

The HONORARY MINISTER: He would not have to go that far unless he had a big property, and it is easier for a big farmer to do these things than for a small one. This would apply to unreasonable farmers. I cannot imagine a man with a sense of responsibility doing this work and leaving the land near the fence in a condition dangerous to traffic. If members want to investigate the matter further, I will report progress.

Hon. A. Thomson: You know what the department requires; I do not.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is what the road boards require, and they are backed up by the departmental officers.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.57 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 20th November, 1946.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION.

ABORIGINES AND PROFESSOR ELKIN'S VISIT.

As to Tabling Correspondence.

Mr. RODOREDA (without notice) asked the Minister for the North-West: Did he read an article in this morning's issue of "The West Australian" referring to a proposed visit to this State by Professor Elkin? If so, will he accede to the suggestion that the correspondence between the Minister and the writer of the letter be laid on the Table of the House?

The MINISTER replied: The answer to the first part of the hon. member's question is yes. The answer to the second part is that I have no objection to laying those papers on the Table of the House. The papers will disclose that there was a private conversation between Archdeacon Parry of Perth and Mr. Taylor, representing the National Missionary Council, of which no shorthand notes were taken. The correspondence from then onwards is available and will be laid on the Table of the House.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Companies Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Justice.

2, State Forest Access.

Introduced by the Minister for Forests.

MOTION—ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [2.5]: I move—

That for the remainder of the session the House shall meet for the despatch of business on Fridays in addition to the days already provided.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

BILL—DAYLIGHT SAVING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [2.6]: I agree with the Premier that there is at the present time need for consideration of legis-

lation such as this but, at the same time, I feel that there are provisions in this Bill that are going to be extremely difficult to manage, as it stands at present. The Premier, in his remarks, made some comparison between areas within a radius of 35 miles, as proposed in the Bill, and areas outside that radius, and the State of South Australia and the State of Victoria, where there is an imaginary borderline, with a difference of one half-hour in time between the two States. I submit that there are considerable differences in the circumstances existing in those two cases. Victoria and South Australia are under different jurisdictions and Governments, and the employment of persons in one would hardly be affected by conditions in the other, whereas those within the boundary line proposed by the Bill and those without it might very well be employed in the same industry, under the same control, and would then find themselves in some considerable difficulty when it came to a differentiation in time.

One can, if one wishes, conjure up all sorts of anomalous positions that might readily arise. Suppose we take point A, which is just on the edge of the 35-mile radius and within reasonable distance of point B, where somebody has to work, although he is domiciled at point A. He is ready to commence work at 8.30 a.m., according to the time within the daylight-saving time zone. He travels three miles to his work, which is outside that area, to find that he has arrived there $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours too soon. At the end of the eight hours, which we will assume is the working day for him, those with whom he is working are supposed to work for two hours longer than he wants to work, so it is not quite so easy as the Premier indicated when he made the remark to which I have referred. At the same time, I think I can see quite plainly the reasons that actuated him in bringing the Bill forward in the manner that he did. He contends, I have no doubt, that there are areas in this State—the rural areas in particular—where there is no reason at present for a daylight-saving Bill, and where such a provision was not liked when it was imposed by Commonwealth legislation in the past, and where it would almost certainly not be liked now.

Because I can see the force of those reasons, which I believe would be among the

reasons of the Premier in bringing down the Bill in this form, I do not propose to press that this radius of 35 miles should be taken out of the measure, although from many aspects I feel sure it would be far easier of operation and far less likely to lead to difficulties and anomalies of one kind or another if that were done. The paramount consideration at the moment is undoubtedly to minimise the hardship and difficulties that are upsetting people who are accustomed to be served by the metropolitan electricity supply. Unquestionably there is very considerable hardship not only because of the failure of the electricity supply itself by reason of the industrial troubles that are now confronting us, but because it is impossible to obtain even reasonably efficient substitutes. Circumstances that have arisen are such that every form of illumination of a reasonably suitable kind is almost impossible to obtain, even if one went further afield and made inquiries in districts far from Perth where they might reasonably be expected to be obtainable in the ordinary way. However, we have to accept the regrettable position as it is and take such steps as we can to minimise the unpleasantness and discomfort and, in some cases I would say, the unhappiness occasioned by the absence of proper illumination at night in the metropolitan area.

This Bill undoubtedly will make a contribution toward that end. So far as I can see it cannot do any harm, and it must do quite a lot of good to a great many people. I anticipate, although the Bill does not say so, that if it is proclaimed to come into operation it will only extend for a limited period and not for use after the strike is over and conditions, which have been disturbed in consequence of the present industrial trouble, are restored more or less to normality. I take it that is quite understood and that the Premier will have no hesitation in assuring us—if any assurance is required—on that point. I trust also he will do what he can to give consideration to some measure that will do away with the inconvenience which I can see will take place at borderline places within the 35-mile radius and just outside it. It is clear to me that many rural producers will be within that radius. It will go into the electorate of the member for Murray-Wellington because a radius of 35-miles in a straight line would

take us nearly down to North Dandalup, which is 43 miles away by road.

There will be many persons engaged in rural industry who will be affected by this legislation. Then again, if I am right in my belief, there is no desire for this in rural areas, and that is the main reason why the Bill is not to extend to the greater portion of the State. The people I have in mind will undoubtedly be affected by it, and many more in like positions. I am prepared to see this legislation in its present form experimented with for the reason that I am satisfied it will make a contribution towards alleviating the present difficulties and unpleasantness that exist in the metropolitan area, which is no fault of the people affected by it, at any rate in the majority of cases. I am also prepared to agree to it in the hope that it will be administered in such a way as to prevent difficulties that will crop up elsewhere. I support the second reading.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [2.14]: A case has been made out for a measure of this description to meet the emergency we are experiencing at present. In the time that has been available to me I have endeavoured to ascertain the opinions of representative organisations and I find that they consider the measure acceptable and hold that it can do no harm that they can see. They express the belief that, on the other hand, good results may be achieved, which they consider will be well worthwhile. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I take it that the Bill is one to meet the existing emergency. Public opinion was very definitely against a continuance of the daylight saving system that was imposed during the war, and I would not like to see any Bill that might be for an indefinite period pass rapidly through Parliament without the people generally having an opportunity to express their opinions as to whether or not they approved of such legislation. On the other hand, as a measure to meet existing circumstances, to operate during an emergency and until such time as conditions return to normal, the Bill is one that should receive approval.

I have not had time to give any detailed attention to the wording of the Bill, and I accept the assurances of the Premier and

the Parliamentary Draftsman that the verbiage meets the requirements. I have made some slight examination of a similar enactment passed by the Imperial Parliament from which this Bill has been drawn, but I have not had time to make a similar examination of the references to other legislation that appear in the Bill. The measure gives power to save up to two hours of daylight and the period to be so saved is to be determined by proclamation. The Premier said he would be prepared to have some consultation as to what that time should be. From opinions expressed to me from a number of sources, it has been quite strongly suggested that one hour should be a convenient time. It is not as though this Bill was introduced in winter-time; it comes before us when we have a maximum period of daylight. If two hours were provided for, it would bring into operation new times that might create a situation entailing more inconveniences to counter-balance the increase in time than otherwise would follow from the Bill. I suggest to the Premier that one hour would be convenient and the extra hour so gained would cover all that is sought by the Bill. I support the second reading.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [2.17]: I support the Bill only because it is emergency legislation. The member for West Perth pointed out that public opinion was definitely against the daylight saving system as it existed under the Commonwealth regulation. The only justification for it at present is that no electric lighting is available in the homes, whereas when daylight saving previously operated lighting was enjoyed by the people in their dwellings. Because of the industrial dislocation at present existing, no electricity is available now and the people are suffering inconvenience in consequence, particularly in view of the artificial lighting resorted to, such as candles and improvised kerosene lamps.

The passage of the Bill will provide an extra hour or so of daylight that can be availed of by the people. One of the worst features is that, although we realise that the convenience of primary producers will be rather disturbed, there are thousands of women with children whom it is difficult to get to bed before 9 o'clock at night. The children play around and it is most diffi-

cult to get them to bed while it is still light. I know that we did enjoy some conveniences under the daylight saving system during the war period because people could indulge in sport up to 9 p.m. I myself did so on occasions. When the system was enforced under Commonwealth regulations it was an industrial measure, the object of which was to ensure a saving of power in the generating of electricity. By making greater use of daylight in the summertime, a good deal of economy was effected. In this instance, however, the only justification for the Bill is the emergency at present existing. There is no electric light in the homes and it is necessary to make greater use of the hours of daylight. Immediately the industrial dispute ends, I trust that a proclamation will be issued to discontinue the operation of the measure.

MR. RODOREDA (Roebourne) [2.21]: One aspect of the question has been brought under my notice by a representative of a number of the dairymen within the 35 miles radius. On their behalf, he expressed definite hostility to the measure for the reason that dairymen would have to bring in their cows to be milked a couple of hours earlier. Anybody who knows anything about the dairying industry is aware that, if the time of milking is altered, the production falls considerably. The flush period in the industry is past and production has dropped appreciably during the last two or three months, and the dairymen say that this change in time will cause a further decrease in production. Then, when they have to change back to normal time again, production once more will suffer. Consequently these men feel a good deal of concern.

I thought the matter serious enough to try to get into touch with the Premier this morning. However, I did not succeed, but I communicated with the chairman of the Milk Board and pointed out what bound the dairymen down to specific milking hours was the time when the contract carters called to pick up the milk. I have received word that the chairman got into touch with the depots and carters and has practically arranged for the contract carters to ignore the daylight saving and go along at the normal time. Thus the difficulty has been overcome.

MR. OWEN (Swan) [2.23]: I support the second reading of the Bill, but I think it should be interpreted broadly because, as the Leader of the Opposition mentioned, if daylight saving were introduced with fixed boundaries, some dislocation of industry would be caused. I rose chiefly to point out that if daylight saving were introduced and the clock were advanced two hours and children were expected to reach school at the equivalent of 7 a.m., it would be very hard on them because they would be forced to rise proportionately earlier. On the other hand, it would be difficult to get those children to bed earlier because they would play round during the evening until their normal bedtime. I suggest that the schools should still commence at what would normally be 9 a.m. This would have an additional advantage in that the staggering of school hours as compared with those of people going to work would relieve the transport situation.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [2.24]: The two preceding speakers have pointed out difficulties that certainly will arise. If cows are milked two hours earlier than usual, the production will definitely decline. I believe that the reason why women-folk were so opposed to daylight-saving some time ago was on account of its definite effect on the children. Children like to have a certain amount of darkness before they go to bed and daylight saving dislocated their routine.

I should not like to see an arrangement for the schools to start at 11 instead of 9 a.m. If children had to rise one or 1½ hours earlier than usual, they would be a nuisance about the place. I should like to leave this matter to the discretion of the Premier, who doubtless will consider all aspects. If a difference of only 1½ hours were involved, it might be better, but the matter can safely be left in the hands of the Premier. Suppose the strike were settled within the next 24 or 48 hours, what would happen under the measure?

The Premier: No proclamation would be issued.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I thought the intention was to pass the Bill through all stages yesterday. However, I should like to know what will happen if the strike should suddenly end. I take it that daylight saving

will not be continued once the strike is over, but there may be some dislocation for a considerable time afterwards. Perhaps it would be better to have daylight saving for at least a couple of weeks until people are able to get candles, lamps, etc., not at present available.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne—in reply) [2.28]: When moving the second reading, I stressed the point that this Bill is intended to meet emergency conditions only. The member for Subiaco asked what would happen if the strike ended before the measure was proclaimed. What would happen would be that no proclamation would be issued prescribing daylight saving. The matter of conserving electric energy will be quickly and rapidly overtaken when normality returns. On the previous occasions when daylight saving was discussed in this Chamber, the need was to conserve coal. Now it is to use all the daylight possible because there is no coal to generate artificial light.

There is much in the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition. There is an opportunity and necessity for making simple adjustments in the lives of the people both inside and outside the area and on the borderline. No person living within the radius where daylight saving applied would rise an hour earlier or leave his home an hour earlier if he worked over the boundary where the ordinary time was observed. The point raised by the member for Roebourne is one that we had to consider. I set inquiries in motion in regard to other forms of transport. But it does affect producers who are marketing a commodity which has to be picked up according to a regular schedule. I can assure members that all these things will be adjusted, so that neither the cow nor the cow-owner will be inconvenienced. With regard to children, I am told that they will wake up early, anyway, and that when they do wake up it will be possible for parents to rise instead of saying, "Keep quiet until we get up!"

Mr. J. Hegney: That depends on the age of the child.

The PREMIER: Yes, and on home discipline.

The Minister for Lands: And the age of the parents, too.

The PREMIER: It is a matter of discipline to a great extent. Instead of parents saying, "Keep quiet," it will be time for them to get up when the children wake. The question of education is being closely examined by the Minister. The earliest time the Bill can be proclaimed is from midnight on Thursday, so that the measure will apply as from Friday. If something happens within the next 24 hours to obviate the need for daylight saving, the proclamation will not issue. The House has the assurance that we will take care that this is purely an emergency measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HAIRDRESSERS REGISTRATION.

Report of Committee adopted.

MOTION—RAILWAYS.

*As to Inquiry into Efficiency and
Administration.*

Debate resumed from the 13th November on the following motion by Mr. Seward:—

That this House expresses its grave dissatisfaction with the Government Railways affairs in this State for the following reasons:—

- (1) The increasing inability of the railway system to handle freight offering.
- (2) The increasing discontent among the staff.
- (3) The dilatoriness in making improvements.
- (4) The doubt as to efficiency of the administration.

And calls upon the Government to institute a searching public inquiry at which employees can give evidence without prejudice to their positions, and other sections of the community be freely heard with a view to early restoration of a reasonable level of service and efficiency of management.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS
(Hon. W. M. Marshall—Murchison) [2.35]
I listened attentively to the member for

Pingelly when he introduced this motion, but I feel that he offered nothing particularly new or refreshing in the points he submitted.

Mr. Watts: We expected you to do that.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: For many years we have been accustomed to listening to similar comments on and criticisms of the railway system; but may I say that since this Government took office approximately 14 months ago, no Minister has ever made a declaration that the Government itself is satisfied with the standard of service rendered by the railways. Even prior to the advent of this Government, I do not know that a serious defence had been offered for many years past in regard to the inadequacy of the service rendered by the system. This Government assumed office almost at the declaration of the cessation of the war. There is a large percentage of the community that, rightly or wrongly, believed that when the last bullet was fired all the handicaps under which people had existed during the war would vanish. Time has proved that to be inaccurate; and we find greater difficulty now in remedying certain factors than was the case during the war. Formerly, for instance, it was possible, on account of the importance of maintaining the railways, to secure requisites for the maintenance of rollingstock and traction power that it is well-nigh impossible to obtain today.

The Commonwealth Government, with its conscriptive regulations, was able to oblige us with urgent requirements but, since the war ended and we have been passing through the transition stage from war to civil production, many of the necessities of everyday life have been denied us to a greater extent than during the war. I said that this Government had never attempted to defend the standard of service being rendered to the public. It was realised that the system was in a precarious position so far as rollingstock and traction power were concerned, and consequently the standard of service was low and practically impossible to defend having regard to the treatment the people have a right to expect in this connection. But the motion would imply, in some of its terms, that the Government is defending the standard.

Some of the points referred to would seem to indicate that the Government is dilatory in its desire and ambition to improve the standard. To make an assertion of that sort is to depart altogether from the facts and to divorce the statement from the possibility of support by any person who realises the invidious position in which the Government is placed under present circumstances. Everything possible was done to relieve the position, and the Government set out to improve the traction power of the railway system, by endeavouring to secure engines from anywhere, either within Australia or abroad.

Mr. Watts: When was that?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Members know that. It was done almost 12 months ago, but the endeavour met with no success. Engines could not be obtained either from abroad or within Australia at that time. There was then no alternative but to attempt to step-up production—as far as men and materials were available—in the Midland Junction workshops. There again great difficulties were met. Trouble was also encountered in securing sufficient skilled labour to meet normal requirements, quite apart from overtaking the lag that had come into existence over a period of many years. The handling of such problems is easily criticised, but in fact such difficulties are extremely hard to overcome. I think members will be reasonable enough to appreciate that the deficit of last year was a good indication of the Government's desire to improve the railway system. Further, if one reviews the Treasurer's presentation of our case to the Grants Commission one finds there another indication that the Government is not sparing expenditure in its endeavour to relieve the position.

Quite apart from the inability to secure all requirements to improve the service rendered to the public by our railways, the Government has not been altogether satisfied with the method of control, and has never made any declaration to the contrary. As a matter of fact, since I have been a member of the Ministry every effort has been made to expedite the presentation of a Bill the purpose of which would be to effect a change in the method of control, but it is not the simple proposition that one might believe, if not faced with

the responsibility of having to frame such legislation. Investigations have to be made and varying circumstances compared and those factors, coupled with a great many other obstructions such as are met with in the course of a job of this sort, have rendered it almost impossible to present that legislation, at least up to date. The possibility of introducing that measure this session is becoming more remote as days go by. The departments concerned with drafting legislation and with printing are working overtime, and have been doing so for a good while. I think members are now well aware of the position as far as printing is concerned.

I would point out to the member for Pingelly that if the major piece of legislation is not introduced this session—it does not now appear that it will be practicable to do so—I feel I can give him and other members of the Opposition the assurance that there will be an alternative measure introduced which will have some practicability, having regard to the handicaps with which one is confronted in the drafting and printing of Bills at present. The trouble with our railway system is not peculiar to Western Australia. It is a worldwide problem today. I know of no State in the Commonwealth that boasts of 100 per cent. efficiency in rail transport at the present time. All the States in the Commonwealth are suffering today from the results of the war and Western Australia made greater sacrifices than did most of the other States, because we contributed more to the war effort in skilled labour, on a per capita basis, than did any other State.

For some years before the war, there was a tendency to allow the capacity of the system to drift, and from 1929 to 1936 or 1937 very little was done or could have been done—I emphasise the words “could have been done”—to maintain the system in decent order or to increase and improve the standard of the service. As members are aware, for a period of five or six years, little or no money was made available for the purpose. Consequently the railway system, at the outbreak of war, was severely handicapped. Having contributed to the war effort and to the extent we did, we sacrificed the possibility of improving the service; and no-one would say that during that period we should have done other than what we did, bearing

in mind all the circumstances that prevailed and the dangers that confronted us. It was quite impracticable to do anything more than was done in the effort to overtake the leeway as speedily as possible, and to suggest otherwise is unfair.

Apparently, however, there are some who glory in the opportunity to find fault at all times. I do not know how it came about that the Agent-General for Western Australia discovered that 14 engines built for the Egyptian service during the war period were available for purchase by this State if the Government desired to have them. Those engines were built for conditions which should render them most suitable for use on our system, both countries having rather warm climates, and were built by the Imperial Government in engineering works of very high repute. No sooner were we informed of the possibility of getting those 14 engines than we seized the opportunity in order to relieve the position in our own service. The member for Pingelly, when moving the motion, seemed rather sceptical about the wisdom of buying those engines.

Mr. Triat: They might be another war-time job.

Mr. Seward: They might be another “electricity” job.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is hard to say what sort of a job they are, other than that the plans and specifications were thoroughly investigated before we bought them. Engineers investigated the plans and specifications and blueprints and reported that the engines were serviceable, and bearing in mind that they were built by a reputable firm in a country renowned for its capacity to turn out engineering work of high quality, one could do no more than accept them as being at least somewhere near the mark.

Mr. Triat: The investigating engineer might not have known much about them.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: According to the attitude being adopted, am I to assume that we ought to return those engines?

Mr. Seward: I suppose that an engineer examined the Garratts, too.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Whether that is so or not, the engineer who

built these engines did not design the Garratts; nor did the engineers who designed these engines know the Australian Standard Garratt. I have stated that the engines were designed by reputable English engineers renowned for their efficiency.

Mr. Withers: Was not the blue print deviated from?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The specifications came from the engineering works.

Mr. Withers: But the blueprint was deviated from.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I could not hear the interjection. The whole of the specifications came from the engineering works where the engines were manufactured. They were not drawn here. The Government is doing its very best to relieve the position and it has even taken the risk of buying these engines, and to be subjected to such criticism is not very encouraging. Nothing better could have been done in the circumstances. Referring to the point raised by the member for Pingelly, the only way we could have got engines from abroad would have been to send plans and specifications of our requirements to the various manufacturing firms with a view to getting quotes from them, and those plans and specifications would have had to be drawn up by our own engineers about whom some members seem rather doubtful.

In the case of the 14 engines that came from England, that did not happen. The plans and specifications were perused by the engineers of the Western Australian Railway Workshops and every endeavour was thus made by the Government to relieve the position. Yet, after we have done our best, our efforts seem to meet with the disapproval of members. Having regard to the condition into which the system has drifted, it seems to be that we may have to import engines or get them built in one of the other States. Consider the lag, the arrears of maintenance and the unsatisfactory position as regards traction power! A large percentage of our locomotives are 40 to 50 years old and have passed the stage when they can be economically repaired. Realising this, we must obtain replacements at the earliest possible moment.

Then there was the period of transition from one stage to another and that occupied some considerable time. To overcome the position so far as our traction was concerned and still maintain the output which is essential—about ten to twelve a year—we should in three or four years' time have to build at the rate of 23 to 25 engines per annum. The Midland Junction Workshops have not the capacity to do that at the moment. Apart from the 14 engines, we will have ultimately to obtain other engines when we can and where we can. The Government is not dilatory in trying to secure these engines. Immediately funds were available for the purpose of reconstructing and extending the Midland Junction Workshops, the Government took steps to speed up the production of those works. But the Government is up against other difficulties, namely, shortage of materials and manpower. Those are difficulties which we cannot overcome at present. Members will realise, therefore, that the position is not as simple as it would appear to be, and that there are many difficulties which the Government must meet in its constant efforts to step up production, and in that connection the money involved will not be a consideration at all. To that extent, I think members will be fair in their criticism.

I go so far as to state that while it might easily be said, as indicated in the motion, that some degree of inefficiency in the administration and control of the railway system is apparent—one may be prepared to admit that—the department has been faced with extreme difficulties over a period of years. The Government has done everything it possibly could and will continue to do so, but to overcome all the difficulties will take a period of time. It may be that we shall be able to secure quicker delivery of engines from outside, or even inside, Australia than was anticipated when the firms concerned were last communicated with. However, Western Australia is not a constant buyer of engines from outside Australia. A long time has elapsed since this State bought locomotives abroad. The countries which have been in the habit of buying engines and rollingstock from outside manufacturers no doubt placed their orders with them before the war broke out and naturally the manufacturers would be inclined to fulfil their obligations to the

customers who are permanent buyers of their goods. But Western Australia is not such a customer; it is a matter of convenience for us at the moment to get a supply from abroad of railway engines suitable for our system.

The first point raised by the hon. member when submitting his motion was the failure of engines to pull their authorised loads on one or two occasions. He made reference to the fact that, in order to speed up the system, the department evidently did not take cognisance of the effect of its efforts, because on two occasions it was found necessary to divide a train in order that the authorised load could be pulled by the engine. The hon. member felt as though the Government had speeded up the system before it was advisable to do so. When the department discarded mixed trains in an effort to speed up passenger services and used Diesel electric cars to the maximum, many complimentary remarks were made on the subject, and I think the service was much appreciated by those who were using it. However, the member for Pingelly made reference to these facts in such a way as to indicate that he at least was not satisfied with the endeavour made to speed up the service.

I tell the hon. member that I have not had the experience of an engine being called upon to haul more than it could in normal circumstances. However, a number of factors must be taken into consideration. The engines have specified or authorised loads which they are permitted to haul; but those loads are worked out on the basis of everything running smoothly. Other factors come into the life of a railway engine which might seriously handicap its capacity to haul its authorised load. For instance, I suggest that if a tender were loaded with inferior coal, this might materially affect the possibility of generating sufficient power for the engine to haul its authorised load.

Slippery rails may have the same effect. Some mechanical defect may suddenly appear which also would have the same effect. But I would emphasise the point that for a long period our engines were called upon to haul colossal loads, and the constant daily service which they had to render made it impossible for them to be fully maintained in a decent state of repair. When engines

in that state are out on traffic, it is no so surprising that occasionally something will happen that will inconvenience or upset the running. I listened carefully to the member for Pingelly and have read his speech, and I do not know whether he is satisfied now that the department made a mistake when it endeavoured to speed up the carriage of passengers, or whether the complaint he made was apart from the endeavour to speed up the system.

The next point raised by the hon. member dealt with the haulage of wheat. Here again, I went to much trouble to secure the actual facts as they are recorded, and to a degree the member for Pingelly was quite right. However, all of the statements made by him were not quite correct. He referred to the haulage of the 1942 season's wheat. A conference was held in the office of the Commissioner of Railways on the 12th November, 1941, at which representatives of the Western Australian Wheat Board and Co-operative Bulk Handling were present. The object was to arrange for the haulage of the 1942 wheat harvest. It was agreed that a weekly haulage of 22,000 tons would be necessary to haul all the wheat by January.

At the conference it was considered that 100,000 tons of wheat should be hauled in order to empty the silos to make ready for the oncoming harvest. In that month the question was raised as to the desirability of bringing all the wheat to the seaports. For strategic reasons it was considered inadvisable to do so. On a scrutiny I found that the parties interested in the wheat could not arrange for the average haulage of 22,000 tons per week. They failed to a material extent also, and naturally took the line of least resistance by throwing the whole of the responsibility for the failure on to the Railway Department. It was decided ultimately that about 350,000 tons of that year's wheat should not be brought into too close proximity to our seaport towns for strategic reasons. So the hauling of wheat slackened off and it was arranged that the railway system should haul 10,000 tons of wheat per week, and this the railways undertook to do. I say quite frankly that they did not succeed 100 per cent. in that. The reason was mainly because of the colossal increase in the transportation of troops and military traffic, and a change-over had to be made.

The next point the hon. member raised dealt with the erection of bins at Bassendean. I find from investigations that when those bins were decided upon the storage capacity at North Fremantle was exhausted. From the point of view of strategy, it was not considered advisable to bring all the wheat right into the port. These bins were as a result, erected at Bassendean to relieve the position at North Fremantle. We also did something similar in some of our southern towns. The wheat was taken to two or three places rather than concentrated at a seaport. Although in the 1944-45 season the commissioner contended that he could comply with all the demands made upon the system, and arrangements were made for a certain tonnage of wheat to be hauled weekly, the Commonwealth Government finally insisted upon the introduction of road transport.

When the interested parties met early in the season to arrange for the transport of a given quantity of wheat in 1945—and I think a Commonwealth representative was at the conference—the Commissioner gave an undertaking on the understanding that the Commonwealth Government would accede to some of his proposals. He pointed out that he was very short of manpower and asked the Federal representative to make the necessary approach for the release of certain railway employees whom it was essential to have to give effect to the undertaking which the Commissioner said he could give. It was agreed that the Commonwealth authorities should also release sufficient manpower to enable the deviation at the Swan View tunnel to be completed in a given time. The third proposal was that, as we were experiencing coal difficulties in Collie and there was an acute shortage of that fuel, the Federal representative would make overtures to the Commonwealth Government to increase the supply of Newcastle coal so that the Commissioner could carry out his undertaking.

Finally, the representatives duly arrived and found that the Commissioner was not carrying out the undertaking he gave. That was not the only factor. Due to the shortage of wheat in the Eastern States, it was considered that a greater quantity of wheat was required in a given period. These factors must be taken into consideration with the others. The point I wish to make is that although the Commonwealth representative gave an undertaking to play a certain part,

he did nothing. No men were released, either for manning the trains or for work on the deviation at the tunnel. Neither was there any great increase of Newcastle coal supplied to Western Australia in that period. While the Commonwealth authorities failed to fulfil their side of the contract, they seemingly expected our railway system to do its part to the full. The undertaking was given on the basis I have outlined, which was never conformed to by the Commonwealth, so it is little wonder that the Railway Department failed to fulfil its obligations. Later, when a further conference was held in 1945 or 1946 and it was arranged that 13,500 tons of wheat a week should be hauled, and the railway system did keep up to its undertaking, the Commonwealth representative was fair enough to eulogise the performance of our system. He made the following complimentary remarks:—

“The W.A. Government Railways are to be complimented on the success which has attended their efforts to move the wheat from country storage. The position of W.A. is better than in any other State in the Commonwealth.”

While there is every justification to criticise the system, I think there are occasions, even though they may be rare, when we might refer to the other side of the picture. The member for Pingelly knows, as does every member sitting on the Opposition benches, that the remainder of last year's wheat is scattered far and wide around the wheatbelt of the State, and that we are close on finishing the haulage of that crop. Some little time ago, several members contacted me regarding the necessity for setting up wheat haulage for fodder and gristing. To the best of the ability of the Railway Department, that was done, but it appears that some of our mills would have had to close down by now because we have just about finished all the wheat in the State, and that has been the position for some time.

The next point raised dealt with transportation of lambs for the killing season. Normally, our rollingstock is capable of handling all that is essential for the lamb-killing season, but there are times, during peak periods, when we find it necessary to impose some form of rationing. I feel that the member for Pingelly—although probably right in his contention that there appeared to be a shortage of rollingstock to transport lambs for killing—would know that the

agents, too, have some control over the rollingstock for the transporting of live-stock. Although inquiries from the freezing works during this period point clearly to the fact that the two chain gangs functioning have not had to cease operations, we have had to transport quite a quantity of stock from the rural areas to the Eastern States. That has meant the use of rollingstock which, normally, would have been provided for the movement of lambs during the killing season.

These trucks were, in the main, lost to the service of the Western Australian system for the lamb-killing season, for seven or eight days at least. These difficulties arise, and the agents will carry on their programme, and I suppose they feel that this is the best trade for them to be interested in. I think the suggestion of the member for Pingelly was that bookings were refused. That is not altogether correct, although to an extent the hon. member was right. When all the rollingstock for these purposes has been allocated, the railway officials take no more bookings for a period of some days, because they cannot possibly do so. I think it was during the period to which I have referred that the hon. member got his information as to the refusal to make bookings. That is not quite true. What I have outlined is the system adopted. All rollingstock is booked out and then no more orders are taken for a day or two or, perhaps, a week, when the officers concerned know exactly what they can do. The point made was, I think, a genuine one, but it was put forward because of lack of information as to the system adopted.

In passing I may mention that the hon. member made some reference to a grower not being able to secure the trucks he required and later procuring them through the stationmaster at Pinjarra. I made inquiries to ascertain how that could have happened. The hon. member did not give any dates but that did not really matter. It appears from the information made available to me that when the order was lodged no trucks were available. Obviously not more than two trucks would have been required, and quite possibly two or three stock wagons had been taken into Pinjarra for the sales and that being so the stationmaster was able to make them available. I want the member for Pingelly to appreciate, however, that even in those

circumstances the stationmaster at Pinjarra would have to get the necessary authority from the head office in Perth before he could book those trucks out to anyone else. I have endeavoured to explain what happened in regard to the incidents the hon. member mentioned.

Another reference was to occasional complimentary remarks upon the efforts of the railways and I think members should consider very seriously the handicaps under which the system has been operated for many years. It has not had an easy job by any means. Throughout my lifetime I have always found that no difficulty at all was presented to the man who sat on the kerb of the highways and told me what an easy job members of Parliament have. I suppose you, Mr. Speaker, have had similar experiences. I do not for one moment argue that there has been 100 per cent. efficiency in connection with railway administration but I do say that the authorities have worked under most difficult circumstances with problems great and many. I shall quote one small paragraph that appeared in the Press as follows:—

A successful Quairading farmer highly praised the W.A. Government railways. 3,563 lambs, which were grazing on his property, were loaded into a special train by 6.30 p.m. The lambs were transported through the night and reached the works of W.A. Meat Exports, Robbs Jetty, at 6.30 a.m. next day. The owner stated the co-operation between the railways and the meat works left nothing to be desired.

So members will see that there are some who appreciate the efforts made and give credit to the railway authorities for doing all that is humanly possible in the circumstances prevailing. The next point made by the member for Pingelly had reference to the rollingstock. I think that phase of railway working has been thoroughly discussed and investigated, and members are aware of the Government's programme to rehabilitate the system as early and quickly as possible without any regard to financial considerations. We are stepping-up the programme. The original arrangement was that the lag would be overtaken in eight or 10 years as a result of the expenditure of £3,000,000 on rollingstock alone. We realise that even that is too slow, and we are endeavouring, if it be found practicable and possible, to step-up the programme so that it will be completed within half the period I have indi-

cated. The only consideration that will prevent the Government from accomplishing that objective is the impossibility of getting the necessary men and materials. The importation of rollingstock, such as railway engines, will not be a bar to the programme. If we can get the necessary men and materials much should be accomplished. We are undoubtedly short of manpower at the Midland Junction Workshops, and I am afraid we may have to go outside the State in order to supplement our rehabilitation programme. Possibly that aspect may be left until we deal with the Railway Estimates. Members will agree that it is futile to indulge in repetition, and I shall be able to explain the position better when presenting the Estimates.

The next point raised by the member for Pingelly had reference to engines being purchased from England by the South African Government. As I pointed out earlier in my remarks, in all probability the South African Government has been accustomed to buying its rollingstock from certain engineering works in the Old Land and quite possibly the engines to which the hon. member referred were on order long before the war broke out. Naturally when the firm concerned changed over from war to civil production, it hurriedly executed the order for the South African Government. So far as the system there is concerned I have gathered, from the reports I have seen dealing with it, that all is not well with the railways in that Union.

Mr. Styants: They have all the troubles that we have.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: And have them even now. I have perused a report from South Africa of a recent date and I know that they are experiencing most acutely many of the troubles that are confronting us. I gather from the report that the authorities are not altogether satisfied with the position there, although they can import engines from England. The report of the general manager for railways and harbours in South Africa contains the following:—

As the foregoing figures indicate, there has been a general decline in the output of repaired stock. Detailed comments on the repairs to the different classes of rollingstock are given in the ensuing paragraphs but it may be mentioned that, generally speaking, the falling off in output was due to the heavier repairs

required by obsolete stock, a large number of which it has been necessary to retain in service owing to the expansion of traffic and the difficulty experienced during the war years in obtaining new stock. Other factors were the large manufacturing programme, the shortage of staff and materials, and the congestion of workshops generally.

One would think I was reading from a report supplied by the Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Western Australian railways dealing with the local position. Further on in the report he says—

The repairs to steam locomotives, which reflect a decline of 128 compared with 1943-44, were largely affected by the big proportion of obsolete engines that required to be maintained in a working condition, at least one-third of the engines receiving heavy repairs being overdue for scrapping.

So much for South Africa.

Mr. Hill: How long would it be in South Africa before they would consider an engine obsolete?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Thank goodness, Mr. Speaker, I am slightly deaf and therefore can comply with the Standing Orders! Here is another extract from the report—

As already indicated, the Administration was called upon to handle an unprecedented volume of passenger, goods and coal traffic during 1944-45, and despite the new engines and trucks placed in service and notwithstanding the continuation of intensive working of rollingstock, the traffic offering was at times considerably in excess of available resources. The new locomotives and goods wagons placed in service during the year, particulars of which are given in the ensuing paragraphs, effected some improvement in the position, but the relief thus obtained was largely offset by additional traffic demands and the increased number of engines and trucks requiring overhaul and repairs.

The point is that despite the improvements that have been effected, the South African railways are in exactly the same position as our railways with their obsolete rollingstock. In those circumstances, the South African system is not in the position that the member for Pingelly would have us believe.

Mr. Styants: They did not get any new engines from the commencement of the war until 1945.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is so, and those are the engines to which I have referred as having been im-

ported just recently. The member for Pingelly then made some references to the Australian Standard Garratt locomotives. I think that all the possibilities regarding that type of engine have received ample consideration in recent days. Having regard to the position prevailing, nothing I could say or do would add to the sum total of the information possessed by every member. Another point referred to by the member for Pingelly concerned the New Zealand rail cars. I have made inquiries in regard to that matter because the member for Pingelly said in 1936 one of the Diesel electric rail cars was imported there and in 1937 they built one. From my investigations I understand the New Zealand authorities imported a complete Diesel electric car in 1936 and along with it they bought generators, engines and all the necessary requisites for a further six, which were assembled in New Zealand, not built there.

The hon. member knows that there have been on order—for the last three or four years so far as I can make out—six Diesel electric cars for the Western Australian railway system, and they have not yet been delivered. From time to time, even since I have been Minister for Railways, inquiries have been made as to the probable date of arrival, and the nearest we can get to it is that they may be expected early in the New Year. The member for Pingelly made some reference to the present maximum speed of Diesel cars as being 30 miles per hour. That is not altogether true because they are capable of doing 45 miles an hour.

Mr. Watts: They can do 48 miles an hour.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The latest Diesel cars that are coming out will be far more powerful and practically represent trains because they can take two trailers. The Government has done all it could. It was not possible to wave a magic wand and present the Diesel cars to the Commissioner of Railways. We must await delivery. These are the principal points raised by the member for Pingelly in presenting his motion. I wish to deal now with the motion as it appears on the notice paper. The first point is—

The increasing inability of the railway system to handle freight offering.

Having regard for the condition of the rollingstock, which ought to be well known to members, I do not think it can be found as a surprising effect that we are not able to do all that is required with the railway system. Nor is that particular circumstance a trouble peculiar to Western Australia. I think it will be found to be the position in almost every State of the Commonwealth. Our system will have to be regenerated. To rehabilitate it would not be sufficient. We have to replace 50 per cent. of our engines to make any material show in regard to our traction power. Our one desire is to do that as speedily as we possibly can. The position set out in paragraph 2 of the motion applies not only to the railway system; it will, I think, be found that in every walk of life, in almost every public department, in every privately-controlled and owned factory the same discontent exists. I should say we are suffering from an inability to make roads in this State, to bring those that are already made up to a decent state of repair. I suggest we have not been able to give electric power to the extent we should have been able to give it, nor water supplies to the extent that they are required. In almost every walk of life we find the same position applying. This is no new feature, nor is it confined to the railway system of Western Australia. Numbers 3 and 4 of the motion are—

3. The dilatoriness in making improvements.

4. The doubt as to the efficiency of the administration.

I think I have traversed the ground covered by those two paragraphs already. I have admitted that there is discontent. There is discontent in every industry that I know of.

The Minister for Works: There always was.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not know of a country that is enjoying immunity from discontent so far as working class employment is concerned. The Government is fully alive to the situation. For a long time past it has been giving consideration to the whole question, and probably its intentions would have matured some time ago but that factors intervened which prevented, so to speak, Government action. The particular industrial upheaval prevailing at the moment, although not of long

duration, has not helped the Government in any way to give effect to its wishes and intentions with regard to a thorough investigation and overhaul of our railway system. The position has been considered over a period of months. It is not an easy matter to get hold of an individual who is competent. I do not say that there is a drastic shortage of competent men in Australia, but to obtain their services for any particular proposal, or propositions such as the one indicated in the motion, is extremely difficult. I do not want it to be thought that we are out looking for scalps or trying to make scapegoats of any individual, or to do anything of that kind. The Government is well aware of all that has been going on, and has been watching the position closely and working in accordance with it. I feel that an indication of the Government's sincerity in that regard will be seen in the House in the course of a few days in the form of certain legislation. That will be a preliminary step in the direction indicated in the motion.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [3.50]: I am glad to hear from the Minister for Railways that the Government is fully alive to the problems set out in the motion. I fear that if something is not done quickly the railways will not be fully alive; they will speedily die. That would be a state of affairs for which I, at least, would be extremely sorry. The hon. gentleman's statement at the beginning of his remarks that he was not defending the railways, or excusing their present condition may have been very satisfactory so far as he himself is concerned, and in respect to the limited period in which he has had anything to do with their administration. I can accept it as not only an excuse so far as he is concerned, but as a reason. I can accept the fact that he has only been in charge of this department for something like 12 months. But he has not failed to give his support for 20 out of the last 23 years to Governments of the same political persuasion as himself, who, under successive Ministers for Railways, have had charge of the administration of that public utility. He must accept at least 20/23rds, which is a very substantial proportion, of the responsibility for the position in which these railways are today.

It has not been for lack of reminders from those seated on these benches, whoever they may have been during that period of years, that this state of affairs has come about. It is not the product of six years of war, because six years of war alone, unless that had been preceded by a state of affairs which was very substantially below par, could not, in my view and in the view of any reasonable person, have resulted in the state of affairs that exists today. The Minister in answer to an interjection from me, and speaking in regard to the new locomotives to be received from England, observed that the action to bring them here had been taken something like 12 months ago. He is to be given credit, and those responsible with him are also to be given credit, for the fact that that opportunity when offered was as speedily as possible taken advantage of. Obviously that will not solve the problem of the Commissioner of Railways in regard to rollingstock, particularly in respect of locomotive rollingstock. I quote from the Commissioner's report dated the 30th June, 1945, in which he says:—

The department requires 62 improved passenger and goods locomotives; 36 coaches; 640 high-sided wagons; 50 brakevans; 20 bogie covered vans; 80 bogie wagons; 30 coal-hopper wagons, and 20 water tankers. Substantial additions and improvements to the workshops and new machines and equipment are, however very necessary in order to increase the impetus of the output and enable these proposals to be given full effect.

He wanted amongst other things 62 improved passenger and goods locomotives, 640 high-sided wagons on the 30th June, 1945. At that time he had acquired 25 Australian Standard Garratt engines which have been the subject of so much discussion in the last few weeks. Notwithstanding that he had then 25 such engines he declares that the department requires 62 new locomotives. Yet in 1937 that same gentleman in his report indicated that all the belated repairs which had been held up as a result of previous difficulties consequent upon the depression years, had been caught up with. So it appears that either the position in 1937 was far worse than the Commissioner's report indicated or alternatively that there had been such a tremendous retrogression in the intervening period as to bring us to the state of affairs that existed 16 months ago. I have no doubt it was a combination of the two.

In 1937 there was a motion before this House for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the Railway Department. The Minister for Railways at that time made certain remarks concerning his views of what ought to be done to improve the system. He stated—

I am opposed to these suggestions.

The suggestion, amongst other things, was for the appointment of a Royal Commission.

Particularly when I know that the railway service is being well and efficiently conducted consistent with the material on hand.

I ask the House to note these words. He went on to say—

The material on hand is also consistent with what we can afford in our present state of economic development.

A little further back he said—

We are a comparatively poor State compared with the vast area that we have to administer. We have not reached the limousine level yet. We have to hasten slowly. We know that certain improvements can be effected. If we could spend a million pounds we would have a better railway service, but we cannot afford to spend the money.

He obviously knew, especially if we take these remarks in conjunction with the remainder of his speech, that a lot of money then was required to be spent to bring the railways even to a reasonable level of efficiency. That was apparently the policy of his Government, a Government of the same complexion as that of the hon. gentleman who has just concluded his speech. I point out that at that period there was no war, that the economic effects of the so-called depression had worn off for four years. Apparently the Government of that day was not prepared to take any steps either by an inquiry, which was refused in the House, or by an expenditure which it was stated the Government could not afford to remedy the position which then existed.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Was the depression over in 1937?

Mr. WATTS: Yes, so far as the majority of things were concerned. One could do almost anything within reason at that time. There was scarcely any difficulty of any major character in regard to unemployment or financial expenditure which could not have been overcome within reason. If it had been established, as it could have been, that that reasonable expenditure was required to prevent the serious retrogres-

sion of the railway system of Western Australia, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that it would have been done. So that is where I stand with regard to this particular matter. If legislation of some kind such as has been foreshadowed by the Minister is to be introduced into this Chamber in the near future, effecting some alteration in the state of affairs which is the subject of this motion, I have no hesitation in saying it will be brought before this House mainly on account of the continual criticism—and in the main criticism of a constructive type—which has come for years from this side of the House and, to a lesser degree, from the member for Kalgoorlie. For I have a recollection of the speech made by the member for Kalgoorlie in 1937 in which he confirmed, from the depths of his very considerable knowledge, much of the criticism that had been offered at the time by the member for Pingelly who was responsible for the motion that was moved then.

I was impressed by the member for Kalgoorlie on that occasion when he stated that no progress had been made in the Western Australian railways over the previous 25 years, and that, that being the case while the rest of the world was progressing Western Australia was actually slipping back. He never made a truer statement, because that has been the position of what is the most important transport element in our community today and what will continue to be, because of the vast areas in this State and the very considerable quantities of heavy freight that will need to be carried, an extremely important element in our transport organisation for years to come. The railway system in more recent months has got into a position from which it seems to me years will be required to extricate it. In the meantime, we are all suffering. The organisation of the State has suffered and it must suffer. Its development cannot easily be improved and extended, and the reward for people who have been expecting great things is to find that any improvement is to be postponed for another period of years.

The Minister said that he did not propose to enter into a discussion of Garratt engines, on account of the publicity given to them in recent days. I submit there has been exceedingly little publicity given to Garratt

engines in recent days. Considerable publicity has been given to the industrial trouble which is stated to have arisen out of the use or non-use of those engines; but that is a very different matter. I do not propose to enter into that, but I do think that the public ought to have been informed and should now be informed of the views of other people in responsible positions on this particular type of engine. I also assert that the question of these engines has a very great bearing on one aspect of this motion that is now before us; and that is the doubt as to the efficiency of the administration. The administration includes not merely the Minister and the Commissioner but also those who hold important executive positions in railway affairs. If there is one item of evidence, as it seems to me, as to the lack of efficiency in the administration, when one uses the word in the manner I indicated, I think the question of these engines has a very considerable bearing on it. In the report of the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Justice Wolff, it is stated on page 6—

This inquiry, of course, concerns the Australian Standard Garratt as distinguished from its predecessors of Garratt design used on the Western Australian Government Railways. But as some criticism was levelled at these older types I intend to deal shortly with them. The criticism was faint and not sustained. There does appear to have been some justifiable complaint in regard to the degree of heat developed in the cab but that is a matter which could easily have been corrected. I have no hesitation in saying that whatever evidence there is points very favourably to the older types and to their design in general.

It goes on to say on page 8 in regard to the engine now known as the Australian Standard Garratt —

Mr. Mills, who was appointed Designing and Constructing Engineer of the Commonwealth Land Transport Board and Controller of Rollingstock, was entirely responsible for the design.

He then informs us that Mr. Mills was Chief Mechanical Engineer in Western Australia. The remainder of the Royal Commissioner's comments on the Australian Garratt engine cannot lead anyone to any other belief than that they were ill-designed, badly conceived, and subject to a greater number of breakdowns, faults and troubles than any other locomotive used upon any other service in the Commonwealth. But one might not need to be content to take the evidence or the information supplied to one

by a Royal Commissioner who is a judge of the Supreme Court. One might say that perhaps—although I do not believe it for one moment—he made his report entirely on what he was told and with no practical knowledge. I do not think that is so, because I believe that, as a judge of the Supreme Court, he would be extremely careful to say nothing which had not been very substantially borne out by the evidence of persons well qualified to know.

But I sought for somebody who could tell me something about these Australian Garratt locomotives and the general effect of their working—someone who was a railway expert—and I came across the report of the Queensland Commissioner of Railways, who apparently had 30 of these locomotives inflicted upon him. This report is dated the 30th June, 1945, and after he has started off by saying that when the idea of mass-producing these locomotives without initial trial was brought before him by the Commonwealth Land Transport Board, he objected, he goes on to say at page 6—

My forecast that mass-produced locomotives of a design without initial trial was most unwise has been fully borne out by results. From the time that first engine arrived up to date, Garratt engines have given far more trouble than any other locomotives in this State. New engines should not require workshops attention for three or more years after being put into traffic. However, though nursed by southern locomotive experts who spent many months in Queensland, and given such care and attention by our own engineers and mechanics as was never bestowed on any other type of locomotive in this State, these engines have spent a large proportion of their time in workshops, due to numerous failures, including breakage of cylinders, overheating of bearings, breakage of pivot castings and bogie frames, defects in injectors, lens rings, valves, etc., breakage of firebox stays, and serious leakages in water tanks necessitating extensive repairs. The levelling pipe between the water tanks was of insufficient diameter, requiring the separate filling of each tank when taking water, involving extra movement and delay. Subsequently an additional large diameter pipe was provided on the other side of the locomotive. The fire door was of an unsuitable type and eventually the Queensland type of fire door had to be substituted. The ashpans did not discharge centrally into ashpits as with all Queensland engines but had ashpans on either side, which had to be emptied separately by hand en route, causing further delays. Eventually Queensland engineers designed a device for centrally discharging the ashes. The smokebox arrangement was unsatisfactory resulting

in tube ends being blocked by an accumulation of ashes, thus interfering with the steaming properties of the locomotive. The Chief Mechanical Engineer of this State designed a new arrangement for the front end which, eliminated this trouble.

It was also discovered that in rounding sharp curves one of the driving wheels lifted clear of the road.

These were only some of the many troubles experienced with Garratt locomotives. The position of the firedoor, which was placed at floor level, was strongly objected to by firemen and constant trouble has been experienced with enginemen in the operation of these engines. Excessive side wear develops very quickly in the axle boxes, and on several occasions the leading flangeless driving wheel has become derailed on the open road away from railway stations, causing damage to the track and serious delay to train services. The large number of alterations necessary to the Garratt engines has involved the spending of several thousand pounds per locomotive, but this will not be a charge against Queensland, the total expenditure of £18,000 each covering the provision of the altered locomotives.

He goes on to say—

Although a Garratt locomotive is much more powerful than any Queensland engine, the fact that it spends so much time in the workshop and requires so much special attention, detracts from its value, the mileage actually run by these locomotives being, during the past few months, little more than half that run by all other types, many of which are 40 or more years old. For instance, for the month of July, the average mileage run by the Garratt locomotives working in Queensland was 1,937, compared with an average of 3,148 for the other heavier class locomotives in the State.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the State of Queensland has been seriously handicapped by the use of these engines, which was forced upon us by temporary Commonwealth officials possessing little knowledge of the requirements of this State.

He ends this particular section with the following paragraph:—

For several weeks past all of the Garratt engines have been laid up, due to the refusal of enginemen to operate them, following a series of derailments.

I have not noticed anywhere that any publicity has been given to statements such as those made by the Queensland Commissioner of Railways, bearing out very substantially allegations made by certain other people in regard to these locomotives; and I assert that we are justified, and the public are justified, in asking for that information to be made available to them in order that there might be some proper understanding of the circumstances that

exist in regard to certain matters. But above all it indicates that there are people in high positions in the railways of Western Australia, who were responsible for the design of these locomotives and their acquisition by the people and Government of Western Australia, and who are very doubtfully—very doubtfully indeed in these circumstances—worthy of holding the responsible positions that they occupy and have occupied for a period of years. I am given to understand that there was considerable difficulty with the first of the S. class locomotives completed. I am also given to understand that five of them have been completed, but are they in use?

Mr. Styants: They are in use for about 50 per cent. of the time. For the rest of the time they are laid up for mechanical attention.

Mr. WATTS: That is what I understood to be the position. Therefore they are not giving to the department the full service that the expenditure and labour entailed in their production warranted. Can we in this House continue to face a position, with five locomotives, built at a cost of approximately £100,000 in this State, and 26 locomotives acquired at a cost of one-third of a million pounds, by people who apparently are not able properly to appreciate the needs of the State or the type of locomotives with which they are dealing, where those people will continue to remain in the responsible positions they occupy, in order that they may repeat such errors? I hate having to make statements of that character. As most members of this House know only too well, it gives me a great deal more pleasure to praise, if I can, but the circumstances in this case stare one in the face. The report of the Royal Commissioner is a vote of no confidence in the gentleman to whom I am referring and the report of the Queensland Commissioner of Railways, on a similar subject, is the strongest confirmation that one could possibly wish for.

The Minister for Railways: The report of the Railways Commissioner of Queensland?

Mr. WATTS: Yes, and of the Royal Commissioner, His Honour Mr. Justice Wolff, in Western Australia. I say that in the present state of affairs there is unquestionably

a grave doubt as to the efficiency of the administration of the Western Australian Government Railways, and it is high time, in my opinion, that a searching inquiry was made, not only into the administration by these particular individuals to whom the report of the Royal Commissioner refers, but as to anybody else who is likely to be able to place this State in a position such as exists in this case. In minor matters there has been, of recent years, some sign that the Railway Department has realised what Mr. Justice Wolff, in the conclusion of his report, had to say. I think His Honour's remarks are well worth repeating. They are as follows:—

If the railways are to survive in a world of keen competition; if they are to fulfil their purpose in co-ordination with other forms of transport, they must be modernised. That means bigger and better locomotives. The policy of "making do" (an expensive one, which has immediate and secondary effects) must be cast aside. I am inclined to think that the Railway Department in its eagerness to get these locomotives, seized what it considered an opportunity to ease a serious shortage of locomotive stock. That explains, I think, even if it does not excuse, the purchase of such a large number of locomotives which were not really designed for general traffic conditions. Economic measures such as Transport Acts are of little use if they merely protect the railways from competition. The railways must be able to compete. If the railways are unable to give service, there will be a natural economic adjustment, perhaps slow, but nevertheless inexorable, in which the railways will go down.

I now come back to where I started. The Minister said the Government was fully alive to the problems facing it. I said I thought it had better be careful, or the railways would be dead. Today the situation is rapidly tending in that direction. I do not know what is going to be the position, after the present industrial difficulty has been overcome, in regard to road transport. In my opinion, it will be extremely difficult to enforce to the full the existing provisions of the State Transport Co-ordination Act, as they have been enforced in the past. I agree, in the peculiar conditions existing in Western Australia, that that legislation has served—and with some amendments could continue to serve—a very useful purpose, for a number of years, but I believe that the day upon which those amendments will be made has been brought a lot nearer by the happenings of the last two or three weeks.

As one travels through the country today one sees that the cream of the traffic is being picked up by road transport to be taken from the country districts to Perth, while all sorts of traffic, it is true, is being carried on the return journey. When the railways again commence operations, it will be found that a great part of the reasonably high-priced traffic that they normally handle at this period of the year, particularly the wool, will be lost to them, while the low-grade freight will, I have no doubt, be fully available. That, in itself, will be extremely detrimental to the service. Many producers are now carrying their own produce in their own vehicles, and many other people are actively engaged in road transport, so it will be increasingly difficult to maintain the State Transport Co-ordination Act in full blast, in its exact present form. Of course, there are considerations that will minimise the difficulty to some extent.

It is true that certain types of freight that are being carried, particularly from the metropolitan area to country districts, are being transported at such rates that the cost of commodities in rural areas is being raised and a certain amount of dissatisfaction is being created in that regard. For example, the freight on potatoes by rail from Perth to Katanning was roughly £2 5s. per ton, and under the price-fixing arrangements made by Mr. Mathea, the road freight is 25 per cent. greater than second class rail freight, which means about £6 per ton, so there is a matter of £3 15s. per ton by which it is greater than the normal freight charged. That costs 6d. per stone extra to the consumer, without taking into consideration any other charge that may be added by anybody else. That sort of thing does creep into this business and may have some effect on saving the bacon of the railways to some degree.

In conclusion, I support this motion, which is moved—as other motions have been moved in previous years—because we do not want to see retrogression of the railways going on, as it has been going on. In 23 years there have been 20 years of government of the political complexion of the hon. gentleman who has just finished his speech, and therefore he and those associated with him must, to that degree, take the responsibility—at least twenty—twenty-thirds of it—for the position in which the railways are today, because it

is no use saying this is a matter that has arisen in the last year or so. It has been growing steadily over the last 12 or 14 years and I think that today, having sown the wind, we are reaping the whirlwind.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [4.25]: I desire to say something on a motion of so much importance to the State. The Minister for Railways has said quite frankly that he does not propose to—and in fact cannot—defend the standard of service given by the railways. He has endeavoured to explain the reasons why this and preceeding Governments have not been able to put our railway system on a more satisfactory basis. I think the reasons given are far from convincing. This has been going on for too long in the administration of the present Government and its predecessors since the time of the depression. The state of the railway administration and service has frequently been the subject of criticism and comment in this House, in the Press and throughout the whole State. Today we have reached a position in railway administration—I do not speak with reference to the present industrial difficulty at all, but to the general position—which I think would largely have been obviated had the matter been the subject of prompt and definite action some time ago, prior to the war for preference and, if not then, at the earliest possible stage after the war. I support the motion for an inquiry. In fact the whole story of the present railway position is an admission that the inquiry should have been made years ago.

I do not profess to be an expert in railway matters, but the writing has been on the wall for everybody to see for years past. Lately the Government very properly instituted an inquiry by an impartial arbitrator into the Australian Standard Garratt engines. That was an entirely proper action on the part of the Government and a recognition of the fact that, in respect of one department of railway administration, an inquiry was necessary. The motion of the member for Pingelly emphasises that the same sort of inquiry should be extended to other departments of railway administration, and says simply that what the Government recommended regarding one branch, in the way of an inquiry, must, to be consistent, lead to a more general inquiry into

the affairs of the department. I do not propose to pass any detailed criticism on individuals or on any particular aspect of the administration. If we are to have an inquiry, that will be a matter for evidence before it, and for determination by the person charged with making the finding or findings.

When I advocate inquiry, as desired by the member for Pingelly, it is partly for this reason, that suggestions have been made against high officers in the department, suggestions of lack of administrative ability, and I think that they should have an opportunity of being heard. They have no such opportunity here in Parliament. They are not in a position where they can write to the Press to put their case, and I think that when matters reach a stage where there are Parliamentary discussions and criticisms in such a case it is proper for Parliament to afford these highly placed men—and any others concerned in the administration of the department—an opportunity to put their cases before some independent and impartial arbiter.

I listened to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition regarding the A.S.G. engines and I am prepared—and I think the public would be prepared—to take the finding of the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Justice Wolff. That was published less than three months ago. The date of the report is the 29th August, 1946, and he therefore had before him all the information from all the States right up to what might be called the immediate hour. I am prepared to accept the conclusions he reached after visiting all the relevant States including Queensland. On page 52 of the report he stated—

It is unthinkable that locomotives which cost about a million and half pounds of public money should be thrown on the scrap heap if they can be made road-worthy.

In his recommendations, which I do not propose to traverse, because members are familiar with them, he said—

There is in my opinion no justification for taking a locomotive out of traffic unless the limit of tolerance has been reached as regards sideplay between the wheel hubs and the axle-boxes.

So, on the authoritative report of the Royal Commissioner, whatever might be said about the A.S.G. engine—and it certainly has defects that need to be rectified and which he says can be rectified—it is a

locomotive that is needed for the State's economy, particularly that of the primary producers, and it is one that the Commissioner says can be made road-worthy so long as one precaution is observed, namely, the degree of lateral play to which he referred.

There are one or two other aspects of the railway position in general to which I wish to refer. These relate to the position of the services which normally would be carried on by the Railway Department and which at present are suspended by reason of the industrial trouble. It is obviously the duty of the Minister and his associates in the Cabinet, in the event of a stoppage of the railway system such as that prevailing at present, to make the best possible arrangements to meet the requirements of the public, and it is the question how far the railway services are being discharged through other means that I desire to examine for a moment. I know that the Minister has made certain emergency arrangements. I know that there has been a certain suspension or relaxation of transport regulations to enable road transport to function and take up some of the work that has been rendered impossible over the railway lines. I know that there has been some degree of organisation of road transport to carry supplies of various kinds from the city to the country and from the country and the Goldfields into the city. I suggest to the Minister that the time has come for a fairly comprehensive detailed statement to be made as to what has been done. The public is at a loss to know exactly what is being done and it would be of use to the public to be informed.

Mr. STYANTS: On a point of order! Is it permissible for the hon. member to discuss the present industrial dispute under the terms of this motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not consider that the member for West Perth has got away from the terms of the motion yet.

Mr. McDONALD: I think I may claim to be running fairly well on the rails, although the engines may not be. I am not now concerned with the subject of the industrial dispute; what I am concerned about is what the Railway Department is doing to discharge for the public the services the railways were created to give. As the department happens to have engines out of

commission at present, I want to know what it is doing to meet the service that the railways would normally render to patrons. I suggest that the Minister should tell the people much more about what he is doing and what he proposes to do than he has done in the past. People want to know more about the road services, where and how they operate, where to go to get information and to obtain any services rendered by those means. People are in a state of uncertainty and confusion in the matter of transport to the Eastern States, as to whether they can obtain conveyance to Kalgoorlie to catch the Trans. train or, if returning from the Eastern States, what means are available to get from Kalgoorlie to Perth and how their luggage and other belongings are to be transported. People ask, "Cannot the Tourist Department, for example, arrange to operate motor buses from Perth to Kalgoorlie and enable people who have to go to the Eastern States to get to Kalgoorlie to catch the Trans. train, and vice versa." The Minister might have in mind matters of this sort.

The Premier: That has already been arranged. This morning's paper had a full advertisement referring to it.

Mr. McDONALD: I did not notice the advertisement.

The Premier: There is a big advertisement about a fleet of cars leaving Perth for Kalgoorlie on Friday.

Mr. McDONALD: I did not see it. The people ought to be told by advertisements quite promptly what is being done by way of through emergency services. I believe the people would feel more assured if they knew something of the real position. At all events, they would appreciate the realities they are up against in regard to industry. The Premier and the Minister for Agriculture no doubt have wide knowledge of the egg industry, and I have been told that people producing eggs face the possibility of extremely serious loss. If we could be told something of the arrangements to deal with these matters, it would be of distinct service to the public.

There is also the matter of supplies referred to by the Leader of the Opposition. I understand that no particular trouble has been experienced so far because the supplies

carried by storekeepers and merchants in the outside areas have been sufficient to provide for the public for some time, but those supplies are now causing anxiety, and difficulty is being occasioned on the matter referred to by the Leader of the Opposition—the non-readjustment of prices. When sugar costs £5 per ton to be conveyed to Kalgoorlie, obviously it cannot be sent unless there is an adjustment of prices, and I have been told that there has been a lag and a delay in the fixation of prices which is affecting the supply of materials to the Goldfields and the outlying areas. Therefore I suggest that the Minister should give the public a statement as to the emergency services which he has organised and proposes to organise to meet the present dislocation of railway services.

I have a further matter to mention, namely, road transport. The question of road transport is one that has not been faced for many years, although it is frequently referred to in this House. Nothing is more certain in a country of big distances like Australia than that we cannot indefinitely hold up road and air transport to support a means of locomotion whose operation is becoming more and more circumscribed and less and less in demand, namely, the method of railway transport. The pressure that has been banking up all these years has now been exhibited in the services rendered through the operations of the Minister, the Transport Association and other organisations to cope with the position created by the strike. The people in the country areas, although suffering many deprivations, say that in many respects they have never been so well served, and that they will not forget this and the advantage, promptitude, speed and convenience of the road transport they have enjoyed during this emergency of the last two or three weeks. Therefore I suggest that the member for Pingelly should welcome the inclusion of an item in his motion to inquire into the matter of road and air transport. I move an amendment—

That a new paragraph be added as follows:—“(5) Greater freedom and opportunities for road and air transport.”

I feel that no inquiry into railway administration would be complete or satisfactory unless there were opportunity for considering the impact of air and road transport and its relation to rail transport.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

MOTION—TRAFFIC ACT.

To Disallow Angle-Parking Regulation.

Debate resumed from the 28th August on the following motion by Mr. Doney:—

That new regulation No. 106A, made under the Traffic Act, 1919-1941, published in the “Government Gazette” of the 5th April, 1946, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 30th July, 1946, be and is hereby disallowed.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin—in reply) [4.44]: As members are aware, this motion has been set aside for something like two months or rather more so that the Minister might, by agreement with me, seek some better method than the present one. This apparently has not been done; if it has, the Minister has not so advised me. I quite realise that with the strike and the two or three large Bills the Minister has been handling, he has not had much opportunity to deal with the matter. Meantime members may have lost sight of the points that were made by various speakers against the present method of angle-parking. I do not know how they are likely to vote upon this motion, but the debate has indicated to me that only one member among those who have spoken to it was at all outspokenly favourable to the present method, and that was the member for Canning. Not even the Minister himself really likes the present method, because he made it plain that it is only in the nature of an experiment. I think he would be inclined to agree with me that, no matter what the defects of the old method might have been, the present method is no better.

I have been in the terrace quite a few times lately. I went there, as a matter of fact, so that I might know whether any improvement has been taking place. I should say that it is no better now than it was at the time I brought my motion forward. It seems to me that the present angle-parking method has certainly spoilt the best—certainly the most satisfactory—city thoroughfare that we have. Members will recall that I said it was almost impossible for anyone to pull out on either side of the terrace for the purpose of delivering goods to any of the offices. That is not desirable. I have noticed, too, that in peak traffic periods in

the terrace, as one car backs out there is a long line of hold-ups, frequently no fewer than some 20 or 30 cars being involved, and that where two or more cars pull out more or less at the one spot, the hold-up is much more serious.

One speaker, as an excuse for the present method, said that it took quite a number of cars which otherwise would have been parked in Murray-street; that is to say, those wishing to do business in Murray-street would now park their cars in the terrace, go down and do their business and come back and take their cars away once more. That is not too satisfactory and can hardly be so, because the total time allowed to anyone parking in the terrace is a quarter of an hour, and obviously it would be absurd to pretend that anyone parking there could walk to Murray-street, do his business and come back again within that time. I have noticed—and I mention it as showing that those who say the space left for traffic is pretty much the same as it was before—that previously two cars could pass one another on either the right or the left side of the dividing line; but now anyone being down there and noticing the position for himself will realise that only one car can travel in the one direction, of course either on the left of the line or on the right.

You can see from that, Mr. Speaker, that the space available for traffic is therefore no more than exactly one-half of what it was before. I think the regulation should be disallowed for the reasons that I gave when submitting the motion and for other reasons supplied by other members. That is all I need say, otherwise I would run the risk of repeating what has been said already. I would remind members, however, that this is not a party matter at all and I therefore hope that when they vote on the motion they will have regard to what is best suited to the public convenience.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	7
Noes	..	..	..	28
				—
Majority against	..	..	21	—

Mr. J. Hegney
Mr. Hill
Mr. Leslie
Mr. Perkins

AYES.

Mr. Seward
Mr. Watts
Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Coverley
Mr. Graham
Mr. Hawke
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Hoar
Mr. Holman
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Kelly
Mr. Marshall
Mr. McDonald
Mr. McLarty
Mr. Needham
Mr. North
Mr. Nulsen

Mr. Owen
Mr. Pantou
Mr. Read
Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Shearn
Mr. Smith
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Triat
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Willmott
Mr. Wilson
Mr. Wise
Mr. Withers
Mr. Fox

(Teller.)

Question thus negatived; the motion defeated.

BILL—DAYLIGHT SAVING.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; Mr. Hill in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Council's amendment is as follows:—

Clause 2—Delete the words “or used by the public” in line 2 of page 2:

Mr. HILL: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

The adoption of the amendment will not deprive the traffic inspectors or the Police of the powers which I desire them to have.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1946-47.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 29th October; Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

Vote—Departmental, £200,000 (partly considered):

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [4.58]: The Loan Estimates introduced by the Premier some time ago provide for the expenditure

of something more than £5,000,000. Were they viewed as proposals which would ensure the expenditure of that sum during the year ending the 30th June, 1947, or within a reasonable time thereafter, they would, doubtless cause to be carried out works of considerable magnitude in Western Australia, although it is noticeable that they exclude mention of many works that are both desirable and necessary and also of other works to which considerable publicity has been given as to the intentions of the Government, but as to which there appears to be no financial provision whatever. But the Premier, as he put it, in announcing the biggest Loan programme in the history of the State for one year, made an almost continuous advance apology for the work that might not be done. He said, "There are many factors still operating, however, to prevent us from carrying out very substantially much of the works planned." He also said, "The principal disturbing factor is manpower," and "One of our great concerns is shortage of material." Later, the Premier had this to say—

In addition, there is an unprecedented demand for the products of labour, and we may experience serious difficulty in carrying out some of the works listed in the loan programme, but so far as it is possible to give effect to it this will be done.

Despite the fact that so far as the capital mentioned is concerned, it is, I gather the largest annual loan programme that has been presented in Western Australia since the advent of self-government, it does not apparently mean that it is likely to be, during the next 12 months, the greatest achievement in loan works, because—and the Premier evidently desired to make this clear—there are many things that would restrict or prevent the carrying out of such programme. No-one is better acquainted, I take it, than the members of the Government with the possibilities of manpower and materials during the next year. I assume that if anyone knows what manpower and materials are likely to be available in that period, it is the Government.

So I should have thought it would be possible to put before this Committee a statement of proposed expenditure which would enable everyone to know exactly what is likely to be done, having in mind the po-

ssibilities as to the availability of manpower and materials. It may be an excellent idea to fill the public mind with bright visions of improvement, and then to let it know subsequently that there will be inevitable delay because manpower and materials are not available. But, as I said the other night, there has been too much of that in recent years. We have had too many targets set that have not been reached by any bullets; we have had too many scintillating schemes to be put into operation in the almost immediate future which do not yet seem to have dawned, as it were. I think it would have been a wiser and better course in all the circumstances, and bearing in mind the many "ifs" that the Premier inserted, if the hon. gentleman had modified his proposed expenditure and laid down clearly what is likely to be done in the ensuing 12 months with the money, manpower and materials—the three "Ms"—that in his estimation, and that of the officers responsible to him, can safely be provided.

So I offer that criticism because I think it is deserved, or at least justified, in all the preceding circumstances, and in the light of the situation disclosed by the Premier himself in his remarks. He also made some reference to the need for us all to work hard. There is, unfortunately, abroad throughout the world today—and this is by no means confined to Western Australia—the idea that it is possible to achieve progress without much work. As one reads the report of current happenings in the newspapers one can come to no other conclusion but that that view is held in a considerable number of countries. If the Premier intended his observations, on that subject, to be something in the nature of a timely warning to the people of this State, I have no hesitation in saying that I heartily agree with and support him. There is no question that a country like this needs development. While there are undoubtedly some limitations upon what can be done to develop this State, we have by no means—not by many a mile—reached saturation point in its development; nor are we likely to for many years.

In my opinion it does not matter, within reason, what a man is paid for a day's work. Let it be as great as we like! In fact, from many aspects, the greater the

amount paid the better, provided the man gives a commensurate return to the community. It is there that I feel the possibility of error among our people is creeping in, because there seems to be an impression that it is what we receive that counts, and not what we earn. If one is paid a substantial amount for one's service, provided the work done is to the limit of one's endeavour and ability in the time available, then I believe the better the remuneration the better will be the position of a community as a whole. But we cannot allow the idea to flourish that we should be well paid for doing little, because progress and development do not lie that way. In the world today the belief is held by a substantial number of people—not by all the people by any means—that by doing little and being well paid for it they are making a proper contribution to the betterment of themselves and their fellow beings. Well, there is no question about it, they are not.

There is a great future before Western Australia if we can maintain the standards we have been accustomed to for the work and endeavour of all classes of the community during past years. Any reduction in that spirit can do nothing else than impede the progress of the State and make more difficult the task of Governments in attempting to develop it. That is where I say this aspect has a considerable amount to do with the Loan Estimates. It does not do any good for great plans to be drawn up unless there are people ready and willing to give of their best, within their reasonable capacity, in the work that is to be done in order to implement those plans. If the Premier's remarks were intended to be something in the nature of a friendly warning to those who hold the point of view that I have been criticising, then his observations were well timed. He also said, "Schemes must be planned which are so sufficient and fundamentally sound as to give a return of themselves." There is a problem of the greatest magnitude. We have, throughout this State, had the idea on more than one occasion that a particular scheme would give, for the expenditure involved, a substantial or sufficient return so as not to cast any burden on the general community and the finances of the State, and we have found that we have been wrong. I do not doubt that we will find

that we are wrong again in other instances in the future.

I do not suggest for one minute that we should stop works of a kind that cannot provide their own sufficient return, because if we did that there would be many things that we would never contemplate doing, some of which will ultimately provide the return to which the Premier referred. But we cannot always get a return from the expenditure of loan moneys, unless it be a very indirect one. The Premier himself made reference to the need for expenditure on public buildings. I subscribe to that need; I believe there is a necessity for public buildings, not only in the metropolitan area but also in the rural districts—the rural townships particularly—in order that the duties of Government servants may be better carried on than they are at present, and so that the needs of the public may be better and more conveniently met. But I do not suppose for one moment that if we were to spend £1,000,000 on improving the position in that regard, in various parts of the State, we would extract in revenue anything like the amount necessary, in addition to what is being received already, to pay the costs of the money invested. In fact, I am convinced we would not. But that is no reason why Government servants and the public should be compelled to serve and be served in premises that are entirely unsuitable and inconvenient and, in many cases, of such great age that they have virtually ceased to have any value or usefulness whatsoever.

That is one aspect where we cannot expect to make our loan expenditure give a return, unless we are prepared to regard the return in service and convenience as being of monetary value. If we do that, then we have answered the question satisfactorily, but I prefer to put it as an indirect return which is available to the people. Later the Premier repeated his observations about the shortage of manpower, in these words, "We find ourselves with ample funds available, but labour is very hard to obtain." He did not, except in some of his remarks relating to the timber industry, attempt to give any reason why this labour is so hard to obtain. Not many years before the war, when we were spending a considerable amount of loan money on public works—about half the amount

estimated here—we had people who had no work to do, and were looking for some.

Now we suddenly find that we have ample work to carry out, but insufficient people to provide the necessary materials and labour. It appears to me that there must be reasons known to the Government as to why this is so, and I would have been glad to hear from the Premier what they are. This question of shortage of manpower is a sort of legacy of the war, and it does not seem to have substantially diminished if I take the Premier's remarks at their face value, seeing that now, 16 months after the war has ended, there are 50,000 people in Western Australia who have been demobilised. In view of that, what is the trouble? Has anyone sought to find out? Those 50,000 people have certainly not been settled on the land. They have not turned their attention to agricultural pursuits except those who engaged in them before the war. There seem to be a great many other industries which, pre-war, had full staffs but today find themselves in difficulties in obtaining the numbers they had in the pre-war period. The Government is continually complaining about shortage of manpower. Materials would have been the problem ten years ago when there was a shortage of work to take up the manpower available. How long is it going to take to ease the situation if 16 months after the war has ceased, and in view of the circumstances I have mentioned, we find ourselves in the position confronting us today?

What steps, may I ask, has the Government taken in the first place to find out the cause of this trouble and, secondly, to rectify it and provide the necessary labour for the work that has to be done? I think merely to state that the Government, with money available, finds difficulty in getting men to do the work, while no doubt a plain statement of fact, is not the satisfactory contribution that would seem to be a necessity at the present time. In more recent days, there have been some stunning proposals publicised in the Press affecting a part of the State in which I am very interested. I refer to the port of Albany. I think I have previously mentioned, and I take this opportunity to repeat the statement, that Albany is some 27 miles only from the southern boundary of the consti-

tuency I represent. In consequence, there is a continuous clamour from the people resident there that Albany should be used in handling their inward and outward needs and produce. That has been going on for a long time and, notwithstanding deputations and pleas and petitions, nothing whatever has been decided upon to rectify the position at the port. As the years have gone by, such facilities as we have there have considerably deteriorated.

The absence of facilities for the handling of certain traffic has diverted to other ports much of the business that should have been handled at Albany and, in the net result, the port has fallen into the doldrums, through the preaching of decentralisation and the practising of the reverse. That state of affairs has been more particularly noticeable during the last 20 years and, without repeating the observations I made on another motion an hour or so ago, I submit that the responsibilities in this respect do not rest upon me but upon the gentlemen sitting immediately opposite, who have been in charge of the Treasury bench for almost the whole of that period. As I say, more recently we have had the stunning proposal for a 10-year plan for the development of the port of Albany.

I am not in a position to say whether the proposals put forward are likely to achieve what is desired. At the moment I am not very greatly concerned as to whether they are suitable or unsuitable. I will leave that for other people to determine, because it does not appear to me to be of the slightest interest at this moment. In the Estimates under discussion, which provide for the expenditure of over £5,000,000—the largest amount of loan expenditure provided in any one year in the history of this State—these proposals are left entirely unprovided for and therefore the proposals at the moment leave me cold. I want to see some overt action, shall I say, some clear indication of the intention of the Government to provide these facilities, or at least to make a start upon them within a reasonable time. I certainly do not find anything of the sort in the Loan Estimates. What I do find are some references by the Premier which convince me that it will be a long time before these matters will be proceeded with, particularly when he said—

Members will realise that the availability of manpower will be the limiting factor in many of these projects. Nevertheless, we think it desirable to proceed with the projected plans if it is ever possible to make a start with them.

Then again, he further stated—

I have mentioned that it is more than doubtful whether the whole of the money provided in these Estimates can be spent during the year, but I was anxious that no desirable and necessary works should be excluded from the programme merely because of the absence of the necessary financial provision.

The Premier went on to say—

There is an obligation on the Government to provide in its programme for works that it is likely to commence or undertake, so that they can be proceeded with should the opportunity occur.

There we have it; there is the obligation! As there is no mention whatever in this programme to the commencement of the work I have just referred to, then it is clear to me that it is unlikely to be commenced or undertaken within the time covered by these Estimates. I say that is a most undesirable state of affairs in view of all that has transpired in regard to this port and all the representations and petitions that have been presented over a period of years. In view of the difficulties that have arisen through the absence of certain facilities, it is evident that no provision has been made on the Estimates for even a start to be made, and that, taken in conjunction with the remarks of the Premier I have quoted, which are categorical and clear, it certainly does not seem that there is any likelihood that anything at all is to be done at Albany in the reasonably near future, notwithstanding the stunning proposals duly reported in the Press in recent days. So much for that particular aspect of the Loan Estimates.

Next I desire to make a few references to the tramway system in Perth. No substantial improvement has been disclosed in regard to it in recent months. I say that from the point of view of one who has, perhaps, a greater knowledge than many members sitting opposite because I am a regular passenger on the trams, mostly on the rear platform jammed with others like sardines. I own one motorcar which is in the country and therefore the trams represent my method of transport in the metropolitan area. I tell members quite

frankly that I have been able to get ample information that enables me to state how the average passenger feels. There has been very little improvement on the trams during the last 16 or 18 months and the dilatoriness of the system, the inconvenience of it and the sardine-like attitude of the average passenger during the peak traffic periods, are just as unsatisfactory as they were two or three years ago. In fact, I would be surprised if it could be any worse—if the trams were running. I often wonder whether something cannot be done to improve the situation without being able to obtain extra vehicles that are part of the scheme we have heard described in this Chamber from time to time. It seems to me that there are many courses that could be adopted to speed up the service by the better use of the existing vehicles.

It is no uncommon sight to see at some stopping place in the more thickly populated parts of the suburbs groups of people waiting for a quarter of an hour before any tram comes along. Then one finds three travelling along within ten yards of each other. The first two are crowded out and sometimes people are able to get on the third tram. If they decide not to attempt to squeeze into the third car, they possibly have to wait for another quarter of an hour and then go through the same procedure again. When it comes to handling traffic at the peak period one can see almost exactly the same things happening at the Town Hall corner and other stopping places in the city. The people pile up in heaps; the trams come along in their sets of three; the passengers struggle to find a place on one or other of the vehicles; then there is another quarter of an hour's wait and the same procedure is repeated.

I have conceived the idea that one of the troubles is adherence to timetables, which I understand is the practice. It seems to me that it does not matter two hoots that there should be rigid adherence to timetable and that the better way of handling the traffic at peak periods would be to move the passengers as quickly as possible. I submit that suggestion to the Minister who, I notice, is studiously reading "The Daily News" during the course of my remarks. I suggest that he give that particular aspect some attention.

The Minister for Lands: He cannot hear you!

The Minister for Works: Some of your members are asleep.

Mr. WATTS: I am not worried about that; it would not trouble me if even the Minister himself did that. Another matter of interest to me is the question of whether it would not be desirable to have more than one car barn in the metropolitan area. At present I think there is only one, which is situated at the eastern end of Hay-street. From that centre circulate all the trams and vehicles controlled by the Tramway Department. They leave there for their respective destinations and return there in due course. That must make for considerable congestion. If I am correctly informed, there are car barns in various parts of other cities and the services are run between the car barns and the city centre or terminus as the case may be. I am given to understand that that makes for a considerable speeding up of the transport services in those particular cities. I notice in these Estimates, if I read them aright, that there is some intention to expend money on the tramway system, one of the items being additions to the car barn at East Perth.

I throw out the suggestion that investigations might be made as to whether it is not more desirable to establish car barns in some other parts of the metropolis, in which a proportion of the trams might be stabled, with the idea of minimising the considerable congestion that takes place up and down Hay-street. That there is congestion, there is no question; and, without being in the least harshly critical, I would say that it is extremely difficult for the persons concerned to administer a service all the vehicles of which come from one place and are then distributed over all the points of the compass, almost the whole of the distribution taking place at the Perth Town Hall or the William-street corner. These things I believe would readily minimise at least the difficulties which are occasioned by shortages of rollingstock, without having to wait or be worried by waiting for trolley-bus chassis and other things that have to be imported from some other country and which do not come forward very readily under the present state of affairs.

I notice, too, that there is one tram—I stand open to correction if there is more than one; but at any rate there are very few and I know of only one—that has been fitted with an electric windscreen wiper and orange lamps that serve as an indication that the vehicle is a tram and not some other kind of vehicle, the difficulty of making this distinction having been the subject of complaint in the Press and other places when there have been collisions with trams. This one tram has been fitted for a long period. I have admired it on more than one occasion because there is no missing it. One knows at once that one is looking at a tram. When the vehicle comes along, the orange lights are unmistakable. The windscreen wiper is quite a dependable instrument, and it is astonishing to me that there has not been provision for that sort of improvement much earlier.

I think that electric windscreen wipers began to come into operation 13 or 14 years ago. Before that, most of the windscreen wipers were of the vacuum type or things that one wiggled with one's hand. They were not so good; but the electric type came into operation 13 or 14 years ago, and no motorist who does a lot of travelling, especially in winter weather, would be without one if he could possibly obtain one. I have had one on my car for 10½ years. I obtained it long before the war and had it installed almost immediately because it seemed to me to be the ideal. It makes driving in wintertime, and particularly in traffic, very much safer and could have been suitably adapted to the tramway system a long time ago. But it seems to me that the attitude adopted with the average Government employee who wants any reasonable improvement effected in the work he is doing is to let him go on strike or to say he is going on strike before a commencement is made to provide such improvements.

For months, and even years, there was an argument about doing something with the Swan View tunnel, and not until a strike took place or was about to take place—I forget which—was it decided to make a deviation. There was almost a strike over windscreen wipers for the trams. Then somebody procured a wiper for demonstration purposes, and it has been demonstrated now very solemnly for a period of four or

five months. In the net result, I should think everybody is satisfied that it works. As for the orange lamps, I think that everyone agrees they are easily distinguishable and indicate quite plainly that the vehicle on which they are fitted is a tram. It should be possible to provide them for every portion of the tramway service, both for the safety of the public and those concerned with the tramway system.

The Minister for Mines: I can tell you for your information that when we can obtain windscreen wipers they will be used. We also intend to improve the headlights, which you did not mention.

Mr. WATTS: I did not intend to cover anything I had not noticed. I was contenting myself with observations I had made. I always prefer to speak of that about which I think I know something, even though the Minister may be able to correct me. In this instance he has not corrected me, but has merely told me something I did not know but was fishing for. I now wish to refer to something of a local character so far as I am concerned, and that is the construction of what is known as the No. 1 tank at Pingrup. The Minister for Works has had a lot to do with this matter.

The Minister for Works: I have never heard of it.

Mr. WATTS: The Minister has heard of it all right, and I hope he will hear about it some more, because it requires a lot more work to be done on it, and has been the subject of correspondence between him and myself for the past few weeks. I notice that there is provision on the Estimates for a similar water conservation plan in the Ongerup district, and I appeal to the Minister to take steps to ensure that the same thing does not happen at Ongerup as appears to be happening at Pingrup where, after some thousands of pounds have been spent on a reservoir to hold 2,000,000 gallons, apparently the water collected during the winter is being lost. Whether there is a leakage in the concrete walls or bed of this particular tank, I do not know; but reports reaching me indicate that the water is steadily going down, although no draw is being made upon it, for the simple reason that the people have to drive $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles up a side road to reach the tank, which nobody

wants to do unless he has no water on his farm.

Mr. Cross: Was not the tank put down in porous country?

Mr. WATTS: The engineers have advised the Minister in this matter, I have no doubt; and I am not going to pit the hon. member's knowledge or my own in a case of this kind against that of the engineers. I do not think the hon. member knows as much about the matter as I do—which is not saying much—but I do submit that the subject needs careful inquiry; because I do not want to see money which has been wisely expended, simply lost, which will be the case if this tank does not serve the purpose for which it was erected—and I think there is a distinct probability that it will not. I hope that when the scheme for the Ongerup district is put into effect, any errors that have been made at Pingrup will be avoided, and that the position at Pingrup will be rectified in the very near future.

Generally speaking—and if these Estimates are carried out in a reasonable time—except for one or two omissions to which I have made reference the distribution represents a fair apportionment of the money available between the various parts of the State concerned. I do not think anybody can harshly criticise the Estimates on the ground that any particular portion of the State has been overlooked to a degree which is worthy of criticism. It seems to me that every part of Western Australia has received consideration, and to that extent I am prepared to commend the Estimates. But, as I said, they do not hold out very bright prospects to me. I see too many “ifs” in the way and too many things missing from them which should have been there, and which have been the subject of bright ideas and scintillating plans that I have mentioned before during the last year or two. I think that the general consensus of opinion on these Estimates will be that if they are carried out within a reasonable time they will make a contribution towards the development of Western Australia, but they will not make a contribution to certain places, and particularly the harbour at Albany to which I made reference just now, that they should make.

Mr. PERKINS: I move—
That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. PERKINS (York) [5.41]: As the Premier stated when introducing the Estimates, and as has been indicated by the comprehensive contribution by the Leader of the Opposition, while the Estimates cover a great deal of ground, there is a colossal amount of work to be done in the near future in this State if we are going to bring things to anything like the level we desire to reach within a reasonable time. I refer mainly to works that must be carried out from loan money. The ordinary revenue that the State receives is sufficient to meet the immediate day-to-day expenditure. But it is evident that there is no surplus from that revenue to carry out developmental works, so that most of those works fall on the loan revenue.

I feel rather concerned that we should obtain as good value for the work we are doing at present as is possible. If members will cast their minds back, they will recall that following the last war, during an era of high cost, a great deal of work was done which imposed a severe burden in the way of interest charges. I remember water schemes that were installed in the early twenties when the cost of pipes and labour was fairly high and the rate was as much as 1s. per acre. The rate per thousand gallons was very high. Producers were able to pay the rates necessary to meet the interest charges, while produce brought a good price, but when the depression set in they were unable to meet the high charges resulting from the works being undertaken at a time when all costs were high. The result was that much of the revenue was not received by the Government. Huge amounts of unpaid rates piled up and eventually the liability fell on the general revenue of the State.

At present costs are rising and in many instances are now high. I hope all possible steps will be taken to avoid the position getting out of hand. It is necessary to take precautions to avoid building up unproductive debts, which I am afraid will be incurred unless we maintain the efficiency of labour and keep down the costs of building and other works contemplated by the Government in the near future. I have received complaints from builders that the efficiency of labour under the Government day-labour building scheme is not as great as that expected by private builders. I have no means of checking

such complaints, but have heard that artisans are inclined to leave private building contractors in order to work under the day-labour scheme.

The Minister for Labour: We are told that the private contractors are buying labour from us.

Mr. PERKINS: It is said men are leaving the private contractors because they are not expected to work as hard under the day-labour building scheme as in private industry. That applies only to some men, and I think the average workman is content to do a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. However, there are always some men in any industry who try to do as little as they can. There is a tendency for that type of person to set the pace in an industry. There have been indications that the efficiency of labour has been falling for a considerable time, and the output per man has shown a similar tendency. The Government should be vigilant to see that its works are not responsible for bringing about a further deterioration in that regard.

If anything like the amount of work contemplated by the Premier, when putting the Loan Estimates before us, is to be done, a lot of overtime will have to be worked, not only by those actually doing that work, but by workers in other industries supplying the necessary materials. I believe we all view with misgiving the attempt being made to reduce the number of working hours at this stage. If any adjustment is to be made I think it would be better for the working hours per week to be maintained and the wages per week to be adjusted as a reasonable recompense for the labour involved in the job. If the hours are reduced output must be affected to some degree and while there is so much vital work that must be carried out as speedily as possible, it is nothing short of catastrophic for anything to be done to reduce the output per man. There are many influences at work at present acting as a deterrent to overtime. The principal factor is high taxation, and we have all received complaints about the futility of working longer hours if a large percentage of the extra money earned is paid away in taxation.

While we are all anxious to reduce taxation, it is outside the control of this Par-

liament and we can only urge on the individuals responsible for doing the work that, even if they disagree with the amount of taxation deducted from their wages, they should look at the problem from a wider angle, realising that if everyone adopted the same attitude there would be small hope of the amenities and improvements that we all desire being provided within a reasonable time. There are many avenues in which we could advocate the expenditure of loan money. In introducing the Estimates the Premier has indicated some of the more urgent work that he intends to have done. We can only wait and see how things work out.

I wish to refer particularly to our rural roads system. During the war a minimum amount of work was done on such roads, either those under the control of the Main Roads Board or those controlled by local authorities. The effect on our roads has been disastrous and it will cost much more to restore them to reasonable condition than it would have taken to maintain them in good order, had it been possible to do the work as it was needed during the war years. Of course it was impossible to do that, and the national emergency over-rode local considerations, making it necessary for some of that work to be left undone in the meantime. When improvements to our roads are being effected I think it is desirable that we should make a permanent job of as many roads as possible, rather than to do mere patching work. The local authorities are trying to play their part, and many of them are floating loans in order to carry out at least a portion of the urgent work in their localities in a proper manner. The problem, however, is too big for them under the present financial set-up.

Complaints are coming in that the financial burden of maintaining roads is getting beyond the capacity of individual local authorities. I think the position can only be remedied either by the Main Roads Board taking over a larger proportion of the more important roads in the rural areas or by funds being made available to local authorities from the petrol tax or some other source of revenue, to enable them to carry out urgent work in a substantial manner. Like all other departments, the Main Roads Department is short of equipment. We see the old type tractor-drawn graders at work on jobs that could

be done much more cheaply and expeditiously by more modern machines. I am assured by the Minister for Works that his department is doing everything possible to obtain modern equipment.

I think the problem is one that calls for co-operation between the Government and the local authorities and, wherever local authorities have the necessary equipment, I hope the Government will co-operate and see that it is used to the maximum extent. The problem is not one entirely for the State Government, and I think the Commonwealth Government has a considerable responsibility. I understand that the petrol tax was 2½d. a gallon in 1929, rising to 7½d. in 1939. It was 1s. per gallon in 1943. In 1938, 58 per cent. of it went into Consolidated Revenue and only 42 per cent. into roads. Apparently the Commonwealth has been appropriating a large percentage of the petrol tax into Consolidated Revenue. I think there is a responsibility on the Commonwealth Government to hand back some of the revenue received from that source to the Main Roads Departments in the different States, and to local authorities, especially as such local authorities carried out, free of charge, much work for the Commonwealth Government during the war.

I would prefer the matter to be cleared up in a more satisfactory way by putting the finances of the local authorities on a more permanent basis. The problem has altered in recent years and there is now faster and heavier motor traffic than existed ten years ago. It is infinitely faster and heavier than the traffic of 20 years ago, and the methods that were satisfactory in 1920 are useless to deal with the position today. I do not doubt that other members representing rural constituencies will see the matter in the same light as I see it, and will agree that the problem of restoring our rural road system to proper order and of putting the local authorities on a sound financial basis is indeed an urgent one, and I strongly recommend the Government to give urgent consideration to it. As time passes and we clear up the more urgent work, there is a responsibility on the central Government to help the local authorities in the provision of amenities in country areas to bring living conditions

there somewhat more into line with those in the metropolitan area.

In Victoria, I understand, the State Government helps the local authorities in the provision of swimming pools. Many swimming pools are projected in the rural areas of this State when more urgent work has been completed, and I hope the Premier will bear in mind what has been done in Victoria and not let this State lag far behind in that respect. Such provision would make an immense difference to the living conditions in the country areas. If we do not give some encouragement to the local authorities to improve the facilities available in the country, all our talk of decentralisation will be nothing but a mockery and we shall not be honest when we urge the need for decentralisation.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.2 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 21st November, 1946.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION.

PETROL TAX.

As to Amount Received from Commonwealth.

Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Chief Secretary:

1, Is it correct that of the amount of £895,917, collected during the financial year ended the 30th June, 1946, by the Commonwealth Government from taxation on motor spirit in this State, £192,000 was returned to the State Government of Western Australia?

2, If this figure is not correct, what is the correct amount?

3, What amounts were collected by the Commonwealth Government from taxation on motor spirit and returned to the State Government for the years 1940 to 1945 inclusive?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, The sum of £895,917 was collected during the financial year ended the 30th June, 1946, by the Commonwealth Government from taxation on motor spirit in this State, but the sum returned to the State Government of Western Australia was £584,786.

2, Answered by No. 1.

3, The amounts collected by the Commonwealth Government from taxation on motor spirit in this State for the years 1940 to 1945, both inclusive, were £3,927,165, and the amounts returned to the State Government in these years were £2,945,207.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 2).

Introduced by the Honorary Minister.

2, Hairdressers Registration.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—STATE HOUSING.

Reports of Committee adopted.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. G. Fraser in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

New clause (partly considered):