

Act, so here goes my certificate." We have concrete evidence that the Treasurer has given a guarantee to a scheme that was never intended to come within the provisions of the Act. I do not think there is much room for doubt about that.

It will be found that having been done once, it could well be done again with even greater justification than in the case of Canterbury Court. In future, the Treasurer can say, "I have a precedent. The previous Treasurer advanced money for the building of Canterbury Court. There seemed to be a little doubt about it afterwards, but Parliament passed a validating Act. There was a *fait accompli* and we knew it was wrong, but we put up a sob story to Parliament about the building being half erected and Parliament had to agree."

We are the custodians of the State's funds, and for my part I will not stand idly by and see a Bill passed which distorts the real intention of the present Act by seeking to validate the scheme mentioned in the Bill.

On motion by the Hon. R. C. Mattiske, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till the 15th September.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.12 p.m.

CONTENTS—continued

	Page
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE—continued	
Bunbury technical classes, subjects, students and teachers, location, etc.	1494
Bunbury technical school, establishment and subjects to be taught	1494
Abattoirs charges, Robb Jetty and Midland Junction	1495
Public Works Department, employees dismissed and under notice	1496
Honey, establishment of board	1496
Albany Harbour, draft of new wharf, dredging, etc.	1496
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE :	
Betting Royal Commission, implications of Premier's comment	1496
MOTION :	
KA railway wagons, examination of contract by Auditor-General	1498
BILLS :	
Government Railways Act Amendment, assent	1492
Western Australian Industries Authority, 1r.	1497
Industrial Development (Kwinana Area) Act Amendment, 1r.	1497
National Fitness Act Amendment, 1r.	1497
Natural Therapists, 1r.	1497
Royal Commissioners' Powers Act Amendment (No. 2), 1r.	1497
Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation) Act Amendment, 3r.	1497
Child Welfare Act Amendment, 8r.	1497
Road Districts Act Amendment, 3r.	1497
Tourist, 3r.	1497
Art Gallery, returned	1499
Judges' Salaries and Pensions Act Amendment, returned	1499
Traffic Act Amendment, returned	1499
State Concerns (Prevention of Disposal), 2r.	1500
Cattle Trespass, Fencing, and Impounding Act Amendment, 2r.	1526

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

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Assent

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Bill.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HIGH SCHOOLS

Number Built and Under Construction

1. Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Education:

(1) How many State high schools were built or were in course of construction in—

(a) the metropolitan area;

(b) other parts of the State between March, 1947, and the end of December, 1952?

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 9th September, 1959

CONTENTS

	Page
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE :	
High schools, number built and under construction	1492
Gascoyne River, conservation of water supplies	1493
Garnarvon school—	
Calling of tenders	1493
Building of hostel	1493
Esperance, finance for development and shortage of fencing	1493
Metropolitan water supplies, investigation of catchment areas	1493
Collie-Roelands road, look-out points for tourists	1494

(2) What are the respective figures for the period between January, 1953, and the end of March, 1959?

Mr. NALDER (for Mr. Watts) replied:

- (1) (a) None.
(b) One, and 13 junior high schools were established.
- (2) (a) Nine.
(b) Five.

2. *This question was postponed.*

GASCOYNE RIVER

Conservation of Water Supplies

3. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for the North-West:

(1) Now that the Commonwealth Government has offered full co-operation and technical assistance in the development of the North-West, has he made a request to the Commonwealth Government for technical and financial assistance for water conservation in the Gascoyne River at Carnarvon?

(2) If not, why not?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) (a) At present financial assistance from the Commonwealth is confined to projects north of the 20th parallel of latitude.
(b) Investigations are being carried out by officers of the State Government. There are no technical problems for which assistance is required at present. It is not proposed to seek assistance until projects have been fully examined with local resources available. Experience has shown that this is the most satisfactory approach.

CARNARVON SCHOOL

Calling of Tenders

4A. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Education:

Now that a site for Carnarvon's primary school has been chosen, will he advise when it is likely that tenders will be called for building the school?

Mr. NALDER (for Mr. Watts) replied: Acquisition of the site is not yet finalised.

Building of Hostel

4B. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Education:

Is it intended to build a school hostel at the same time as the erection of Carnarvon's primary school?

Mr. NALDER (for Mr. Watts) replied: Yes, if finances permit.

ESPERANCE

Finance for Development and Shortage of Fencing

5. Mr. NULSEN asked the Minister for Lands:

- (1) How much money was made available for land development in the Esperance area for the past five years by the Rural & Industries Bank, to June, 1959, giving yearly amounts separately?
- (2) What amount will be allowed by the Rural & Industries Bank in the next two years for the purpose as set out in No. (1)?
- (3) Does he know that there is a shortage of fencing material such as 14-gauge barbed wire, and 12½-gauge plain wire, steel posts, etc.?
- (4) Will he have inquiries made to ascertain the cause of the shortages, as short supplies are arousing concern in regard to the development of the Esperance agricultural and pastoral lands?

Mr. BRAND (for Mr. Bovell) replied:

- (1) Amount advanced under Delegated Agency Esperance Plains Development Scheme to the 30th June, in each year:

	£
1955	Nil
1956	21,141
1957	13,747
1958	13,850
1959	18,930
	<hr/>
	£67,668

- (2) £30,000 has been placed on the estimates for the Esperance scheme for the current financial year and the position is kept under constant review. The allocation next year will be decided in the light of all relevant circumstances.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) My inquiries ascertained that the shortage is of a temporary nature and was occasioned by the late opening of the season, which caused a concentration of orders following the good August rains, so that the demand was greater than the available stocks. The trade expects that 14-gauge barbed wire should be in good supply in two months' time, 12½-gauge plain wire in six weeks, and steel posts in two to three months.

METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLIES

Investigation of Catchment Areas

6. Mr. CRAIG asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

In view of the Government's apparent concern over the present position of metropolitan water

supplies, would consideration be given to investigating the possibilities of developing several other catchment areas that exist close to, and northwards of, Perth in the Swan Valley and Chittering Valley areas?

Mr. WILD replied:

Outline plans for metropolitan water storages adequate for over 1,000,000 people have been made and will be progressively developed in detail. These include new dams on the Canning River; at Gleneagles; the Wungong Brook; the Serpentine River (now in progress); North and South Dandalup Rivers; and the enlargement of Victoria Reservoir on Mundays Brook. The streams to the north of Perth are limited in capacity and will all be vitally required for water supplies outside the metropolitan area to the north and east.

COLLIE-ROELANDS ROAD

Look-out Points for Tourists

7. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Works:

In view of my previous approach in relation to providing strategic look-outs or parking spaces alongside the Roelands-Collie main road, thereby enabling tourists, etc., to stop, park, and then take in the panoramic views of the Collie Valley and coastal plains, could he now advise:

- (1) Has an investigation yet been made and report submitted by Main Roads Department engineers?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) How many such parking spaces or look-out points are to be constructed?
 - (b) Where exactly are they to be located?
 - (c) When is it contemplated they will be constructed?

Mr. WILD replied:

- (1) Investigations are still in train.
- (2) (a), (b), and (c) Three situations are being examined for the provision of strategic look-outs or parking spaces.

BUNBURY TECHNICAL CLASSES

Subjects, Students and Teachers, Location, etc.

8A. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many—
 - (a) subjects are taught and what are those subjects;

(b) students attend each of those subjects;

(c) teachers are on the teaching staff,

at the Bunbury technical classes?

(2) When and where are the individual subjects taught at present?

Mr. NALDER (for Mr. Watts) replied:

(1) (a) and (b) There are 15 subjects taught at the Bunbury Technical Centre. The following are the subjects together with the average attendances at the end of the second term:—

Typing	.....	16
Shorthand	.....	15
Accountancy I	.....	9
Accountancy II	.....	2
Commercial law A	.....	2
English	.....	5
Mathematics	.....	16
Italian	.....	7
Art	.....	19
Dressmaking	.....	16
Cake decorating	.....	18
Woodwork	.....	11
Metalwork	.....	9
Technical drawing	.....	11
Supervised correspondence study for apprentices	.....	28

(c) There is no full-time staff but a part-time officer is in charge and there are 16 other part-time teachers.

(2) With the exception of the supervised correspondence study for apprentices, which is conducted in the late afternoon, all other classes are conducted in the evening, generally commencing at 7 p.m. With the exception of the class in Italian, which is conducted at the Bunbury Primary School, and one class in dressmaking conducted at Carey Park School, all classes are conducted at the Bunbury High School.

BUNBURY TECHNICAL SCHOOL

Establishment and Subjects to Be Taught

8B. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Education:

- (1) When and where is it now contemplated a technical school will be established in Bunbury?
- (2) What additional subjects will be taught on such a school being established?

Mr. NALDER (for Mr. Watts) replied:

(1) It is proposed to establish a technical school on the site at present occupied by the Bunbury Primary School, when this site can be made available by the building of an alternative school.

- (2) The additional subjects taught will depend on the demands which become evident in the area. In any case it is expected that day trade classes for apprentices will be commenced in those trades in which the numbers are adequate to justify the facilities. This is likely to include such trades as carpentry and joinery, motor mechanics and electrical trades.

ABATTOIRS CHARGES

Robb Jetty and Midland Junction

9. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What method of charge is adopted for slaughtering and dressing at the Robb Jetty Abattoir?
 (2) What method of charge is adopted for slaughtering and dressing at the Midland Junction Abattoir?
 (3) What are the respective charges for each of the abattoirs mentioned?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) The method of charge at Robb Jetty Abattoir for slaughtering and dressing for local consumption is on a per head basis, as required by the Midland Junction Abattoir Board. The method of charge by W.A. Meat Export for export is on a per lb. basis.
 (2) The method of charge at the Midland Junction Abattoir for slaughtering and dressing for local consumption is on a per head basis. The method of charge for export is identical with the local charges.
 (3) Both abattoirs operate under the scale of charges published in the *Government Gazette* of the 25th June, 1954, as amended by the *Government Gazette* of the 2nd March, 1956, in regard to extra charges, as follows:—

Slaughtering Charges

The fees to be charged for slaughtering of stock at the abattoirs (inclusive of inspection and 24 hours' free storage in the chilling rooms) shall be as follows:—

(i) Cattle—

	Per head s. d.
From 201-249 lb. dressed weight	25 0
From 250-400 lb. dressed weight	30 0
From 401-600 lb. dressed weight	35 0
Over 600 lb. dressed weight	40 0

(ii) Calves—

Up to 100 lb. dressed weight	7 6
From 101-150 lb. dressed weight	10 0
From 151-200 lb. dressed weight	21 0

(iii) Sheep 4 0

(iv) Lambs 3 6

(v) Pigs—

Per
head
s. d.

Up to 110 lb. dressed weight	9 0
From 111-179 lb. dressed weight	11 0
Over 179 lb. dressed weight	13 0
Extra Charges	

Per
head
s. d.

(i) Bulls 300 lb. and over (chilled weight) and genuine stags 6 0

(ii) Tubercular and/or gangrenous cattle 6 0

(iii) Tubercular, injured or septic calves 3 0
Per
100

(iv) Rams and genuine stags 110 0

(v) Ram Lambs (50 lb. and over chilled weight) 110 0

(vi) Injured, maggoty, daggy, downer, objectionably crippled, objectionably wet or dirty sheep or lambs 55 0

(vii) Full wool sheep 55 0

(viii) Sheep over 62 lb. chilled weight 55 0

The only exception is at Robb Jetty in certain cases where inedible offal is retained by the owner, and additional charges are made as follows:

Cattle—4s. 7d. per head.

Calves—7d. per head.

Sheep and lambs—6½d. per head.

Pigs—2s. 3d. per head.

W.A. Meat Export charges for export are as follows:—

Cattle—quarters wrapped in stockinette, stored for 28 days and delivered F.O.B. to ship—2½d. per lb.

Pigs—up to 110 lb. including wrapping etc. as for cattle—2d. per lb. over 110 lb. which are cut into sides—½d. per lb. extra.

Sheep—up to 39 lb.—4s. 6d. per head. 40 lb. and over—1½ per lb. for every lb. over 39 lb.

Lambs—up to 36 lb.—4s. 6d. per head. 37 lb. and over—1½d. per lb. for every lb. over 36 lb.

Stags, rams, etc.—sheep 149s. 9d. per hundred extra.

Stags, rams, etc.—lambs 116s. 3d. per hundred extra.

Objectionable—sheep 74s. 11d. per hundred extra.

Objectionable—lambs 58s. 2d. per hundred extra.

Skins and hides remain property of the owner of the carcasses.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Employees Dismissed and Under Notice

10. Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What is the number of employees dismissed from the architectural division of the Public Works Department since the 3rd April, 1959?

(2) How many are under notice of dismissal?

Mr. WILD replied:

(1) 310.

(2) 7.

HONEY

Establishment of Board

11. Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is he aware that a number of apiarists are desirous of the establishment of a State honey board?

(2) Does he propose to take any action by way of legislation to constitute such a board?

Mr. NALDER replied:

(1) It is understood the matter was discussed at the last annual conference of the Beekeepers' Association, but as yet no approach has been made by the association.

(2) This will be considered if and when an approach is made by the industry.

ALBANY HARBOUR

Draft of New Wharf, Dredging, etc.

12. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is he aware that the draft at the new wharf at Albany is 28 ft. 6 in. at present, and water depth is 30 ft.?

(2) Is he aware that draft was planned for 32 ft. with a water depth of 34 ft.?

(3) Is he aware that on the 25th August, 1959, of two ships in port at Albany, the Japanese ship *Hikokane Maru* had to leave with only 10,300 tons of wheat instead of 12,000 tons, and had to go to Fremantle to top up; and that the *Teakbank* had to reduce its draft to 28 ft. 6 in. by pumping out its supply of fresh water and other ballast to enable the ship to move alongside the new wharf so as to unload its cargo of sulphur, brought about by the rocky outcrops of blasted rock?

(4) Will he, in the light of the new evidence as submitted, give further consideration to the return of the dredge *Fremantle*?

Mr. WILD replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) No; but similar action is common to many ports in the world, including Bunbury and Geraldton.

(4) It is planned that the dredge *Fremantle* will be returning to Albany as soon as existing commitments at the port of Fremantle are completed.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

BETTING ROYAL COMMISSION

Implications of Premier's Comment

1. Mr. ANDREW asked the Premier: Last week the member for West Perth asked the Premier a question as to the cost of the Royal Commission on betting up to that date. The figures were given and the Premier added the following words:—"We are getting good value for our money."

(1) What does the Premier mean when he says, "We"?

(2) What does he mean by, "Getting good value for our money"?

Mr. BRAND replied:
Western Australia.

2. Mr. ANDREW asked the Premier: Personally I do not take that as an answer to the question I asked.

Mr. Brand: You are not getting another one.

The SPEAKER: Is the honourable member asking another question?

Mr. ANDREW: Yes. Will the Premier amplify his remarks and inform us what he means by, "Getting good value for our money." How?

Mr. BRAND replied:

I do not want to pursue this matter too far.

Mr. Hawke: I bet you don't!

Mr. BRAND: Don't I?

Mr. Hawke: I bet you don't!

Mr. BRAND: Don't I?

Mr. Hawke: No.

Mr. Graham: Wait till you get in the box.

Mr. BRAND: You don't want to press me too far. The position is that a Royal Commission has been set up, and a salary has been arrived at; and I feel that the man who has been appointed as commissioner is doing his job at a salary satisfactory to us all. I believe he is carrying out his job very satisfactorily.

Mr. Hawke: Much better than Peat and Berry.

Mr. BRAND: I would not know.

Mr. Hawke: Dicken! Gerry would.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRIES AUTHORITY BILL

First Reading

On motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Industrial Development), Bill introduced and read a first time.

As to Second Reading

MR. COURT: I move—

That the second reading of the Bill be made an order of the day for the next sitting of the House.

Question put and passed.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (KWINANA AREA) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

On motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Industrial Development), Bill introduced and read a first time.

As to Second Reading

MR. COURT: I move—

That the second reading of the Bill be made an order of the day for the next sitting of the House.

Question put and passed.

NATIONAL FITNESS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

On motion by Mr. Nalder (Minister for Agriculture), Bill introduced and read a first time.

As to Printing and Second Reading

MR. NALDER: I move—

That the Bill be printed and the second reading made an order of the day for the next sitting of the House.

Question put and passed.

PRINTING OF BILLS

Mr. MAY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, no authority has been given for the printing of the first two Bills. I draw your attention to that fact.

MR. COURT: I move—

That the Bills contained in notices of motion Nos. 1 and 2—namely, the Western Australian Industries Authority Bill and the Industrial Development (Kwinana Area) Act Amendment Bill—be printed.

Mr. Hawke: You cannot do that now. You have missed your opportunity.

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

Ayes—23.

Mr. Brand	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Court	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Craig	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Grayden	Mr. O'Neill
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Owen
Dr. Henn	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. I. W. Manning
Mr. W. A. Manning	(Teller.)

Noes—19.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Molr
Mr. Brady	Mr. Norton
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Graham	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Hall	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Toms
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. May
Mr. Kelly	(Teller.)

Ayes.

Mr. Watts
Mr. Bovell
Mr. Burt

Pairs.

Noes.

Mr. Nulson
Mr. Evans
Mr. J. Hegney

Majority for—4.

Question thus passed.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING

1. Natural Therapists.

Introduced by Mr. Tonkin.

2. Royal Commissioners' Powers Act Amendment (No. 2).

Introduced by Mr. Hawke.

BILLS (4)—THIRD READING

1. Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation) Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

2. Child Welfare Act Amendment.

3. Road Districts Act Amendment.

Passed.

4. Tourist.

Transmitted to the Council.

KA RAILWAY WAGONS

Examination of Contract by Auditor-General

MR. TONKIN (Melville) [4.58]: I move—

That the Auditor-General be requested to examine and report to Parliament upon the contract with Tomlinson Ltd. for the construction of 200 KA wagons with specific reference to—

- (1) the method of costing being used by the Railway Department when compiling estimates of the cost of construction;
- (2) the estimated price at which the Railway Department could construct KA wagons;
- (3) the estimated saving, if any, which would have resulted if the wagons had been constructed by the Government.

This motion has been made necessary because the House previously rejected a motion for the tabling of the papers. In order to have a proper appreciation of the situation it is necessary for me briefly to recount some of the happenings in connection with the motion for the tabling of the papers.

The Minister for Railways strenuously opposed the tabling of the papers and advanced two reasons. I do not for one moment concede the validity of the reasons advanced, but I can say they were reasons he did advance. He gave a main reason and a secondary reason. He designated them as such. He said that his main reason was that there was a disturbing leakage of information from the Railway Department. This leakage was having a detrimental effect on morale; and, in refusing to table the papers, it was his intention to protect the railway system from political attack. That was his main reason. I have never heard that reason given before for refusing to table papers. It was unique and remarkable. Still, it was the main reason that the Minister advanced.

His secondary reason was that it was a tender, and normally information regarding unsuccessful tenderers was not available. Of course that is not so, because one has only to ask the newspaper men who report these things from time to time, and they will state that, upon the opening of tenders, the matter is public property.

Mr. Court: Not all tenders. The Tender Board confirmed what I said.

Mr. TONKIN: Tenderers make it their business to find out why they did not get a tender. The unsuccessful tenderers know who the successful tenderer was and how much they missed out by. They know who was above and who was below them. Members know that that is so and always

has been so. However, that was the reason advanced by the Minister. That was his complete case.

He then said he would offer to permit me to peruse the papers in his office on the understanding that I could not use any of the information which I saw therein. In dealing with the matter on the air on Monday night, the Premier left out that important qualification. He endeavoured to tell the people of Western Australia that I had the opportunity of seeing these papers, but I declined to take advantage of it. Of course, he could not be fair enough to state the position truly and say that the qualification under which I was to see the papers was such as to make it extremely unwise for me to have a look at them.

One only has to remember this: The Minister stated that there is a disturbing leakage of information from his department. He has admitted that that has been taking place for a long time. I put it to members: If I agreed to have a look at the papers on the understanding that I used none of the information and that I honoured my undertaking; and subsequently there was a leakage of information, who would be blamed? I put that to members. In view of the fact that the Minister has admitted already that there is a substantial leakage of information—it must be anticipated that it will continue—if I had a look at these papers and kept my mouth completely shut about them, and that information leaked out, as it could do, who would be blamed?

Under these circumstances, would any member go and examine these papers? Of course not! Neither would the Minister. So there is only one road open to me which is a reasonable road for me to travel. That is: If I am not able to get the papers tabled for all to see, let the Auditor-General, who is the servant of Parliament, have a look at them, and report to Parliament on the matters I have mentioned; not matters which will disturb the morale of the service, or matters which will upset the unsuccessful tenderers, but matters which we are entitled to know. The first is—

- (1) The method of costing being used by the Railway Department when compiling estimates of the cost of construction.

The Minister says this costing method is all hay-wire. Let us see whether the Minister knows what he is talking about or not! Let us know what the costing method is so that we can make up our minds as to whether it is all hay-wire or not, and pit our judgment against the judgment of the Minister. I think we are entitled to know that. Let the Auditor-General tell us. The second is—

- (2) The estimated price at which the Railway Department could construct KA wagons.

There should not be anything secret about that. Let the Auditor-General go into the question of costing, interrogate the officers, and tell us faithfully what he thinks is the price at which these wagons could be constructed. I challenge any member to say that we are not entitled, as members of Parliament, to know that. Thirdly and lastly—

(3) The estimated saving, if any, which would have resulted if the wagons had been constructed by the Government.

Surely we are entitled to know that! If the Government, because of its policy in the first instance, deliberately wants them to cost the taxpayers more than is necessary, we ought to know so that the Government can stand up for its policy and defend it. We are entitled to know. We should not be kept in the dark about it.

Those are the three things which I am suggesting nobody could successfully argue should be withheld from us. Are we to be reduced to mere cyphers? The Auditor-General is the officer of Parliament. He can report to Parliament in the ordinary course of his duty. This calls for a special report. He can examine the position, interrogate the officers concerned, and supply this information. Anybody who would deny members this information is most unreasonable; and it would indicate immediately there is something to hide. Mere opposition to this request would justifiably cause one to imagine that there is something to hide.

Mr. Court: Not necessarily.

Mr. Graham: Definitely.

Mr. TONKIN: If it can be shown that that information is information we are not entitled to have; if it can be shown that the releasing of that information would be detrimental to the State, it might be said that we should not have it. But it is not information which should be withheld from members of Parliament, and there is none more fitted than the Auditor-General to make the report. That is all my motion means: that the Auditor-General should be requested by Parliament—we have a right to request him—to look into this matter. Surely it would help the morale of the railways by supplying information on a question which is now considerably obscure, to say the least.

In regard to the Minister's repeated statements as to the cost of construction of these wagons, and his reference to £1,400 and the like, it is pertinent to read the addendum to the third report by Commissioner Smith, who did not, and could not anticipate, when he made this report, that the question would be raised by me or anybody else in Parliament. This is what he had to say about KA wagons—

KA with tare of 5 tons 17 cwt. can carry a pay-load of 14 tons 3 cwt. on all lines, light or heavy. In 1941,

KA were built at Midland for £246. Estimated cost of construction in the workshops in 1953 was £789 and in 1957—

which I remind members is but two years ago—

—£937 including all additional rises and charges.

Let us look at these figures for a moment. In four years there is an estimated increase of from £789 to £937, approximately £150. Is it reasonable to suppose they jumped from £937 to £1,400 in two years?

Mr. Graham: Fantastic!

Mr. TONKIN: Those are the figures which gave rise to this doubt about the statements which have been made by the Minister. Therefore, it is not unreasonable for me to ask that these particular points should be examined; and we should be told whether the method of costing is a satisfactory one, and what the method of costing is so we can have a look at it. We should also be told the estimated cost of constructing these wagons in view of these figures. A rise of £500 in two years is not understandable.

Mr. Court: You are not disputing the department's figure of £1,400, which was given to your Government?

Mr. TONKIN: Surely we are entitled to know what is the estimated saving which would have resulted if these wagons had been manufactured in the workshops. Why should the information be kept from the public or from us? If there is an estimated saving, why should we not know? Why should we not know if there is an estimated loss, if the Minister would have it that way? We ought to know, and I await any argument which can be advanced to tell us why we should not know. There is no necessity for me to speak at length in connection with this matter. It should be crystal clear. It is a motion which every member, irrespective of Party, should be prepared to support.

Mr. Graham: Hear, hear!

Mr. TONKIN: If he does not, he makes himself a party to covering up something which, I say again, is obscure, and in connection with which we are entitled to have this information.

On motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Railways), debate adjourned.

BILLS (3)—RETURNED

1. Art Gallery.

With amendments.

2. Judges' Salaries and Pensions Act Amendment.

3. Traffic Act Amendment.

Without amendment.

STATE CONCERNS (PREVENTION OF DISPOSAL) BILL

Second Reading

Debate adjourned from the 26th August.

Mr. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Industrial Development) [5.15]: I rise to oppose this Bill. It is one which seeks to provide that, notwithstanding the provisions of any Act, a State-owned instrumentality or State trading concern shall not be sold or leased unless and until the approval of Parliament of the sale or lease has first been obtained.

Mr. Toms: What is wrong with that?

Mr. COURT: In submitting this Bill to the House, the Leader of the Opposition has added to the definition of State trading concerns a further definition in respect of State-owned instrumentalities thereby widening very greatly the scope of the proposed legislation as distinct from the provisions of the State Trading Concerns Act. Apart from the added definition, the Bill seeks to reverse an amendment moved in 1930 by the Mitchell Government in this Chamber, and agreed to after a very long debate.

Mr. W. Hegney: That was 30 years ago, you know.

Mr. COURT: It is very interesting to read back over the debate. A very long debate, it was, with the then Opposition proceeding to keep the then Government on the go for about 24 hours.

Sir Ross McLarty: And the rest!

Mr. COURT: I think it can be said that the arguments used by the then Premier, Sir James Mitchell, would be as cogent today as they were when he presented them in this Chamber in 1930. At that time, one of his most bitter complaints was that the then Opposition, when in Government, wanted the right, without consulting Parliament, to extend State trading to any extent it wished; but it sought to retain in the legislation the right or the insistence that the Government of the day should apply to Parliament for the approval of the sale of any of the undertakings. In other words, it wanted it each way. I submit that the idea of obtaining the approval of Parliament firstly is completely impracticable, and anyone who stops to think for one second will appreciate why. The object of the Bill, therefore, is none other than to prevent the transference of State trading concerns from State ownership to private ownership.

Mr. Graham: I think your remarks on the industry advances measure would be very interesting in connection with this.

Mr. COURT: I am dealing with this particular Bill, which seeks to make it obligatory for the Government of the day to obtain parliamentary approval before

it can dispose of any State trading concern; a Bill to reverse a provision that is already in the Act, under which the Government can dispose of the State trading concerns without consulting Parliament. There is very good reason why the Government of the day, as the responsible body, should have the right to dispose of these concerns without prior consultation with Parliament, if it has a mandate from the people—and this Government has such a mandate.

Mr. Graham: You are doing a complete somersault on your remarks of last session on the measure I just mentioned.

Mr. COURT: I cannot follow the reasoning of the member for East Perth on that particular point, because I cannot see it has any bearing on this Bill.

Mr. W. Hegney: It probably does not suit you to.

Mr. COURT: I ask: What industrialist, in his right mind, would negotiate with the Government for the purchase of a State trading concern and run the gauntlet of this Parliament ratifying his negotiations?

Mr. Graham: That happened with the oil refinery, didn't it?

Mr. COURT: Nothing of the sort! That has been thrown in as argument, but it has no particular bearing on this proposal before the House. It is an entirely different matter to have to bring a State trading concern that is established and a going concern, before Parliament for ratification of its sale, from that of bringing a Bill to ratify an agreement that has just been made or is about to be made for a new industry.

Let us examine this statement closely. There is no established business there which could be damaged; no employees that are directly affected or prejudiced by all the acrimonious debate that would ensue in this Chamber. And, I repeat, no industrialist in his right mind would run the gauntlet of negotiating with a Government to purchase a State concern knowing that it had to be debated in this particular Chamber before the agreement could be ratified.

Mr. W. Hegney: If everything were fair and aboveboard, he would not have any quibbles.

Mr. COURT: That, of course, is just a superficial observation by the member for Mt. Hawthorn; and if he reflects for a while, he will appreciate why even the most generous transaction could be distorted if it became the subject of Party-political debate in this Chamber.

Mr. May: Why do you always use a clenched fist?

Mr. COURT: I suggest in all sincerity that if the ratification of the sale of a State trading concern had to go before

this Chamber, before the debate had finished the goodwill of the business would have been ruined.

Mr. Andrew: It's ruined now!

Mr. COURT: A potential purchaser would be subject to all sorts of propaganda. Motives would be questioned, no matter how reputable he might have been. Someone would see a nigger in the wood-pile, with the result that such an industrialist would not bother about negotiating with the Government of the day. It comes back to my point that the object of this Bill is not, as would appear at first glance, to ensure that the conditions of sale are examined by Parliament; but, in practice, to prevent the sale of State trading concerns. Just imagine the position of employees in a State concern, be it the State Building Supplies, Chamberlain Industries, or any one of the State trading concerns one could think of.

Mr. Evans: Is Chamberlain Industries a State trading concern?

Mr. COURT: Under this Bill, for practical purposes, it would become the equivalent of a State trading concern and would have to be subject to ratification by Parliament. Imagine the position of the employees while a Bill was wandering through this Chamber and another place!

Mr. W. Hegney: It would not be any worse than it is now, I should think.

Mr. COURT: Of course it would! If such a situation occurred, think what a bonanza it would be for the competitors. Just imagine how they would throw their hats in the air!

Mr. Graham: What damage could it do?

Mr. W. Hegney: How would it damage the employees?

Mr. COURT: Would the member for East Perth like his business to be exposed to all the acrimonious debate that would ensue, realising—and let us be realistic about this—that the Chamber would line itself up, with socialists on one side and anti-socialists on the other, with the socialists determined that the concern would remain a State concern.

Mr. Graham: My business would not be running the gauntlet. It would be the State's assets.

Mr. COURT: Nonsense! This State's assets—

Mr. Graham: What do you think it is? A potential gift to your political friends?

Mr. COURT: We want to—

Mr. Graham: Hand out to some of your coppers; that is what you want.

Mr. COURT: I am not subject to any time limit, so the honourable member may interject as much as he likes.

Mr. Graham: We would not trust you two feet!

Mr. COURT: I gather that, and I can assure the member for East Perth his remark is heartily reciprocated.

Mr. Graham: You hate—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Graham: You hate the State and would give anything away which it owned!

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for East Perth must maintain order.

Mr. Graham: I am being provoked!

The SPEAKER: The Minister must address the Chair.

Mr. COURT: It has been suggested that I hate the State and everything that belongs to it.

Mr. Graham: You love big business and nothing else!

Mr. COURT: It is plain nonsense, and I have done as much for my State as the member for East Perth will ever do.

Mr. Graham: L.s.d. Court!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COURT: In point of fact, this Bill represents the bitter hatred of the Hawke Administration, or the Labor Party—or whatever one likes to call it—for private enterprise.

Just let us examine the situation. Suppose we are faced with an offer on a good, sound, commercial basis for the sale of a State trading concern, and Parliament is out of session. It is January, we will say, and Parliament is due to meet in July. A satisfactory deal is completed, or negotiated, to what looks like a successful conclusion, by the end of February. What are we going to do?

Mr. Graham: Can't you call a special session?

Mr. COURT: And what a howl there would be if we were to call a special session for one particular Bill to ratify the sale of a State concern!

Mr. Graham: It has happened before!

Mr. COURT: That was done in connection with a new transaction. As I tried to explain to the member for East Perth before, a new contract is an entirely different type of transaction from one which involves the negotiation for the sale of an existing going concern.

Mr. Graham: We had a special session to deal with the rents and tenancies legislation one April.

Mr. COURT: That, I should imagine, would fall into a different category from the sale of a State trading concern.

Mr. Graham: I am merely indicating that there is nothing new or novel about having a special session.

Mr. COURT: There would be a mighty howl and wail if we called a special session to—

Mr. Graham: You can bet your bottom dollar we would all be here!

Sir Ross McLarty: How about keeping quiet?

Mr. Hawke: Who was that?

Mr. COURT: Members will appreciate that the Government of the day has the responsibility of government. This particular Government has a mandate to transfer the State trading concerns to private ownership.

Mr. Toms: Prove it!

Mr. COURT: We prove it every night. How else do we govern? The Opposition has not been able to force us out of power yet.

Mr. Graham: Only because a chap you tried to beat was not beaten—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COURT: If the Government of the day, with a mandate and with the responsibility of government, makes a bad decision—

Mr. Evans: You make plenty of them!

Mr. COURT: — the public will soon find out; and it has its remedy. Goodness only knows we have elections quickly enough in this country. We seem to be always going to the polls.

Mr. Hawke: How would the public find out, when the Minister would not make the papers available?

Mr. COURT: The Leader of the Opposition can be assured that the details of any such transaction concerning the transfer of a State concern to private ownership would be made known to Parliament.

Mr. Hawke: By whom?

Mr. COURT: By the Government of the day.

Mr. Hawke: Don't give us that!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COURT: A completed transaction obviously would be known to Parliament; because if the Leader of the Opposition would stop to think for one moment—just one moment—he would appreciate that the first time the annual accounts in respect of State concerns are presented to Parliament, and the first time the Auditor-General's report is presented, the change in the investment in State trading concerns must be disclosed.

Mr. Evans: That could be months after!

Mr. Hawke: That is only part of the story!

Mr. COURT: If the member for Kalgoorlie will reflect for a moment he will recollect that the Auditor-General's report is normally presented to Parliament in respect of the year ended the 30th June before Parliament rises.

There would be a terrific howl if it were not made available to Parliament; and it is available, in modern times, nearly as quickly as some of the public companies' accounts are available; because the Auditor-General has consistently, in recent years, tried to shorten the time before the Public Accounts are available, duly audited, to Parliament, and therefore to the public of the State.

Mr. Graham: It would still be too late; because by then the eggs would be scrambled.

Mr. COURT: That is the socialist theory when the Socialists nationalise anything. They hope that they will be able to make such a mess of things that they can never be unscrambled; so do not talk about scrambling the eggs.

Mr. Graham: You know all about squandering the public purse and handling the public funds to your friends.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COURT: It is easy to see why there are difficulties in regard to State trading concerns. Many of those difficulties are inherent in any State trading concern—

Mr. W. Hegney: Do you include the State ships in the State trading concerns?

Mr. COURT: For the purposes of this measure, the Leader of the Opposition has sought to attain an all-embracing coverage of undertakings, which would include the State Shipping Service within the definition of State trading concerns, if it were not already there. The Bill contains a special definition, to give it the widest possible coverage. It does not stop with the concerns now known, legally, as State trading concerns. To revert to my point about the difficulties which beset State trading concerns; one of the greatest problems which besets any State trading concern is political interference.

Try as hard as we may, it is almost impossible completely to remove political interference from these concerns. Once the Treasury is responsible, in connection with the funds, such things are considered fair game by members on both sides of the House, who ask for special demands to be made, for special conditions of work to prevail, special conditions of sale of goods and certain priorities to be established, and the like—

Mr. Evans: What about the Lotteries Commission? How much political interference has there been there?

Mr. COURT: It is only in recent weeks, in connection with Chamberlains, which is now being run as closely as is possible along the lines of a private show, that certain people came to me to see if they could get some preference given to them for the supply of tractors in Western Australia; because they said too many of the tractors were going to the Eastern States. It is easy, under pressure of that

nature, to agree to such requests; but on this occasion I said, "No." The decision was to allow Chamberlains to operate as a private enterprise concern, as nearly as was humanly practicable; and if the directors of that concern were operating on a basis of disposing of a preponderance of their production in the Eastern States, in order to establish goodwill there, I was all for it.

It shows how easily one can fall for political pressures which arise in connection with State trading concerns. A private show, on the other hand, can trade according to the basic established concepts of trading in that particular industry; and in the long run it will achieve the best long-term result.

Mr. Lawrence: Was that your attitude before, or after?

Mr. COURT: It has been my attitude, naturally, since I have been a Minister. I would not have received the request before I was a Minister. A great difficulty which besets State trading concerns is the uncertainty; because they will always be a political chopping block; sometimes to a greater extent than others—but always there is that uncertainty.

Then we have the actions of the previous Government which, I consider, in the long-term view, did State trading concerns in this State a great deal of harm; and here I refer to the directed business—

Mr. Lawrence: That is a deliberate lie!

Point of Order.

Mr. COURT: I find that those words are objectionable, Mr. Speaker, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member is asked to withdraw the words used.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I would ask that the Minister prove his statement to be the truth. I did not call him a liar; but said he made a mis-statement of facts.

The SPEAKER: The member for South Fremantle said, from my recollection, "That is a deliberate lie"; and the Minister has asked for a withdrawal. I think the words "That is a deliberate lie" have been ruled, on many occasions, to be objectionable. For that reason I must insist that the words be withdrawn.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Then I withdraw, and substitute the words "That is a mis-statement of the facts."

Debate Resumed

Mr. COURT: If the honourable member considers it a mis-statement of facts, I will show, categorically, that the previous Government—the Hawke administration—directed that certain Government business be given to State trading concerns, without quote, and without tender. There is no disputing that that is the fact of the case.

Mr. May: A real political speech.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COURT: It is correct. Members opposite cannot deny that directions were given by their Government to Government departments in that regard.

Mr. Evans: What is wrong with that?

Mr. COURT: There is a great deal wrong with it, for reasons which members opposite do not appreciate because the long-term interests of this State do not mean anything to them.

Several members interjected.

Mr. Jamieson: They do not mean anything to you, so long as there are no pounds, shillings, and pence in them.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COURT: One of the great disadvantages of State trading concerns is their effect on our industrial development. Apart from the Unfair Trading Act, nothing did more damage to the industrial development of this State than the previous Government's expansion of State trading concerns; and its policy of directed business.

Mr. W. Hegney: It was your propaganda overseas.

Mr. COURT: Throughout the business world it became clearly understood that the previous Government was determined to expand its State trading concerns—

Mr. Evans: When are you going to try to repeal the unfair trading legislation?

Mr. COURT: The honourable member knows that that is—

The SPEAKER: Order! That has nothing to do with this Bill.

Mr. COURT: The honourable member knows that, as a matter of policy, we are committed to the repeal of that Act.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will confine himself to the Bill.

Mr. COURT: I repeat that the influence of the Unfair Trading Act did as much damage to the industrial development of this State as did the previous Government's policy of expansion of State trading concerns, including its day-labour organisation and its direction of business to Government instrumentalities. Why should people come here and invest their capital, if they have to compete unfairly with a Government which should be doing all it possibly can to encourage them to become established and to expand here?

Mr. Graham: What is this about competing unfairly?

Mr. COURT: Is not directed business unfair competition?

Mr. Graham: Why does the Commonwealth direct that all its printing be done in the various States by the Government Printing Offices of those States?

Mr. COURT: The honourable member should be glad that it does. The honourable member's Government gave an inflexible direction regarding goods and services having to be channelled through Government instrumentalities, without quote and without tender.

Mr. Graham: Let private enterprise attend to its own business; and let the Government attend to Government business.

Mr. COURT: The previous Government directed Government business—

Mr. Graham: A Government has the right to direct its own business.

Mr. COURT: Does it do industry any good when a Government frightens other industries away?

Mr. Graham: How does it do any harm?

Mr. COURT: People who could come here and bring their capital and know-how will not do so if Government business is denied them. There are many people who would expect to be able to compete for that business—

Mr. Graham: Not necessarily.

Mr. Hawke: Private enterprise is beginning to replace Parliament.

Mr. COURT: It is becoming obvious that the point made by the Minister for Health is a pertinent one: That this Bill shows up in its true perspective the difference between the ideologies of the Opposition and the Government Parties.

Mr. Graham: It shows your contempt of Parliament.

Mr. COURT: If this is contempt of Parliament, why were you in Government for six years without making any attempt to amend this legislation, which has been here since 1930?

Mr. Graham: We did not think we would live to see the day when a bunch of lunatics was in charge of the State.

Mr. COURT: If the member for East Perth was serious about that, he would appreciate that he is not reflecting on us, but on the people who put us here.

Mr. Graham: You misled the people; that is why you are here.

Mr. Heal: The McLarty-Watts Government did not try to do this.

Mr. COURT: To develop this story about the disabilities and disadvantages of State trading concerns, let me refer to their capital demands. A motion was moved in this House, a couple of years ago, by the member for Narrogin, who was unsuccessful in his attempt to have that motion passed in connection with the sale of some State trading concern; and the reasons he gave were cogent and pertinent. At that time, when this State was gasping for funds with which to get on with basic development, we were having to put money into State trading concerns which

could be financed from another source without any obligation on the Government. It follows that if the Government of the day is to continue the State trading concerns it will, from time to time, receive demands for capital for their expansion, or for the replacement of assets of those concerns, as the case may be.

Mr. Graham: Do you say private enterprise hasn't its hand out every day of the week for subsidies, guarantees, and so on from the Government? I suggest that the Minister should be consistent in what he is saying.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COURT: It also follows that, when times are less buoyant than they have been in the post-war era, these concerns show losses in many cases.

Mr. Evans: Don't private concerns also show losses?

Mr. COURT: On these occasions when State trading concerns run into losses, it is the Government which has to find the money, not only in regard to capital, but also losses which must be met from Government funds. The member for Kalgoorlie made the point that private concerns run into losses also, and that is pertinent; but they have to paddle their own canoe and find their own finance—

Mr. Jamieson: That is all you know about it.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is altogether too much interjecting. I do not wish to interfere too far with the course of the debate; and I think I have been very tolerant up to this stage. I repeat, that I have been tolerant when there have been one or two interjections; but that does not mean that four or more members can interject at once. In future I will not allow such interjections.

Mr. COURT: In less prosperous times, when it is difficult for State trading concerns to break even, all their history shows that the Government has to provide the funds for them; but if a private show makes losses—and they often do—it is the responsibility of the shareholders to find the money to meet those losses. Management has to account to the directorate, and the directorate to the shareholders. They have to justify their prospects before they receive any further capital from the shareholders; and that is one of the basic differences between State trading concerns and privately-owned concerns.

Mr. W. Hegney: I am not going to interrupt; but what concerns have you specially in mind?

Mr. COURT: If the honourable member cares to go back and have a look at the history of the State trading concerns over a period of 30 years he will find that many of them have had terrific accumulations of losses.

Mr. W. Hegney: What ones have you in mind?

Mr. COURT: I am not going to enumerate them one by one from memory, because the honourable member would question the accuracy of my statement. But to mention only one: What about the accumulated losses of Wundowie? Those losses run into a very substantial figure; and that is not the end of it, because Wundowie is in the process of requesting a substantial capital write-down right now to assist it in getting a more equitable accounting formula for that part of its business.

Mr. Toms: You say, then, that Wundowie should not have been established?

Mr. COURT: The point I return to is that the Government, once it is committed on a State trading concern, is committed for capital requirements as well as its losses. There is the tendency for a State trading concern to drift into capital commitments. I instance the case of Chamberlain Industries. No-one, in his wildest dreams, when that project was first established and assisted by the Government, would have thought it would get into the colossal difficulties and make the huge losses that it eventually did. However, once the Government is committed on such projects, it is extremely difficult for it to withdraw its assistance.

A private concern, however, can say, "We are not capable of meeting our losses, so we will make the first loss the last one." In a State trading concern, there are political considerations that are inseparable. It makes no difference whether one is on one side of the House or the other; because, when one is in Government, there are tricky considerations to take into account at certain points of time.

For instance, a few weeks ago the New South Wales Government was subjected to terrific criticism over the Metropolitan Cement Co. because it allowed its Rural Bank to be committed to £4,250,000 on that industry. The political considerations have been present, and the Government has allowed the situation to drift on and on to the great disadvantage of New South Wales.

Mr. Evans: What are your comments on the assistance rendered by the Hawke Government to the many organisations mentioned last year?

Mr. COURT: That has nothing whatsoever to do with this Bill. Would the honourable member have preferred that the Government had not given that assistance? It has nothing to do with the question of whether a State trading concern or a State instrumentality, as defined in the Bill, can be sold without prior parliamentary approval.

The Leader of the Opposition, in submitting this Bill, has tried to treat, in a fairly flippant manner, the fact that the

Government has a mandate to sell these concerns, and the fact that we have laid down three basic conditions under which they will be sold. I am going to repeat those three basic conditions, because they are important and we propose to honour them to the full.

Mr. W. Hegney: The Minister for Health introduced a Bill last night and side-stepped the issue.

Mr. COURT: First and foremost, there is the question of a fair and reasonable price.

Mr. Evans: Does that mean so much?

Mr. COURT: In the mind of the member for Kalgoorlie that may be nothing; but in the mind of this Government, it is something real, and something important; and the Government is prepared to justify to the full that anything it does is fair and reasonable.

Mr. Evans: You have dishonoured that already.

Mr. COURT: The member for Kalgoorlie seems to be taking an active interest in the Bill; and I would like to remind him that in spite of its introduction by the Leader of the Opposition, to provide that these deals shall be subject to ratification by Parliament, the Hawke administration was quite prepared to sell one of the State hotels without coming near Parliament to obtain its approval.

Mr. Hawke: To whom?

Mr. COURT: The Leader of the Opposition was prepared to sell it as a community hotel to the Wongan Hills people.

Mr. May: Yes; to the people of the State!

Mr. COURT: It is no use playing with words. It was not sold to the people of the State; it was sold to a committee of people who reside in Wongan Hills. We do not object to the transaction; and, in fact, we were quick to bring it to a successful conclusion. Nevertheless, the previous Government did not see fit to bring the matter before Parliament. The previous Government did not get self-righteous about it and say, "We cannot sell the assets of the people without coming to Parliament for its approval. We want to make this deal with the people of Wongan Hills." The Hawke Government would have completed the transaction, instead of the present Government.

The Hawke Government was going to do that against the advice of the then Minister administering the department, and against the advice of the senior officers of that department, and in spite of the fact that the price was only about 4/7ths of the market value of the concern. But there was no self-righteous indignation shown by the members on the back benches behind those who then comprised the Government.

Mr. May: But the people benefited.

Mr. COURT: This Government completed the deal, and we were pleased to see that State hotel sold to the people of Wongan Hills. But I again make the point that there was no indignation on the part of the Government back benches then that although the Minister was against the sale for certain reasons, and although his officers were against it for certain reasons, the transaction was not brought before Parliament for sanction.

The question of a fair and reasonable price is something that can be proven and determined beyond all reasonable doubt. No Government would be so irresponsible as not to protect itself in regard to what was a fair and reasonable price. As a Government, we are prepared to take the judgment of the people on what would be a fair and reasonable price.

Mr. Evans: Let us take the judgment of Parliament!

Mr. COURT: In so far as the protection of the employees is concerned, the Leader of the Opposition is inclined to labour this point as though the Government was not prepared to protect the employees. There are transactions every day taking place where there are negotiations for the protection of the employees. Who, buying a large concern with an established staff, would want to get rid of the staff overnight? Of course, no-one would!

Every person values a good asset; and if the employees of any concern are worth their salt they are of great value to a person who is taking over a business. Most people I have met in my professional experience are anxious to retain the services of people who have a knowledge of the business; people who are part of the goodwill of the business.

Mr. Rowberry: Why are you putting them off now?

Mr. COURT: Is this Government doing any different from what the honourable member's Government did? The honourable member should compare the number of people who were dismissed or retrenched from the railways by the Hawke Government compared to the number this Government has dismissed during the five months it has been in office.

The Leader of the Opposition continually brings forward a Press statement that was published during election time; and I want to read it because he quoted it for reproduction in *Hansard*. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition has reproduced it on many occasions. The statement is attributed to the Liberal Party during the election campaign. It reads as follows:—

The Hawke Government is making absurd charges that Liberal intentions are to close all State Trading Concerns.

They were absurd charges because the whole basis of our approach to the question of transferring the State trading concerns

from State ownership to private ownership is to keep them going within the economy of the State on a satisfactory basis and to have them expanded on their new ownership.

Mr. Hawke: Read on!

Mr. COURT: Let us deal with one thing at a time! They then suggested—

Mr. Hawke: Who are, "They"?

Mr. COURT: I am referring to this statement. This is the Liberal Party statement that the Leader of Opposition had recorded in *Hansard*. I will continue to read it—

The Hawke Government is making absurd charges that Liberal intentions are to close all State trading concerns, fire their employees—

Mr. Hawke: Read on!

Mr. COURT:

—reduce wages and lengthen working hours.

What could be more stupid than for the Opposition to claim that we, as a Government, could either reduce wages or lengthen working hours? There is a system of industrial arbitration in this State.

Mr. Hawke: You have done it!

Mr. COURT: We are bound by and we support the system of industrial arbitration.

Mr. Rowberry: What about long-service leave?

Mr. COURT: We support long-service leave. I suppose it is expecting too much for us to think that the member for Warren would assume that in negotiations to protect employees we, the Government, would protect them in their existing conditions.

Mr. W. Hegney: How would you protect them?

Mr. COURT: I am exasperated by the attitude of the member for Mt. Hawthorn on this! We would protect them in contracts in a form which are being drawn up every day of the week.

Mr. Hawke: What is the good of a contract when a bloke gets a week's notice?

Mr. COURT: If one protects one's employees, it means just that. It protects one's employees against—

Mr. W. Hegney: Against what? You are flummoxed!

Mr. COURT: Against the peremptory dismissal of staff. No-one in his wildest dreams would say that one should give a blank cheque to an employee to remain in employment regardless of whether he loafs or steals money. Would members on the opposite side of the House still engage a man if he stole money, or was

insubordinate, or disobeyed the rules? When members talk about "firing" the people, they are talking wholesale sackings. It is a foolish claim to say that the Government will allow anyone to take over a concern and sack half the people without rhyme or reason, even allowing some license for what is said at election time.

Mr. Hawke: Read on!

Mr. COURT: This statement continues—
We will fire nobody—

Mr. Hawke: Oh! I am glad you mentioned that!

Mr. COURT: We have not "fired" people.

Mr. W. Hegney: The Minister for Works told me that he had fired 310 men since the 3rd April last.

Mr. COURT: The member for Mt. Hawthorn has been mixed up in the industrial world for too long to misinterpret the meaning of the word "fire." He knows full well that when that word is used in industry—and particularly in union circles—it means to go in and fire people by the dozen without rhyme or reason.

Mr. Hawke: No wonder the member for East Perth left the Chamber!

Mr. COURT: If he wanted to leave, that is his own business. Probably he just could not take it. When one analyses the statement that the Leader of the Opposition tries to spin so much around, one finds that what it contains is quite proper. The promises made in that statement will be honoured. Anyone would think that they were incapable of performance and that the Government was incapable of carrying them out. There is nothing for anyone to run away from on this side, because we propose to honour everything that we have represented.

Mr. Toms: What is the difference between being fired and being retrenched? There is no difference when one does not receive a pay packet.

Mr. COURT: When the labour force of the railways was reduced by hundreds and hundreds as a matter of policy, I suppose those dismissed workers were expected to be satisfied because it was the policy of the Labour Government; and I suppose the 200 men who were dismissed from the Public Works Department were satisfied because it was the policy of the Labour Government!

Mr. Hawke: There was a vital difference.

Mr. COURT: I do not know of any vital difference. They were dismissed by the Labour Government. The policy of this Government of encouraging industry to come here and encouraging the expansion of existing industries in order to absorb more people in them, is the objective of any Government that is worth its salt.

The policy of the previous Government was leading the State into stagnation. Temporarily, it thought it was employing more men by putting them to work on Government projects; but the end could only be stagnation, because such a policy was frightening people away from the State.

In his speech, the Leader of the Opposition referred to the answers given by the Premier regarding valuations. I do not think for one moment that he was serious; and expected to get the estimates of the valuations from the Premier; because had his Party been in Government, he would have given precisely the same answers as were given by the Premier—and for a very good reason.

If the sale of these concerns is to be negotiated, the last thing which should be made public is the idea of the Government as to the current-day values. Some of the concerns could be worth more than their balance-sheet values; some of them would be much less than those values. How silly would we be if we told the world before we entered into negotiations for sale what we thought were the present-day valuations—not the book values. That is the last information which should be made public. The Premier was therefore within his rights in order to protect the assets of the State by refusing to make an estimate of the current values of the concerns, quite apart from the difficulties and costs of obtaining those valuations.

The Leader of the Opposition tried to claim that what this Government has done since it came into office has depreciated the value of these businesses. There is no substance whatsoever in that claim, because there was no goodwill value from a sale point of view in the State trading concerns, to the extent that they were carrying out directed business. That type of business does not bring goodwill. It is directed business. The moment the power to direct is removed, that portion of the goodwill collapses; and that can be the most profitable part of the business. Therefore the action taken by the Government since it took office has not depreciated the true sale value of these concerns.

Mr. Rowberry: Is that a shadow of things to come?

Mr. COURT: Not necessarily, unless the honourable member wants to read my remarks as such. I am only answering the arguments put forward by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Hawke: You are just talking.

Mr. COURT: That is the type of interjection used by the honourable member very often when he is in want of something to say. He accuses one of using words and more words and just talking.

Sir Ross McLarty: We can say that members opposite are masters of talking.

Mr. COURT: At this point in the session, members on the opposite side of the House should be the last ones to be accusing us of just talking. In the last few weeks of this Parliament we have seen an exhibition of people just talking.

I oppose the Bill. If it is passed, it will be the means of stopping, for all practical purposes, the sale of all State trading concerns to private interests, for which the Government has a mandate and for which there has been enabling legislation on the statute book for 30 years—legislation which the present Opposition had not made any move to alter during its six years of office.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn) [6.4]: I propose to support the Bill.

Mr. Court: That is absolutely amazing!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I have heard the Minister speaking on a number of occasions since he first adorned this Chamber in 1953, but never have I known him to kick against the wind so much as he did this evening.

Mr. Court: I heard you say that before.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Minister for Railways said there is an Act which has been in operation for 30 years, and that is the legislation under which the Government proposes to act in any negotiations which may be carried on for the disposal of State trading concerns or State instrumentalities. To put it plainly, this Bill is necessary to protect the interests of the people in this State. We do not trust the Government. As those assets belong to the people, Parliament is the rightful authority to determine whether any trading concern should be disposed of.

Mr. Court: You may not trust us, but the people do.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am speaking as a political force. We do not trust the Government, and that is the reason for the Bill being introduced in this Parliament, and that is also the reason why it should become law. As the State trading concerns have been established with the people's money—they do not belong to the Minister for Railways, the Premier, or the Leader of the Opposition—they should be retained entirely in the interests of the people. Members in this House, totalling 50 in number, represent all the people of this State; and Parliament is entitled to make a decision.

Let me refer briefly to one bogey, among others, raised by the Minister for Railways. He said it would be impractical for the Government to enter into negotiations with any industrialist if this Bill were to become law, and that a special session of Parliament would have to be called. What is wrong in doing that? Where are the difficulties in regard to the calling of Parliament to assemble? If the Government negotiates with a company for the sale of any State trading concern it can

be indicated quite clearly and speedily that before negotiations can be finalised, they will have to be ratified by Parliament. Similar action has been taken in respect of some agreements which were the subject of Bills, and subsequently Acts of Parliament.

In the interests of the State and for the protection of the people it is necessary that any negotiations in this direction should be ratified by Parliament. We can therefore dispose of that argument of the Minister for Railways without further need to ponder over it, because it does not hold any substance when examined.

Mr. Court: Why didn't you seek to alter the legislation when you were in office?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: In answer to that interjection, I would point out that the previous Liberal-Country Party Government, which was in office from 1947 to 1953, did not dispose of any State trading concerns; on the contrary, it expanded and increased the activities of some State instrumentalities. The present Attorney-General was the Leader of the Country Party, and the member for Murray was Premier in the McLarty-Watts Government; but no move was made to dispose of any State trading concern in those years. Naturally the Labour Party assumed that any succeeding Government would follow along the same lines as the McLarty-Watts Government.

Mr. Mann: Why should it?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: It has been said that the Government has a mandate to do certain things. I say that it has a constitutional right to legislate in regard to the functions of the Government of this State, but it is considered that Parliament should be the authority to decide whether or not there is to be a disposal of any asset.

I refer to an article appearing in *The West Australian* of the 13th March which is quite appropriate and relevant to my remarks. I would like the Premier to elaborate and explain what he meant by some of his statements appearing in this article. If he is not prepared to do that, then the Minister for Railways might, at some suitable stage, expand the statements.

Mr. Hawke: He can during the Committee stage.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The statements of the Premier were as follows:—

The Hawke Government is making absurd charges that Liberal intentions are to close all State trading concerns, fire their employees, reduce wages and lengthen working hours. We will fire nobody nor close any concerns down.

I would ask the Premier to explain the next part which is as follows:—

What we intend is, first, to make them payable, based on sound business principles instead of departmental

principles, and when this is done we will put them on their own as public companies with shares on the stock exchange, to continue their operations as free enterprise concerns.

I ask the Premier to indicate what he proposes to do and to reveal his present attitude, if not during the reply to the second reading then during the Committee stage.

Mr. Hawke: Does he know what those statements mean?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: That is what I am anxious to find out. I want them to be cleared up. The statement of the Premier in the passage I have just read should be of concern to all members.

Mr. Hawke: It is meaningless jargon.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I challenge any member on the Government side to elaborate on this phase relating to the disposal of State trading concerns. The Premier continued his speech in the following terms:—

Their 6,300 personnel will remain in their jobs as far as the Government would be concerned.

We have been given some small indication of the 6,300 men being retained in their jobs.

The State Engineering Works has been functioning for some years, and it has been a very live instrumentality. I understand that it has been making profits. It is the field of training which is tapped by apprentices in the engineering trades. Since the 3rd April a substantial number of qualified employees have been dismissed from the State Engineering Works. If I interpret the policy of the Government correctly—and its policy has been declared more than once—the Government proposes to continue with that policy.

Take another instrumentality—the architectural division of the Public Works Department. A few months ago there were about 1,500 persons engaged by that division. I have asked a question in this House relating to the engagement of those men. I have done so on a number of occasions and will continue to ask the same question until the end of the session if the policy is continued by the Government. The question is—

What is the number of employees dismissed from the architectural division of the Public Works Department since the 3rd April, 1959?

How many are under notice of dismissal?

The answer I was given on the 20th August was that there were 282 dismissals and 14 under notice. The answer to that question given today was 310 dismissals and another seven under notice. We have the information from the Government that the notices of dismissal will be given periodically; the Minister for Works made that statement in reply to a question some time ago.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: In about 12 months' time, if the Government carries on with its present policy regarding retrenchments or—to use the term borrowed by the Premier from the article I referred to previously—if the firing still continues, there will be only a skeleton crew in the Public Works organisation a year from now.

The SPEAKER: I hope the honourable member will relate his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I shall relate them directly to the Bill; and I will do that almost instantly. I mention this to show that the policy which the Government is following is one that requires the introduction of a Bill of this nature in order that, if there is to be a disposal of State concerns, Parliament shall ratify such disposal.

I wish to refer now to the question of the morale of the employees already in the State trading concerns, who do not know from day to day just what their economic position will be. If the Bill passes, they will at least know that they will have reasonable security of tenure until such time as any negotiations, into which the Government may enter with private persons for the sale of these concerns, have been agreed to by Parliament.

That is an important point; because certainly those in the architectural division of the Public Works Department do not know from week to week just what their position will be. It is the same in the State Engineering Works; and from my knowledge, I suggest that the same applies to the employees in the State Brick Works; and those in the charcoal iron and steel works at Wundowie; and those in other concerns.

The Minister for Industrial Development made some statements in regard to the Unfair Trading and Profit Control Act; he said it was a barrier to industrial progress in Western Australia. The Government introduced that measure for the purpose of protecting the people; and the Bill would not have found its way on to the statute book had it not been for the support given to it by members who were supporters of the present Government. Members in another place—to be correct, members of the Country Party—supported the then Government; and, as a result, the Act was placed on the statute book.

Although the Minister for Industrial Development keeps repeating that this Act is a distinct barrier to the expansion of industry in Western Australia, I suggest that the attitude of the members of the Liberal Party during the currency of that legislation, was one of which they could not feel very proud. What they did helped, if anything, to bring the State into disrepute in other parts of the world. Despite what the Minister has said, the State made industrial progress.

Mr. Court: It stagnated.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I want to refer to the hackneyed phrases that we have heard, although the Minister for Industrial Development would think they were honeyed phrases. I think they are both honeyed and hackneyed; and I am referring to the remarks made with respect to the conditions of the proposed sale of any Government instrumentalities; or, to use a term that will be used in the future, State trading concerns.

When the Minister for Industrial Development was asked to explain what he meant by the expression "a fair and reasonable price," I noticed that he skated around the principle involved. The attitude of this Government towards State trading concerns and Government activities is such that I believe the Government's interpretation of a fair and reasonable price is entirely different from that of the Opposition. I consider the Government will seek the earliest opportunity to dispose of the trading concerns which will be profit-making and will provide a pecuniary gain to private enterprise. In the circumstances, I think that the statement about a fair and reasonable price is one which can be stretched to the limit.

As a matter of fact, if the Government carries out its policy of retrenchment, and of sapping the vitality of the State trading concerns, I suggest that the fair and reasonable price for the State Saw Mills today is far different from what it will be in 12 months' time or two years' time.

Mr. Court: What is the sapping of vitality that you talk about?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Government, for a start, is sapping the vitality of the State Engineering Works; and those works are marked for disposal by the Government. From the statement made earlier this evening by the Minister for Industrial Development, it is quite apparent that as soon as possible the skids will be put under the charcoal iron and steel works, so that they will be disposed of to private enterprise.

I come now to my second point: the protection of the employees. This matter has been bandied around by members of the Government ever since they were returned to office; but I have asked a question here and have received various answers. Last night the Minister for Health introduced a Bill to empower the Government to dispose of the State hotels; and there is nothing in the measure to protect the employees. When the Minister for Industrial Development was asked what protection was to be given to the employees of these State trading concerns, he said it was usual for the transmitttee to take over the employees, and be happy to get them.

Mr. Court: If they are any good, of course he wants them.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Minister is just like a little kookaburra; he is flitting from limb to limb, and has a grin from ear to ear. When he is nailed down, he gets on to something else. Let us deal with the protection of the rights of the employees. We will assume that the Government has just finalised the negotiations for the disposal of a State trading concern. I want to know—I have not received this information from any member of the Government yet—whether the employment of the employees will be guaranteed—not for a week after the signing of the contract, in accordance with the terms of the award, but indefinitely; whether their employment will be carried on. Of course, the Minister knows that once the contract is signed, the employment will be governed by the terms of the relevant award or industrial agreement.

Mr. Court: Isn't that normal?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: To date, the Minister has not suggested that the employment of these people—provided their work and services were efficient and satisfactory—would be continued indefinitely by the purchaser.

I come now to my next point: The continuation of the industry concerned within the economy of the State. Those are high falutin words, but they are so much jargon!

Mr. Court: Why is that?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: If one of the private members of the timber combine purchased one or more of the State Saw Mills—either for cash or on terms—and decided that in 12 months' time—or overnight—it would be economical to close the concern down or operate it only on a half-time basis, would the Government refuse to sell? The Government, in its anxiety to get rid of these State concerns, would stretch its conditions to the limit.

Mr. Court: It is still possible to ensure that the industry would be continued within the economy of the State.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Minister's phrases are just hollow; there is no substance in them, although they sound all right!

Mr. Court: It is only you who say that.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: They might tickle the ears of some members of the Government, or even of some members of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Brand: Some of that is going on right now.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I shall deal with the Premier in a moment. For a while, the words of the Minister for Industrial Development will tickle the ears of some people; but what do those words mean? When the phrases are examined—

Government members: Just words.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Yes, just words.

Mr. J. Hegney: Meaningless jargon.

Mr. Brand: You are right.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Minister for Industrial Development, unlike the Premier, is noted for his verbosity and circumlocution! The Premier, when he is asked a reasonable question by the Leader of the Opposition, is closer than an oyster; he will not give an answer at all! The position is that the Bill is before the House.

Mr. Brand: Cracks in the ice.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I suggest that the Premier direct his attention to a report in the Press, that I read earlier, about the concerns being made payable before the Government disposes of them.

The Bill has been introduced for the express purpose of ensuring that before any of the State trading concerns—I know the State railways and the State Shipping Service will not be disposed of, because it would not pay private enterprise to take them over; but there are some concerns which certain private individuals would be happy to acquire—are disposed of, the Government shall bring before Parliament the particulars of the terms of sale, so that Parliament, which is composed of the representatives of the people, shall determine whether any such proposed agreement or contract shall be ratified, or not. I support the Bill.

MR. ANDREW (Victoria Park) [7.45]: I support the Bill because I think it is very necessary that some protection should be given to the people of the State when various Governments come into power in this State and reverse the policy of their predecessors. If the policy of the present Government continues, the assets of the people of Western Australia will be frittered away and proper regard will not be given to the welfare of the people.

If a Government accepts its responsibilities, it is charged with looking after the assets of the State. During his speech the member for Mt. Hawthorn spoke about the Government frittering away the value of the assets which the State now has in its instrumentalities. I believe, as most people believe, that those assets can be frittered away, and the instrumentalities sold eventually at a price far below their real value.

I have asked a number of questions of the Premier as regards the employment of people in certain Government concerns. Notwithstanding the fact that we have heard so much about the Government not firing anybody, it now has 1,081 fewer employees employed by Government enterprises than it had when it took office. That is a great number of people; and if the Government continues to sack its employees from these particular establishments eventually there will be no assets left to sell. On the 15th

March there were 514 employees in the State Engineering Works, and a week ago there were only 391. The same trend is to be seen in all the other State instrumentalities. As the member for Mt. Hawthorn said a few moments ago, many employees have been sacked from the State Saw Mills.

If one has a live business, with a good turnover, and an efficient staff, it is worth more than a business which is run down and which has poor prospects of doing much in the future. If the Government continues with its policy of reducing the staff employed at these State instrumentalities it will eventually be able to sell them at a figure much below their real value. But as soon as private enterprise buys these businesses sound concerns could be built up from them. This will mean a loss to the State because those businesses will have been acquired for a fraction of their true value.

In opposing the measure, the Minister for Industrial Development said that it would be awkward to negotiate with private companies if each sale had to be brought before Parliament for ratification. He claimed that it would upset the negotiations. I cannot see that it would make much difference. Negotiations could proceed, and if the price was fair and equitable, and Parliament was assured that the assets of the people of Western Australia were being sold at their real value, the sale could be agreed to. I cannot see how this legislation could possibly affect negotiations being carried on. The only thing is that those negotiations would have to be ratified by Parliament; but, as you Mr. Speaker, once said, "If you have the numbers you can do anything."

I believe a check should be put upon the Government so that it cannot sell State instrumentalities without the approval of Parliament. This Government is a most reactionary one—and I say that objectively. I believe it is looking after the interests of its friends, despite the fact that it says it is bringing business methods to bear in Government concerns. If there is a Government concern in existence, and there is work to be done for the Government, why should not the Government concern do it?

This Government boasts of its great business methods so I will give an instance of how these great business methods operate—and this is a true instance. The State Engineering Works tender for fire bars. Let us say that 100 fire bars are required, and the tender price is 8s. 10d. The State works get the job because theirs is the lowest tender. Time goes on, and tenders have to be called for another 100 fire bars. The State Engineering Works put in the same tender price—8s. 10d.—but some other concern tenders at 8s. 9d., and so the private concern gets the contract. A truck has to be sent to the State Engineering Works to pick up the patterns.

That costs about £2; and, when the private concern has moulded and cast the fire bars, the patterns have to be returned to the State Engineering Works, again at a cost of £2. So to save 8s. 4d. by its great business methods the Government spends an extra £4. I do not call that good business.

We have heard the conservatives speaking about the wonderful job that private enterprise does. Yet by their actions the conservatives apparently do not have much confidence in private enterprise. They assail members on this side because we believe in socialism; but so far as I can ascertain—and I have read a lot about it—socialism works in the interests of the whole of the people. Personally, I cannot see anything wrong with a Government functioning on behalf of and for the benefit of the whole of the people.

I do not think anybody could put up a case against the Government functioning for the benefit of the whole of the people. I have not yet heard of such a case. But members opposite condemn us because of our attitude towards socialism. They practise socialism, but in reverse. As a Government they look after and nurture private enterprise by giving it Government contracts. If private enterprise is so efficient, why can it not look after itself? Why should it be hand-fed by the Government?

Mr. Court: It is not a question of being hand-fed. It is a question of being able to tender.

Mr. ANDREW: That is what you are wanting to do.

Mr. Court: Nothing of the sort!

Mr. ANDREW: When this Government was elected, the director of a certain printing company rang up a member who is now a Minister and congratulated him. He then said to him, "I am after that contract that I used to have." That is the way a lot of that sort of work is done. Members opposite are looking after their friends.

Mr. Court: On what do you base that?

Mr. ANDREW: This fellow opened his mouth too much and spoke too loud. He mentioned it to a friend of mine, who told me. He mentioned it when congratulating one member who is now a Minister.

Mr. W. Hegney: It could have been the Minister for Police.

Mr. ANDREW: I know his name but I shall not mention it. Most likely that printing concern got the contract, because there have been a number of retrenchments from the Government Printing Office. Members opposite do not believe in socialism for the whole of the people; but they believe in socialism for a few of the people at the expense of the whole of the people. Private enterprise should look after itself, and Government work should

be done by Government instrumentalities; that is only proper and legitimate. If a private concern had all the necessary machinery to do certain work it would not call tenders to have that work done by an outside firm. But that is what the Government is doing, because it is giving certain Government work to private enterprise; and it is not justified in doing so. Our friends opposite say it is their policy. I said a moment ago that this is a most reactionary Government, and no previous Government has attempted to do what this one is now doing. It has sacked men from the architectural division of the Public Works Department and other Government concerns.

The SPEAKER: Has the architectural division anything to do with the Bill?

Mr. ANDREW: I think it has a lot to do with it because of what the Government is attempting to do to State enterprises; and, after all, that is a State enterprise. You may not agree that it is a State enterprise, Mr. Speaker; but I believe it is. I am of the opinion that this Government is breaking down the position of these State instrumentalities.

Has the Government thought of getting rid of the Water Supply Department? Such concerns are run by private enterprise in America and other countries. If the Government has, as it says it has, the courage of its convictions, why does it not go the whole way and sell to private enterprise a lot of these other Government instrumentalities, such as the Water Supply Department, the State Electricity Commission, and so on? Why does not the Government try to get rid of the Crown Law Department and let out its legal business to private enterprise? Members opposite are only half-baked private enterprise people because they want to get rid of only those enterprises which benefit the workers.

Mr. Hawke: The Liberal Party Ministers would do all these things, but the Country Party Ministers would not allow them to.

Mr. ANDREW: Workers employed in Government concerns generally have better conditions than those employed in private enterprise.

Mr. Court: That is not so.

Mr. ANDREW: It is so; and I can prove it by showing the honourable member the awards which cover the various establishments. The honourable member knows very well that that is so.

Mr. Court: You only think it is so.

Mr. ANDREW: What about the long-service leave provision? A man in private enterprise has to wait for 20 years; but in Government concerns it is only 10 years.

Mr. Court: That is only one thing in a man's avocation.

Mr. ANDREW: The Minister for Railways talks a terrific lot of rubbish in this place, as the member for Mt. Hawthorn said a few moments ago. We all agree with that.

The South Australian Government, which is a Liberal Government, could lay some claim to that title, being one which is developing schemes for the people of the State as a whole. It has commenced many big schemes for the benefit of the people of South Australia; and that is one of the reasons why Sir Thomas Playford and his Government have had the support of the people of South Australia for such a long time.

The Minister for Industrial Development rather puzzled me earlier this evening when he made the statement that the Government did not fire people. He said, "When you fire people you fire this one, that one, and the other". If a man loses his employment by getting a little note in his pay envelope that from next Friday his services will not be required, and if it is signed by the manager, I cannot see that it is any less being fired than if he is told straight out, "You are fired". That is just a little more rubbish that the Minister for Industrial Development put over.

This is a Bill which we, who look after the interests and welfare of the State, should support. The trend in the world today is towards improving the general conditions of the people. There is also a trend by Governments in all countries to take over more and more functions. Even in Australia we have taken over the responsibility for many functions which, a few years ago, we would not have thought of doing. As an example I would quote pensions and social services, unemployment benefits, and so on.

A few years ago we would not have thought of taking over these responsibilities. Today, the trend is to try to benefit the worker; and the previous Government did a good job in trying to build up the work force with a view to securing better conditions. This Government, on the other hand, has taken action which has upset many people and which has made many workers suffer. I hope the Bill will be passed, because I believe it should receive the support of all well-meaning people in this House.

MR. ROWBERRY (Warren) [8.2]: I rise to support the Bill. As it purports to prevent something, it is necessary to discuss what it purports to prevent. At the outset I would like to say it requires a discussion on political economy as a whole in relation to the views held by the Government and those held by the Opposition. I have been interested to hear the different views expressed on this subject. Some members believe that the function of Government is to govern; and I believe that

the Minister for Police is convinced of that fact. Whatever the Government intends is left to one's imagination.

There are some who believe that we on this side of the House are out to destroy private enterprise. So they draw up Bills and appear before the people and say that they propose to sell State trading concerns, as these are some of the things that destroy private enterprise. We must be able to distinguish between private enterprise and capitalistic monopoly, because they are two different things.

I have a friend who, by his own private enterprise, has worked up a considerable business on the outskirts of this town. At present, his existence is threatened by capitalistic monopoly. They have gained control over the supplies of his trade; and by exercising a monopoly over such supplies, they can put him out of business, or cripple him. They might even go to the extent of indulging in a take-over bid, of which we have read so much recently. In fact, they are standing over for a take-over.

One member expressed the view that it is the function of Government to stimulate trade in times of recession, and to refrain from interfering in trade at all when times are good. This is a quaint idea. Why should the taxpayers be called upon to clear up the mess in times of recession—a mess created by private enterprise or capitalistic monopoly—when all that private enterprise and capitalistic monopoly are preoccupied with are large profits?

The greatest deterrent to making profits is costs. One of the great items in costs is salaries and wages. So it necessarily follows in times of recession that capitalistic monopoly or private enterprise will unload their employees on to the market, and the Government will be called upon to look after their welfare. We on this side of the House believe that we should take advantage of boom times by piling up profits and so be able to keep these people in employment by using the money earned by public enterprise.

Mr. O'Connor: Where is that profit?

Mr. ROWBERRY: I answer that interjection by asking, "Where is the loss that Government enterprises are supposed to make? Where does this loss go? Does the money run down the drain to the sea? Or down the drain into the sewers?" We all know, of course, that it goes into the economy of the country by helping to keep people in employment; by creating more employment; and by looking after the welfare of the people generally.

The idea of States interfering in private enterprise is not new. As a matter of fact, one can read about its having occurred in the year 1715 B.C.—and that was not yesterday. It was very interesting to hear the member for Canning make an observation about Christian Socialism. He

seemed to be in some doubt about it, and asked whether there could be such a thing as Christian Socialism. I am now referring to the source of this Christianity to which he referred. In the 41st chapter of the Book of Genesis we read that Pharoah dreamed a dream, and in this dream he saw seven fat kine; and lo there came up seven lean kine and devoured the seven fat kine.

Mr. Hawke: The member for Murray is looking worried!

Mr. ROWBERRY: These could have been the Liberal Party. Pharoah could not understand this dream, but in the land of Egypt there was an Israelite named Joseph who was skilled in the interpretation of dreams. Accordingly Pharoah called on him to interpret this dream. The interpretation of the dream was that the seven fat kine were the seven full years of great harvest; and the seven lean kine that devoured the seven fat kine were the seven years of famine. Pharoah commended Joseph to take one-fifth of the harvest of the seven fat years and store it up in granaries and warehouses for the benefit of the people, so that they would have food during the seven lean years.

The arithmetic somehow does not quite tally. I am not able to understand how one-fifth of the production would enable them to carry on for the seven lean years. I was told as a child, however, that if there was anything in the Bible which I did not understand I should just ignore it.

Mr. Craig: That is just what we are doing now.

Mr. ROWBERRY: It is quite easy to see the analogy between those times and the present day. It will also be noticed that there was no mention at all of private enterprise or big business protesting against the action of the king. The king apparently did what he thought best for the people of the country, and by doing so he looked after their welfare.

Had there been big business in those days there is no doubt as to what would have happened. In times of boom they would have sold the entire production on the export market, and when the seven lean years were reached the people would have been hungry. The moral contained in the parable that I have just quoted is the philosophy to which we subscribe.

During the course of the elections the Premier was reported in *The West Australian* of the 18th March, 1959, as having said—and it would bear repeating—

People are the most important factor in industry. Industry will support the people. We sincerely believe that. We believe industry should be there to employ people, to look after their welfare and their children's welfare.

It will be noticed that he did not mention private enterprise at any time as being responsible for the welfare of the

people. He said that industry would be responsible; he said it belonged to the people.

I support the Bill on three counts. First of all I support it in the interests of the intended purchasers of the State trading concerns. A retrograde step like that would put the clock back thousands of years; and before it is taken, I think Parliament should have the opportunity to discuss the business, because these are the assets of the people.

It should be clearly illustrated and made known to prospective purchasers of State enterprises that we, on this side of the House, will do our utmost to restore those enterprises to Government possession as soon as we have the opportunity to do so. If purchasers care to enter into negotiations involving millions of pounds under those conditions, their blood be on their own heads; but the conditions under which they are purchasing these industries should be made clear to them.

The second count on which I support the Bill is in the interests of the taxpayers. After all, these State trading concerns are public assets; and we, as custodians of the public welfare, should know what is going on and should have the opportunity to see that their interests are protected. Further, State enterprises have sometimes played a lone part in pioneering and expanding industry in this country. They have been responsible for the welfare and economic security of whole towns in this State. Without them these towns would not have been established; nor would they have continued on the same level of prosperity which they have enjoyed up to the present.

Thirdly, I am supporting the Bill on behalf of the employees of the State trading concerns. In referring to the interests of the employees and to the effect of the transfer of these concerns to private enterprise, the Minister skated around the question and left it to our imagination. I do not need much imagination to realise what will happen to the employees when the State trading concerns are handed over to private enterprise.

The Minister said that employees will be protected in the contracts. Once the concerns were sold, any such contract would not be worth a "cracker," to use a colloquialism. There is in existence the arbitration law relating to the conditions of hiring and firing of workers. The court will not interfere with that law. Any contract containing a protective provision for the employees will not be effective for longer than one week under the Arbitration Act. For that reason the Minister's assurance that protection would be given to the worker under the contract is worthless.

Mr. W. Hegney: He would not give that assurance.

Mr. ROWBERRY: During the Minister's speech I asked him about long-service leave for the present and the future. The State

trading concerns have led the way in providing good conditions and amenities to the employees. The occupation in which I served for so many years led in the provision of such amenities as housing, baths, wash-houses, kitchens, houses with sub-floor ventilation, and housing accommodation fit for human habitation. The State Saw Mills led the way in that direction in the State. As a result of its example and efforts, the private employers followed suit.

Then there is the question of long-service leave which is at present enjoyed by Government employees after 10 years of service, and by private employees after 20 years of service. I wonder how many employees in private employment remain with their employers for 20 years! I imagine there would not be many.

Mr. Court: You have been wrongly informed.

Mr. ROWBERRY: That is one direction in which the private monopolists have brought pressure on the Government; they are desirous of breaking down those conditions. There are such provisions as holiday pay and workers' compensation, and they are more generous in the case of the State employees than those in private employ. I have already referred to workers receiving workers' compensation and drawing holiday pay before going away at Christmas and Easter. They have the holiday pay deducted from their compensation cheques. That was never intended, but that can be legally enforced. However, it is not enforced in the State trading concerns, because they do not believe that is the spirit of the law, although it may be the letter.

For those reasons I have no option but to support the Bill. Parliament should have an opportunity of discussing so momentous a question as this. As custodians of the rights of the people, we should have the opportunity to discuss this before a decision is made. I reject entirely the proposition of the Minister that any disclosure of valuations would prejudice the negotiations for sale of the State trading concerns. I cannot see that such disclosure would prejudice the Government to any great extent, now that this Bill is being discussed in Parliament. No more harm can be done.

I want to refer finally to the mandate which the Minister claims his Government possesses. Surely he does not imagine his Government has a mandate. It has the constitutional power of government.

Mr. Roberts: Chamberlain has said we have a mandate.

Mr. ROWBERRY: We cannot be worried about what Chamberlain said.

Mr. Nalder: You had better print that one.

Mr. Graham: We are not all wrapped up in sausage skins.

Mr. ROWBERRY: Mr. Chamberlain will probably hear what I have said.

Mr. Roberts: He will study it too.

Mr. ROWBERRY: Mr. Chamberlain is only one man and he is entitled to his opinion. I am entitled to my opinion, which is shared by a number of people including members on this side of the House. Were it not for the fact that the Labour Government has resolutely set its face against any amalgamation with any other political Party, the Liberal Party in this State would be in the political backwoods forever.

MR. FLETCHER (Fremantle) [8.23]: I support this Bill because it is a laudable measure in the public interest. Since public money has been involved and will be involved in the loss of State trading concerns, if this Bill is not supported by both sides of the House the result will be detrimental to the public.

I maintain that State trading concerns should not be disposed of except with the authority of Parliament. Members opposite should also adopt the same attitude as I adopt, since they pretend to represent the public interest. Their attitude in wishing to dispose of State trading concerns is a contradiction in this respect: Frequently we hear from individual members and learn from their bible—the newspapers—that they believe in freedom of competition. If they dispose of the competition which now exists per medium of the State trading concerns, then they will dispose of the competition which they pretend to believe in.

Mr. Court: Under the previous Government they were not allowed to compete.

Mr. FLETCHER: The Government is not consistent.

Mr. Court: You do not know what were the directives of the previous Government.

Mr. FLETCHER: I cannot see how it can pretend to hold the respect of its own members, if it merely pays lip service to a policy which it pretends to support. It has been maintained by both sides of the House that State enterprise and private enterprise should work together side by side. I support that contention; but I support it to this extent: I do not wish to see members opposite dispose of payable State trading enterprises and leave the unpayable concerns to the Government merely for the purpose of criticism.

Mr. Toms: You do not think they would do that!

Mr. FLETCHER: Exactly. It makes me suspicious; and a lot of other people with whom I have worked are also suspicious on this count. I want members opposite to understand that I am not indulging in class distinction. I believe members opposite when they say that they do not understand our attitude. I sincerely think

that they cannot, as they have never worked in industry, and have never rubbed shoulders with the men as we have. They have not worked at the bench.

Mr. O'Neil: Who was talking about class distinction?

Mr. FLETCHER: I am not. I say in all sincerity that I am not pledged to class distinction. We on this side represent—

Mr. O'Neil: What?

Mr. FLETCHER: The people of Western Australia.

Mr. O'Neil: So do we.

Mr. FLETCHER: Only a narrow section of them.

Mr. Graham: St. George's Terrace dictation.

Mr. FLETCHER: As I have said, there are remunerative and unremunerative State trading concerns; but I am of the opinion that private enterprise will be only too pleased to take over those which are payable and leave the unpayable businesses to the Government or the public purse. Those concerns which are left will then be criticised by the Government because they do not pay. For example, it was recently stated in this House in relation to the disposal of State hotels, that the Government should not run them. The Government is prepared to run them at a loss; but if they are making a profit, members opposite want to dispose of them to their friends, who would run them at a profit.

Take buses for example. Irrespective of which Government was in power, it was inevitable that the routes which were showing a profit would be controlled by private enterprise. When I keep repeating private enterprise, I am not getting on to the aspect of class distinction. I am merely trying to point out that the unremunerative routes were not acceptable to private enterprise and were left to the Government. These routes were doing a public service by serving the less populated areas. There were not many fares and private enterprise left them to the Government.

Now we have seen a strange somersault. The bus companies are run down and many of them are finding the business not as lucrative as previously. It is almost necessary to kick their representatives off the doorstep of the House as they keep lobbying to see if they can be the next to be taken over.

Mr. Court: Have you been lobbied about the remaining services to be taken over?

Mr. FLETCHER: No; I am comparatively unimportant in this place, other than that I represent the people of Western Australia. Representatives of the company will not come lobbying to me, but they will probably go to the Minister and other members on that side of the House.

Mr. Court: They have not been to me.

Mr. FLETCHER: A lot of criticism takes place in connection with the railways.

Mr. I. W. Manning: It would not be a bad idea to get a payable railway.

Mr. FLETCHER: Do the railways stop running because they are running at a loss? I think the Minister for Railways said the other evening that he had enough trouble on his plate. Just because a little spur line to a certain locality did not pay, would the Government advocate the stopping of the running of that spur line if it were in the public interest that it should remain?

Mr. Court: The previous Government did shut 842 miles of railway line.

Mr. Jamieson: Under certain conditions.

Mr. Court: Conditions that you did not honour.

Mr. Graham: Drivel!

Mr. FLETCHER: The point I was trying to make is this: that if the Government was—

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FLETCHER: The Government does not hand over unpayable railway lines to private enterprise; it leaves them for the taxpayer to support. We have to deal with this issue in relation to the retention of Government jobs; the training of apprentices; the retaining of tradesmen; and the training of tradesmen for the future. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition dealt with that aspect very adequately the other evening when he said there was a likelihood of a dearth of apprentices in this State in the future.

Just as we on this side of the House fight against sackings from Government departments from the point of view of public welfare, we fight against the disposal of any State Government enterprise for the same reason. It has been said here before, and I reiterate, that they are a training ground for apprentices and tradesmen of the future. These tradesmen are the backbone of industry in Western Australia. The disposal of any State trading concern where these men are trained will not be in the best interests of the community; and we, on this side of the House, oppose it.

It has been alleged that we show favouritism to Government shops and push business in that direction. I think that the other evening the Minister for Railways stated that the Labor Government had approved of the manufacture of 100 wagons by a private firm. We on this side of the House do not deny that. I do not deny it. I say that we were kinder to private enterprise than members on the Government side are to Government enterprise. We saw that that firm did not go into liquidation, and made sure that it had a certain amount of work to do in order to maintain its work force. I would

like to see a little reciprocal action on the part of members opposite in that respect. If we were tolerant to private enterprise to that extent, members on the Government side should be tolerant to a similar extent to State trading concerns.

Mr. W. Hegney: You are asking a lot from them now.

Mr. FLETCHER: The other night, when I said I knew this particular firm, the Premier interjected—I will not say rudely—and suggested that the members of the firm also knew me. I have worked as a tradesman for this firm—Tomlinson Ltd. is the name of the firm—and the W.A.G.R. I would like to say in reply to the Premier's interjection that the members of that firm know nothing which is to my detriment. They knew me as a good tradesman and a good worker, and I say that with all modesty.

However, as a result of the tactics adopted at Tomlinsons, I left. I was not sacked! I worked for them for four days, that is all. That was because of the ruthless attitude shown. With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I would like to illustrate why Government enterprise should be maintained; and how, in some cases, private enterprise is ruthless. I had a cut on the lathe. Tradesmen opposite will understand what I mean.

Mr. Jamieson: Where are they?

Mr. FLETCHER: As I smoked at that time, I lit my pipe while the lathe was working. The leading hand came up to me and said, "You cannot smoke here." I said, "I have smoked for years and intend to continue to do so." Up came the manager finally and I said to him, "Are there explosives here?" He said, "No." I said, "Why am I not allowed to smoke then?" He replied, "Mr. Tomlinson does not like it."

I saw a smile on the faces of members opposite a moment ago when I said I had only worked at Tomlinsons for four days. I presume they think that that is all I was worth. I was worth more than that. I told Mr. Tomlinson, Jnr.—I will not be rude—just what he could do with the lathe and the job, and that I wanted my money in the morning.

Mr. Perkins: I have no doubt he told you where you could go, too.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is a splendid interjection, and I thank the Minister for it. It is a splendid interjection because it reminds me that Tomlinson, Jnr. asked me whether I would reconsider my decision and stay on.

Mr. Court: I don't know that this has very much to do with the Bill.

Mr. Hawke: I think the Minister for Transport should put his interjection on the notice paper.

Mr. FLETCHER: I say this: If all that we on this side fight for is to be pulled down to those industrial levels; and if that sort of behaviour is indicative of private enterprise, I believe that Government shops and enterprises should be maintained as a stabilising influence to prevent—words fail me in this respect—the pulling down of industrial awards and decent working conditions. It is for this reason that it is in the public interests that before any State concerns are disposed of, authority should be given by Parliament. For that reason, I support the Bill.

MR. JAMIESON (Beeloo) [8.40]: In supporting this Bill, I would like to take the Minister to task for some of the statements made by him earlier in the evening with regard to Government enterprise frightening away the would-be private enterprise from the shores of Western Australia. I have never heard such a lot of ballyhoo! We have only to study our nextdoor neighbour, South Australia, to realise there is no truth in that. Since Sir Thomas Playford has been in charge there, he has found it expedient to conduct Government enterprises in a number of fields. For instance, all the mining activities—with the exception of B.H.P.—are conducted by State enterprises. I am referring to uranium, coal, and a dozen other lesser minerals. How much has that frightened private enterprise away from the shores of South Australia?

Mr. Court: He has not had directed business such as your Government had.

Mr. JAMIESON: Never mind! Business has been directive there because there has been no alternative. The same applies in the case of the State Saw Mills which were recently established by the Playford Government. In his opening speech, Sir Thomas Playford claimed that they were the biggest in the Southern Hemisphere. Because the South Australian Government was prepared to open those saw-mills, it now has the monopoly of the sawn timber of the State forests.

Mr. Court: It is an entirely different set of circumstances from those which exist in our State.

Mr. JAMIESON: Of course it is; because it suits the Minister to claim that.

Mr. Court: You have been—

The SPEAKER: Order: There is too much interjecting.

Mr. JAMIESON: All those circumstances are entirely different, because it does not suit the Minister to think otherwise.

Mr. Court: They are different.

Mr. JAMIESON: They are State instrumentalities and State trading concerns, and are run in conjunction with other

private enterprises which can easily live alongside them without any fear of failure.

Mr. Hawke: Hear, hear!

Mr. JAMIESON: If the Minister were to clearly consider the geographical position of Australia, he would realise why our industries are not akin to those of our Eastern States neighbours; and that is the whole crux of the matter, and not this shilly-shallying about State instrumentalities.

Mr. Court: Are you giving up the ghost of Western Australia?

Mr. JAMIESON: No, I am not; but I believe that, over the years, Governments irrespective of colour—but the Liberal Governments in particular, because possibly they have more influence with the Chamber of Manufactures and the commercial interests of this State—have dealt with the problem in the wrong way. They have tried to cater for markets that do not exist, or which are out of their reach. The markets of the Eastern States will never be available to this State.

Mr. Court: Why?

Mr. JAMIESON: Because of Western Australia's geographical position. Other markets should be exploited. If the Government used everything at its disposal to obtain these markets, Western Australia would receive a fair and proper industrial equity. But the way things are going now, it will get nothing.

When asked to name one of the enterprises that had lost money, the Minister immediately referred to the Wundowie charcoal iron industry. Everybody knows the circumstances associated with that venture. It was a pilot plant established to ascertain whether iron could be manufactured under the conditions that prevail in this State. To that extent, it proved satisfactory. He might say that, on the other hand, Wapet has never made a profit either. It has spent millions of pounds; but if it ever strikes oil, it will be to the good of the State.

And the same proposition applies to the charcoal iron industry, in establishing what could be done in this State, so that the State might finance a bigger and better industry; or other firms might come in and, with the knowledge gained from this pilot plant, be of untold value to the State in the future. Simply to say that private enterprise should have prior rights in everything is ridiculous.

Wherever possible the people's assets, such as the State Saw Mills and other trading concerns, must be preserved just as jealously as class A reserves or anything else belonging to the people. These Government instrumentalities serve a purpose, by limiting exploitation of the public through excess prices being charged for various commodities.

The Minister made much of some Eastern States cement concern under the control of the Government of, I think, New South Wales; but it is noted, from the figures available, that cement and cement products are dearer here than in any other State in Australia. That is not because the raw materials are not available; but because there is nothing to limit the price range that can be imposed on the public by cement manufacturing firms in this State.

There is nothing wrong with instrumentalities such as the State abattoir at Midland Junction, or that at Fremantle. Those organisations are properly controlled; and, although they do not make excessive profits, they do make a profit and they serve the public well within their own sphere. Apparently the present Government is prepared to give these State assets away to its friends at any price. Most of the State trading concerns are in good running order, yet the Government apparently wants to quit them so that they may become part of various combines.

We know that any of the Government trading concerns that are of assistance to private industry will not be interfered with. The Government would not like to sell any State enterprise, if disposing of it would upset the general picture as far as the Chamber of Manufactures is concerned. In this regard I have in mind, for instance, our electricity supply. The Government would not dispose of that asset; because it knows that, if it did, a position might develop such as that which obtained when private enterprise had charge of the electricity supply in South Australia.

We believe that before any Government instrumentality is disposed of, Parliament should voice its opinion on the proposition. The Bill does not say that Parliament would not give its consent to such a sale; and while the present Government is in power it should be easy for it to gain the consent of both Houses of Parliament to the proposition. It will certainly be easier for the Government to do that than it would have been for the previous Government; because no Labour administration in this State has had charge of both Houses of the Parliament, and it would be necessary for us to receive the consent of both Houses—

Mr. May: The Government might meet some trouble in another place.

Mr. JAMIESON: Yes; it might have difficulty in convincing some members there. Over the years some Government enterprises have been dismal failures; some partly successful; and others quite successful. I believe that, in the main, their establishment has been justified. I do not think it has been proved that the taxpayers of the State have lost anything

in State enterprises in the overall picture; because these instrumentalities have supplied a great deal of employment, and the wages of the employees have been spent to the benefit of other industries.

It seems strange that such a well-established enterprise as the Midland Railway Company still finds difficulty in financing its operations; and comes running to the Government, at the slightest pretext, for assistance by way of guarantees and so on. That company does not turn to private enterprise or to the banks for help, but to the Government of the State; because it knows that the Government appreciates that, whether or not the company is a paying concern, its operations are necessary to the primary producers in that part of the State. Over the years successive Governments have had no hesitation in giving guarantees to the Midland Railway Company for huge sums of money, in order that it might continue its operations. From its inception in 1886, that private enterprise has been sponging on the taxpayers of this State.

The early history of that company indicates that, if it had not been for Government support and a Government guarantee of £50,000 to the National Bank, the company would have gone broke. It could not even pay the £8,000 for the banqueting which followed the signing of the original contract, and the bills for that entertainment remained outstanding for a considerable time.

So bankrupt was the Midland Railway Company at various stages of its history that it could not have carried on had it not been assisted by the taxpayers pouring money into it over the years. It would be interesting if the Minister, with his accounting ability, could discover for us just how much Government money has gone into the Midland Railway Company. If he made such an investigation he would probably be alarmed, because in that regard I believe the Midland Railway Company would leave Chamberlains well behind. Many other private firms have also applied to the Government for assistance from time to time.

Not long ago one firm, which has since received a lucrative contract from the Government of the day for the building of railway wagons, made quite a squeal and a song and dance because it was heavily indebted. The then Labour Government guaranteed this firm, Tomlinsons, to enable it to secure certain special machinery, even though it was doubtful that, from an engineering point of view, it was an economic proposition. It so happened that Tomlinsons were able to obtain certain contracts, and they were thus able to overcome some of their financial problems and meet their guarantees. But had it not been for the ready assistance given to it by a so-called socialistic Government,

which according to the Minister would cut the throat of every private instrumentality, that firm would have gone out of existence some time ago.

There are many small engineering firms on a similar basis. The Minister knows only too well the position of Wasp, and a number of other small engineering concerns at Innaloo. They were living on the crumbs being fed to them by what really could be called a State instrumentality, although it is being run as near as possible along private enterprise lines. I refer to Chamberlain Industries. That is an industry which will be a problem to State Governments of every political colour for some time to come. Certain Governments, for reasons best known to themselves, poured money into that firm without being effectively covered by way of guarantee, or any full investment from private enterprise.

Those Governments were prepared to trust the firm, and they went along with it. It looks as though it will repay some of the trust reposed in it. Admittedly the firm has reached a stage where, if it were required to meet all its debts at the moment, it would be in bad shape; but it is in no worse position than the Midland Railway Company. So long as the concern is doing some good for the State; and so long as it returns to the people of the State some value for the money expended on it; and so long as it provides employment for the people of the State, I feel we are quite justified in maintaining a full interest in it—particularly a firm of the magnitude of Chamberlain Industries or, for that matter, any State instrumentality.

We have before us the problem of the State hotels. They are a State instrumentality which I believe should be covered by a prohibition Bill such as this. Possibly I cannot growl very much about that aspect because, by the measure it has introduced, the Government will be doing exactly what this Bill wants the Government of the day to do in respect of all Government instrumentalities—that is for their sale to receive the approval of Parliament. No doubt, because it has the numbers, the Government will be able to prevail upon Parliament to meet its requirements.

The Minister for Industrial Development put over some story that negotiations for the sale of State concerns might be adversely affected if this legislation were passed. So far as I am concerned that would be all to the good. I do not think the people of this State should be able to have their assets sold without a full investigation being made into the position. As much use as possible should be made of them for the benefit of the people of this State. If this legislation is passed, we will have some safeguard; and it will

prevent the Minister, who is such a champion of private enterprise, from running completely haywire and doing what he likes with assets which belong to the people of Western Australia.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [9.0]: Those members of the public now listening to the debate who heard the Minister for Industrial Development certainly suffered an ordeal; in addition they could quite easily have come to the conclusion that this is a Bill to prevent the disposal of State enterprises.

Mr. Court: That is your intention.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Bill suggests nothing of the sort. The purpose of the measure, as members who have studied it will know—and goodness knows the machinery portion of the Bill comprises only 4½ lines!—is to enable the elected Parliament of Western Australia to express its viewpoint rather than that a decision should be made by an irresponsible Government.

There is nothing new or novel in a Government owning and operating certain enterprises. New ones are being established by Governments throughout the Commonwealth practically every year. When we last had a Liberal-Country Party Government in Western Australia I know, so far as the portfolios I took over, that it built at Armadale, the largest brickworks in the State where pressed bricks are made; it erected a tremendous new sawmill at Shannan River; it embarked upon a tragedy of a sawmill at Kent River; and, notwithstanding the opposition of the then Conservator of Forests, it erected a second mill at Deanmill for the State Saw Mills.

As the member for Beeloo has already pointed out, in South Australia there are classical examples of a Government embarking on State enterprises; a new State sawmill was opened by no less a person than the Premier of South Australia only a few weeks ago. These enterprises which are in existence in Western Australia have been here for 30, 40 and 50 years. Liberal Governments have come and Liberal Governments have gone, and those enterprises have been allowed to remain—and for very good reasons. It has taken until the year 1959, when we get a conglomeration of babes in the wood, to embark upon this irrational and irresponsible course and contemplate taking action that is completely at variance with the action taken by every other State in the Commonwealth, and by Governments of their own political colour.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You are just being traditional.

Mr. GRAHAM: When the member for Murray was Premier of Western Australia, he did not for one moment consider sacrificing the assets of the State; and not because of any political philosophy, but

because of the welfare of Western Australia, he expanded State enterprises, as I have already indicated.

Mr. Hawke: Hear! Hear! He was a Statesman.

Mr. Court: Why didn't you attempt to alter this Act during your term of office? That is the thing that mystifies me.

Mr. GRAHAM: I will be perfectly honest—and I can only speak for myself because the matter was not considered by Cabinet—when I say that it was not thought for one moment by anybody, even an ex-Premier, the member for Murray, that there would be a Government so bereft of commonsense and regard for the State of Western Australia that it would contemplate the wholesale disposal of the State's activities.

Mr. Court: He supports our policy.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am at a loss to understand what has come over members of the Liberal Party of recent times. I have interjected on many occasions that the trouble was that they all appeared to be encased in a sausage skin; that a certain gentleman in charge of a meat business in Beaufort Street, Perth—and it happens to be in my electorate—and those about him, have completely mesmerized those who are Liberals in 1959.

As members well know, during the course of the session, no matter how harmless the proposition before Parliament may be—and if it is only a question of altering so much as a word in a Bill or a motion that is before the House—not one single person of the rank and file on the opposite side of the Chamber has dared to cast a vote against the Government. That is iron discipline if ever there was any! It is obvious that there are influences outside Parliament that bring tremendous pressure to bear on the individuals who sit opposite; and it appears that it also applies to the Ministers, and with far greater force and effect.

I want it to be recorded in *Hansard* that, so far as I am concerned—and I say this as sincerely as I have said anything in this House—it was a bad day for the State of Western Australia when the present member for Nedlands was elected to the Parliament of this State.

Mr. Court: That is only your opinion.

Mr. GRAHAM: I believe that he has dedicated himself—irrespective of cost and consideration—to certain people and certain interests. With him it is a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence.

Mr. Court: Nonsense!

Mr. GRAHAM: I am not suggesting that it is pounds, shillings, and pence to himself. He is not bowing to the altar of finance; he is grovelling before it.

Mr. Court: What drivell!

Mr. GRAHAM: He is not the least bit concerned whether hundreds or thousands of workers are peremptorily sacked by his

Government. He is not concerned about the activities of the State enterprises. No; he is concerned about giving allegiance to the elements which he was elected to this Parliament to serve; and he is serving them well and faithfully. Unfortunately, there are so many of these interests that the Minister for the time being, those forces behind him, and other members of the Government, are able to get away with it. We all know that this is a period of monopoly; of absorptions; of mergers and power groups. Because of that, this Government is able to get away with murder almost, and nothing whatsoever about it appears in the Press. There is not even a bare mention of it, and then it is conveniently forgotten. Why? Because there is a monopoly of the morning and evening newspapers and a couple of weekly journals.

There is a monopoly of several broadcasting stations, and the only commercial television station. What a delightful story could be told about that! How members of the commission investigating the granting of licenses to television stations in the Commonwealth of Australia decided that the only commercial license in this State should go to a certain concern.

The SPEAKER: I think the honourable member will have to confine himself to the Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is precisely what I am doing, Mr. Speaker. Because of certain pressure, the television license was granted to this monopoly. If for no other reason, surely it is essential—as has been found to be the case in every other State of the Commonwealth and under every Liberal Government in the history of Western Australia until now—to retain our State instrumentalities, instead of having them disposed of by a bunch of extremists who have no sense of responsibility to Western Australia; but who, so long as they are serving their masters and receiving some praise through the monopoly Press, apparently think they are performing a job worth while.

Mr. Court: You sound like an embittered man.

Mr. GRAHAM: My only interest in this matter is the State of Western Australia and its people.

Mr. Nalder: Hear, hear! That is what we like to hear!

Mr. GRAHAM: To illustrate the point: This Government can rob the single unemployed workers of 17s. 6d. a week with apparently no protest being made, with no concern, or any other feeling.

Mr. Court: Is that in the Bill?

Mr. GRAHAM: Of course it is not! The Bill seeks to provide that Parliament shall be consulted before the State's assets

can be taken away from the people; and I am endeavouring to give some reason as to why there is necessity for the State to remain in business so far as concerns—and of a far greater diversity than is the case at present—should be set up and continued in the interests of the people and not, necessarily, in accordance with any political philosophy.

Members know that it required a member of Parliament—the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—to introduce a Bill to prevent these mergers and this monopoly tendency from occurring in the milk industry in Western Australia so that we would not finish up in the same position that we have in regard to our Press; namely, with a complete monopoly in one concern only to handle milk, which is such an essential food and commodity.

What is the position in regard to bread? Surely it can be brought into this question also. As we know, there are mergers and absorptions going on in the baking industry, and presently we could be faced with the position that there will be one or two bakeries only in the whole of the metropolitan area. Of course, it does not matter if the staff of life is at stake or that the whole of the community can be held to ransom. That would not mean a thing to the present Government as long as someone is making a profit.

Mr. Court: Are you thinking of starting up a State bakery?

Mr. GRAHAM: No. We should make our considerations very carefully before agreeing to disband any of the State instrumentalities; and, because of pressure from outside, do something with existing statutes relating to State trading concerns. The Minister for Industrial Development sought to make us believe that Western Australia was in the doldrums, or something akin to it, because of the activity of the previous Government in carrying out its own work through its own instrumentalities. What a crime! What business firm does not do that? As I indicated previously, if Bunnings Ltd. wanted to build some sheds, would it call tenders from other firms for the supply of timber, or would it use its own timber? The Hawke Government that was in office for six years considered that that should be done in regard to its own activities. That is only sound and good business sense.

In regard to the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Control Act I make the charge that our monopoly newspaper and the Liberal Party of Western Australia, in order to achieve some political results, were prepared to sell out the State of Western Australia. I had conversations with Sir Arthur Warner—he would be in touch with the workers and the unemployed!—and he told me about this terrible piece of legislation and what

it was doing to the State of Western Australia. I asked him where he got his information and, in deference to a few confidences, I will not mention any names. However, members can draw their own conclusions.

Sir Arthur Warner had not seen a copy of the legislation, and he had listened to the lies and the poison emanating from certain circles—whether it was political propaganda through the medium of the Press, or anything else—and he knew nothing about the true position whatsoever. He did not know the purpose of this legislation, which was to supplant the restrictions that were retained for six years by a Liberal Party under the guise of price control.

Under that system we had clerks running around departmental stores telling the manager of a store how to run his own business, and whether he should sell a pair of socks for 6s. 9d. or 6s. 11d. a pair. In due course, however, the people considered that the Hawke Government should be entrusted to bring in reasonable legislation, so that if an odd firm kicked over the traces it could be dealt with and some satisfaction could be given to the public. If any individual or firm conducted a business in a decent and reasonable way there was nothing to fear from the restrictive trade practices legislation.

With this sort of thing, where there is a monopoly; and where the Government, or her Majesty's Opposition—in any event the representatives of the people—are not given the opportunity to speak, all the lies imaginable can be put over the people. We have heard it said here, Mr. Speaker—as you have on so many occasions—that because of the farsightedness and vigorous policy of the Bolte Liberal Government in Victoria, that State has been going ahead by leaps and bounds, by comparison with the State of New South Wales, which has been stagnating.

I have particulars here which I need not quote; but members will be able to consult the Commonwealth Statistician's figures in connection with it. If they do, they will find there has been a greater increase in the percentage in the establishment of industries, expansion, and so on in the socialist State of New South Wales, where there has been a Labour Government for a quarter of a century or more; but because of the bull and boloney we get through the monopoly Press, we are led to believe—and no doubt many on this side of the House have accepted the proposition—that miracles are being performed in Victoria and, by comparison, New South Wales is being left behind. So it is desirable, surely, that the State should have some instrumentalities, so that the Government of the day can exercise some influence upon the activities of avaricious traders.

Mr. Wild: Are there many State enterprises in New South Wales?

Mr. GRAHAM: I am unable to state whether there are many, or whether there are few; but the Minister for Works is obviously feeling a little uncomfortable and, therefore, is seeking to get me off the track.

Mr. Court: We have the highest proportion in Australia.

Mr. GRAHAM: Of what?

Mr. Court: Of State trading concerns.

Mr. GRAHAM: What State trading concerns were started by the State Labour Government over the last six years?

Mr. Court: It is one of the things holding us back.

Mr. GRAHAM: It is only in the last year or two that that has apparently been discovered, because all these State enterprises were there previously; and, as already indicated, they were tremendously expanded by the previous Liberal-Country Party Government.

Mr. Hawke: By the Minister for Works in particular.

Mr. GRAHAM: Why did not the Government of the day find out that these State enterprises were holding back private enterprise? Has the Minister for Industrial Development anybody who is contemplating coming to Western Australia to invest £50,000,000 to take over our railways; or a few million pounds to take over our State Shipping Service?

Mr. Court: I wish I had.

Mr. GRAHAM: Of course he has not got anybody who will be prepared to do that! And, like so much of the rest of his speech, that was all a lot of poppycock. If he can prove to me that one industrialist has refrained from coming here because of State enterprise and the unfair treatment that his potential concern might receive as a consequence, I will be prepared to reason with him. These things, however, are what we learn in the parliamentary kindergarten—the sort of tripe that is no doubt spoken to the young people we have seen here in the last few weeks in order to enthuse them with this anti-social policy.

So long as those opposite can look after their influential friends, and be protected by the Press, the welfare of the people can go hang; it counts for nothing with them. I have never seen a Government so unconcerned when it has deliberately pushed people out on to the labour market; it shows no concern whatever. The people in the holy of holies think it is doing this job with some divine guidance from above, and that the State as a result will be saved from the tremendous octopus of socialism. Members of the Government seem to feel they are justified in taking the action they are.

They are making certain business people happy, but nobody else. But, of course, there would be reasons.

I was pleased to hear one of the members on this side of the House discuss, the other day, the proposition that there should be a move—and he is considering this—in the House for the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate the source of funds paid to political Parties over the past 10 years—or any other period of the choosing of the members of the Government, which has the numbers, and which can alter the period.

The SPEAKER: I do not think this relates to the Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM: I think it does, for this reason: that I am as certain as I stand here that what the Government contemplates, and what this Bill seeks to have exposed from time to time arises because this Government owes something to certain people and to certain interests.

Mr. Roberts: What rot!

Mr. GRAHAM: This is the pay-off. If that be not the case, when this motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission is submitted I will expect unanimous support for it from members on the other side of the House, so that we can trace every rat back to its hole, and find out if £500 came from this source, and £1,000 from the other.

Mr. I. W. Manning: £5,000.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Australian Labour Party has no qualms in connection with the matter; it is prepared to have its books and its accounts analysed and made available to the public. I wonder if the Liberal Party can say that. What I am anxious to see is all its donations from this source, and from that source; and then some of the plums—which are the State enterprises at the moment—to be made available to those particular interests at bargain prices.

Mr. I. W. Manning: Who has been picking your plums?

Mr. Hawke: Here is the Wizard of Oz.

Mr. GRAHAM: I wonder what has gone wrong with the Whip. That has been the best speech he has made in years. At least the Leader of the Opposition was able to understand what he said; and we cannot say that every time the member for Harvey speaks. I suggest that this is all part and parcel of a grand plan. I appreciate that some members opposite are—to use an earlier term—babes in the wood. They are quite naive; but they are following the instructions and orders given from outside, given from above; and they are afraid to deviate even one iota—in exactly the same way as the Minister for Transport would not allow an “i” to be undotted or a word to be changed, however

illogical such an attitude might be. Not one private member has been game, because of what he fears from outside, to vote against the Government or with the Opposition in respect of anything, no matter how trivial.

Mr. Mann: Rubbish!

Mr. GRAHAM: It is not rubbish; it is recorded in *Hansard*. I guarantee that if anybody cares to check through the records of Parliament he will find that there has never been a period in the history of Western Australia when such complete subjection has been shown by a political Party as is being shown now.

Mr. Roberts: Talk sense!

Sir Ross McLarty: What nonsense!

Mr. GRAHAM: The member for Bunbury is using a word he has heard before; a word he will not understand. The Minister for Industrial Development talks to us about State trading concerns; and says that if there are losses they are to be borne by the State. That is true to a point. But the concerns that are showing the greatest losses—and I instance the railways and the State Shipping Service—are not likely to find a ready buyer to take them over; and, accordingly, the losses will continue to be borne by the State. In other cases, where the hotels are making profits, some of the political friends of the Liberal Party will be able—again at bargain prices—to help themselves, and all will be well; another debt will have been discharged.

Is private enterprise able to look after itself? I can see a few members in this Chamber who are enjoying a supply of water—through both the ordinary reticulation scheme and irrigation—in the country districts, at rates subsidised by the people. I well remember certain bus companies operating in the metropolitan area and being subsidised heavily by the State, in order that they could continue in existence.

I am aware of a decision made almost simultaneously, when £50,000 was taken out of the pockets of the single unemployed men and £60,000 was put into the pockets of primary producers in certain districts, as a result of the granting of road subsidies. Surely that is State money which is assisting to prop up private enterprise! In the book of account, surely that is regarded as a financial loss!

There is no need to talk to me about the value of their production as there is no need to talk to me about the value of a railway system or a transport system such as the State Shipping Service. We are now talking of strict accounting—something which the Minister for Industrial Development should know about. I am also aware that some old Western Australian families—I know them as old friends, and some of them have returned from a trip around the world, or their teenage daughters have returned from a trip to Singapore—held

out both hands when there was an outbreak of codlin moth in Bridgetown wanting State assistance to help them in their distress. This is a case of private enterprise being assisted through State revenue.

I need not go on like this, because there are hundreds and hundreds of such incidents where private enterprise has been helped; where private enterprise has approached Governments of all political colours and has been assisted. Apparently there is no loss as a result of such assistance being given! Are these grants and concessions made to those people to be of no account? If some concern belonging to the people of the State—not to those in St. George's Terrace or at a certain address in Hay Street not far removed from here—makes a loss, then that is a terrible thing and it must be disposed of.

It has been said that the State should not interfere with the provision of housing. Yet when private enterprise fell down on the job, a housing scheme was devised by a Labour Government; and it has been thankfully received by Liberal Governments throughout the length and breadth of the Commonwealth. In the erection of houses for letting, private enterprise fell down, and the Government came in. Private enterprise was interested in building churches, swimming pools, shops, and so on rather than houses, so the day-labour organisation of the Public Works Department was built up in order to provide those houses. Those were the difficult days, when private enterprise by and large failed the people of Western Australia in respect of that matter.

Now that the position has eased in respect of housing; now that building work is a little more difficult to obtain, those day-labour employees of the Public Works Department—many of whom have been there for almost a lifetime—are being sacked and thrown on the economic scrap-heap. Now we must lay prostrate before the altar of private enterprise, and the houses are to be built so that the private builders can put a percentage of the cost in their pockets. It goes beyond that. In the construction of the Empire Games Village, even the architects are to get their corner.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member must relate his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM: I have been pointing out during my address the unholy alliance between this Government and outside interests, and the fact that the interests of Western Australia are to be sacrificed. The Government does not care if the people of this State are called upon to pay another £80 to £150 per house on account of architect's fees, in the building of the Empire Games Village in the course of the next two years, as long as the professional men—the architects—are being catered for. That appears to be the important thing!

Mr. I. W. Manning: I take it you would like to see the architects unemployed.

Mr. GRAHAM: That outlook of the member for Harvey appears to be the general outlook of members on the opposite side. They are concerned with the professional men. It does not matter what the workers pay for their homes, as long as the architects are getting their corner. Surely it would be more in keeping with one's responsibility in a democracy, if one was concerned with the people for whom the State provides homes, instead of being concerned with certain private interests. If we can do without the latter and their cost, so much the better. If we require their services and are unable to get on without them, then we will employ them; but not otherwise.

Mr. I. W. Manning: You want to put them on the dole?

Mr. GRAHAM: I cannot see anything wrong with that. That typifies the outlook of the supporters of the Government, because they must in every respect do something to help their political friends.

I now come to the point on which I opened. This Bill does not seek to add anything of itself, other than to give both Houses of Parliament an opportunity of weighing the pros and cons of a governmental decision—a decision to dispose of certain concerns which belong to the people of Western Australia. They are not the prerogative of, nor is the ownership of them vested in, the Liberal Party. These things belong to the people of this State; therefore the Parliament of Western Australia should be the final authority to say yes or no.

Of what use is it for us to complain when we are confronted with a *fait accompli*, irrespective of what the Auditor-General may say; irrespective of what may be revealed on the files when there is a change of Government, and there is a Government which is able to see what went on and under what circumstances? What is wrong with the proposition that Parliament be given the opportunity of vetting a governmental decision? The reason was because of the urgency of the situation. Has anyone ever heard such rot?

Here was a company prepared to spend £40,000,000 in starting a concern in Western Australia. Some previous agreement required the ratification of the Parliament of Western Australia. We were duly summoned and dealt with that matter.

Mr. Court: That was to establish a concern.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is precisely what I said.

Mr. Court: That is an entirely different proposition to selling a going concern.

Mr. GRAHAM: If the Gwalia State Hotel were for sale; and if I desired to purchase it, and arrived at a satisfactory arrangement with the Minister for Industrial Development, the Chief Secretary, or the Treasurer—whoever was responsible; and if I were really keen about the proposition, would I be deterred if I had to wait for three or six months for the sale to be ratified by Parliament?

This is the point: A Liberal Government in office, having a majority in this House as a result of the support from the two Independents, and with a majority in the Legislative Council, can bulldoze its way through whatever it likes, however preposterous the proposition may be. There is no impediment whatsoever.

If a Labour Government were in office and it received an attractive offer for the hotel and desired to sell, being the Government no doubt it would have a majority in this House. Accordingly it would encounter no difficulty. If the Tories of this Parliament at the other end of this building were running true to form, surely they would not fall over themselves to oppose that piece of legislation or enabling Bill, even if the hotel was to be sold at double the true value.

Mr. Court: On your say-so, your Government would never submit such a proposition.

Mr. GRAHAM: I can say that the previous Government offered the State hotel to the local community at Wongan Hills. It was in negotiation, as the Minister for Transport would know, with regard to the disposal of the hotel at Bruce Rock.

Mr. Court: You did not bring the matter to Parliament.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is so, because these places are still being retained by the public.

Mr. Court: By a section of the public.

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes; but by the public for public purposes, and not for private purposes.

Mr. Hawke: By the local community.

Mr. GRAHAM: In a great majority of cases the local people would spend their money in these hotels. Instead of its going into the pockets of the publican who is in charge for several years and then moves on, the money will remain in the community, township, and district.

Mr. Court: I think such a transaction would be subject to this Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM: If that is the only objection—

Mr. Court: Not the only one.

Mr. GRAHAM: —I would think that the Leader of the Opposition would be prepared to treat with the Government and agree to the insertion of a few words in order to cope with that situation.

Mr. Court: That is not my only objection. Let me make that quite clear, if I have not already done so.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister for Industrial Development has not done so. He has confirmed my earlier view that so long as he is doing something to stuff money into certain interests, then he feels he is performing a worth-while task.

Mr. Court: Nonsense! I am trying to do something for the State.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not know of anything that this Government has done for the ordinary people of the State. I know that you, Mr. Speaker, would not allow me to recite a list of 20 or 30 of this Government's activities. Now we see that the pensioners are going to have their travel concessions reduced.

Mr. Court: They have been extended. You would not face up to the M.T.T.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member cannot discuss the M.T.T.

Mr. GRAHAM: It has often been said that liars should have good memories. The only comment I make is that I will remember the Premier complaining a few weeks ago about some belated activities taken by the previous Government; and about a decision by the then Premier in respect of concessions pertaining to the M.T.T.

Mr. Brand: A decision that was not made.

Mr. GRAHAM: Now we are being chatted by some of them as though no decision was made.

Mr. Brand: A decision was not made.

Mr. Jamieson: Do not point! It is rude.

Mr. Brand: Enough pointing has been done already.

The SPEAKER: We had better get away from the subject of concessions to pensioners as that has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM: I think it all fits into a pattern: that this Government is abjectly a slave to certain interests. There will be an opportunity on the Estimates, but I wish there were an opportunity now, to demonstrate—we know perfectly well a recital or emphasis of them would not reach the columns of the Press—for the edification of private members that, if they looked

at a list of the Government's activities in debit and credit form, they would find all the debits against the humble members of the community and all the credits in favour of selected people and selected interests. The fact of the situation is, of course, camouflage; and up to date the public, I venture to suggest, is not aware of it.

The **SPEAKER**: The honourable member has five minutes.

Mr. **GRAHAM**: I will not require five minutes, but I would hazard a guess that of the time already expired, five minutes has been taken up by members of the Government and its supporters with interjections, and another 10 minutes in my replying to those interjections.

The Government has apparently decided to oppose this Bill. If one member on the Government side is opposed to it, from our experience that means every single member is opposed to it. In other words, this Government has no faith in Parliament; it apparently wants to be able to proceed as stealthily and as surreptitiously as it likes until the position reaches a stage, irrespective of what is revealed, when it is too late for anybody to do anything about it. I have some experience of this sort of thing being done.

For instance, in connection with the agreements pertaining to Kwinana, there were commitments in respect of housing propositions. The Government never consulted the high officials of the State Housing Commission. Months after we became the Government, it was not even then known, in respect of the Cockburn Cement Works, after the legislation had passed through the Parliament of Western Australia nine months earlier, that there was an obligation upon the State Housing Commission to erect a certain number of houses for the employees, and so on.

If that was the experience with a far more sober Government than—the McLarty-Watts Government—as against the irresponsible Government in 1959, what sort of practices is this Government likely to get up to if it is given a blank cheque, as is the position at the present moment, and which this Bill seeks to overcome?

I repeat: This Government has shown its hand. It does not want these things brought to Parliament; it does not want these transactions to be aired in public. It is afraid the public might learn what is being done in respect of their possessions. But only after the show is over; after much camouflage and hiding of files and the rest of it—presumably when there is a change of Government—will the public come to realise that perhaps millions of pounds of assets which belong to the public have been disposed of at ridiculously low prices in order to oblige some of the Government's political friends of the Liberal Party. Perhaps it is to return in

part some of the tribute and subscriptions made by some of these interests and organisations; no doubt made without a tag attached, but with that understanding nevertheless.

I would be exceedingly interested if we could get just a momentary inspection of the funds that have gone into Liberal Party accounts for electioneering, and the sources of them. Any member who does not support this Bill brands himself as being anything but a democrat.

On motion by Mr. Tonkin, debate adjourned.

CATTLE TRESPASS, FENCING, AND IMPOUNDING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [9.43] in moving the second reading said: This Bill has been brought to this Chamber from another place, and is not unlike one which was submitted to this House last session. Many members of this Chamber will remember the debate which took place on that Bill. The final action came during the dying hours of the session and occurred a little after 1 o'clock in the morning, only a few hours before the House rose, when the measure suffered the fate of slaughtered innocents and went overboard.

The purpose of the Bill is to give some protection to owners of enclosed country land from trespassers who wilfully enter upon such property in order to pick wildflowers, gather firewood, and sometimes pick mushrooms. In some cases they go shooting; and in others, to steal fruit.

Very often the act of picking wildflowers or mushrooms, or of shooting, is very minor compared with the damage that is done to the property in the process. These people seem to have no regard for ownership at all. The contention of the old days that a man's home was his castle seems to have gone by the board. At present, many of our owners in the country districts—and particularly those within 80 to 100 miles of Perth—are powerless to stem the tide of the hordes of trespassers.

People who are guilty of this offence are often from the best circles and societies. It seems to me that they lose all sense of propriety when the mushroom season is with us. They go through fences and trespass all over a farmer's property to gather mushrooms which, in themselves, are worth only a few shillings. However, the damage that is done to farmers' properties is enormous.

It was mentioned to me only a few months ago that one particular farmer tried to stop trespassers on his property.

The driver of a car had been lifting the wire netting on the fences so that his companion could push her perambulator under the fence in order that she might gather mushrooms. They had no regard whatever for the damage they did to the fence. They were apparently unaware that they had enabled sheep to escape to the opposite side of the road and eat the poison growing there. When the farmer remonstrated with them, they were quite abusive. When he mentioned the danger to the stock—the ewes were expected to lamb at any time—they asked him why he did not shift his animals to another paddock. That is the attitude of many of these people who in normal, everyday life are very decent types. As I say, they seem to lose all sense of decency when out in the country.

Of course, it could be argued that the landowner could get some redress by taking those people to court and charging them with stealing. But what is the intrinsic value of a few wildflowers or mushrooms? Nothing; or at least very little. It would be very petty to take a person to court and charge him with stealing flowers, mushrooms, or firewood; particularly when the farmer would probably have tons of firewood, thousands of mushrooms, and acres and acres of wildflowers. He would be quite happy to dispose of them if only the people behaved in a decent manner.

Apart from the pettiness of taking someone to court for stealing, many magistrates in the past have treated these charges very lightly indeed. I know of people who have suffered considerable loss by individuals breaking in and stealing fruit. The offenders have been taken to court and the magistrate has said, "Who of us has not, some time in life, pinched a bit of fruit? It is a very petty crime." With that remark, he has dismissed the charge. It is quite possible that the same magistrate would the next day heavily fine or even gaol someone for stealing a bottle of milk or a few sweets from a shop. That is regarded as a serious offence. It seems to me that many of the people who are trying to gain a living from the land are treated very lightly, and the fact that they are the owners of the land is of no importance at all.

This Bill, which seeks to give the owner of land some little authority to charge the offenders with trespassing, is quite a small one with only two clauses. It seeks to amend the Cattle Trespass, Fencing, and Impounding Act, 1882-1957—an imposing title. The second clause, which seeks to add a further section, provides that where the owner of land can prove that a person intentionally and without lawful reason or excuse enters on the land, the justice shall, whether or not the entry has caused any damage, order the defendant to pay to the complainant on

account of the entry, a sum of not less than £2 or more than £10. The relevant section in the Act is rather weak in this respect, and this amendment seeks to put some teeth into the Act and give the complainant the right to claim some redress for the trespassing.

It also seeks to give authority to an employee, or a member, of the family of that person, to obtain the name and address of a trespasser. A person who refuses to give his name and address, or who gives a false name and address, will be guilty of an offence and will be liable to a penalty of £5.

Mr. Graham: How much did you say the penalty was?

Mr. OWEN: Five pounds.

Mr. Graham: Do you remember that the other night, for the same offence, the penalty was £100?

Mr. OWEN: The penalty mentioned in this amendment is fairly consistent with the Act as it is at present. The other amendment in the Bill is to limit the authority given in this measure to the South-West Division of the State as defined in section 28 of the Land Act, 1933. There was considerable controversy over the Bill introduced last year, when some goldfields members felt that it would do an injustice to people in their part of the State who had, over many years, made a habit of going on to certain pastoral leases and indulging in shooting. So that there will be no interference with those people, it is asked that the measure should apply only to the South-West Land Division.

This Bill, which was introduced in another place, passed the second reading and Committee stages almost without debate; and I hope this House will give it favourable consideration, so that farmers and others whose properties are subject to invasion by people who have no intention of causing harm, but may do so in innocence or in ignorance of the damage they are doing, may be protected.

The majority of farmers will have no objection to persons entering their properties, having secured permission in order that they might be directed to areas where they would do no harm. The farmer does not want to prevent these people from having some entertainment, but wishes to retain control over his property, in order to preserve his fences and stock. I commend the Bill to the Chamber and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Moir, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.57 p.m.