgrower and a man raising sheep is enjoying an income of at least £3,000 to £6,000 a year and yet we are carrying his commodities at less than cost.

**Hon. A. L. Loton:** You know that their financial position has been completely reversed during the last few years.

**Hon. L. CRAIG:** Of course it has, and because of their financial position some years ago these concessions were made and still remain on the books when they should not be there.

**The Honorary Minister for Agriculture:** Freight charges have risen recently.

**Hon. L. CRAIG:** In business such charges would have been adjusted within a few months following the increased prices being received for the commodities. It is the natural thing to do.

**Hon. N. E. Baxter:** Has the Midland Railway Company increased its prices accordingly?

**Hon. L. CRAIG:** I do not know, but their running costs are much lower in comparison with those of the State Government Railways. That company shows a profit. I am not talking about the days when Julius Caesar ran the railways; I am talking about today. In the same way, farmers are also showing a profit.

**Hon. L. A. Logan:** One gets service from the Midland Railway Company.

**Hon. L. CRAIG:** I suppose one does. The point is that that company is showing a profit and if the Government railways are not showing a profit it is an indictment on the Government.

**Hon. G. Fraser:** The position is entirely different. The Midland Company runs only one line against the whole network run

by the State. How can you honestly compare that company with the Government railways?

Hon. L. CRAIG: The Government railways are not run as a business concern but purely as a benevolent institution.

Hon. G. Fraser: The Government railways were run for a long time to develop the country.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is so, but when people are prosperous, would the hon. member agree that we should carry their goods at a loss?

Hon. G. Fraser: No, I agree with you there.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is all I want. When these concessions were made we were carrying necessities such as superphosphate, which was essential for the development of the country and the main product at that time was wheat. But in order to obtain that concession, the railways imposed a condition on the farmer that he should allow the railways to carry all his other commodities which were not subject to concessions. So long as we allow these concessions to continue so must the agreement to carry their other products remain.

I would like to see the abolition of the restriction on the cartage of wool but before that is done an adjustment of freights would be necessary. If the two are done simultaneously the problem will solve itself because it is not a serious one. I understand the amendment applies only to those farmers who carry their wool in their own vehicles. I agree that this would be done very seldom but there is a principle involved in this question. The principle should be to this effect, "We will give you these concessions but we must have your profitable carriage." That is why I am going to oppose this Bill and for no other reason.

We should not break away from that principle until an adjustment has been made in the freight charges which have been operating in the past. I urge the Minister to resist the clamour of a few people against legitimate and fair charges when such people can afford to pay them. I am engaged in wool raising myself and the charges on wool production are tremendous today. It costs £1 a bale to insure wool at present. Therefore, the State is entitled to some benefit from this prosperity and if it were alert it would be quick about it and ensure that it obtained its share.

It must not be forgotten that the farmer would not be paying the whole of the increased charges because these amounts are deducted from his taxation returns and today I am certain that many farmers are paying 10s. in the £ taxation. Therefore, the Commissioner for Taxation would probably be paying half of the increased charges on the railways. The Government

should not wait for somebody to move but should be one of the first in and say nothing about it. That is done in business and it must be done, otherwise private enterprise could not carry on. I must oppose the second reading.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South—in reply) [8.10]: I thank hon. members for the interest and enthusiasm they have shown during this debate. It is somewhat of a precedent when a private member's Bill can shock an hon. member.

Hon. L. Craig: No, not the Bill; the statement by the Honorary Minister.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I am sorry, but the hon. member was shocked as a result of something divulged following the introduction of the Bill.

Hon. L. Craig: You are responsible for it. You are a shocking boy!

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Evidently Mr. Craig did not hear the figures which I quoted earlier in the debate because I mentioned that wool freights, from 1945 to 1949 had increased by 36 per cent., wheat freights by 74 per cent., superphosphate by over 100 per cent. So there is no doubt that freight charges have risen. For the hon. member's benefit, I will again quote the freight charges on an 150-mile basis during the various periods.

In 1945 the freight charge on wool was 44s. 6d. a ton and in 1949 had increased to 60s. 8d. In 1948 it increased by 15s. a ton and it went up another 15s. a ton in two years. So the freight charges did rise with the increased wool prices. Wheat in 1945 was 12s. 6d. a ton and in 1948 went up to 15s. 8d. a ton, and in 1949 to 22s. 3d. a ton.

Hon. L. Craig: I said that the concessional rates should not be continued.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: The concessional rate has increased from 12s. 6d. to 15s. 8d. a ton, and has jumped from 15s. 8d. to 22s. 3d. in one single rise. That is tremendous! It must not be forgotten that costs of production on all sides are rising continually. Railway costs have increased owing to the payment of interest and sinking fund charges over a period of many years, and yet no charge has been made by the Lands Department for the use of the ground over which the railways are run.

The railways were built to help develop the country, and land, as a result, was sold in the districts which were served, and yet no charge was made by the Lands Department, which should have been made. Producers have been carrying this burden of interest and sinking fund payments for many years. I was pleased to hear the Minister for Transport say the other evening that there was going to be a writing down. If that had been done 10 years ago, the question of freight charges would

have been entirely different today. Unfortunately, they went on until we reached the crest of the wave of prosperity. Now, apparently someone in authority has realised that the overhead charges and accumulated sinking fund payments must be written down. I think the Minister for Transport made the statement that he was responsible for that. If so, I congratulate him on his initiative.

The Minister for Transport: I said I was going to submit that proposition to Cabinet, but I have not yet done so.

HON. A. L. LOTON: At least, the Minister has thought out something which will be very welcome if it has anything to do with the affairs of State. The small profit that the railways have made on the cartage of wool rather surprised me. The Minister stated that it amounted to .4d. per ton mile. That is indeed a minute profit, and I thought it would have been at least 3d. per ton mile, particularly when the Minister said that it was essential that at least this one payable commodity should be hauled by the department. It seems all the more remarkable in view of the increase in freight of 36 per cent. that the railways showed a profit of only .4d. per ton mile. I do not know if the Transport Board is responsible for it, but the Minister for Railways certainly said—

The State Transport Board has provided valuable protection for the railway system and enabled it to survive.

I certainly think the Act itself deserves full marks in that respect. It has caused a lot of grumbling in many sections of the community over a period of years.

The State Transport Co-ordination Act has by no means done the job it was intended to accomplish. The intention was that it should operate in co-ordinating the traffic of the State, but instead of that it has protected the railways against all forms of competition. All the Bill I have submitted is intended to do is to enable the producers to cart wool on their own vehicles if they so desire, in addition to other goods that are clearly defined in the measure. There is no compulsion about it at all. The question of the public carrier does not enter into it at all. I am in agreement with the contention that the man who plies for hire has knocked the roads of the State to pieces.

This is the second time this year that road transport has had to be employed in order that super. may be carted. Despite the fact that it was stated that there would be no such transport needed until early in the year, here we are in October and we have had to resort to this form of haulage. I view with alarm the position that will arise when the harvest really starts to be moved. More trucks will have to be employed if super. is to be delivered in accordance with the proposed plan that the railways desire to carry out.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: And there will be record water carting, too.

HON. A. L. LOTON: I know there is always an answer to everything that is put up.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: But I am agreeing with you!

The PRESIDENT: Order! I suggest that the hon. member might address the Chair.

HON. A. L. LOTON: I shall do so, Mr. President, and to that end shall ignore interjections. The suggestion made that all that is necessary is to ring up the Transport Board and a permit will be granted is all very well, but the solution is not as easy as that. If a person were to ring up the board, the reply received would be that railway trucks were available and that a permit would not be granted. That is the real answer that one would receive.

I can quote a couple of instances regarding railway delays that have occurred within the last three weeks. One day in a country town a man brought in two loads of wool. Both were loaded on to trucks, sheeted and despatched. One truck arrived at Fremantle seven days later than the other. The effect was that half the man's wool will be sold next Monday at the October sale and the other half will be submitted at the sale in November. That means that the man has to incur all the varied costs that apply to the handling of wool at the sales and in addition, is not able to have the wool sold in his own line, which he desires if at all possible.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER: How many bales did he have?

HON. A. L. LOTON: Between 50 and 60 bales.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER: He could not bring down that quantity.

HON. A. L. LOTON: No. My complaint in that instance is that the Railway Department dropped one of the trucks off at a siding for some reason or other, and therefore the wool did not reach Fremantle in the one consignment. In the other instance, a man loaded the wool on to a truck and had five bales over. He decided to cart that wool himself. His consignment arrived at Fremantle five days late and will not be disposed of at the same sale as the rest of his output.

Such experiences have raised the ire of producers. These men are providing a commodity that is returning tremendous wealth to the State, which is an advantage to Western Australia in consequence of the high prices obtained for wool. If we are compelled to use one system of transport, it should provide a reasonable service. If the Railway Department rendered proper service to the producers and



in the event of the Bill I have introduced being agreed to, I do not think 30 per cent. of the producers would use their road vehicles for the cartage of wool.

If a man had five odd bales he might put them on a truck and cart them to the metropolitan area, but under existing conditions the railways are simply hiding behind the protection of the State Transport Co-ordination Act. Small increases in freights have applied in the metropolitan area, but I do not think any manufacturers have been compelled to use the railways for the cartage of their output to customers or of their requirements to the factories. They are allowed to use contract carriers or to employ their own vehicles.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: The railways were not intended to develop the city.

Hon. L. A. Logan: It would be a pretty poor city without the railways.

HON. A. L. LOTON: Then I assume the railways are intended to run round in circles! There has been a slight increase in the fares on the suburban railways, but even then a section of the community was excluded on the ground that the individuals concerned could not carry the additional burden. The concession fares that apply during an hour or so in the morning were exempt from any increases. If producers have received concessions, then obviously the same principle has been applied to other sections of the community.

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

Ayes	10
Noes	12

Majority against .... 2

#### Ayes.

Hon. E. J. Boylen	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. N. E. Baxter

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. Fraser

(Teller.)

#### Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. H. L. Roche	Hon. G. B. Wood

Question thus negatived; Bill defeated.

House adjourned at 8.28 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 18th October, 1950.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### EDUCATION.

As to Northam High School, Cycle Rack.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has a decision yet been made to install a cycle rack at the Northam High School?

(2) If not, when is a decision likely to be made?