

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 25th July, 1957.

CONTENTS.

Questions : State trading concerns, payments in lieu of rates and taxes	448
Indecent Publications Act, amending legislation	448
Crime, incidence in Albany district	448
Charcoal iron industry, (a) establishment at Bunbury	449
(b) preference expressed by Perth Chamber of Commerce	449
Housing, number of houses built at Bunbury	449
Traffic, registration fees, Holden and Volkswagen	449
Police, escorts, Kalgoorlie-Perth	450
Native flora, protection, Albany district	450
Forests, Conservator's rights on freehold property	450
Metropolitan water supply, expenditure from loan funds and revenue	450
Electricity supplies, (a) South Fremantle power station	450
(b) Kenwick district lighting	450
Narrows bridge, completion and construction	451
States Grants (Encouragement of Meat Production) Act, money received by W.A.	451
Fishing industry, Commonwealth investigation, Great Australian Bight	451
Iron ore, export and financial return	451
Air transport, interstate passage expenditure	451
Railways, suspension of week-end special hire services	451
Lands, resumption, claim of N. Charles, consideration, etc.	452
King's Park aquatic centre, responsibility for petition and tabling	452
Motor-vehicles, wharfage and port handling charges	452
Motion : Rail closures, rescission of 1956 resolution	459
Bills : Agriculture Protection Board Act Amendment, Message, 2r.	452
Fremantle Prison Site Act Amendment, 2r.	453
Justices Act Amendment, 2r.	454
Local Courts Act Amendment, 2r.	455
Bees Act Amendment, 2r.	455
Dairy Cattle Improvement Act Repeal, 2r.	456
Electoral Act Amendment, Message, 2r.	457
Occupational Therapists, 2r.	459
Agent General Act Amendment, Message, 2r.	470

QUESTIONS.

STATE TRADING CONCERNS.

Payments in Lieu of Rates and Taxes.

Mr. W. A. MANNING asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) What amounts were paid by the following State trading concerns—

State Saw Mills,
State Hotels,
State Brick Works,
State Engineering Works,

during the years ended the 30th June, 1956, and 1957, to—

(a) local governing bodies as (or in lieu of) rates, stating to which road board or municipality such amounts were paid;

(b) the Treasury in lieu of land tax?

(2) If none was paid, what amounts would be paid as land tax in this current year were the land used similarly by a private concern?

The MINISTER replied:

(1)—

	1955-56.			1956-57.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
(a) State Saw Mills—						
Manjimup Road Board	1,491	17	2	671	12	9
Colliie Coalfields Road Board	9	15	0	9	15	0
City of Perth	153	14	6	171	16	3
State Hotels		Nil			Nil	
State Brickworks		Nil			Nil	
State Engineering Works		Nil			Nil	
(b) In all cases		Nil			Nil	

(2) As the land held by these concerns is not subject to the land tax Acts, no valuation for land tax purposes has been made. In the absence of such valuations, the required information cannot be supplied.

INDECENT PUBLICATIONS ACT.

Amending Legislation.

Mr. HEAL asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

Is it the Government's intention this session to introduce a Bill in relation to indecent literature or to amend the existing Act to suppress indecent and obscene publications assented to during the year 1952?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:

A decision will be reached at an early date.

CRIME.

Incidence in Albany District.

Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Has there been an increase in crime in the Albany police subdistrict for the year ended the 30th June, 1957?

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

(2) If so, will he give the increase figures and the number of juvenile crimes, showing the comparison of the figures for 1956 as against the figures for the year ended the 30th June, 1957?

(3) If there is an increase, can the acting commissioner ascertain the reasons for such increase?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Offences by adults to the 30th June, 1956	23
Offences by adults to the 30th June, 1957	59
Increase	36
Offences by juveniles to the 30th June, 1956	15
Offences by juveniles to the 30th June, 1957	96
Increase	81

(3) As the increase in adult crime is not excessive, no particular reason can be given for the increase, other than a natural increase due to the enlarged population of Albany.

Juvenile crime increase is accounted for by a spate of breaking and entering offences by juveniles; this type of offence increasing from two in 1956 to 67 in 1957.

CHARCOAL IRON INDUSTRY.

(a) Establishment at Bunbury.

Mr. MAY asked the Premier:

(1) Was he correctly reported in "The West Australian" of the 18th July, 1957, as saying in answer to a statement by J. H. Laurence, that "Bunbury is the most suitable place for the establishment of a charcoal iron industry"?

(2) If the above is correct, is it fair to raise false hopes to the representatives from other centres when actually a decision has already been made?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Mr. Laurence was not quoting any statement of mine when he made the reference, in his article, to Bunbury.

(2) No decision has yet been made. The claims of each centre in the South-West thought to be suitable will be very carefully considered in the event of the Commonwealth Government deciding to grant Western Australia a licence for the exporting of one million tons of iron ore to Japan over a period of 2½ years.

(b) Preference Expressed by Perth Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Premier:

In "The West Australian," of the 24th July, the president of Perth Chamber of Commerce expressed a preference for the

proposed charcoal iron industry to be run by private enterprise, which should be permitted a reasonable profit—

(1) Does he know what rate of profit is considered reasonable by the Perth Chamber of Commerce?

(2) If not, can he ascertain the meaning ascribed to this phrase by the Perth Chamber of Commerce?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) No.

(2) I doubt very much whether the chamber would take the public into its confidence on this vital point.

HOUSING.

Number of Homes Built at Bunbury.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many houses were built within the boundaries of the Municipality of Bunbury during the year ended the 30th June, 1957, under each of the following headings:—

- (a) Commonwealth - State rental housing scheme;
- (b) War Service Homes;
- (c) State Housing Act?

(2) How many applications for homes in Bunbury were still outstanding at the 30th June, 1957, under each of the above-mentioned headings?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) Commonwealth-State rental housing scheme	49
(b) War service homes	13
(c) State Housing Act	32
	94
	—

In addition, 59 homes were commenced prior to the 30th June, 1957, but not completed.

(2) (a) Commonwealth-State rental housing scheme	156
(b) War service homes	12
(c) State Housing Act	56

TRAFFIC.

Registration Fees, Holden and Volkswagen.

Mr. O'BRIEN asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What were the annual registration fees on a Holden sedan and a Volkswagen sedan for the year 1956-57?

(2) What are the current registration fees for the same vehicles?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Holden sedan £5; Volkswagen sedan £3.

(2) £8 8s. and £5 16s. respectively.

POLICE.*Escorts, Kalgoorlie-Perth.*

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Police:

(1) On what occasions do police escorts travelling by train between Kalgoorlie and Perth, with a prisoner or charge, dress in uniform?

(2) Is the dressing in uniform required by regulation or by the Police Act, in cases mentioned in No. (1)?

(3) On what occasions do police escorts travel in civilian clothes?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) All such escorts are performed in uniform, except those specially exempted. See answer to No. (3).

(2) No, but all police duty is performed in uniform unless otherwise required.

(3) Police escorting mental patients or children, perform such duty in civilian clothes.

NATIVE FLORA.*Protection, Albany District.*

Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Forests:

With the extensive opening up of land in the Albany area, will he bring to the notice of the responsible department the need for greater policing of wild flower reserves protecting plants such as boronia, crowea, primroses and pitcher-plant?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

FORESTS.*Conservator's Rights on Freehold Property.*

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) What Act or regulation empowers the Conservator of Forests to assume control of growing timber on freehold land transferred by sale or gift when the original owner had full timber rights?

(2) In what year was the Act or regulation promulgated?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The reference to "sale or gift" is not clear. Under the Land Act and the regulations thereunder, Crown grants and conditional purchase leases or licences shall be issued subject to conditions reserving the marketable timber to the Crown.

In 1936 by Order-in-Council, the Conservator of Forests was appointed agent of the Crown for the control of timber on leasehold or freehold land held, subject to conditions reserving the marketable timber to the Crown.

The Land Act was amended to restore to the owners of certain freehold land held subject to timber reservation conditions, the timber rights thereover if the lease held prior to the issue of the Crown grant was free of timber reservation conditions.

(2) See answer to No. (1).

METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY.*Expenditure from Loan Funds and Revenue.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

What was the total sum spent from—

(a) Loan funds;

(b) Revenue;

on the metropolitan water supply during last financial year?

The MINISTER replied:

Water Supply Expenditure, 1956-57.

	£	1,405,301
(a) Loan funds	
(b) Revenue—		
Maintenance and operating	548,280	
Interest and sinking fund	598,102	
		1,146,382
		<u>22,551,683</u>

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.*(a) South Fremantle Power Station.*

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What quantity of sea water is used per hour for cooling purposes at the South Fremantle power station?

(2) For what reason was this station sited right on the beach?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Approximately 5,000,000 gallons per hour.

(2) So that this quantity of water could be obtained economically.

I might say the answer is elementary.

(b) Kenwick District Lighting.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is any improvement to the supply of electricity contemplated for the Kenwick district this financial year?

(2) If "Yes" is the answer to No. (1), will extensions to Short-st., Kenwick, be provided with light after the improvement to the local power supply?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) If these extensions can be economically justified.

NARROWS BRIDGE.*Completion and Construction.*

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What is the contract completion date for the Narrows bridge?

(2) Is construction up to or ahead of schedule at the present time?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The 1st April, 1959.

(2) Work on the project is closely in accordance with the estimated time schedule.

STATES GRANTS (ENCOURAGEMENT OF MEAT PRODUCTION) ACT.*Money Received by Western Australia.*

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What amount of money was received by Western Australia under the States Grants (Encouragement of Meat Production) Act, 1949-1954, for the year 1956-57?

(2) How was this money expended?

(3) What representations, if any, have been made to the Federal Government for assistance under this legislation?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £52,000.

(2) Wyndham-Nicholson-rd.: Continuing the construction of the Wyndham-Nicholson-rd., particularly construction of waterways, river crossings and bituminous surfacing southwards from Wyndham aerodrome.

Under the Act—No. 74 of 1949, see Section 5 (1) (a)—the State Government was granted a total of £789,000 which was the estimate for constructing the Wyndham-Nicholson-rd. to an agreed standard. The work was completed during 1956-57.

East Kimberley stock route: £1,931.

(3) In 1954 representations were made to the Commonwealth Government to increase its assistance for watering points on stock routes from a maximum of £31,500 to a maximum of £50,000. This request was granted.

FISHING INDUSTRY.*Commonwealth Investigation, Great Australian Bight.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Fisheries:

Has he any further information available regarding the Commonwealth Bight Fisheries research project, and in particular—

- (a) the port on which the project will be based;
- (b) the areas to be researched;
- (c) the amount to be expended;
- (d) the type of vessel to be used?

The MINISTER replied:

The Commonwealth Government has approved of a proposal for experimental development of the trawling industry in the

Great Australian Bight, and a modern diesel trawler manned and equipped for commercial operations will be used to carry out the investigation. Inquiries for a suitable vessel are proceeding. As the general proposals at this stage are only tentative, firm details are not available.

IRON ORE.*Export and Financial Return.*

Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

(1) Is he correctly reported in "The West Australian" of the 18th July, 1957, as saying: "If the licence is granted to export 1,000,000 tons of iron ore, no State finance will be required for the project"; and "The market is assured for the next five years by the contracts offering. At the end of this period, the total cost of the plant will be written off and the industry should have no difficulty in selling against any world competition"?

(2) As the period of five years appears to be a short time in which to recoup capital and is not consistent with the experience of industry generally, can he give the House the income and expenditure figures on which he based his five-year writing off claim?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) It is not considered advisable to publish these figures at the present stage of the negotiations. They will be made available after the Commonwealth Government has made a decision on the application by the State Government for an export licence.

AIR TRANSPORT.*Interstate Passage Expenditure.*

Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

Is the high proportion of interstate air passage expenditure by the Government with T.A.A., as compared with A.N.A., for the year ended the 30th June, 1957, due to Government policy?

The PREMIER replied:

I certainly hope so, but it could be due to a preference by those concerned to travel by way of T.A.A. Airlines.

RAILWAYS.*Suspension of Week-end Special Hire Services.*

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Adverting to question 14 of Wednesday the 24th July, is it intended, or is there any possibility of the week-end special hire services being suspended in the near future?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

There is no intention at present to suspend these services.

LAND RESUMPTIONS.

Claim of N. Charles, Consideration, etc.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Works:

In connection with the land being resumed from N. Charles of Royal-st., Kenwick, will he indicate—

- (1) What did he mean by "the matter is being pushed on with all possible despatch"?
- (2) What certain formalities have to be complied with?
- (3) How much more time has to be allowed before completion of this, and other resumptions in the same vicinity?
- (4) In view of the large disparity between the offer by the department of less than £3,000 and the amount claimed by Charles, namely, £10,000, and the obvious necessity of Charles therefore having to go finally to the compensation court, will he make a payment equal to his offer to Charles, without prejudice to the action that will have to be taken before the compensation court?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) Exactly what these words would convey to a person of normal intelligence.
- (2) Formalities are being carried out by the Lands Department and include—
 - (a) preparation and examination of plans, which may involve check surveys in the field;
 - (b) subsequent submission of documents for Executive Council approval, and
 - (c) gazettal of resumption.
- (3) At least portion of this resumption, including land held by N. Charles, will be gazetted on or before the 16th August next and the balance as soon as possible thereafter—probably within one month.
- (4) No payment can be made prior to resumption without complete agreement as to the full amount payable, but immediately upon gazettal of resumption, I would be prepared to make an advance payment of £2,000 to Mr. and Mrs. Charles on account of compensation to be assessed or determined despite Section 46 (3) of the Public Works Act, 1902-1956 which was inserted by the Opposition.

KING'S PARK AQUATIC CENTRE.

Responsibility for Petition and Tabling.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the member for North Perth:

Was "The West Australian" correct in its issue this morning when it held the hon. member responsible for having a petition circulated among members of Parliament in connection with the projected

Olympic Pool in King's Park? If he is responsible for that petition, will be table it?

Mr. LAPHAM replied:

I have not read all of the articles in this morning's issue of "The West Australian."

Mr. May: Did you look at the photograph?

Mr. LAPHAM: But the hon. member was wrong when he said that a petition was circulated. A signed statement was circulated and was then presented by me to the Premier. It is now his property and consequently I am not able to lay it on the Table of the House.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: There is nothing to be afraid about, anyway.

MOTOR-VEHICLES.

Wharfage and Port Handling Charges.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS. Yesterday, in replying to a question, I undertook to advise the member for Cottesloe as to wharfage and handling charges operating in Sydney. I said that I would furnish the information as soon as it came to hand. I now have the answers.

The SPEAKER: The Minister may proceed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member asked—

- (1) What are the wharfage and port handling charges in relation to the export of motor-vehicles?
- (2) What are the comparative charges in other States of Australia?

The wharfage and handling charges operating in Sydney are—

Wharfage is at the rate of 2s. 9d. per ton measurement.

Handling charges are incorporated in freight rates as handling is performed by shipping companies.

BILL—AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [2.33] in moving the second reading said: Members will notice that the only object of this small Bill is to increase the number of members on the Agriculture Protection Board from nine to ten. For some time now the Farmers' Union in this State, as well as other bodies, have made claims to me that the representation at present on the board is not sufficient to give an overall State coverage for the control of vermin or noxious weeds. The

area from Serpentine southward to Northcliffe and across to Augusta is completely unrepresented.

At present there are nine members on the board, five of whom are ex officio members. They are necessary for the board's activities because of their special knowledge and they include departmental officers such as the chief weed control officer, the Government entomologist, the chief warden of fauna and a Treasury official. The other four members of the board are appointed by the Governor from nominations made by the Minister for Agriculture. There is a representative of the agricultural industry, one from the pastoral industry and two from the Road Board Association. An examination of the areas from which the representatives of the pastoral and agricultural industries come indicates that their interests are a long way north of Perth; one comes from Gabbin, and the other, the representative of the pastoral industry, from even further north. The members representing the Road Board Association also live in districts far removed from the lower South-West.

As a consequence, although the board is at present composed of nine men and is responsible for the destruction of vermin and the control of noxious weeds over the whole of the State, the wetter areas of the lower South-West, where the procedure for the destruction of vermin and noxious weeds is entirely different from that in other parts of the State, have no representation at all. Obviously, this is an omission and on behalf of the Farmers' Union and the other organisations which have approached me, I present this Bill to correct the position. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Bovell, debate adjourned.

BILL—FREMANTLE PRISON SITE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [2.36] in moving the second reading said: This is another short Bill which has special reference to the area of land under the control of the Fremantle prison authorities, under a special Act. From an examination of the boundaries of this institution, particularly from a planning point of view, it will be seen that the position is entirely out of line with present-day requirements and, in fact, the true position is not really shown.

Under a special ordinance, passed in 1850 or 1851, control of land was given to certain officers in trust for Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, for ever, for the purpose of prison or convict

activities. However, over a great many years, different organisations have taken bites at this land—all necessary for public reasons—and today the boundaries are completely different from those shown on the original ordinance.

An Act was passed in 1902 which repealed the early ordinance and provided for the vesting in Her Majesty of an area which comprised the site of the convict prison at Fremantle but it excluded certain Fremantle lots, the largest of which is the Fremantle oval. Apart from the lots originally excluded, other areas of land have from time to time been transferred or leased and those areas include:—

- (1) The reserve occupied by the drill hall which was transferred to the Commonwealth on Federation and an additional area which has been acquired by the Commonwealth of Australia.
- (2) The portions comprised in Reserve 7735, that is the South Terrace school, and Reserve 22292, which is the Fremantle public hospital.
- (3) The area previously occupied by the base flats.
- (4) Fremantle Lot 1633 which was held as a special lease for the City of Fremantle and is now the subject of a proposed exchange between the City of Fremantle and the Government.
- (5) The public streets within the area.
- (6) The proposed parking area over which the City of Fremantle is seeking control.

In addition to all these changes that have taken place under lease or transfer, there have been many applications put before the Government over the last two or three years by other organisations which feel that if there is any land available, then they should be given consideration in order to continue their normal club activities. The area which was originally occupied by the base flats—which have now been demolished—is at present available and, having received applications from the Police Boys' Club, the Returned Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's League of Australia and the South Fremantle Football Club the Government is anxious that each and every one of these bodies should have an opportunity to obtain ownership and proper permanent legal tenure of land in order that they might be able to approach financial institutions for money, which obviously they will have to find, to further their activities by the erection of buildings and other matters of that kind.

At the moment, under the existing Act, even if they were offered some land, they would not have the security that would

be required by most financial institutions before they would lend money for activities of this nature. It is for the purpose of definitely cleaning that point up that this Bill has been brought before Parliament. Last year I approached the Crown Law Department concerning this matter, and I was advised that legislation would be necessary. The purpose of the Bill, therefore, is solely to amend the principal Act of 1902 so that the land in question becomes Crown land in actual fact and so that it may be dealt with under the provisions of the Land Act.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Did you mention that the Fremantle City Council had approached you in regard to the allocation of some land under this Bill?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There has been a great deal of discussion on the possible distribution of this land and, in fact, in giving attention to all these matters, the Fremantle City Council's requirements have been taken into consideration. This applies also to the town planning authority. Therefore, every person in that area is quite satisfied that what is proposed to be done in the Fremantle district is merely for the purpose of securing the title of the land to enable these people to carry on their activities efficiently. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Ross Hutchinson, debate adjourned.

BILL—JUSTICES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [2.45] in moving the second reading said: I have here a small Bill in which three matters only are covered. The first deals with the jurisdiction of justices and proposes to give them power to set aside decisions given in default of the appearance of any party in court. The Supreme Court, by reason of its inherent powers, has jurisdiction to set aside a judgment obtained in that court by default, but courts presided over by justices have no such authority in the absence of an expressed power in the particular legislation which prescribes their functions.

The absence of such a provision in the Justices Act was the object of comment by the Full Court of this State, their Honours inviting the attention of the Government to the advisability of making good the omission. Reference was made to the fact that Victoria had legislation of this nature and that Victorian provisions might well serve as a pattern for any legislation introduced in this State. The Victorian measure has, accordingly, been followed with adaptations. The suggestion for amendment arose out of a case where the defendant

had given instructions to a solicitor to defend him but, unfortunately, the solicitor overlooked the matter. The court, having received proof of service of the summons, heard the complainant and made an order. The defendant subsequently applied for an order to review, but the Full Court held it had no power to set aside the judgment.

The second amendment is to clarify a doubt which exists as to the powers of justices under Section 145 of the Justices Act to award part of a fine for assault as compensation to the party assaulted. This doubt arises because of the provision in the Fines and Penalties Appropriation Act, 1909, which requires pecuniary penalties—with certain exemptions—to be paid to the Treasurer for the public uses of the State. The section in the Justices Act to which I am referring provides that, on the summary conviction of any person of an assault, the justices may order that the fine or part thereof shall be paid to the person assaulted.

No doubt this was intended as a means of awarding compensation to a person assaulted where, for instance, his spectacles or teeth were damaged and to provide him with the ready means of obtaining prompt replacement or repairs. Confusion has often arisen as to whether or not the section in the Justices Act has been superseded by the Fines and Penalties Appropriation Act. There does not seem to be any good reason for removing the authority given to magistrates to award to the injured party the whole or portion of a fine. The amendment will make it clear that the Fines and Penalties Appropriation Act, 1909, does not affect the section in the Justices Act.

The third and last amendment concerns the amount provided as security for the appearance of an appellant. Two cases in particular have given rise to the amendment. In one case a judge had occasion to comment on the meagreness of the recognisance fixed. He expressed the hope that it be brought to the notice of justices and others who had power to grant recognisances, that the sum of £25 referred to in Section 187 of the Justices Act was merely a minimum and that cases might occur where more substantial recognisances were required. One of the magistrates has now directed attention to the inadequacy of the bail fixed in a case which was before him. The present position of it being open to an appellant's solicitor to approach a justice in private and be the only one heard on the application for bail is undesirable. The Chief Crown Prosecutor and the Acting Deputy Commissioner for Police are in agreement that it would be best if only a court of petty sessions could fix the amount of the security. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. W. A. Manning, debate adjourned.

BILL—LOCAL COURTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [2.51] in moving the second reading said: This Bill provides for law reform at the request of the Law Society, and its provisions are mainly procedural. The Law Society submitted recommendations for amendment of the local court rules, but before the proposals can be implemented certain amendments will be required to the Local Courts Act.

The first amendment concerns the listing for hearing of an action. At present, when an action is defended, the Clerk of Courts lists it for hearing, in the country at the next sitting of the court, and in the metropolitan area on the next available date. This system is unsatisfactory to all concerned. Neither party may be ready, or negotiations for settlement may be going on. The amendment will ensure that an action is not listed for hearing unless one or other of the parties requests it.

Judgment in default of defence is permitted to be entered for pecuniary damages not exceeding £25. The present position is that there has to be a hearing for an assessment in every case. Most assessments arise out of damage to vehicles and it is thought unnecessary to have the case set down for assessment where the amount does not exceed £25. Where claims are beyond that amount, the existing procedure will be followed.

A further amendment gives a foreign bailiff power to execute a warrant for arrest. The present practice is that the warrant must be executed by the bailiff of the court which issued the warrant. This method is considered cumbersome. Another amendment permits clerks of courts to act on delegation in respect of judgment summonses, but provides for supervision by the magistrate. In remote country areas magistrates sometimes have to travel long distances just to hear local court judgment summonses.

It is considered that most of the clerks of courts would be sufficiently experienced and capable of hearing and determining judgment summonses. However, provision should be made for a clerk to act only where the magistrate or Minister requests him to do so, and any order made by a clerk must be confirmed, varied or set aside by the magistrate. Where a decision by a clerk is set aside, the magistrate shall re-hear and determine the action himself. The adoption of this procedure will avoid delays in hearing judgment summonses in certain cases.

In connection with the examination of a debtor, the existing procedure is for application to be made to the magistrate by way of motion for an order, after which a summons is served. The amendment

provides for application to be made to the clerk of the court for a summons to be served. The clerk may refuse to issue a summons. If he does, application can be made to the magistrate to direct the clerk to issue a summons. If adopted, the amendment will bring about a saving in time and stationery. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. F. Watts, debate adjourned.

BILL—BEES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [2.57] in moving the second reading said: The proposal contained in this Bill is to amend Section 6 of the Bees Act, 1930-1950, which provides for areas infected with diseases of bees to be proclaimed, in order that suitable action may be taken to control and eradicate those diseases. The provisions in the Bill are the result of a recommendation based on complaints received from the beekeepers concerning the spread of a disease which from time to time decimates this industry and causes untold damage and loss. This disease is known as American Foul Brood.

At the present time it is possible, under the Act, for an inspector to declare an area to be infected. A certain time must elapse, however, between the moment the inspector cites the particular area and the time he is able to get a proclamation issued and gazetted. The time which elapses could quite often give an unscrupulous man the opportunity, if he so desired, to transfer those hives, bees and equipment from an infected area into a clean area. As a consequence, this dreadful disease could travel quite rapidly over large sections of the State.

The object of the Bill is to prevent that happening. The provisions contained in the measure would make it possible, if Parliament agrees to the amendment, for notice to be served on a beekeeper—if he has hives within what an inspector considers is an infected area—under which he would be totally prohibited from either removing his hives, bees or equipment, or from allowing any other equipment to go into that locality until the proclamation declaring it an infected area had been issued in the normal course. The time allowed in the Bill for the inspector to secure a proclamation would be a total of 42 days. I therefore think that six weeks should be ample time to give the inspector an opportunity of getting the authority for a proclamation to prevent the removal of hives and other equipment.

That is practically all that this Bill is intended to do. A very serious situation could develop, as a result of any laxity on the part of anybody, in this industry,

which has come to mean so much to this State. The income of the industry is around £250,000 per annum, which is not an inconsiderable amount. Something like 638 beekeepers are affected by the Bill. So this is indeed an industry of some importance.

A very minor amendment has also been included in the Bill, which is in some way tied up with a measure to be introduced relating to the Bee Industry Compensation Act. The amendment attempts to correct inaccuracies of expression, if I may so describe them, that now exist in the parent Act relating to the destruction of infected bees, hives and other appliances of apiarists. The amendment to the relative section of the Act will serve to emphasise the fact that, while ordering the destruction of infected material, an inspector may attach a condition that if such material is disinfected by a new process which has now come on the market and is readily available, then all that equipment need not necessarily be destroyed. This has really led to the amendment proposed to the Bee Industry Compensation Act, but it was necessary to make some reference to the matter in this Bill.

There is very little more I can add. Members will agree, if they examine the Bill, that it is absolutely necessary and vital to immobilise infected equipment, to concentrate it in its own area and not allow it to be used, if it is not destroyed, before it is fumigated or treated in some way. Because of the time that must elapse before an order can be given by an inspector and he can get full authority by proclamation, and because of the danger which exists owing to such a long intervening period when equipment can be moved, it has been found necessary to introduce this Bill on behalf of the beekeepers of this State. They require the provisions contained therein to make it obligatory on beekeepers by law to refrain from shifting any of their belongings from an infected area until special treatment can be arranged. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Owen, debate adjourned.

BILL—DAIRY CATTLE IMPROVEMENT ACT REPEAL.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [3.4] in moving the second reading said: This Bill has been introduced as a result of much agitation over the years by the Farmers' Union and by dairy farmers in the lower South-West who endeavoured to gain the repeal of an Act of Parliament which, although of tremendous importance to dairy farmers over the years, has now become more or less redundant and is not nearly as important as it used to be.

The Dairy Cattle Improvement Act was passed in 1922 round about the time when the group settlement areas came into being in this State in the lower South-West. The main object of the measure was to foster the improvement of dairy herds in this State. Starting off, as they did in those days, where large tracts of country were thrown open, and as a consequence there was not the grade quality of stock available, even if the farmers had the money to buy such stock, they had to take whatever was available in order to operate their holdings at all. Generally, the stock was of a fairly low quality. Its standards were nothing of the kind at which we are aiming today and which we are fast reaching.

The Act provides that bulls can be registered on the payment of a small fee. Under this registration the bulls are classified as either purebred or grade bulls. A registration fee of 10s. is imposed on a purebred bull once in its lifetime, but a grade bull must be registered annually at a cost of 5s. Of course, the whole purpose behind the registration of bulls was to enable the officers of the dairying division of the Department of Agriculture to know what types of bulls were being used, and to be able more readily to get in touch with the owners of bulls of undesirable standards so that the many advantages of the better types of bulls could be made known to those farmers. This was a means of encouraging them to improve the quality and standard of their stock.

It was necessary to fill in an application form every year under the provisions of the Act and to set out the breeding and the productivity performance of the female ancestry of each bull. It was considered that with this knowledge coming forward each year, farmers would gradually realise that the quality of many of the animals they were registering was actually of inferior standard, and that they would endeavour to procure herds of a better type. That was the object of the Act.

With the increasing knowledge that farmers have gained since those earlier days, together with the greater opportunity and facilities for improving their herds through the extension services supplied by the Department of Agriculture, which has been able to bring before the farmers the very best and latest in modern agricultural science, there has been a marked increase in the standard of the animal population of this State over the years.

A very significant change has taken place in the industry. As the years progressed we found that many farmers turned away completely from dairy cattle and went more into fatstock rearing. In that regard, the figures are rather illuminating. From the information supplied

to me, it appears that the trend to beef production has been intensified over the years, and since the conclusion of the war, beef cattle kept for fattening have increased by approximately 100 per cent., while the number of dairy cows increased by only 7 per cent. The Superintendent of Dairying, Mr. Cullity, has this to say in regard to the matter:—

On many farms the carrying capacity has increased beyond the number of cows that can be handled by the available labour, and instead of farmers attempting to raise only dairy steers which, although they grow readily and are quite marketable, are not so attractive to the butcher as beef or beef cross animals. They are being definitely encouraged to breed a number of cross beef animals from inferior dairy cows, and later animals of more specifically a beef type.

This is being done by the inclusion of beef bulls in the artificial breeding service. This move will assist the production of beef in the south western districts which already are contributing the major portion of the beef supplies to the City of Perth and country towns. The artificial breeding service, which so far has proved most successful, will also mean that an increasing number of farmers will be breeding their dairy cattle to the superior bulls which are kept at the centre. For example, in the first 12 months of the scheme, 1,500 cows were bred in this way. At the moment, there are 190 farmer members of the scheme and the total number of cows which have been offered for the coming 12 months is 8,000.

Therefore, it can be seen that if we take into account the ever-increasing difficulty of endeavouring to administer the Act which, in itself, is in many respects, contradictory and most difficult, and if we allow for the advanced knowledge which is being disseminated rapidly each year throughout the dairying areas, plus the fact that we have definitely entered into the practice of permanent artificial insemination in the South-West—insemination is quickly receiving the approval of farmers throughout the length and breadth of the South-West—we have now arrived at a point where confidence is felt regarding the prospect of maintaining or improving quality without the present Act.

As a result of the activities of the Wokalup research station, and the willingness of most farmers to accept the knowledge and advice which the officers associated with it are able to impart, I am led to believe that at long last we should accede to the requests of the dairy section of the Farmers' Union, as well as many other

people in the South-West, to repeal this Act. I do not consider it has any further use so far as this industry is concerned.

Mr. Bovell: In regard to grade bulls, does it mean that they will be registered only once and not every year?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If this Bill is agreed to, the whole Dairy Cattle Improvement Act will be repealed. We feel that modern knowledge is such that there is no longer any need for what is known on the statute books as the Dairy Cattle Improvement Act. The repeal of this Act has been requested for a long time, even since I have been a Minister. I refused to have anything to do with it until I realised the success that was being achieved at Wokalup. I now feel that the future of the industry lies in that direction and there is no need to retain this Act any longer.

Mr. Bovell: It will not be a retrograde step so far as the quality of breeding of cattle is concerned?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No; that is my information. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. I. W. Manning, debate adjourned.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [3.16] in moving the second reading said: This Bill could be slightly contentious, but I do not think it will be. These matters can only be decided by reasoning and sensible thinking. When members reach that stage, it will go through without any hitch.

Mr. Bovell: It is a hardy annual.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Bill contains a number of amendments to the principal Act, which are designed to ensure smooth and efficient administration of the measure. It proposes to reduce the residential qualification in the case of Legislative Assembly enrolment from three months to one month. This is a reversion to the period which existed prior to 1948 and will effect uniformity with the qualifying period for the Commonwealth.

There is nothing more disconcerting to potential electors in a new district than the existing disparity in the residential qualifications for State and Commonwealth enrolments. An elector, anxious to observe the electoral laws with respect to his new address, is supplied with the necessary State and Commonwealth cards

and is surprised to find that although qualified for Commonwealth enrolment, and possibly for Legislative Council enrolment, he is unable to enrol for the Legislative Assembly until the three months' residential period expires, with the result that after completing Commonwealth enrolment he invariably forgets about the State enrolment when the time is due.

Mr. Bovell: That is a poor excuse.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There is another aspect also as he may, in good faith, prematurely complete a Legislative Assembly claim card and thus leave himself open to prosecution.

Mr. Court: You would not prosecute in a case like that?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not know; it would depend on the offence.

Mr. Court: It is more apparent than real.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: With uniformity it would not happen. Our Act is not uniform with that of the Commonwealth in this respect.

Mr. Court: Surely three months is reasonable!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is too long.

Mr. Bovell: It gives the elector a chance to enrol.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is a discussion for the Committee stage.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Bill introduces a new provision similar to the existing section in the Commonwealth Act authorising the Chief Electoral Officer to impose penalties for non-enrolment for the Legislative Assembly. At present, the only action that can be taken for non-enrolment is through the Police Department. The Chief Electoral Officer has power to impose penalties for failure to vote and it is felt that he should be given the same power in respect of non-enrolment. However, a person would still have the option of the matter being dealt with by the Chief Electoral Officer or by a court of summary jurisdiction. The penalty for a first offence is limited to a maximum of 10s. and, for any subsequent offences, a sum not exceeding £2.

By repealing Sections 43 and 46 and by re-enacting Section 46 in an amended form, the necessity for a claim to be filed provisionally for 14 days before enrolment is removed and provision is made that a claim, if in order, will permit an elector to be enrolled immediately upon its receipt. If the registrar is not satisfied that the claimant is entitled to enrolment, he must refer the claim to the Chief Electoral Officer for his decision and if he rejects the claim, the claimant has a right of appeal to a magistrate. By removing the period of

14 days for maturation of claims, Section 47 of the principal Act is unnecessary and is to be repealed.

The existing provisions in regard to objections to enrolment still remain, with the addition that where an objection is by an elector, notice of the day and place appointed for the hearing must be sent to both the objector and the elector objected to by A.R. registered post, and that the objector must appear at the hearing if he desires to support the objection. If the objector does not appear in person at the hearing, the objection shall not be entertained by the magistrate.

A provision is included in the Bill for every writ for an election to be deemed to be issued at 6 o'clock in the afternoon of the day on which it is issued. This means that the rolls would close at 6 p.m. on the day of the issue of the writ. The Bill amends Sections 70, 71 and 72 in regard to the minimum and maximum periods between the issue of the writ, close of nominations, polling day and the return of the writ, and is a reversion to the period prescribed prior to 1948. It is felt that there is no necessity for the existing special provision for nomination day for the North Province to be not less than 35 days before the date fixed for polling.

A new clause is introduced in the Bill to make provision for the party designation of a candidate to be shown against his name on the ballot paper, and in order that this can be effected, a party must first be registered, and the requirements for registration are set out in the Bill. The Chief Electoral Officer is the registration officer and is empowered to hear any objections against the registration of a party. Any person or body of persons dissatisfied with the Chief Electoral Officer's decision in respect of an objection or a refusal of registration, may appeal to a board of review consisting of a representative nominated by the appellant, a representative nominated by the respondent and the Chief Electoral Officer as chairman.

The Bill deletes the special provision permitting an elector for a province to vote by post if he is more than seven miles from a polling place in the province for which he is enrolled. It is considered that an elector for a province should not have any better facilities than those given to an elector voting for the Legislative Assembly who can record a postal vote only if he is more than seven miles from a polling place open in the State.

A provision is also included to allow an elector to vote at any polling place open on the day of an election either as an ordinary voter or as an absent voter, as the case may be. At present an elector, before being permitted to record an absent vote, must make a declaration to the effect that he is not, and will not be, within the district for which he is entitled to vote during the hours of polling.

Instances have occurred where electors have attended polling places at which they have been accustomed to vote for Federal elections but which were outside their district for State elections. As they could not make the necessary declaration, they were refused an absent vote with the result that in many cases they were required to travel some distance to record their votes. As voting for the Legislative Assembly is compulsory, it is considered that every facility should be afforded electors to vote and that all restrictions in connection with the recording of absent votes should be lifted.

The Bill removes the sections relating to the limitation of electoral expenses and the lodgment of returns of expenses incurred. The Act at present aims to limit the electoral expenses of candidates to £250 in elections for the Legislative Assembly and £1,000 in elections for the Legislative Council. But the sections in their present form have very little effect in controlling the expenditure of a candidate when conducting a campaign.

There is no way in which certain expenditure can be checked, and difficulty is often experienced in obtaining correct returns from candidates. Furthermore, items such as advertising and printing are often arranged by a party and it is practically impossible to assess a correct proportion to each candidate. There does not appear to be any provision in New South Wales or Queensland for the lodgment of returns of electoral expenses by candidates.

The Bill reduces from 50 yards to 20 feet the distance for which canvassing near the entrance of a polling place is prohibited. This is the distance permitted by the Commonwealth Act. The clauses in the Bill not already referred to are of a minor or machinery nature and, in some cases, consequential, and these can be explained in the Committee stage of the measure. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

BILL—OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [3.30] in moving the second reading said: The Occupational Therapists Association is endeavouring to obtain legislation which would make theirs a registered profession. This is desirable in the interests of the public as the services of occupational therapists are being used on an increasing scale and, in future, it is expected that the mental health services will require more of these people.

When properly qualified, occupational therapists are ethical practitioners and are an essential medical auxiliary. Their

services supplement orthodox medical treatment with a view to obtaining a speedier and more complete recovery from illness and to assist rehabilitation of sick persons and their return to community life. It is advisable that the public and medical profession be able to identify the qualified person who can assist them. This can be achieved by registration. Registration will also encourage and foster development of the profession and attract recruits. There is a shortage of trained occupational therapists.

Provision is made for the appointment of a board, which shall be a body corporate. The board is to be subject to the Minister. The funds of the board, apart from defraying expenses incurred in the administration of the Act, including the remuneration of the registrar and staff of the board, may be applied in furtherance of education and research in occupational therapy. The board may make rules for regulating its meetings, appointing of deputies for members, prescribing fees to be charged, relating to registration and deregistration of occupational therapists, tenure of office of members of the board, and prescribing the course of study and classes to be attended and time spent in training, etc.

In order to obtain registration a person must be 21 years of age, of good character, and hold qualifications prescribed by the rules, or have been bona fide engaged in the practice of occupational therapy in the State for at least 24 months during the period of three years next preceding the coming into operation of the Act. A person is not entitled to be registered, or continue to be registered, as an occupational therapist if he has, either before or after being registered, been convicted in the State or elsewhere of an offence which, in the opinion of the board, renders him unfit to be registered. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Ross Hutchinson, debate adjourned.

MOTION—RAIL CLOSURES.

Rescission of 1956 Resolution.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [3.35]: I move—

That the resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly on 13th December, 1956, reading as follows:—

That in the opinion of this House, having regard particularly to the considerations referred to in Appendix "A" to this motion, the services provided by the railways listed in Appendix "B" to this motion

should, notwithstanding certain other considerations, be discontinued and that such railways should cease to be operated—

Subject to the Government—

- (a) ensuring that through increased efficiency and economies throughout the W.A.G.R., including workshops and administration, a substantial reduction in the railway deficit will be achieved as a result of the cessation of the railways in Appendix "B"; and
- (b) ensuring an adequate replacement system of passenger and freight transport before cessation of operation of the railways in Appendix "B"; and
- (c) overhauling and re-organising the metropolitan Government passenger transport services with a view to reducing substantially the deficits in such services.

Appendix "A."

(1) The annual cash deficits of the State railways.

(2) The condition of State railways generally and particularly of the railways listed in Appendix "B."

(3) The need for improvements in the economical operation of the State railways, and for the concentration of railway resources to permit of all-round improvements in the cost of operating the railways.

(4) The facts that the railways listed in Appendix "B" are unprofitable and that their rehabilitation and operation would involve heavy expenditure when compared with existing and anticipated future traffic on those railways.

(5) The rising costs of operating railways.

(6) The need to avoid, to every possible extent, any necessity to increase rail freights on the remaining railways, and to provide for the adequate rehabilitation and operation of the remaining railways.

(7) The recovery of materials for use on other railways.

(8) The availability and use of other means of transport.

(9) The most satisfactory and economical employment of staff.

Appendix "B."

Railways.	Length of Railways. Miles.
Meekatharra to Wiluna	111
Cue to Big Bell	19
Malcolm to Laverton	64
Geraldton to Ajana	67
Wokarina to Yuna	38
Burakin to Bonnie Rock	76
Mukinbudin to Lake Brown	8
Lake Brown to Bullfinch	50
Bullfinch to Southern Cross	22
Boddington to Narrogin	51
Busselton to Margaret River	38
Margaret River to Flinders Bay	29
Elleker to Nornalup	61
Brookton to Corrigin	56
Lake Grace to Hyden	58
Katanning to Pingrup	59
Gnowangerup to Ongerup	35
	842

be, and is hereby rescinded.

In moving this motion, which proposes to rescind the resolution of this House made on the 13th December, 1956, I would say at the outset that I suppose there has never been a resolution of this Parliament—probably since the granting of self-government and certainly not for a couple of decades at least—which has occasioned so much concern and indignation in various parts of Western Australia, as this one has, and not only in those parts of the State which are actually affected by the resolution, because there has been, in many areas outside those directly affected, a very grave concern felt and considerable objection and resentment in regard to the treatment which, in some cases at least, has been afforded to the fellow citizens of those concerned, dwelling in some of the more remote parts of Western Australia.

Be it noted that the closure of railway lines which was contemplated by that resolution dealt, in the main, with those portions of line which are in the outer areas of development in this State. There is little or no direct effect by any of the wording of the resolution on those citizens who reside in the more populated areas of Western Australia or, indeed, on those who reside in the more closely settled parts of the State, as I said, in the main.

The next thing to which I wish to refer is that it was stated, and has been reiterated in more recent times, that Her Majesty's Government in this State would not, because of its policy on the one hand and its desire on the other hand, have taken the action which was covered by the resolution in question, had that resolution not been approved by both Houses of Parliament. That has been stated by responsible Ministers of the Crown on more than one occasion, either verbally or

in letters which have been read at public meetings to some of which I have been invited and have attended.

Therefore it would appear that the consent of Parliament as a whole to this proposition was a *sine qua non* and a condition precedent to the carrying to finality of the proposals which the resolution contained. So far as the incidents which occurred on the 13th and 18th December last are concerned, that was the position; but it is no longer the position.

Standing Orders of this House and of another place permit either Chamber to rescind resolutions or motions which have been carried, provided that due notice is given and the resolution that is to be rescinded is read at the same time as the motion seeking its rescission. In another place in recent times, as a result of a motion thus moved, a resolution has been carried rescinding that which was passed on the 18th December last year—a similar one to that which was passed here on the 13th December last year.

So I submit to you for your consideration, Mr. Speaker, and to members of this House also, this fact: The resolution of Parliament which was carried on the 13th December last in this House and on the 18th December last in the other House, no longer exists as such resolution. In consequence, it would be competent for the Government, without any loss of face or without any other difficulty that I can foresee, to say to the public of Western Australia, "We will agree that this matter should be reconsidered; we also agree that a better and more sensible approach should be made to it than was made last December; we will have the matter re-investigated but, in the meantime, we will reopen the lines for traffic."

That, I think, would be a proper approach to the matter, especially as the joint resolution of both Houses is no longer such a joint resolution but only a standing resolution of this House. If, of course, this House were to decide to do the same thing, which I am going to ask it to do, in my view there could be no other course possible open to the Government but to do as I have suggested. It seems that the rules and Standing Orders that are applicable to this House and to another place would never have made provision for the rescission of a motion such as was passed on the 13th December last, unless it was intended that that rescission of either House should have some quite definite effect.

The effect that I suggest it has is that the resolution of Parliament—Parliament being the two Houses of it—which the Government desires to have, and which it obtained in rather extraordinary circumstances, no longer exists. Therefore it would be fully justified in giving the matter reconsideration on that ground alone. But as I have said, I hope this House will proceed in the matter also.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.10 p.m.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I had been saying that it was my belief that a resolution carried by both Houses of Parliament can no longer be effective when it has been rescinded by one House. I leave that thought with hon. members. At the time when this motion was discussed, it was quite apparent from the speeches that were delivered in this House that, in addition to those members who actually voted in the final analysis against the motion, there were others who, by their sentiments, were against it as much as I was myself. It would seem to me not to be unreasonable to think that some of those hon. members would very much like to have the opportunity given to them, which could be ensured by the passage of the motion which I am now moving, to reconsider the whole matter.

In order that I might not be misunderstood in making this assertion, I would like to read certain extracts of the speeches by those members to whom I have referred. These have been extracted from the Hansard reports of December last. The first extract I wish to quote is from the speech by the member for Murchison on page 3107. He said this—

In closing the railway the Minister will close the goldmines as well. . . . I appeal to the Government not to discontinue the lines.

On page 3109 he said—

I ask that before any final decision is reached to discontinue the lines, consideration be given to providing a sealed road.

On page 3110 he had this to say—

If the discontinuance of these further lines is agreed to, in seven years there will be no subsidy at all. There will be no line, no subsidy and no people outback. Because the people there are determined not to remain; and rightly so. Why should they stay there and suffer all sorts of adversities for the city slickers down here?

He went on to say further—

I say that the discontinuance of the lines would be a retrograde step for any Government to take. It would, as far as the Murchison is concerned, be cutting the lifeline of those who live there.

He concluded by again appealing to the Government, on page 3112 of 1956 Hansard, to give further consideration before closing the lines.

Mr. Nalder: Those appear to be your sentiments.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: As the hon. member has said by interjection, those sentiments might have been those expressed by myself in this regard. There is not very much doubt that some at least of what the member for Murchison has forecast, is coming into effect in the area to which

he referred. I would like to say that I am not making these quotations in a spirit of criticism. Do not imagine that! I just want to indicate that the views I hold are not singular to me and those who actually voted against the motion, but also apply to several others who, for one reason or another, either voted for the motion in the final division, or did not vote at all.

The member for Albany at page 3113 appealed to the Government to reconsider the question, and the member for Kalgoolie on page 3192 said—

In my opinion, the Government has out-Goebbeled Goebbels because it has recommended the discontinuance of 842 miles of railway.

Further on he said—

Members who have defended the recommendations of the committee have dabbled in tin-pot tyranny. That responsibility must not rest on their shoulders. I do not want it to rest on mine. Is this the only alternative to reducing expenditure? I have not been convinced that it is.

On page 3194 he went on to say—

I am not happy with this motion. I am opposed to the principle of discontinuing railway lines.

The member for Boulder on page 3195 said—

I do feel that everything has not been done that should have been done before taking the step envisaged here.

Further on he said—

To provide proper roads . . . will cost . . . far more than to keep the line in operation.

On page 3201 he said—

I intend to support the motion, but I do so with the greatest reluctance, and I feel that before any steps are taken to carry out the rest of the recommendation, a searching inquiry should be held into the whole of our railway system and its management.

Those are the sentiments which have been expressed in one way or another by members of this House and another place who hold the same views as I do. Virtually what was suggested by the member for Boulder in the last paragraph I read is really that for which I am asking at this juncture—that there should be a rescission of the present decision, and that the matter should be reconsidered in the light of such a searching investigation as that to which the hon. member referred. So I must say that I cannot offer, far from wishing to, any criticism of the remarks made by those hon. members, because I am of the opinion that the views expressed were at that time, and are still, entirely justified.

The Minister for Works: If this searching investigation, which you seek, resulted in the recommendation that double the length of line should be closed, what would be your attitude then?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: At least we would have the opportunity of studying the searching investigation. I am coming to some remarks about the investigation which has been made.

The Minister for Works: You evaded the point very nicely.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I do not think the recommendation is worth the paper it is written on.

The Minister for Transport: You could still say that of any inquiry.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Quite so, but in the light of certain facts in regard to the matter, it seems to me that at least it has some substance in this particular instance, because many of the statements that were made in the inter-departmental committee's report have been varied by ministerial statements in the meantime in answer to questions, and have also been varied by happenings in the meantime.

It was only a few days ago that I asked the Minister for Transport if he would advise me of the relative ton mileage rates in connection with wheat and iron ore. The hon. gentleman informed me that 2.68d. was the rate for both wheat and iron ore and, for reasons he gave in answer to my question, the carriage of wheat was somewhat simpler than the carriage of iron ore which, I think, is handled in bulk. I am in no position to deny the accuracy of the Minister's figures. In fact, I am inclined to believe they are correct figures. However, 2.68d. per ton mile is the amount which these respective cargoes realise in similar circumstances.

The report of the inter-departmental committee, page 21, under the heading of "Rail Freights," gives particulars regarding traffic yielding below 6d. per ton mile and above 6d. per ton mile. Under the subheading of "Rail traffic yielding below 6d. per ton mile," the report states that the return on the hauling of wheat was 2.90d. and on miscellaneous, including ores and minerals, 2.02d. Therefore, according to that, the wheat rate was .22d. above the figure quoted by the Minister, and the miscellaneous rate 2.02d. was .66d. below the figure quoted by the Minister. That does not indicate that the report of the committee is accurate in, at least, that respect.

We have been told from time to time and at various times that the cartage of wheat is unprofitable to the railways. It has been extremely hard for me to swallow that story knowing, as I do, that every time there is a shortage of wheat to be carried, the railways seem to be in further difficulty and when there is a surplus of

wheat to be carried, the railways seem to be better off. Yet, as I say, the statement I refer to has been repeated from time to time in this House and elsewhere. If the figures given by the inter-departmental committee were correct, it would place wheat in a better position than that which I am going to demonstrate in a moment. But, I have already said that I propose to accept the figures given by the Minister in the course of the last few days.

I would refer to a report in "The West Australian" of the 18th July under the heading of "W.A. Charcoal Iron Plant." It stated that a series of questions concerning the economy of the industry was submitted to the Premier and it goes on to say—

The answers are generally informative; they are quoted hereunder verbatim.

"Verbatim" I understand means word for word by the person making the answer and, in his answer to the last one of the series of questions, the Premier said this—

The railways will make a profit on the transport of iron ore from Koolyanobbing, both for export and for the new plant.

Taking the figures of the Minister, the rates are the same and wheat is somewhat easier to carry. According to the Premier, carriage of iron ore will make a profit for the railways. How is it that something which is easier to carry at the same rate is making a loss?

The Minister for Transport: I think you know the answer to that.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I do not know the answer to it, and I will take a lot of convincing that there is an answer, because it is as obvious as the sun in the sky.

The Minister for Transport: You have never heard of telescopic freights?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I have heard of telescopic freights frequently, and they apply to iron ore just as much as wheat, providing the distances are relatively the same. The distance from Koolyanobbing and Southern Cross is as great, if not greater, than that from all our wheat-producing areas.

Mr. Ackland: It is greater than the average.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Certainly and, in consequence, the situation, in my opinion, is as I have stated, and there can be no question in my mind about the oft repeated allegation of the loss on wheat.

One of the statements of the inter-departmental committee was that unless a considerable length of line was closed—they recommended approximately 2,000 miles in all—closure of only small sections would be useless and, in answer to an

interjection by the Minister for Transport when the member for Moore was speaking a few days ago, the Minister agreed that that was the position.

In the report of the Commissioners for Railways up to the 30th June, 1956, these words are stated—

Closure of some of the non-paying branch lines will help the rehabilitation of the remainder of the system. Indeed, it will improve the position of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, but the point must be borne in mind that piece-meal closures will have comparatively little effect. Substantial benefit can accrue only from a major contraction of the present attenuated railway system from 4,119 miles to roundly 2,500 miles.

The difference between 4,119 miles and 2,500 miles is 1,619 miles and that is approximately twice the area affected by the resolution of the 13th December last. So we reach this position, as I see it, that this partial closure, if it is proceeded with, on the evidence of the commissioners themselves, the inter-departmental committee and the Minister himself, is not going to achieve the result they expect.

The Government, through its Minister for Railways, has repeatedly stated in letters that have been read and I have seen—one was read at a meeting at Northam on the 12th July—that it is not intended—I do not accept his assurance—to close any other railway lines. That statement was repeated at Wagin, where a meeting was held and which I did not attend in person. However, a letter from the Wagin Road Board informed me that at the meeting last Friday, the Minister, in a letter to the board, specifically referred to the Wagin-Bowelling railway.

The Wagin-Bowelling railway was in the next list recommended by the inter-departmental committee, and the Minister says they can rest assured that the Government has no intention of closing that line. In consequence, I repeat that the whole proposition is more unfair than would appear at first sight, because it could only be justified, if it could be justified at all, by the fact that the length of railway to be closed would conclusively show a considerable saving to Consolidated Revenue.

In my opinion—and I said if it could be justified at all—it could not be justified on those grounds alone unless every possible step had been taken beforehand to effect other economies and to increase revenue where practicable. But for the moment we will allow that to pass and say that if it could be justified, it could be justified only by doing the job properly; and the Minister for Railways in repeated communications since December last has stated quite clearly that it is not proposed to close any more lines. Therefore the attack that has been made

upon this limited length of line, including the lines in the areas represented by the members for Murchison, Katanning, Mt. Marshall and others, is entirely unjustified, because it is obvious that these closures are not going to carry out the purpose that was proposed by the Government and envisaged, apparently, by the committee and the commissioners. All it will do is to make things difficult for a considerable number of people.

Now I suppose I had better deal with this aspect before I pass on because the Minister will, no doubt, make some reference to it as his colleague did in the Legislative Council. He will probably tell us that a certain section of settlers who have come into my electorate are quite satisfied with the transport proposals, to wit, the people from Ongerup eastward, because they are going to be allowed either themselves, or by Government contractors—Transport Board-supervised contractors—to carry a great proportion of their produce to, and to receive their superphosphate from, Albany.

In principle, I agree that these persons can be reasonably satisfied by that proposition but they are in rather an unusual situation. They are, as it happens, only a comparatively short distance from the port of Albany. The railroad to Albany goes around two sides of a triangle, and the road that the settlers use represents only one side of it. Therefore, it is considerably shorter. In consequence, they are, in principle, satisfied with the idea, but I question very much whether they are satisfied with what they are going to get, because they do not yet know what it is!

That is another problem. No one is able to tell them at this juncture just what they are going to pay for the transport of those commodities to which I refer—those that are capable of being sent to Albany; mainly wheat and 6-row barley. No one is able to tell them yet what this is going to cost; nor has there been any satisfactory arrangement made in regard to the road which will have to be used. This road is known, I believe, to the Government departments as the Lake Grace-Albany-rd., but to the local people it is known more usually, I think, as the Chester Pass-rd., because it goes through the Stirling Ranges. In the circumstances, this road will have to carry all the traffic.

It is extremely difficult to estimate completely what the traffic is going to be. On the figures of the last two years, it is obviously going to run into well over 20,000 tons of traffic to Albany and about 20,000 tons from Albany. These figures are obviously capable of substantial increase when the Jerramungup war service land settlement project comes into full operation. But on the figure of something over 20,000 tons, and with the use of 10-ton vehicles to carry the goods, it is going

to take 17 or 18 such vehicles, in constant operation over a period of six months, to handle this traffic back and forth—a total of 40,000 tons. I am very doubtful whether the road is going to stand the racket so that it can, within reason, be used comfortably and safely by the ordinary public, and indeed, in the ultimate, by the contractors themselves.

When the Transport Board was good enough to come to the Gnowangerup Road Board district and pay a visit to the Needilup hall, which is in the centre of this area, I asked the chairman whether he knew of any firm which was prepared to supply the necessary vehicles to handle this quantity of goods? He said he did not. I asked him then how he imagined it would be done, because I was bona fide anxious to find out, in view of the large number of vehicles required for this long haul of between 92 and 125 miles.

The Minister for Works: How many vehicles do you consider would be necessary?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I consider that 15 to 18 will be required to do the job over six months; and I submit to the Minister that it cannot be done over a longer period than that, in view of the timing at Albany.

The Minister for Works: That is on the basis of one trip a day each way.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Virtually that. It is difficult to do any more with the backloading of the superphosphate. I made pretty careful inquiries into this.

The Minister for Works: That is 90 miles a day.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The distance is from 92 to 128 miles, and do not forget that this is to the centre of Jerramungup, and in many cases the carters will have to go further out still, on account of the individual contracts they have with the farmers, which their tender with the Transport Board provides for. Then the backloading of superphosphate at Albany has to be attended to. These people will be extremely lucky, I understand, if they can do six trips in five days. This has been worked out, and that is why I say 15 to 18 vehicles will be needed. It may be 15 if I am right in that last figure, and 18 if I am not.

Mr. Ackland: Will they work eight hours a day on that run?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: These are the best figures I have been able to obtain, and I go so far as to say that Mr. Howard did not dispute them at the Needilup hall because, I think, he saw the difficulty. I have great appreciation for Mr. Howard—do not misunderstand me! What I wish to say about the operations of this service is not by any means directed at him or his fellow-members. They have a duty to perform and, as far as I am concerned, they were carrying it out in an extremely

reasonable and courteous manner. But when, in the presence of 70 or 80 people, I asked Mr. Howard where he thought of getting these vehicles from, he expressed the opinion that it might be possible to obtain a syndicate or combination of people who had such trucks and who could co-ordinate a plan for the carriage of the goods.

I do not know what the net result will be. I know that tenders are being called this week. In principle, from the point of view of these people, and from the point of view of this particular district and the production there, what is suggested may be excellent, but we still do not know on just what terms it is going to be, what the cost is going to be, and what the extra handling charges will be, because some of the wheat, at least, will have to be put into the bin at Ongerup and taken out again to be sent to Albany by road, and so on.

The Minister for Transport: I think the experience of the people in the Lakes district would be pretty right.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Their experience, as far as I can discover, is not very satisfactory. I have had opportunities in recent times to discuss the question with them, and to say the least they did not seem particularly enthusiastic.

The Minister for Transport: You get grizzlers everywhere.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Of course, their structure has been built around the absence of a railway; there has never been one there. In the other areas that I should refer to, they have been built up round the railways. The circumstances are rather different; they are not on all fours by any means. I mention that particular aspect only to let the Minister know that I can see what is taking place down there and if it was the only line in question, I would probably content myself by making representation to Ministers of the Crown, and to others, to have remedial measures taken. But so far as I am concerned, I am dealing with 807 miles of other line on the majority of which there are no such privileges likely to be afforded to the people concerned, because the surrounding circumstances are such that the same privileges and rights cannot be afforded them, assuming that those rights and privileges to which I have referred work out satisfactorily.

We will have another look at some of the disparities in figures that have been quoted in regard to this matter. On the 6th November, 1956, by question No. 24 on the notice paper, the member for Mt. Marshall asked the Minister what were the working expenses and earnings for the suburban coaching system for the year ended the 30th June, 1956. The Minister replied that the working expenses were £1,468,995 and the earnings £372,421 for the suburban coaching service. If we deduct the latter

from the former we find that there is a deficiency of £1,096,574, after deducting all earnings on the metropolitan coaching system.

Only a few days ago, in another place, the Minister for Railways was asked a similar question in regard to the same year and the answer that he gave in respect to the deficiency of working expenses over earnings was just over £500,000. So there is a difference of approximately £500,000 between the figures given to this House on the 6th November, 1956, and those given some time in July, 1957, in another place, in respect of the same year. How are we to know which of the two is right? I consider that it is pathetic and if one had the time for more research, one could quote other figures of a similar character—and they will be quoted before the debate concludes—which have been given here from time to time and which vary, not so much in sums of money but in proportion, as much as the figures which I have just quoted.

I do not know which to accept, but whichever one of the two I do accept—be it a loss of £1,096,574, or just over £500,000—the net result is that the suburban coaching system is losing more than the inter-departmental committee estimated in regard to the whole loss per annum on the 842 miles which are subject to closure by virtue of the resolution which we are discussing. Surely it is unjust and unfair, in all the circumstances, to compel the closure of 842 miles of line when nothing has been done to minimise the losses on the other sections of our transport system.

Already we have classical examples, even in the last few days, of the willingness of Her Majesty's Government in this State to spend substantial sums of money in the metropolitan districts—doubtless on most deserving projects—while at the same time equally deserving but very much minor projects in the country districts are met with a response that no funds are available.

The Minister for Works: What about giving an example?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I could give half a dozen examples; they are in my files upstairs.

The Minister for Works: One is enough.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The sewerage scheme for the Mt. Barker junior high school is one.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: There is no money for drainage.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I could think of a number of others as well.

The Minister for Works: Mt. Barker got a water supply, you know.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I stick to the facts; I am not taking the Minister to pieces in this matter. I had better not digress any

further because my remarks at the moment are away from the motion. But undoubtedly there is and has been a tendency to take action in regard to these areas which are far removed from the big centre of population while at the same time resolutely refusing, apparently, to take any remedial action closer to home.

Mr. Bovell: School bus services would be one instance, would it not?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: That has not been on the basis of "no funds are available" but on the basis of "we have funds but they are not big enough to cope with the job". So I will leave that matter out for the moment.

The Minister for Works: Quite a number of jobs in the metropolitan area have been turned down because no funds are available. A water supply at Maida Vale is an example.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Perhaps I should move another motion during the course of which I could give more examples after I have got my facts together. I will now turn to another aspect of this matter. I suggest to the Minister that he could effect most of the saving in revenue that was sought to be saved by the inter-departmental committee's recommendation, by doing one or two things that occurred to me and one or two things that doubtless he could find out for himself.

The other day I asked him what was the loss on the railway between Walkaway and Geraldton. If this motion is to proceed and the Northampton and Yuna railways are to remain closed, that particular piece of line is out on the end of the Midland Railway Company's line and joins up with nothing except the town of Geraldton, which will have no railway traffic north of it. The Minister told me that the loss was £100,000 for the last year.

I mention that particularly because during last year the two lines north of Geraldton were, for the major part of the time anyway, open for traffic. As a consequence, a loss of £100,000 was made during that period. I wanted to find out the anticipated loss for this year when the two lines were closed, as they were at the time I asked the question. I sympathise with the Minister because it was more likely to be a guestimate than an estimate; so I do not quarrel with him for not being able to answer it. Therefore we will take the loss at £100,000.

In such circumstances, I suggest that the Government hastily offer the Midland Railway Company that section of the line on the most compassionate terms and so save itself the whole of that loss, because I am sure that it will be far more useful to the Midland Railway Company to finish up its run at Geraldton than to have the present system of changing over at Walkaway.

The Minister for Transport: I have an idea the company is not interested in that proposition.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: It is a pity it is not. I should make the proposition so attractive that it might be, because if the Minister got nothing out of it, he could not lose as much as £100,000. Another matter which comes to mind is that I asked the Minister in the course of questions about the calculations that were made to apportion revenue actually paid in at big receiving centres such as North Fremantle, Fremantle, Albany and so on. I received from him an answer which indicated really what I expected, that it was apportioned out actually on a mileage basis.

In short, if the whole trip the freight made was 300 miles, and the branch line in question, for purposes of calculation, was 30 miles, then that branch line would get 1-10th of the total. I accept that as being the method adopted by the Railway Department. According to the further replies received from the Minister, there are no less than 45 persons engaged in doing this remarkable task; and for what purpose? The only purpose, as far as I can see, is that it has been used up to date to decide that railway lines, which produce tremendous quantities of goods, are unprofitable and ought to be closed. I would suggest that the railways statistics office be closed, because, I submit, that by doing so we would save £60,000 by way of salaries of clerks, and other attendant expenses.

Let us look at that proposition further. On this basis of calculation, I would suggest that the railway line between Spencer's Brook and Fremantle would be surely the most profitable in Western Australia, because it would be receiving its 2-10ths or 3-10ths, or 4-10ths, or whatever its portion, of almost everything that comes over the railways in Western Australia, except that which comes from the South-West, where my friends, the members for Vasse, Harvey and Bunbury have their electorates. It will receive its share of the traffic that comes over every line in the State except those. Yet, what will it contribute towards the revenue of the railways by its own direct production? The greater part of the production at Wundowie, which might be some contribution to it, on the evidence of questions asked in the Legislative Council and answers given by the Minister in recent days, is brought down by road.

There are very few substantial freight-producing industries along that area; certainly nothing comparable to those that are to be found further out. Yet, I suggest, on this basis of calculation, there is not the faintest doubt that that line is the most profitable section in Western Australia, and yet it virtually produces nothing for the railways to transport.

Mr. Johnson: Are you suggesting closing it?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: No, I am suggesting that the railways statistics office be closed for all the good it is, and for all it contributes to the betterment of the railway system. I am not suggesting that that length of line be closed at all, because it is obviously a necessary link between the areas to which I referred and the port of Fremantle, and for other purposes. But on the basis of calculation that has been used, the area that produces the most receives the least credit, and it is quite possible that the area which produces little or nothing by comparison will receive the greatest portion of the credit. If that is all the achievement that the statistics office can accomplish for us, I suggest that the £60,000 be saved without further ado by means of its closure.

To my mind, wiser counsels should prevail in this matter and I think we should reconsider the position. As I have already said, and I repeat, the reason why I am moving that this resolution be rescinded is because I believe it is no longer effective as the decision of both Houses of Parliament, because the other House, which was part and parcel of it originally, has rescinded the resolution. Before I reach my concluding paragraphs, I would like to refer to a deputation I introduced to the Premier on the 13th of March last.

That deputation was one which was representative of virtually all the districts concerned in these railway closures. The deputation placed before the Premier its views over a period of approximately 2½ hours, half an hour of which, I would say, was taken up by the hon. gentleman's reply. One of the strongest points made by the deputation—and it made several—was the necessity there appeared to be to them to ensure that an adequate inquiry was made into the productive capacity of these areas. In the course of his reply the Premier gave me, anyway, the impression that he was greatly impressed by that point of view.

I would like to say that the words I am about to read were not taken from my own notes of the proceedings, because if they were, they might quite easily be inaccurate. These words were taken from a transcript of the notes which the Premier very kindly, subsequently, gave to me at my request. Among other things this is what the Premier had to say and I quote—

(1) Mr. Hawke told the deputation he would agree that there should be a further close inquiry and investigation into each of the lines covered by the motion approved by both Houses. As far as he understood the position it had not been intended that the carrying of that motion should be the last word.

(2) The angle put forward by the deputation which had impressed him was that not sufficient consideration had been given to the present agricultural and land production within the areas concerned and to the possible potential ability of the areas to increase that production. Perhaps a man well versed in such matters could be appointed to investigate that angle, particularly and to report to the Government.

(3) In reply to a query by Mr. Perkins—

that is, the member for Roe—

—who said an impression had been gained that some of the agricultural lines would cease running by the 30th June, the Premier said the only one listed for closure on the specified date was Nornalup-Elleker. He thought no other line would be likely to be closed before the 30th June.

I reiterate that those words are not mine; they are those of the Premier taken from the transcript of the proceedings given to me by him, and therefore there can, I think you will agree, Mr. Speaker, be no doubt as to their accuracy. They postulate his agreement for a further close inquiry and investigation into each of the lines covered by the resolution approved by both Houses.

What further close inquiry and investigation have we had? I certainly know of none. I have inquired of every local authority in the three or four districts associated with this business, plus my own, into which I have been since the time of that deputation, and none of them know, or has any knowledge, of inquiries by any person of any kind into this matter since the 13th March last.

In the "Sunday Times" of the 7th April and "The West Australian" of the 8th April, there appeared the following statement—

Definite dates for the closing of a number of railway lines were announced yesterday. The dates were announced last night by the Transport Minister, Mr. Graham. They are—

	Miles.
29th April—Geraldton to Ajana	67
29th April—Wokarina to Yuna	38
6th May—Boddington to Narrogin	51
30th Sept.—Elleker to Nornalup	61

At this stage I will interpolate for a moment. The Elleker-Nornalup line was to be closed on the 1st March. It was the only one, members will notice, which was

excepted by the Premier in his remarks when he said that no other lines would be closed before the 30th June. The Transport Board visited Denmark and Nornalup—I was present at the former place—and they did, at that time, in fact, call for tenders. Apparently some difficulties cropped up in their minds which, I should say, would be very likely from the information since available.

The Minister for Transport: Wrong.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I do not know; I have never been told. All I got was the information in three or four weeks' time, that the line would not be closed until the 30th September. So, it is an example of the old trick: The first shall be last, and the last first, perhaps. However, I shall go on with the quotation of the Minister for Transport in the Press. He said—

A tentative programme for the suspension of other lines was also announced.

May—

	Miles.
Mukinbudin to Bullfinch	58
Brookton to Corrigin	56
Busselton to Flinders Bay	67
Malcolm to Laverton	64
Meekatharra to Wiluna	111

June—

Burakin to Bonnie Rock	76
Gnowangerup to Ongerup	35
Katanning to Pingrup	59

I will also interpolate here. I think June is passed, and July very nearly. However, the Gnowangerup to Ongerup line has not been closed. From the information I have, the date of 1st July as proposed, has not been confirmed and I shall be advised later of the date. I have been given no reasons for that, but I just state the fact so it will be on record that I have stated it.

When I saw the announcement in those two newspapers, it seemed to me it was so contrary to the remarks made by the Premier at the deputation which waited on him on the 13th March, that I wrote to him on the 8th April, the date on which I said the second of the Press statements appeared. I wrote to him as follows:—

I was somewhat astonished to see in today's paper a statement attributed to the Minister for Transport relative to the closure of certain agricultural railway lines (including the Gnowangerup-Ongerup). It appeared that the lines mentioned are to be closed by or before the 30th June, 1957.

I have before me the transcript (which you were good enough to supply to me) of the notes of the deputation introduced by me which waited upon you on March 13th, and of your reply thereto.

That is, I quoted what I have already read to the House. I went on to say:—

I would like to point out that the first of these statements coming from the head of the Government, and when read in conjunction with the second, amounted to a definite undertaking by the Government that a further close inquiry would be had into each line by an agricultural expert before closure was decided upon.

No such inquiry has taken place.

I feel, now, that I must ask you to take steps to ensure that the undertaking is given effect and that meanwhile no closure action be taken. Please be good enough to advise me as early as possible.

That was the 8th April. On the 10th April, the Premier wrote to me. I might say, to make the position clear to hon. members, and so that the Premier cannot think I have overlooked something, that I handed that letter to the Press, but I first told him I was going to, so that explanation will show the sense of the next letter from the Premier. He said this—

In your letter to me in this matter of Monday last, you have jumped to a conclusion for which there is no real justification.

Had you taken the simple precaution of contacting me personally at Parliament House or by telephone at the Premier's Office before setting out to write your letter, you would not have written it.

I sent a special minute on March 27th last to the Hon. Mr. Hoar (Minister for Agriculture) asking him to have an investigation made of the agricultural potential of the areas of land served by the railway lines which the Government has been authorised by Parliament to close.

Therefore, I feel now that I must ask you to take steps to withdraw publicly the suggestion contained in your letter that my undertaking to the deputation concerned has not been carried out.

I have already said that, so far as we know, nobody has made an investigation on the spot in regard to any of these lines. I made such inquiries, as possible, from local authorities, and that is the information received from all of them. If there has been some sort of investigation made in an office in Perth, it may be that the Premier thinks that was what the deputation needs, but I can assure him it is not what I intended and, I think the same belief would be applicable to all the other members of the deputation because, as I have already pointed out, he said there

would be further close inquiry and investigation into each of the lines covered by the motion. I would suggest that any such investigation, other than one conducted on the spot, is not a close one.

When I received the Premier's reply, I did not feel then—or now—that I had anything to withdraw, so I wrote again quoting the Press statement of the Minister for Transport, pointing out that I knew of no such investigation. No public information had been given about it, and no reference had been made anywhere, so far as I am concerned, except in this correspondence and the deputation and I said, after quoting those things to which I have referred—

I am glad to hear that your request has gone forward to the Minister for Agriculture. I would remind you that I merely said that no such investigation had taken place, and asked you to ensure that it did before any line was closed.

If the Hon. Mr. Graham is in order in making statements of this nature when the surrounding circumstances are such as have been covered by our correspondence, then I think you will agree with me that it places me, and others, in a rather difficult position after we had acquainted those others with the terms of your reply to the deputation on March 13th.

In these circumstances, I think you will agree that there is no necessity for me to withdraw any observation in my letter of the 8th April, but rather to ask you to counteract the statement made by Mr. Graham so that the inquiry may take place.

The Premier: I thought there was something in the letter about an English cricketer.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Wait until I come to it. The letter went on—

I will, however, send a copy of this communication to the Press as I did of my letter of the 8th April, without comment as I did in that case with a request that they should give it publicity.

That correspondence, the Premier's letter and mine of the following day was dated the 10th and 11th of April, 1957. Up to that point it appeared to me and, I think it will appear to every hon. member who is here, from this correspondence that the Premier had a case to answer.

The Minister for Works: You seem to be quite friendly foes; almost affectionate.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I trust the Premier and I are not going to lose our tempers every time we have a difference of opinion.

The Premier: Hear, hear!

Hon. A. F. WATTS: It would be better if all controversies were kept on that level as much as possible. I think the Minister would agree that there is no need to get offensive about it. I will pass on—

The Premier: Not yet!

Hon. A. F. WATTS: On the 30th April, three weeks later, I received this extremely informative and illuminating reply from the hon. gentleman in regard to the proposed closure of railway lines—

I desire to thank you for your letter in this matter of 11th April.

For you the letter is unusually long, which to me is of considerable significance.

Apparently the controllers of the Press thought it too long for publication.

With kind regards—

Mr. Bovell: The Premier has been liberal with his regards to you.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I would suggest to the House that that is not a reply to the communication which I sent to the Premier; it certainly does not deal with the subject matter at all and it does not indicate that he intended to take definite steps to do anything further in the matter of the inquiry. It only, in my opinion, shoved me off with three or four lines on a piece of paper in order that the hon. gentleman could say he had replied.

That is as far as it got. Therefore, for quite a few days I wondered what I could do about it. I thought to myself, is it worth while taking up further with him? I have told him quite plainly what he said to the deputation and I have communicated with him. The Minister for Transport, in short, seems to have jumped the Premier's gun and placed the Premier, in view of his remarks to the deputation, in a most difficult and almost invidious position. Knowing that the hon. gentleman understands thoroughly the game of cricket, I decided to send him the following reply, which I subsequently did on the 17th of March.

Mr. Lawrence: He would probably bowl you out at cricket.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: The letter read as follows:—

I duly received your communication of April 30th.

I think it would be appropriate to say, in reply that I was sorry to read in the cricket news that Hall, the West Indies fast bowler, clean bowled Cook of Cambridge for the poor score of thirteen.

That information seems to me to be rather more relevant to the matter of our correspondence than was your communication of April 30th.

With my kindest regards—

So far as the correspondence is concerned, that is where it stops, because the hon. gentleman can take it either way he likes—either that it was completely jocular, or else that I thought he was clean bowled.

The Premier: We will have to put you in the parliamentary cricket team. Look what we have been missing!

Hon. A. F. WATTS: But the fact remains that we have not had in any worthwhile fashion—or in any fashion that we know of; it has been an unknown investigation, if it has taken place at all—any worthwhile investigation into this matter as the deputation of the 13th March was given to understand by the Premier that we should have. So I submit on that ground also that this matter is properly open for further review, and ought to be reviewed; and that the best way to review it is to cancel this resolution so that we can start off afresh on this business. The Premier was not able to hear all I said earlier, which is either his misfortune or mine—I do not know which; probably a bit of both.

The Premier: I was listening to the Primate of Australia.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Splendid! But I would suggest to him that he might find out the general tenor of my remarks and give them his consideration before the debate on the motion is resumed.

The Premier: I shall.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: So far as I am concerned, I think I have said enough to indicate, first, that this proposition has not been fair to the people concerned in the main; and secondly, that it has been proceeded with without sufficient investigation and inquiry, not only into the subject matter of the railway lines that have been closed or are to be closed but, also into the whole business of the railway system and the possibility of effecting economies, in regard to which I have even made one or two suggestions, equal to the savings which are expected to be made by this arrangement.

Thirdly, I have said enough to indicate that as the proposition recommended by the commissioners and by the inter-departmental committee—which would, they said, have had some effect on Consolidated Revenue—is not going to be carried out but only this piece-meal bit, it is more unfair to the people concerned than it otherwise would have been. Fourthly, that the burden of all this up to date is falling upon the people who are producing the goods which are making the other lines profitable under the system of calculating conducted by the Railway Department, and that it is high time that the views of some other members in this House—which I quoted—sitting on the

other side—which views are very similar to my own—were taken into more consideration, and that this House and Parliament were given another opportunity to review the matter.

Lastly, as the resolution which was carried by both Houses is no longer a resolution of both Houses—because it has been rescinded by one—that is not consonant with Government policy if it wants a resolution of both Houses; and it would therefore be fairer to everybody, and be very wise if the whole matter were started afresh and we approached it in a more reasonable and intelligent manner than the majority of members of Parliament did in December last.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, debate adjourned.

BILL—AGENT GENERAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [5.21] in moving the second reading said: This Bill has been brought down to amend the Agent General Act. The purpose is to increase the amount of salary to be paid annually to the Agent General. The amount provided in the Act at present is £2,150. The Bill proposes to raise that sum to £3,000.

The Agent General's salary has always been paid on the basis of sterling and not of Australian currency. Members will notice that in the Bill the term "sterling" is not used. The legal advisers of the Government told the Government that there was no definition of "sterling" of sufficient stability to make it acceptable for inclusion in the Act; and the suggestion from the Crown Law Department was that if any qualifying word was to be used in regard to the money to be paid by way of a salary, the term "English" should be used, and that term is included in the Bill.

I think all members would agree that the present salary of £2,150 per annum is now out of date, and too low to compensate adequately any person who occupies in London the position of Agent General for Western Australia. It is true that an entertainments allowance is paid in addition to the annual salary. The present allowance is £1,150 sterling per annum. The Government proposes to increase that amount. Recently I had a talk with the widow of the late Mr. Dimmitt, and it was very clear from what she told me

that the present salary and entertainments allowance are not nearly sufficient to meet the requirements of a position of this kind.

Hon. D. Brand: What do you intend to increase the allowance by? Is it to be proportionally to salary?

The PREMIER: Most likely. I should point out that when an Agent General goes to London after his appointment, he has to make his own arrangements for housing and receives no payment whatsoever from the Government for that purpose. Members can understand that in the first place, the problem of obtaining suitable housing accommodation is difficult; and they would also understand, I think, that the cost of such housing—whether on a rental basis or on a straight-out purchase basis—would be very high indeed.

The present term of appointment is for three years; and naturally, when a person goes to London as Agent General for this State, he is not inclined to purchase a home, because he has, in the forefront of his mind, the fact that his appointment is only for three years, and that most likely he would not receive any extension of that term.

Mr. Ackland: Have you ever thought of altering that?

The PREMIER: So the position of a person who goes to London as Agent General is that he has to rent suitable accommodation; and the rental which has to be paid for suitable accommodation, reasonably close to London, is very high indeed. In addition, the value of money has changed in England just the same as in other countries of the world. The depreciation of money in England certainly has not been as substantial as it has been in Australia, but, nevertheless, the purchasing power of money in England is not what it was. So, in all the circumstances, it is not before time that a move is being made in this Parliament to increase the annual salary payable to the Agent General.

Mr. Bovell: How does the salary of the Western Australian Agent General compare with that of the other States?

The PREMIER: The present salary for the Agent General for Western Australia is well below that of men holding similar positions in respect of most other States. If we combine the present salary and the present rate for expenses, the total is much below similar totals for the other States.

The Government does not propose to extend the term as now set down, which is for a period of three years. It takes the view that there is no difficulty in extending the appointment of a person who has proved satisfactory in carrying out the

duties associated with the position. On the other hand, it would be unfortunate if at any time an Agent General were found to be unsatisfactory and the term of appointment had been extended, legally in the Act, from three years to five or six years.

It would be very difficult indeed to do anything about a situation of that kind. The Government would have to wait patiently until the full term of legal appointment had expired; and, in the meantime, Western Australia might have been done a considerable amount of harm in the eyes of the authorities in England, and in the eyes of a great many people in that country. Therefore, it is thought wise in the circumstances to retain the present legal period of appointment and to leave it to the Government of the day from time to time to use its discretion and wisdom in relation to the question whether, after a person has served three years, he should then receive an extension of his term for another three years or for such other period as might be decided upon.

Hon. D. Brand: How does the tenure of office of our Agent General compare with the position in the other States?

The PREMIER: I cannot answer that question off-hand but I believe the other States operate on the same principle as we do. There has been some comment from time to time as to whether the retention of the position of Agent General for Western Australia in London is any longer justified in these days. Some people say that as the Commonwealth Government has an official representative there with a big staff, he is quite capable of handling all the business available in England, irrespective of whether it affects the Commonwealth Government only, the States only or the Commonwealth and the States combined, but I do not agree with that point of view at all.

Hon. D. Brand: Neither do I.

The PREMIER: I think it would be most unfortunate for Western Australia if this State were no longer to be directly represented by an Agent General in Britain.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bovell: My experience is that the Agent General does good service in London.

The PREMIER: When this Bill has been finally considered and decided by Parliament, the Government will be in a position to assess the number of persons that might be available for appointment and to take the practical steps necessary to finalise an appointment.

Hon. D. Brand: Have you had a good look around?

The PREMIER: The look around which the Government has had so far has not been comprehensive. It would not have

been wise to do so once the Government had made the decision to ask Parliament to amend the Act. Clearly, if Parliament approves of this amending Bill, the field from which a selection might be made could be widened. If, on the other hand, Parliament rejects this Bill, the field from which a selection could be made will, I think, be considerably narrowed. I do not think we should expect any person to make himself available for appointment to a position of this kind if he knows that the financial situation will be one that could involve him in loss and subsequent difficulty. I believe no State is entitled to ask that of any citizen, no matter how much might be his private means. I feel that the position should be given a salary and associated expenses consistent with the great importance and dignity of the office.

Mr. Roberts: Has the Government considered the provision of a home in London for the Agent General?

The PREMIER: We have not considered that, nor do I think it would be wise for the Government to become involved in expenditure of that kind, because what would suit one Agent General and his wife might not suit the next Agent General and his wife. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. D. Brand, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.35 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 30th July, 1957.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Transport, Perth-Bunbury road and rail services	472
Education, new classrooms, metropolitan and country	472
Geraldton High School, domestic science and water supply	473
Railways, goods consigned from Geraldton to Perth and Fremantle.....	473
Iron ore, cost of mining and haulage from Koolyanobbing	473
Motion : Sale of iron ore to Japan, to inquire by select committee	497
Bills : Western Australian Marine Act Amendment, 1r.	473
Supply (No. 1), £21,000,000, 2r., remaining stages	473
Interpretation Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report	496
Local Government, 2r.	496

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

QUESTIONS.

TRANSPORT.

Perth-Bunbury Road and Rail Services.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) To what extent have road buses been replaced by rail transport between Perth and Bunbury?

(2) What type of rail service has replaced the road service?

(3) What was the financial profit or loss sustained in the last year of operation by the road service replaced?

(4) What is the estimated financial profit or loss expected on the rail service replacing the road service?

(5) What staff has been discharged from the replaced road service?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) The weekly Perth-Bunbury road and rail services have been reorganised and altered as follows:—

Bus service reductions:

Five trips Perth to Bunbury.

Four trips Bunbury to Perth.

Bus service additions:

One trip Brunswick Junction to Perth.

Rail service reductions:

Six rail car services each way.

Rail service additions:

Three rail car services each way.

One steam service each way.

(3) Financial results for each trip are not compiled separately. The whole Perth-Bunbury road service showed a profit of £1,200 for the year ended the 30th June, 1957.

(4) Financial results for each train service are not compiled separately. The saving in operating costs expected from the change shown in Nos. (1) and (2) is approximately £3,250 per annum.

(5) None.

EDUCATION.

New Classrooms, Metropolitan and Country.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) How many classrooms have been built for primary schools for the years ended the 30th June, 1955, 1956 and 1957—

(a) in the metropolitan area;

(b) outside the metropolitan area?

(2) What was the cost of erection of primary schools and additional classrooms at primary schools for the years ended the 30th June, 1955, 1956 and 1957—

(a) in the metropolitan area;

(b) outside the metropolitan area?