

that if this legislation were to lapse there would be a general increase in rent, followed by an increase in the basic wage from one end of the State to the other. I do not think anyone will gainsay that.

That is a brief outline of the Bill, the circumstances necessitating its introduction and the need for its continuance. The information I have given amply justifies the continuance of the measure which, as I have already said, has its counterpart in all the other States and in many other parts of the world. Nowhere have I heard a suggestion and, indeed, nowhere has action been taken, to remove the control. I am quite certain therefore, that the need does exist for the continuance of this legislation in this State and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. T. Tonkin, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.*

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## Legislative Council

Tuesday, 16th September, 1952.

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

### ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the State Electricity Commission Act Amendment Bill.

### OBITUARY—LETTER IN REPLY.

The PRESIDENT: I have received the following letter from Mrs. E. Marshall:—

Dear Sir Harold,

Would you please convey to the members of the Legislative Council my sincere appreciation of the resolution they passed upon the death of my dear husband, the late William Marshall, M.L.A.? Although my late husband was a member of the Assembly, the number of members who spoke to the motion of condolence indicates the high regard in which he was held.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) Ethel Marshall.

### QUESTIONS.

#### HOUSING.

(a) *As to Accommodation for Evicted Families.*

Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY asked the Minister for Transport:

Can he inform the House—

- (1) (a) How many three-unit, and (b) how many two-unit families in the metropolitan area had eviction orders made against them by the court during August?
- (2) How many of such families applied to the State Housing Commission for accommodation?
- (3) How many three-unit and two-unit families were given accommodation by the State Housing Commission during August?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Not known. Information only in respect of those families that apply to the State Housing Commission.

(2) Of those against whom orders were made, nine three-unit and seven two-unit families made application to the State Housing Commission.

(3) Three-unit, 20; two-unit, 15.

(b) *As to Charges by Accommodation Agencies.*

Hon. N. E. BAXTER asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is he aware—

- (a) That non-licensed house-letting or accommodation agencies have commenced business in this State and are demanding a deposit of £12 10s. to obtain a rental home for an applicant, retaining £5 at the end of one month if a home is not found for such applicant?
- (b) That if the above arrangements were put into practice by licensed land agents, any such licensed agent would lose his license?

(c) That due to the housing position a large number of people are patronising these accommodation agencies?

(2) If these facts are correct, would the Government be prepared to investigate the bona fides of these accommodation agencies and, if necessary, introduce legislation to control them?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) I understand that some non-licensed letting or accommodation agencies are carrying on business, but I am not aware on what terms and conditions. It is the intention of the Government to introduce an amendment to the Land Agents Act, which will take into consideration the situation pointed out by the hon. member.

**SAWN TIMBER.**

*As to Subsidy on Haulage.*

Hon. J. MURRAY asked the Minister for Transport:

Can he inform the House as to—

(1) The cost of the subsidy on haulage of sawn timber during the months of April, May, June, July and August from bush mills to—

- (a) the metropolitan area;
- (b) the port of Bunbury?

(2) From where, or by whom, are funds made available for this subsidy?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) Metropolitan area—

	£	s.	d.
April	5,019	2	1
May	4,151	7	9
June	5,618	5	8
July	2,934	9	1
August	6,403	2	0

(b) Port of Bunbury—

April, May, June, July—  
Nil.

	£	s.	d.
August	285	12	5

(2) Consolidated Revenue Fund, Division 54, Subdivision 4, item 5.

**WATER.**

*As to Free Supply, Denominational Schools.*

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

As the reply to Hon. C. W. D. Barker's question on the 19th August, relating to free water for denominational schools only disclosed that the Government simply transferred money from one pocket to another, causing expense in the process, will he prevail upon the Education Department to meet the water accounts of private and denominational schools, and thereby place them on the same footing as Government schools?

The MINISTER replied:

Section 2 of the Assisted Schools Abolition Act, 1895, provides that "From and after the coming into operation of this Act no Elementary School, not belonging to the Government, other than a school in connection with an orphanage or other institution certified under 'The Industrial Schools Act, 1874', shall receive any Grant-in-aid from Public Funds".

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.**

*Tenth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 27th August.

HON W. R. HALL (North-East) [4.42]: I desire to take this opportunity of extending my congratulations to those members who were returned to this Chamber at the election last May, and also to our three new members, Mr. Lavery, Mr. Diver and Mr. Barker. I was greatly impressed the other evening by Mr. Barker's speech, in which he dealt exhaustively with the subject of the North-West. I have never been to that portion of our State but, after listening to Mr. Barker's remarks, I believe it must have great possibilities and I hope to take a trip to the North-West after the close of the present session. I hope Mr. Barker's remarks and advocacy for the North-West will ultimately bear some fruit and that the Governments of this State and the Commonwealth will see their way clear to do something positive towards the development of that huge and potentially wealthy area.

In the course of his Speech, His Excellency made reference to goldmining but I would point out that under present circumstances very little is being done to help this industry in either the eastern or northern goldfields areas, in spite of the fact that the production of gold has played such an important part in bringing our State to its present stage of development. Having been born and bred on the Goldfields and having seen towns in that area flourish, only to disappear almost overnight, I cannot help feeling concerned at what is taking place with regard to the price of gold.

A meeting of the International Monetary Fund is being held at present in America and delegates from South Africa, Canada, Australia, England and many other countries are attending the gathering. South Africa, Canada and Great Britain are advancing reasons why there should be an increase in the present price of 35 dollars per ounce. Within recent weeks some bright person stated in our daily Press that America would not raise the price of gold, but that view was subsequently moderated when it was said that, after the presidential election, the price of gold might perhaps be raised. It is a sad state of affairs when the price of gold produced in this State

depends on the outcome of the American presidential election. Surely the price of this commodity is not to be fixed as the result of the political whim of whoever is successful in the forthcoming contest in the United States!

I believe that there should be a free market for gold. The South African delegates to the meeting in America are advancing reasons why the price of gold should be increased and, from what we have read in the Press, it appears that South Africa has been well ahead of us in the matter of selling gold on the free market. I understand that that country produces—as has been stated by Sir Walter Massey-Greene—about three-quarters of the world's gold, but that is no reason why we, in this State, should not make every effort to have our gold sold on the free market. The price for Western Australian gold should not be fixed by America.

To me it was very pleasing to learn that one of the bigger mining corporations has taken up 135 leases south of the Golden Mile as that seems to me to augur well for the future. It is gratifying to know that this company is interested in the production of gold in Western Australia. The spending of large sums of money on these new leases will have favourable repercussions on the Eastern Goldfields. I regret that the development of goldmining in Kalgoorlie and in the surrounding out-back districts has been retarded recently compared with the position in past years. That is mainly due to the high cost of production, combined with the stabilised price of gold. Although the price of gold has already increased by, roughly, £1 per ounce, it has not made much difference to the industry. Before any benefit is felt in this State, an increase of several pounds per ounce is needed.

An increase of £1 per ounce is equivalent to a little over two dollars. There is no comparison between the price of gold today and the price of £4 per ounce several years ago because the cost of production is out of all proportion to the price received. However, I hope the future of the goldmining industry will be brightened by the discovery of new finds and by the action of this large company on the Eastern Goldfields in taking up a great number of leases. I sincerely trust, however, that those leases will be worked. In the past it has often been found that companies have taken up several leases, and nothing has been done. I have no reason to suspect this particular company of doing that, and I wish it all the luck possible.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Which company is that?

Hon. W. R. HALL: The Western Mining Corporation. There is another matter that causes me great concern, I refer to the traffic problem in the metropolitan area. Today we find cars banked up every-

where, and there does not seem much prospect of the problem being solved. Several parking areas have been made available along Riverside Drive, but the main problem still seems to be one that requires greater thought by the Government or the Perth City Council.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: How about underground parking places?

Hon. W. R. HALL: I am afraid the time is a long way off before Perth will have underground parking areas. I agree that they would save space which could be used for a better purpose, but this State seems to be the last with the latest instead of being sometimes first with the latest. Another matter concerning traffic which I have noticed recently is the devious methods that have been employed by the National Safety Council on safety drives in trying to educate the public. Whereas it used to place crosses on the roads to mark the spots where fatalities had occurred, its time now seems to be taken up with the spreading of propaganda over the radio and by means of hoardings. When one reads of the number of traffic cases that appear in the local court, it is doubtful whether this propaganda does much good.

The Minister for Transport: It also does a great deal in the schools, teaching the children about traffic regulations.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Yes, that aspect of its work is to be commended, but I wonder if the Minister has any idea of the cost of running the National Safety Council.

The Minister for Transport: It costs £150,000 a year.

Hon. W. R. HALL: That is just the information I wanted, and it is very useful. I do not consider that much good is being done by the National Safety Council, but I am, of course, open to correction. Nevertheless, if a large portion of that sum were spent on the appointment of patrolmen on motor-cycles, better results would be achieved by way of educating the public than are accomplished by the present propaganda methods.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The only place it is doing any good is in the schools with the children.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Not much of that £150,000 would be needed to do that, and perhaps the local policemen could cover that aspect of the work.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The municipal traffic inspector at Kalgoorlie is doing it, and carrying out a good job.

Hon. W. R. HALL: In view of the large sum of money being spent, realising the number of accidents that are reported, and taking into consideration the number that are not reported and never heard of, I think it would be advisable for the Minister for Police to give consideration to

the provision of more motor-cycle patrolmen, and thereby save a great deal of money that is being spent on propaganda over the radio, on hoardings, and so on, because, in my opinion, it is not doing much good. Over the last six or eight months in particular, and also over the last few years, the number of accidents has been terrific, and a great many lives have been lost. It is more dangerous to drive now than it was years ago because there are thousands more vehicles on the road.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The alcoholic strength of liquor is too much for some of them.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Some ways and means will have to be found to deal more severely with the negligent driver as well as with those who are arraigned in the courts on charges of drunken driving. I consider that the negligent driver is a greater menace on the road than the drunken driver. If one compares the number of accidents caused through negligent driving with those caused as a result of drunken driving, a vast difference will be noticed. I do not know why we cannot follow the same procedure that they have adopted in Adelaide. For instance, many people are prosecuted in the Traffic Court for parking and other minor breaches that are very difficult to avoid these days. I am told that in Adelaide, when a man commits a minor breach of the traffic laws, he is not forced to go before the ordinary courts, but he can go to the shire office and pay the prescribed fine. That method has the effect of avoiding much unpleasantness, trouble, waste of time and loss of working hours, all of which are involved when an individual has to attend a court and go through the ordinary legal procedure. I think that system could be adopted here, but I would not, of course, suggest a method of that description as being applicable to major offences.

Nearly every person who drives a car these days breaches the Traffic Act in one respect or another. No driver is perfect or infallible in his judgment, and certainly it is very difficult today to drive without being guilty of some offence. I suggest the Government should give consideration to the proposal I make for dealing with minor offences, leaving major matters to follow the ordinary court procedure. Next I desire to commend the Government upon the satisfactory progress made with the reconstruction of the Great Eastern Highway. It is now some 15 years since I first spoke in advocacy of the bituminising of the highway, and I am glad to say that the work is now nearly completed.

Hon. C. H. Henning: It just shows what persistence will do.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Many persons have been persistent over the years regarding this subject, and I feel a bit keen about

it because there have been ex-Premiers who have been in power and have seen to it that main roads to their electorates have been dealt with. The main roads to Geraldton and Albany, for instance, were bituminised years ago.

Hon. H. Hearn: That must have been when Labour Governments were in power.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I do not care what Government was in power. This is a sore subject with me, for I am convinced that the main highway from Perth to Kalgoorlie should have been the first section of our roads to be bituminised and certainly should not be the last. As it is, the road to the Goldfields will not be everlasting in view of the very heavy traffic it is called upon to carry. We have heavy trucks going over the road constantly, carrying tons of merchandise, and these travel along a route that is parallel to the railway. Then we have the wheat trucks which are hauling upwards of 20 tons, and they run parallel to the railways as well. That is why the Government railway system is not paying.

Hon. A. R. Jones: There must be transport available for those commodities, and the railways do not always run.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Admittedly, the railways cannot cope with the wheat and other commodities, but the time will come when they will be in a position to haul the stuff.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The road will not last with that heavy traffic going over it.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: But the railway line will last.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Let members consider the position in the back country and the traffic from Cunderdin and other centres. Let them appreciate the fact that wherever salt or magnesia is to be found in the soil, the road sinks every time heavy traffic passes over it. That is one of the troubles. When the railways are rehabilitated and the rollingstock is available for the haulage of wheat, the position will be eased; but by that time we shall find that it will cost hundreds of thousands of pounds to put the main roads in proper repair. I defy any member to contradict me in that respect.

Hon. H. Hearn: What would you do in the circumstances?

Hon. W. R. HALL: I admit there is no alternative today to the existing system. I am not dealing with that phase, but my object is to emphasise the thinness of the bitumen surface laid down in relation to the heavy road transport traffic that the highway has to carry.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It is only water-sealed.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I agree that the road has merely a gravel formation, together with some clay and a primer with a bituminous content. Then it is topped with

bitumen and three-eighth inch metal. I do not think it is half-inch metal by any means. In other words, the foundations are not there and, in view of the thinness of the bitumen surface, obviously the road cannot cope with the present-day heavy traffic. We shall be faced with the serious deterioration of the Great Eastern Highway. I do not know what the condition of other main roads may be. I refer to those that were bituminised before that connecting Perth and Kalgoorlie was dealt with, but I know the Great Eastern Highway will be in a bad way before very long if regular attention is not given to it.

There is a particularly bad patch between Northam and Perth, and I refer specifically to the section between the York turn-off and Sawyer's Valley. At present the bitumen surface itself is more or less corrugated. The foundation is not there and therefore a decent road is not available in that section. In order to cope with present-day heavy traffic, an adequate foundation must be provided for the road, something like that of the road to Fremantle and that traversing the Mosman Park district. I think the foundation there was from 10 to 12 inches thick, built up with heavy metal. A road formation of that type will be there for all time and will carry all types of traffic.

Next I wish to refer to a very contentious matter, namely, the proposal to pull up the Wiluna railway line. This matter is causing thousands of people grave concern. I know the Minister has received deputations on the subject both as regards the Meekatharra-Wiluna line and also the railway from Leonora to Laverton. Those are the two lines about which there is some doubt today and which are causing people in the outback districts so much concern. Every local authority through whose territories the lines travel has launched a protest against the suggestion that the Government should authorise the removal of the railway lines. I shall always oppose any move to pull up lines serving the Goldfields, whether they be the fields in the eastern district or those in the northern areas. Such a step would be most retrograde.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Yes, anywhere in the State.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I shall oppose any such proposal, irrespective of whether the line pays or not.

Hon. G. Bennetts: If we get an increase in the price of gold, we will need those lines.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I shall deal with that phase later. For the moment I wish to touch on the mineral wealth of the areas served by the two particular lines I have referred to. Those areas have, practically speaking, hardly been scratched in attempts to determine the extent of the mineral resources available there. Then again, the two railway lines

in question serve the pastoral industry as well. Surely some thought should be given to the interests of the mining and pastoral industries and what they are doing for the State today. Certainly that phase should warrant serious attention before any Government would even contemplate pulling up the lines. To those who may be opposed to my way of thinking and consider that road transport could take the place of a railway service, I say that such a course would be quite impossible. No road could ever give service to the people of the outback such as is available per medium of a railway. True, for some lines motor transport may be faster but for truck load lots there is nothing to compare with railway haulage.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It costs a lot more by road transport to Kalgoorlie than it does by the railway.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Yes, considerably more. What about adopting lighter rollingstock? It would save heavy maintenance costs in regard to both rollingstock and permanent way. Another point is that the railway system will have to be kept where it is today if it is going to stop the drift of the outback population to the city. These people always have some sort of fear if they feel they are going to lose their railway service. We know what the people at Leonora, Gwalia and Laverton think about it, and I ask members how they reckon these people would get on if they had to rely on road transport for the essentials of life, and for those things which mean a decent living standard?

True, it may be said that at times road transport has had to come to the assistance of the railways. But after all, it would take a lot of motor trucks to carry the quantity of merchandise that is hauled by a goods train. I fully realise the feeling of insecurity that animates the people in our great outback towns. I know that economies are necessary, but if we transferred heavy loading from the railways to road transport, huge expenditure would have to be made to bring the roads into trafficable condition for the purpose.

We have, in a belt north of Wiluna, vast auriferous areas that have not yet been scratched. I venture to say that many of them have not even been seen by a white man. There would be no chance of ever encouraging prospectors—and we look to them to bring back life to our great goldmining industry—to tackle the country north of Wiluna unless a railway was there. The Minister has always been cautious and non-committal on this particular subject. By and large, I think he is more or less justified, but to remove any of these lines at the present juncture, would indicate that the Government has no hope of developing this portion of the State which comprises thousands of square miles of seemingly virgin country.

There is this point also, that if a person found a low grade show it would be more satisfactory if he could transport the ore by rail. Big Bell was employing some hundreds of men—in the vicinity of 400 or 500—and was treating a large tonnage of low grade ore for a return of something over 3dwt. to the ton. If it were not for the vast tonnage treated by the company, there would be no Big Bell. I understand that the company was not prepared to go on with the mine unless the railway was constructed from Cue to Big Bell—a distance of about 18 miles. What do we find today? Big Bell is a township with a population of 1,500 to 2,000 people, counting men, women and children. If we were to pull up that railway, or the line which goes to Gwalia because the Sons of Gwalia mine did not pay, we can realise the feeling of insecurity which the people in those places would have.

The Big Bell mine has been having some difficulty in keeping going because of the high cost of production, so we can understand what it is endeavouring to do for the State of Western Australia; particularly by inducing people to remain in the outback, which is something all Governments should foster if they believe in decentralisation. If any railway lines are pulled up in these parts, people will drift to the city. Heaven knows, enough people have already drifted here; and today we have some unemployment. If the people come into the metropolitan area, where will we house them?

Another difficulty will be the feeding of them unless we get to a stage where we produce more wool, wheat and gold, and every other commodity which the State wants. These commodities are certainly not produced in the metropolitan area. People will have to go out to the hinterland to produce them, and thereby relieve the situation which is devolving upon us today. Some years ago, before I had the pleasure of representing the part of my province which extends from Wurarga to Wiluna and north thereof—the powers that be evidently thought you, Sir, and I did not have enough to look after, so they gave us a little bit more—a private railway line ran from Meekatharra to a place called Horseshoe.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: We could do with one from Meekatharra to the North-West.

Hon. W. R. HALL: If the Government takes notice of what the hon. member says about the northern areas the time will surely come when we will get a railway from Meekatharra to the North-West. It should have been there years ago. This particular private line was eventually pulled up, despite the protest of my late colleague and friend, Mr. Marshall, who was member for that district. This line was to serve, I believe, a manganese show. This is a metal I know very little about,

but I do not think I will be treading on dangerous ground when I deal with some metals that I do not know as much about as I do about gold. We find, today, that the manganese deposit is now being developed, and some six miles further on the Horseshoe mine is employing in the vicinity of 100 men, yet that line was allowed to be pulled up. This just shows that we never know what we will strike in an auriferous belt such as we have.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: There may be uranium there.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Yes. There may be anything, but if the country is not developed, how will we ever know?

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Get another Government to do these things.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I am afraid it will take the time of two or three Governments to get some of the things done that we would like to see accomplished. The development of the vast auriferous portion of the State will take a lot of time. It will not be completed in a year or two. It is something we can hope for and look forward to. The Horseshoe is a very fine goldmining proposition and if 100 men are employed there, we can be sure that wives and families are up there as well. Is not that a service to the State? There is a good deal of bickering over the price of gold. Other countries seem to want gold. We have the men in the outback areas who are looking for it and they undergo all sorts of hardships and privations in their efforts to locate this precious yellow metal. So I repeat, leave our railways where they are.

I venture to suggest that when the Minister for Agriculture visited that area he got the low-down on what the people of Wiluna think of their railway, or at least the proposal to pull it up, and I should imagine that the Minister for Railways received the same impression when he visited the district. I now wish to quote portion of a letter which has been forwarded to me from the Wiluna Road Board. The letter deals with the cost of road freights during the railway strike, and states—

Some modification of the road freight has since been made, but this gives but little relief and the rate is still prohibitive on many classes of goods. As further illustration of the excessive freights charged—recently five tons of cement were consigned to Wiluna from Fremantle, the freight to Meekatharra being £23 14s. 5d., and from Meekatharra to Wiluna—

That is a distance of only 109 miles.

—£33 10s. 3d.

The distance from Fremantle to Meekatharra is about 500 odd miles.

The Minister for Agriculture: More like 600 miles.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Very well! It cost £23 14s. 5d. for 600 odd miles and for the other 109 miles it cost an extra £33 10s. 3d.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: That must be hardship rating, is it?

Hon. C. H. Strickland: Was that the price for transporting the cement from Meekatharra to Wiluna?

Hon. W. R. HALL: Yes, for five tons. I take it that the cement was carted by road transport from Meekatharra to Wiluna. I am merely quoting the correspondence received from the secretary of the road board.

Hon. G. Bennetts: No wonder people are leaving the outback areas!

Hon. W. R. HALL: It merely proves my point that no thought should be given to pulling up this railway line. If the only argument that the Government can use is that the line does not pay, what about giving consideration to cancelling the "rattler" that runs between Perth and Fremantle? Half the time that train is empty and at the same time the Government and private enterprise run their buses parallel to the railway lines. Can anybody understand that? Yet there is some talk about pulling up the Wiluna line because it does not pay! There has been talk about pulling up the Leonora-Laverton line simply because it does not pay. But those lines are giving service to the people of this State and if they do not pay, what does it matter so long as they give good service to the people in the districts they serve?

Hon. G. Bennetts: They help the development of the outback country.

Hon. W. R. HALL: There is one other point I want to bring before members in regard to the retention of the Wiluna railway, and the following information relates to the district:—

Present depleted stock numbers, owing to bad seasons, are approximately 85,000 sheep and 8,000 cattle, while normal figures on present development would be 120,000 sheep and 15,000 cattle.

It is interesting to note that in spite of the recent drought year over £200,000 was paid in tax by pastoral properties alone in the last 12 months. So the result of the Wiluna Gold Mines originally bringing and making the railways pay handsomely for some years, also brought pastoral development and wealth to the State from the so-called desert interior.

Hon. L. Craig: The tax did not go to the State, of course.

Hon. W. R. HALL: From what Mr. Menzies and Sir Arthur Fadden have said, the States might have their taxing rights returned.

Hon. A. R. Jones: They have gone for keeps.

Hon. W. R. HALL: With uneconomic working, it is very tempting for Governments to curtail expenditure so as to "make the railways pay." The transport administration comes to be looked upon as an end in itself, whose budget must be made to balance. This is an entirely wrong outlook. The function of the transport administration is to serve the country; the primary duty is to see that it is done fully and adequately so that the country's economy may develop freely. I do not know that there is much more I desire to say on this subject, but I have not had as much time as I would have liked.

Hon. A. R. Jones: There is plenty of time.

Hon. W. R. HALL: If members wish me to give my views, and those of the local authorities, on the proposal to pull up the railway line, I will be only too pleased to continue my remarks.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We are prepared to sit here all night.

Hon. W. R. HALL: This line is most important to the people of that area. The distance might be only 109 miles, but that is a long way if there is no railway line and we have to rely on motor transport. There is one feature about it—road transport breaks down regularly. Motor transport is used to bring goods from Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide to Western Australia, but we frequently hear of tyres being blown out on that journey and the tyres used on those trucks cost a considerable sum of money. The people in our outback areas could not possibly rely on road transport and I do not know what we would do without the Transcontinental railway and our State railways.

However, there is considerable room for improvement in our railway system and I could speak at great length when discussing the cost of administration. The amount of wages paid each week to the administrative staff is terrific and there is room for improvement in our rollingstock and passenger services as well. The railway system, during the last six or nine months, has been faced with serious troubles, but it should soon be able to rectify its present position. When we have the diesel locomotives—we have heard a lot about them and they are supposed to be coming into operation after Christmas—let us hope that we will have a faster service and that it will be one to which the people of the outback districts can look forward when they travel periodically to the metropolitan area. At the moment they have to spend hours sitting about because of breakdowns, engine failures and the like.

While on the subject of railways, I wish to make a few comments about the bus service between Perth and Kalgoorlie. It

is a godsend to the people of the Goldfields and it has given good service since it has been in operation. I have spoken to many people who have travelled on the bus and they have nothing but praise for the service and the men who operate the buses.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Is it better than the train?

Hon. W. R. HALL: The bus provides an all-day ride, and people do not have to spend the night sitting up if they do not have sufficient money to pay for a sleeper on the train. That certainly means something to people who have not the wherewithal to pay for sleepers.

Hon. A. L. Loton: You have not answered the question.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I am coming back to it.

Hon. G. Fraser: You should not be asking questions during a member's speech.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I am only too pleased to answer questions asked by way of interjection. From what I can gather the people who have travelled by bus like the service, but I would hate to think that we were going to do without our railway service.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Hear, hear!

Hon. W. R. HALL: I do not want even one train per week to be cut out, but I would not be surprised at what our Railway Commissioners might attempt to do.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Do not make the suggestion to them.

Hon. W. R. HALL: It would not be necessary for you or me, Mr. President, to tell the Commissioners these things, because they always have them at the back of their noodles. What they can cut out, not what they can put in is what they think of. We all know that the railway running from Perth to Kalgoorlie and vice versa must have been a goldmine to the Railway Department of Western Australia. We know that a good deal of money has been collected from it. Do not tell me that it has not been a paying proposition!

Hon. G. Bennetts: It has been the only paying line.

Hon. W. R. HALL: We might find that the only payable line is in the district from which Mr. Roche comes! I venture to say that the Goldfields line is a payable one.

Hon. H. L. Roche: What about the bus services?

Hon. W. R. HALL: Never mind about the bus services; I am talking about the railways. If the hon. member wishes, the bus services can follow the railways. We want our railways and we do not want them cut out. I do not want the railway service cut out in my constituency and it will not be, if I can possibly avoid it.

Hon. L. Craig: Even if they pay for it?

Hon. W. R. HALL: The hon. member lives adjacent to Harvest Terrace and he knows that he is helping to pay for the people who develop the State for him. I want the hon. member to realise that he is not now down at Dardanup!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. W. R. HALL: The hon. member asked for that remark, Mr. President! He insinuated that he was helping to keep the railways going between Kalgoorlie and Perth. Indirectly he is, but I feel that deep down in his heart he is only too pleased to help pay for them. The hon. member knows just what the Goldfields have meant to Western Australia, just as I know what the farming interests have meant to the State. It is no good one industry sticking out against another; they should combine in a joint effort. Each one should help the other. When one industry is down and the other is on top, a bit of tact, reasoning and commonsense would go a long way towards making the position easier.

We have seen the time when farming interests have been in the doldrums; farmers have walked off their farms at Southern Cross and so on. I am very pleased to think that today such is not the case. I wish them all well and I hope they continue to thrive and prosper. What I have mentioned about the agricultural industry also applies to the goldmining industry. Although the industry is a bit down at present, there is the same volume of production of gold in ounces this year as there was last year. I believe the increase in the output is greater. That is how we want it.

Hon. L. A. Logan: We want more active mining.

Hon. W. R. HALL: We certainly do, and we also want more prospectors—a point which was made in a speech in the Commonwealth Parliament the other night by the Federal member for Kalgoorlie. I do not think there has ever been an occasion when I have failed to raise my voice in connection with the need for more prospectors in this State.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It is a pity both Ministers have gone out of the House; they would be able to hear something of value.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I think the Minister for Mines has the figures at his fingertips; if not, he would be able to obtain them from his Under Secretary, so I feel sure he would know what the position is. I am sorry to say that only a little over £2,000 has been paid by this State for the assistance of prospectors. I regret that very much, because it is a very small amount of money. The means test would be taken into consideration in the case of the majority of prospectors who were old-age pensioners, and they have gone out on their meagre ration.



In the earlier days I do not think there was any assistance provided, though the weight was apparently not as elusive then as it is today. So when these men were lucky, they bolstered up the meagre amount on which they had to live. We find that prospecting today is different from what it was in those days. Now the men go to the outback. Years ago between Kalgoorlie and Boulder alongside the railway line we could see dryblowers and shakers by the dozen, and there was also some alluvial gold to be found.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Where was this?

Hon. W. R. HALL: Between Boulder and Kalgoorlie. Look at the number of dryblowers there used to be halfway between these two places. Take, for example, those at Maritana Hill; all the holes where the dryblowers operated their shakers were put down by genuine prospectors. So I think more assistance should be given to these men who are really the lifeblood of the industry. Even though conditions may not be as prosperous as we would like, each one of us can thank these men for the position in which we are today. Had it not been for the likes of Paddy Hannan, his colleagues and scores of other men who blazed the trail and suffered the privations they did, the State would not be as sound as it is today; there would not be the population or the wealth here that we have now. We find that several men have done well on the Goldfields and have taken up farming.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Tommie Todd, for example.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Wherever one goes in the South-West or in the Great Southern, one will find miners, and are they not all white fellows? After having done well on the mines, they have seen an opportunity to strike out and produce something from the land. I think I have spoken long enough on this subject, but I do hope the Government and particularly the Minister for Mines who is a member of this House will see their way clear to doing more than they have over the last few years, to foster prospecting and prospectors.

The present or any other Government should realise that these men should be given enough financial assistance to make it possible for them to live; they should be given the necessary tools of trade and the wherewithal such as dynamite and so forth to carry out their labours. I have seen them at work and I know just how tedious and hard a job prospecting is. It requires a lot of time and a lot of patience. A great majority of the prospectors in the past found it necessary to obtain private backing by some person who was sufficiently interested to help them to go out and do this particular job which with some men becomes a fever.

Hon. G. Bennetts: If members come to Coolgardie on Saturday they will witness the sixtieth anniversary of the discovery of gold there.

Hon. W. R. HALL: It would be gratifying if some members could find it convenient to go to the Goldfields. If we can give them any information which they do not already possess, I am sure any one of us would be glad to do so. I believe we should move freely in each other's territories so that we may appreciate the requirements of each other's districts. Nor do I exclude from this the North-West, about which Mr. Barker has spoken.

I want to turn now to part of the Governor's Speech dealing with foodstuffs. This has not been exactly a sore point with me, but it is one to which I have given a little thought. The part of the Governor's Speech to which I wish to refer is as follows:—

Frozen crayfish tails produced for export in 1951 weighed 2½ million pounds, an increase of 300,000 pounds over the previous year's operations.

Before these crayfish tails are exported, I would like to see the home market satisfied. I notice that only the tails are exported to America; they do not want the rest though I know of a lot of people who do eat the rest. We know that the export of these crayfish tails to America brings dollars into this country. I realise that, but I also realise that when I go to buy crayfish which are half the size that they should be, I have to pay 7s. 6d. One would be lucky to get them at that price.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Surely they are available at a reasonable price.

Hon. W. R. HALL: So we find these crayfish tails being exported to America for the purpose of bringing dollars to this country. There are not too many members in this House who have seen an American dollar; there are some who may have done so. I have seen the Yanks throwing them away at times when they have been annoyed about something. These dollars are, however, required by the Government. I take it these transactions are done with the stroke of the pen and it is possible to make figures do anything.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Not with dollars.

Hon. W. R. HALL: So in spite of the dollars which these crayfish tails bring to Australia, I do think that the home market consumption should be satisfied first and that we should not be asked to pay through the nose for them.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Why do you not catch a few?

Hon. W. R. HALL: That may be all right for the hon. member who has plenty of spare time; I rather thought he would say that.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: There are plenty of crayfish up north.

Hon. W. R. HALL: So long as the home market was supplied, I would be satisfied. It is not long since the lumpers at Fremantel refused to load potatoes for export to Singapore or some other destination. I shall not say more on that aspect, but there are times when I wish that a few more crayfish were available locally. We should be able to buy crayfish at a reasonable price. I do not mind what price is obtained for the tails exported to America, but I do not consider that 7s. or 8s. is a reasonable price to charge locally for a crayfish.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Apparently it is, under existing conditions.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I think it an exorbitant price. Evidently it is thought that some comparison can be drawn between the price of gold and the price of crayfish. I cannot agree with that suggestion.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Do you want to put the fishermen in the same box as the wheatgrower?

Hon. W. R. HALL: Any producer is entitled to a fair price for his commodity. I am speaking of the price of crayfish. I do not think we should be called upon to pay 7s. or 8s. for a crayfish.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: What about fixing a price for crayfish, the same as for wheat?

Hon. W. R. HALL: I have not mentioned the price of wheat.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member might disregard the interjections.

Hon. W. R. HALL: That, no doubt, would be helpful. I do not think that there is anything else arising out of the Governor's Speech to which I wish to refer. I realise that very little is done as a result of members' speeches on the Address-in-reply.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Is the hon. member suggesting that the Address-in-reply debate is a waste of time?

Hon. W. R. HALL: To some extent, I would say, the hon. member has spoken some very true words. Members regard this debate as affording an opportunity to bring forward matters that affect the provinces they represent. Still, I repeat, very little results from the suggestions offered by members. I mentioned that work on the Great Eastern Highway was started in 1938, and it has taken all the intervening years to complete the work, more or less.

Hon. L. Craig: Tell us more about the crayfish tails.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I think I have said enough on that subject. If the hon. member has anything to add, I shall be only too pleased to listen to him.

Another matter to which I wish to refer is the operation of the Licensing Act. I have been interviewed by various people in the Leonora, Gwalia and other outback districts, and I consider that their representations should be brought before the notice of the House. This matter relates to the sale of bottled beer on Sundays. Now that the hotels are permitted to open for trade between certain hours on that day, I see no reason why a man should be debarred for taking home a bottle of beer to drink with his dinner or tea. People in more favoured parts of the State are able to make purchases of bottled beer on Saturday and keep it cool until they require it on Sunday, but I am speaking of places like Gwalia, surrounded by ironstone hills and having a very hot climate.

There are many respectable women who enjoy a glass of ale in their homes, particularly after they have been standing over the stove and the temperature has been as high as 110 or 112 in the waterbag. To keep a bottle cool or prevent the butter from melting, all they can do is to wrap the container in a wet bag and put it under the house where the breeze—if there happens to be any—can play on it. There are very few refrigerators in the back country. Some of the residents live in houses, some of the single men in small camps, but they have no amenities, such as refrigerators, and I see no reason why they should not be able to buy a cool bottle of beer on Sundays. There could be nothing wrong in their doing so.

I could understand objection being raised to a man's purchasing half-a-dozen or a dozen bottles, but one or two bottles would not harm anyone. Certainly, it would not make anybody worse than he was before, and it could not intoxicate anyone. The residents of that part are greatly annoyed at being deprived of this privilege, and go so far as to say that if there was no hotel, they would not stay in the district. I can sympathise with them in that attitude. You, Mr. President, know the outlook of the people living in those parts. I hope the time is not far distant when these people will be able to get the liquor they require on Sundays.

On motion by Hon. H. L. Roche, debate adjourned.

## RESOLUTION—STATE FORESTS.

### *To Revoke Dedication.*

Message from the Assembly received and read requesting concurrence in the following resolution:—

That the proposal for the partial revocation of State Forests Nos. 4 and 42, laid upon the Table of the Legislative Assembly by command of His Excellency the Governor on the 26th August, 1952, be carried out.

*House adjourned at 6.13 p.m.*