

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 7th December, 1950.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

EDUCATION.

As to Hilton Park School Accommodation.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES asked the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the State school at Hilton Park is overcrowded?
- (2) Is it the Government's intention to have extra classrooms added?
- (3) If the answer to (2) is "yes," when is it intended the work will be put in hand?
- (4) If not, will consideration be given to the matter?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not at present.
- (3) Answered by (2).
- (4) Yes.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

As to Plant Pool Account.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN asked the Minister for Transport:

In view of the Premier's statement in reply to a question in the Legislative Assembly on the 23rd August, that the un-

expended portion of the Plant Pool amounted to £151,350 and the latest statement by the Minister for Works in the "Sunday Times" of the 3rd December that £132,000 remained in the fund—

- (a) Will he advise how the difference, viz., £19,350 has been expended?
- (b) If any portion of this money has been used for plant for the Main Roads Department or any other Government purpose, will he reimburse the fund to such extent before allocation to the local authorities takes place?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) Payment of claims received from local authorities and purchase of Plant Pool (medium graders and rubber tyred rollers).

(b) No. Plant Pool purchases are in use on local authority undertakings.

HOUSING.

As to Workers' Homes, White Gum Valley.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Will the Minister advise the reason for the increase in land value and consequent increase in instalments paid on account of workers' homes situated in White Gum Valley?

(2) Is it considered reasonable and fair to make the increase in instalments retrospective to date of occupancy, in some cases 14 months?

(3) In view of the fact that the land is leasehold and the houses are being purchased under contract of sale, is it the Government's intention to increase periodically the land values?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The State Housing Act provides, inter alia, under Part V, Section 27, that the Commission may, with the approval of the Minister, dispose of workers' dwellings in the following manner:—

- (a) The land on which the dwelling-house is erected shall after appraisalment be let to the applicant under a perpetual lease, subject to appraisalment every 20 years. Such appraisalment and reappraisalment shall be based on the capital value less the value of the dwelling-house.

The rent payable shall be such rate per centum per annum on such appraisalment or reappraisalment as the case may be, as may be prescribed.

- (b) The capital cost of the dwelling-house with interest thereon at such rate per annum as may be prescribed shall be paid by the lessee by instalments extending over 40 years.

Such instalments to be paid by way of an addition to the rent on the land.

When the dwellings were occupied the ground rent was assessed on an estimated value of the land pending appraisalment and when the appraisalment was made subsequently on taxation valuations as at the date of completion of the dwellings it was higher than the estimated value.

(2) It was necessary to make the increase in ground rent retrospective to the date of occupation of the property to comply with the provisions of the lease which fixed the fortnightly instalment to cover the payment of the ground rent.

(3) Land values are reappraised every 20 years in compliance with the provisions of the Act as stated above.

RAILWAYS.

As to Locking Spark-Arresters on Locomotives.

Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Minister for Railways:

In view of the repeated statements that fires adjoining railway property are being started by sparks from locomotive smoke stacks which have had their spark-arresters temporarily removed to give increased power, can he give an indication that spark-arresters can, after being fitted, be locked in position?

The MINISTER replied:

Following allegations that locomotive drivers were interfering with the mechanism of spark arresters to obtain better steaming, routine inspections have been carried out over a period of several months, as a result of which there is no evidence to suggest that the unauthorised practice exists.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

As to Statement in Tydeman Report.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES asked the Minister for Transport:

Referring to the Tydeman report on Port of Fremantle, Volume 1, page 9, subparagraph 3 of paragraph 6, relative to high level bridges and tunnels, will the Minister give the Government's interpretation of this part of the report?

The MINISTER replied:

Subparagraph 3 of paragraph 6, page 9, Volume 1, of the Tydeman report draws a picture of the problems which the contiguous areas of port and town may have to face one or two centuries from now. It instances the possible distant future difficult problems of bridges versus port and town development in contiguous areas.

These problems are being met with today in the older ports in other parts of the world after centuries of development and are referred to in greater detail in part 4 of Volume 2 of the Tydeman report.

This report has been accepted by the Government. Government's interpretation of subparagraph 3 of paragraph 6 is that given by Mr. Tydeman himself, who, in two following subparagraphs 5 and 6, on page 10, has recommended the means by which the first steps of port development may be made to minimise these difficulties which may be handed on to posterity.

Subparagraphs 5 and 6 in effect state that port expansion should only be undertaken up-stream if there are important reasons for doing so, and that such important reasons which are instanced in following paragraphs, did exist for limited up-stream expansion. Mr. Tydeman has therefore recommended to the Government limited up-stream expansion.

BILL—SEEDS.

Report, etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

BILL—LUNACY ACT AMENDMENT.

Report, etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—SWAN LANDS REVESTMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [3.12] in moving the second reading said: Members are aware of the extensive housing scheme carried out by the State Housing Commission in South Perth. Under the pressure of urgency, the actual building operations were proceeded with and homes have been provided for a large number of people, but there still remain certain legal matters to be adjusted or straightened out in connection with the many and varied phases of title to land, closure of roads and rights-of-way, excisions from reserves, truncations of corners, etc., which have arisen consequent upon the resubdivision of the locality to suit present day needs.

To provide roads in the plan of resubdivision of the locality, it has been necessary to encroach on Class A Reserve 20833 set apart for park lands and recreation, Reserve 3694 for municipal endowment, and Reserve 7682 for a sanitary site. A small portion of the latter is required for addition to building lots in the vicinity to maintain the street alignment. Provision is made in Clause 2 for the necessary excisions and revestment of the lands in the Crown. A proper road system has

now been provided and certain old roads and rights-of-way have been included in building lots.

Provision has been made in Clause 3 to close these unrequired roads and rights-of-way and re-vest them in the Crown. For the purposes of the building scheme, some lands were purchased outright from the owners together with all the owners' rights in the land, while other lands were resumed under the Public Works Act. The originating Crown grants issued in the earlier days of the colony reserved to the Crown only gold, silver and precious metals, and the grantees or their assigns are at liberty to reserve to themselves the lesser minerals when they dispose of the land.

Section 15 of the Public Works Act provides that, upon resumption of land, the rights of the owner in the lesser minerals are not taken. In consequence, the title acquired by the Crown upon resumption is not entirely free, and therefore the land cannot be re-vested in His Majesty as of his former estate to be dealt with as Crown lands under the Land Act, and another Crown grant cannot be issued. A few weeks ago we passed a somewhat similar measure dealing with Midland railway land.

In this new subdivision, instances have arisen where part of the land in a new lot was purchased from the former owner and is entirely free, while the balance is resumed land which cannot be re-vested. To enable the issue of Crown grants to the State Housing Commission for all the lands in the lots under the new plan of subdivision, it is necessary to free the lands which are at present hampered with the lesser mineral restrictions.

It can hardly be contended that any persons dealing with land in the particular district seriously take into consideration such rights as may exist in regard to lesser minerals. However, the legal problem exists as a result of the circumstances related, and it would not appear that anyone is likely to be affected by the re-vesting of both the mineral rights and the land in His Majesty. Clause 4 provides for this.

In earlier-day subdivisions the owners sometimes left a narrow strip a few links wide along their external boundaries and this had the legal effect of barring neighbours from making use of the roads provided by the subdivider when the neighbours in turn decided to subdivide their own lands. These narrow strips remain the property of the original owner who ceases to be further interested after he has sold the lots in the subdivision.

Such a case has been encountered with a strip three links wide at the dead-end of Bright-street, which is to be closed, and Clause 5 provides for the re-vestment in the Crown of the narrow strip. Upon the final stage being reached by the issue of Crown grants to the State Housing Commission, the Commission will then be in

a position to transfer individual homes to purchasers who have been in possession for some time and pressing for titles. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [3.17]: I consider that this Bill should not be passed without some protest being placed on record, though I shall not go so far as to oppose the passage of the measure. I am fearful that if we allow this sort of thing to continue interminably, we shall eventually reach a stage when an individual wishing to buy a block of land on which to build a home for himself will be unable to do so. Apparently, this measure will give the State Housing Commission sufficient land to build 3,000 homes, and all that land, I understand, is within half-an-hour's travel of the city. This is not the only measure we have passed this session dealing with land for the Housing Commission, and it seems to me that if this continues, all the land will presently be controlled by the Commission, and private individuals will be deprived of the opportunity of buying land.

The Minister for Agriculture: The object of the Bill is to clear up certain anomalies and make the position better for people who are now in possession of homes.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It seems to me that this sort of thing should not be allowed to continue. The State Housing Commission already holds a good deal of land. Why should not a private individual have the right to buy land and build a home for himself?

The Minister for Agriculture: So he may.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Not if we go on passing Bills of this sort. We have to be careful or eventually the land all around the city will be taken up by the Commission and the private individual will be debarred from getting a block.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central—in reply) [3.19]: If the hon. member desires an hour or two to consider the Bill, I have no objection to postponing further discussion till a later stage of the sitting. As I have explained, the measure is necessary to clean up a number of anomalies, and has nothing to do with the buying of land. People will still be able to buy blocks on which to build. There is nothing at all to prevent a man from buying a block of land wherever he can get one, and seeking a permit to build. We considered a similar matter in regard to minerals the other night when we were dealing with Midland railway land. I assure members that there is no catch in this measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

**BILL—STATE TRANSPORT
CO-ORDINATION ACT
AMENDMENT (No. 2).**

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the 1st December.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [3.25]: We are asked to consider a Bill which can have far-reaching effects on the implementation of the principal Act which was originally introduced in 1933. The Bill, which was introduced in another place, seeks to amend the Act by inserting after the word "service" in line 1 of paragraph (b) of Section 37 the words "owned and controlled by the Government." By Clause 4 it seeks to amend the First Schedule to the principal Act by deleting the words "and the term 'railway station' shall, notwithstanding the definition of 'railway' in this Act, include any railway station whatsoever," where they occur in lines 3, 4 and 5 of the last paragraph of that schedule.

When introducing the Bill, Mr. Strickland announced that he proposed to add another amending clause which, however, was subsequently withdrawn. I understand this was done because it appeared to be out of order. The hon. member has another amendment on the notice paper to which I shall refer later, but I suggest now that it not only mutilates the Bill entirely, but also falls short of fulfilling the hon. member's purpose. At the moment, however, we are dealing with the Bill as it stands and I oppose it because I think it is dangerous. It appears to be designed to operate against the Midland Railway Company, and it could have a serious effect not only on the company but on the users of the railway in that area.

Clause 3 seeks to exclude all existing services, except Government services, from the protection of the Act. At present, Section 37 does not require that consideration shall be given to the railways alone, but to all existing transport services, and in this connection the Transport Board has, in the past, taken into consideration the facilities provided by services not licensed under the Act, such as the shipping service to the North-West. If the clause is passed, any existing operator of a privately-owned service can not expect to receive protection from unfair competition, irrespective of the amount of capital he may have invested in his undertaking, or the efficiency with which he conducts it.

Section 3 of the Act was referred to specifically by Mr. Willcock, then Minister for Railways and later Premier, when he introduced the State Transport Co-ordination Act in 1933. He said—

The North-West aerial service is being subsidised by the Commonwealth Government. If, with the aid of the subsidy, that concern were able to compete, say, with the Midland railway, if the payable business were captured by aircraft and the Midland railway had to be closed, where would we be? The Midland country is recognised as being amongst the best in the State, and what would happen to that country without effective railway facilities?

So it was clearly the intention, when the Act was introduced in the first place, to afford adequate protection to the Midland Railway Company in exactly the same way as protection was designed to be afforded to the Government railways. This intention was further clarified by Mr. Millington in an amendment which he introduced in 1938 seeking to remove all possible doubts as to whether the Act did apply in its entirety to the Midland line. The purposes of the amendment was to give protection to the Midland Railway Company in exactly the same way as protection was enjoyed by the Government railways. That was the intention of the Government at the time; and it was a Government of which Mr. Wise, who introduced this Bill, was a member.

The measure now before the House seeks entirely to remove that consideration. I feel sure the Bill goes much further than the Leader of the Opposition intended when he introduced it. Let me refer to the effect that Clause 4 would have on the Act. This clause seeks to amend the First Schedule to the Act, dealing with exemptions, by excluding the Midland Railway Company's stations from the definition of "railway station." This amendment does not affect the Act as a whole but merely the provisions of the First Schedule. Paragraph 1 of the First Schedule provides exemption for the produce of farms or forests, etc., to the nearest railway station or town and the back-loading of necessary requirements. Paragraph (2) makes a similar provision in regard to pastoral undertakings.

At present, therefore, a farmer or pastoralist in the Midland railway zone may transport his goods to and from the nearest station on the Midland line without a license. There are instances where the railway station is not the nearest town, as in the case of Dandaragan, New Norcia, Merkanooka and others. Farmers in these districts therefore would not, if the amendment is passed, be able to carry their goods to or from the Midland railway. They would be compelled to transport over greater distances to stations on the Won-

gan Hills line or, alternatively, to apply for a license and pay the fees to the Transport Board.

Under paragraph (11), as now operating, a carrier or any other person acting as a "feeder" to a railway station may operate up to a radius of 35 miles from that station without a license. If the amendment is agreed to, carriers now feeding the Midland railway under this clause will no longer be exempt and will have to pay license fees, or alternatively, will have their operations restricted to a radius of 20 miles only, from their places of business. The inclusion in the schedule of the additional words set out in the 1938 Act was not designed to have any material effect other than to correct an obvious anomaly in the original Act by giving to farmers, carriers and others in the Midland railway zone the same privileges which were afforded elsewhere in the State.

I would point out to members that Section 37 requires that before an application for a commercial goods vehicle license is granted or refused, the Transport Board shall, among other things, take into consideration the existing transportation service for the carriage of goods upon the routes, or within the area proposed to be served, in relation to its present adequacy and possibilities for improvement to meet all reasonable public demands, and the effect upon such existing service of the applicant service. If this Bill were to be passed, the Transport Board would be required to take into consideration only any Government-owned service along the route on or within the area in which the applicant service proposes to operate. What an unsatisfactory, if not chaotic, state of affairs would result! If there were not a Government service in the vicinity, private services could run anywhere and in any numbers.

No private operator would enjoy the protection of the Act notwithstanding the amount of capital he may have invested in his business, and irrespective of the efficiency with which he conducted the service. The way would be then open to pirating or unfair competition. In its administration of the Act the Transport Board, in dealing with new applications, has taken into consideration facilities provided by services not licensed under the Act, such as the shipping service to the North-West.

Section 34 provides that a user of a commercial goods vehicle for the purposes set out in the First Schedule to the Act need not obtain a commercial goods license, nor be required to pay the heavy fees involved by taking out such a license. The effect of this provision is that farmers, pastoralists and timber producers, without obtaining a license, can carry their produce to the nearest railway station even though that station should involve a journey of more than 15 miles.

This concession is most valuable to these persons and provides them with some liberty to transport their produce without being required to approach the Transport Board for a license and pay the substantial fees entailed. The Bill will eliminate these rights in respect of all people who transport their produce by road to railway stations on the Midland railway system. All these people would either have to cart their produce to the nearest station on the Government system, which would involve a journey several times as long—

Hon. H. C. Strickland: It would still be optional.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I do not think so. It is removing a protection from the Midland Railway Company.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: The company can still carry it.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: But it would have to get a license from the Transport Board. As I said, these people would either have to cart their produce to the nearest station on the Government railway system, or else they would have to go to the expense of taking out a commercial goods license. It would mean that all people in the areas served by the Midland railway would be placed under special disabilities and committed to additional expense, as compared to the rest of the people of the State whose nearest railway station would be on the Government system. It is thus sectional legislation of a virulent type.

The principal Act was designed to encourage the provision of additional transport services for passengers and goods, and to avoid uneconomic duplication of services. As members realise, the main objective of the Act was to provide railway services with a fair measure of public support. The railway system of this State is operated mainly by the Government; but an important section of the system has been controlled for the past 56 years by the Midland Railway Company, under authority granted by Parliament.

The company's rates and fares are substantially the same as those charged by the W.A. Government railways for similar distances, with the exception that the company's freight rates are less in the case of a large proportion of goods traffic between the metropolitan area and Geraldton. By the operation of this company's special port-to-port rates, the freight on most classes of traffic between the metropolitan area and Geraldton is appreciably reduced, being in some cases less than two-thirds of the comparable W.A.G.R. rates.

The Midland Railway Company thus affords the people of Geraldton, and surrounding districts, a privilege not enjoyed by any other community similarly situated elsewhere in the State. From every point of view the conditions requiring co-ordination of transport, which apply to Govern-

ment railway services, apply equally to the railway services operated by the Midland Railway Company. If it is admitted, as it is, that some protection against unfair competition is required by the Government railways, then the same degree of protection is required and should be provided, for the services operated by the company. This has been recognised in the past, both by Parliament and the Transport Board. The Bill seeks to exclude the railway system operated by the company from the benefits of the State Transport Co-ordination Act, and cannot be supported on any reasonable grounds.

I must emphasise the fact that the Bill will have exactly the effect which Parliament, by passing the principal Act, has endeavoured to avoid. It leaves the way open to a multiplicity of services covering the same ground, with the result that the established service, such as that of the Midland Railway Company, in which large capital investments have been made, will be forced to seek increased charges to enable it to meet its bare costs. This dislocation of co-ordinated transport, which would be brought about by the Bill, would either force the Midland Railway Company for one, to carry on its services without being able to cover costs or, as is more probable, would result in increased expense to farmers, pastoralists, people in business and all others being served by the company, without their obtaining any benefit whatever from such increased expense imposed on them.

In Clause 4, the Bill seeks to amend the First Schedule to the Act which details the goods that may be carried without license by commercial goods vehicles. Paragraphs (1) and (2) of the schedule provide exemption for the carriage of farm, station or forests produce, etc. to the nearest railway station or town, and permits the back loading of necessary requirements. Under this provision, therefore, a farmer or pastoralist in the Midland railway zone may transport his goods to and from the nearest station on the Midland line without a license. Paragraph (11) of the schedule provides that a carrier or any other person acting as a "feeder" to a railway station may operate up to a radius of 35 miles from that station without a license. If the amendment were passed, carriers now feeding the Midland railway under this provision would no longer be exempt and would have to pay license fees or, alternatively, would have their operations restricted to a radius of 20 miles only from their places of business.

A further amendment has been indicated by Mr. Strickland and I would like briefly to set out the effects which his proposal would have. It would result in further centralisation as most North-West requirements will come direct from Perth instead of from Geraldton, Northampton, etc. The Midland Railway Company has already

made inquiries with reference to establishing a road service from Geraldton, and I was informed that a license would not be granted as a service from Geraldton already existed. If the amendment were carried, it would be difficult to police, as all loads when checked would be given as going to the north of the 26th parallel, while goods could be off-loaded at Geraldton. This traffic on the roads would have a grave effect on their condition. It would rob the railways of traffic and would interfere with what is generally recognised as a very efficiently conducted service.

I can understand the intention of the Leader of the Opposition in another place and Mr. Strickland, in trying to obtain some concession for those who live in the northern areas. But, I do not think they realise the effect which that concession might have on people who live further south. As Minister for Transport I have always taken a sympathetic view of the requirements of the people in the North and I have tried to help them as far as I possibly can, always having regard to the merits of the particular case submitted.

Some months ago Mr. Wise approached me and said that as he intended to go to Carnarvon to discuss with the Grants Commission the disabilities of the district, it might be possible for an officer of the Transport Board to go up at the same time. I discussed the matter with the board and it was agreed that two officers should go up to discuss problems on the spot with a view to giving extra consideration or perhaps getting a better first-hand knowledge of the difficulties which existed. Unfortunately, a change of plans made the visit, at that time, impracticable.

As Minister for Transport, I will stand by my original statement and if Mr. Strickland, Mr. Wise or any other members representing constituencies in the North-West notify me that they are prepared to have a similar investigation on the spot at any future time, I will be only too happy to make the services of those officers available. In the meantime, we are quite prepared to listen sympathetically to any case or application which may be brought under our notice with a view to meeting special conditions which may apply today and which would afford relief. But, we are not prepared to sanction a blanket exemption such as this Bill will provide. In our opinion, it will make the Transport Co-ordination Act ineffective and will confer highly sectional benefits on one section of the community and at the same time injure the interests of another section. We consider it very dangerous. I counsel members to vote against the second reading and I shall certainly oppose the Bill.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South) [3.46]: I support the second reading. I will always be prepared to support any proposal that appears to me to go even a small distance towards easing the strangulation imposed upon other means of transport, other than the railways, as a result of the application of the provisions of the State Transport Co-ordination Act. I have said before, and I adhere to my opinion, that one of the greatest handicaps from which the railways suffer and which tends to promote inefficiency in respect of the services rendered by it to the public, is the transport Act and the restrictions it imposes upon competition.

To my mind, the Bill does not represent nearly the serious proposition that the Minister would have us believe. It seeks to give the people of the northern areas an opportunity to utilise road transport. If we were to provide the residents of that far distant part of the State with the transport facilities they require for nothing, we would be well repaid by having people there who are content to remain in those distant localities.

We are always urging that people should go outback and those who are already there should remain. At the same time, we can always find reasons, which are seldom substantial, why concessions cannot be granted in their interests. I am tired of hearing how dangerous is everything proposed when we advance a proposition the effect of which will be to assist these people and to ease the restrictions and strangulating effect caused by the operations of the State Transport Co-ordination Act. It seems to me that we have reached the stage where we could expect the Government to approach problems of this nature in a bigger way than it has shown any inclination to do so far.

Bearing in mind the expediency that seems to dominate Government policy, if there is any policy associated with this matter, we could expect some other attitude than that which the Government always seems to take. It is difficult for a layman to suggest alterations in the present set-up, but I think conditions associated with the State railways would be far better for the community as a whole, and particularly for the producing section that pays freight on everything it buys or sells, if the financial position of the railways underwent a stringent overhaul. The capitalisation should be reviewed and adjustments made in its charges. If the capitalisation were written down to something like its present value—

Hon. L. Craig: Written up to its value today, you mean.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I question that. If it were written down to something like the value of the railways to the community as a whole and the freight schedule revised—

The Minister for Transport: What would you suggest?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I intended to give an indication of that. If that were done, I think it would be a much better proposition for Western Australia, for the railways and for the Government itself if a freight rate were arrived at to apply to all traffic hauled.

The Minister for Transport: What do you suggest that should be?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: One that would be fair, one at which the railways could afford to carry freight. The rate might be 3d. or 3½d. The charge should apply to all railway freight, and I certainly think something like that would be quite feasible. There should be a flat rate to cover everything, including the so-called concessional rates. There are some concessional rates, but certainly not as many as the public is led to believe.

I have in mind the freight on super. If the rate were fixed at a figure at which the railways could carry goods, people should be given an opportunity once more to use road transport. By that means we would have an opportunity of providing some measure of competition, the result of which should be greater efficiency in the service rendered by the railways. We would certainly dispose of the excuse always advanced, namely, that the railways carry so much at losing rates.

The Minister for Transport: The Bill is not concerned with the Government railways.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: No, but it relates to the State Transport Co-ordination Act, the object of which is to protect the Government railways. Certainly the Midland Railway Company is directly concerned in this instance. My suggestion will obviate the excuse advanced in explanation of why nothing can be done. Road transport could not then be accused of picking the eyes out of the traffic offering by snatching the lines for which high freight rates may be charged. This will give us an opportunity to try the railways out. We would allow those who find road transport more efficient or convenient to make use of it, and we would not have the present-day obstruction and strangulation that are apparent. I am aware that it would involve other factors such as developmental railways and so forth, but that is a matter purely within the realm of the State railways.

It is time that something along these lines was done. In the meantime, if we are not to proceed along these lines in the interests of the people living in isolated parts of the State where they enjoy so few amenities and receive so little consideration, it will mean that constant pressure will have to be exercised in an endeavour to secure some easement of the restrictions imposed upon them. Every

suggestion advanced with the object of assisting the people residing in the North-West or in other isolated parts of the State is branded as unfair and as imposing unjust competition. The sooner we reach a basis that will not be unfair to the railways and will allow reasonable competition with road transport, the sooner the State as a whole will benefit.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you suggest an open go so that the railways can charge what freight rates are considered proper?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I did not say that at all.

The Minister for Agriculture: I assumed you did.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I suggested a flat rate on all traffic hauled by the railways which the department considered such that the railways could be made to pay.

The Minister for Agriculture: Leaving the Commissioners of Railways to charge what they like.

Hon. A. L. Loton: No.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I am sorry; I have done my best!

The Minister for Agriculture: And I have done my best, too.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I realise quite well that to individual cases, particularly as regards the present Minister for Railways, every sympathy is extended, but I do not think the present state of affairs should continue year by year whereby individual propositions have to be dragged along to the Minister or the Transport Board for consideration. I regret that this question has arisen in connection with the Midland Railway Company. However, as the issue has been raised in respect of that railway and in view of the amendment appearing on the notice paper, the concession granted under the measure is to apply only to the North-West and goods conveyed to and from that part of the State, I should not think that that particular railway will be affected very severely.

Holding the views I do regarding the operations of the Transport Board and the position of the railways, as well as the necessity for us to give more than mere lip service in our efforts to assist outback communities, I support the Bill and hope that its sponsor will have the satisfaction of seeing the legislation assented to.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [3.57]: I oppose the Bill because it will, in my opinion, adversely affect an area that at present enjoys a very satisfactory railway service. It will certainly affect the interests of the Midland Railway Company, whether to any great extent depends upon the circumstances that may come into the picture. If we are to open up the transport position in the interests of all forms of transport and so reduce the position

of the railways to the point where the service cannot be maintained, it will be a sorry day for this State.

If we place the railways in the position of not being able to function, we shall regret it. We must grant the railways protection until such time as some other acceptable alternative is available to replace that form of transport. There is nothing in sight at present to meet that requirement. Possibly at some stage atomic energy may be available in that respect, but that day has not yet arrived.

Sitting suspended from 3.58 to 4.30 p.m.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It was suggested by Mr. Roche that competition was necessary if a railway was to give efficient service. I can assure the hon. member that the service given by the Midland Railway Company is without competition and it is rendering excellent service. If the Bill were carried in its present form, it could adversely affect all those residents who use the Midland railway line. It is for that reason I oppose the Bill.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [4.33]: I support the measure in the main with the hope that it may perhaps be amended in some way subsequently because what I am a little afraid of at the moment is the effect of the competition upon the railways. We have already a railway system stretching from east to west and it is now subject to extreme competition from big trucks running over the east-west road to the Eastern States and vice versa.

Hon. L. Craig: Do you approve of that?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: No, I do not.

Hon. H. Hearn: This proposal is different; it is private enterprise.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: The trucks I am referring to run from one State to another in competition with an already existing railway. The other route stretching north is served by a railway for part of the way but beyond its terminus is pure wilderness, far removed from decent transport facilities. Admittedly, there is a shipping service which caters for that part of the State, but is it adequate enough to handle all the goods traffic offering? The goods that are being carried are perishable and whether the shipping service is adequate for that type of traffic I do not know. Perhaps Mr. Strickland might be able to tell us something of that.

Even now, we hear of goods being carted overland by heavy road trucks from the Eastern States and I consider that freight should be handled by rail. At the moment the railways are running at a loss simply because they assist in the development of the country and render a great service to the community. Concession fares are granted for children and others on the railways, and if private enterprise is to be permitted to render a service in com-

petition with the railway system and we eventually lose the railway line as a result, the day might arrive when the traffic was not offering, and private enterprise would discontinue its service and the people in the districts concerned would be left lamenting.

A few years ago I opposed the establishment of a private bus service which was to run in competition with the trams along the Kalgoorlie-Boulder route. I did so because I knew the trams were rendering a good service and that as soon as the buses were running they would drive the trams off the route. I realised that if at a later stage the private bus company decided to discontinue its service, the people would be left without any transport facilities. That is what I am afraid of in this instance.

Perhaps some member representing the North Province could tell me what class of traffic is being carted and what is done generally. I would then be in a position to vote accordingly. I have been in the North-West and know the area. Anything that can be done for the people there in order that their supplies can be brought to them by means of a decent and up-to-date service, I will support. I do not want the service to compete unfairly with the railways, but I think that only perishable goods would be carted to those districts.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [4.37]: When I first heard of the Bill I was inclined to favour it because I think everything that is possible should be done to encourage population in the North. The whole question is really bound up by railway policy. This would not be the only time that the State has had to suffer by standing up to a policy that is detrimental in some respects. We have to support the railways and by doing so we are performing a dis-service to the railways in other ways. I think the Bill and its regulations would be difficult to administer because there would be no guarantee that the goods despatched, say, from Perth, would be delivered at a given point.

If anyone asked me if he could take a load of goods from Perth to, say, Port Hedland, I would tell him to go ahead because one could not expect anyone from, say, the district of Carnarvon to go to the terminal point of the railway and cart supplies the rest of the way by road. If he were able to cart the goods for the whole distance, it would be of great benefit because the cartage could be completed in one operation. We want to encourage people to go to the North but I understand there is a difference between road and rail freight charges of about 60 per cent. in favour of road transport.

It is pretty rough on pastoralists and others if they have to pay about half as much again for freight charges so that a railway policy can be supported. That

is what it amounts to. In all the circumstances, it seems to me to pass the Bill would not be in the best interests of the railway policy that is adopted by the Government. Apart from the district served by the Midland Railway Company, the same principle applies to other parts of the State. If we could wipe out the transport restrictions in other districts, people would be better off because they could do much better work with the advantage of road transport. However, if we were to argue along those lines, people in other parts of the State would not have a ghost of a chance of getting their goods carted.

HON. H. C. STRICKLAND: The people in the North have to keep the people down south.

HON. H. TUCKEY: I suppose that applies all over the State. I do not think we can apply a ban to one area and not apply it to another.

HON. H. C. STRICKLAND: Only about 100 tons of freight will go up north by road.

HON. H. TUCKEY: I do not know whether, in considering the question, the actual tonnage is of any consequence. I would like to see goods carried by road increased to the extent of four or five times the tonnage mentioned by Mr. Strickland, as a means of encouraging more development and settlement in the North. We cannot impose these restrictions on the people for all time if we want the area to develop. We must remember, too, that those people have not even a decent shipping service.

The Minister for Agriculture: They will have, though.

HON. H. TUCKEY: They have been promised one for years.

The Minister for Agriculture: You know of the definite proposals to make it a good service.

HON. H. TUCKEY: I have heard of the bitter complaints about the service, which one finds quite justified when one makes a few inquiries as to the conditions that existed in the past. If it is at all possible to assist the people in the North by this proposal, it is up to Parliament to do its very best to give effect to it. I consider, however, that the Bill could have been drafted in a way that would make it more acceptable to the House than it is now, because I believe the position is left too open.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South) [4.43]: I support Mr. Strickland in his endeavours to have the Bill passed. I am one of those who reached the decision long ago that the State Transport Board has hampered the development of the State by its activities. I feel sure that the stage has long since been reached when we should not have a body such as the Transport Board acting, as it were, as the last line of defence between the railway administration and road transport. That is the position as I see it today.

Earlier this session we had considerable discussion on the matter of road transport and figures were produced by the Minister as to the various charges that have been fixed by the Railway Department. At that time we were told that wool was the only commodity being carted at a profit to the railways at .4d. per ton mile. The charges over an average distance of 150 miles amount to 3.8d. per ton mile and the fact that a profit of only .4d. per ton mile, has resulted from the protection afforded the railways by the Transport Board, calls for comment.

Those who had super. delivered to them, found that the Transport Board had agreed to increase the terminal charge for the delivery of super. I might explain for the information of members that the terminal charge is one on super. carted from the siding to the works. That is the Government's responsibility. The haulage charge is railway freight. If it is carted by road, the Government finds an additional 2.6d. per ton mile, which was the figure supplied by the Minister for Transport. From the siding to the producers, a terminal charge on super. has been applied which, up to this season, was 4s. per ton.

Now we find—and it must be the Transport Board that has agreed to it, because I do not know who else would have done so—that the charge has been increased to 6s. per ton. To cart 13 tons of super. for approximately 135 miles the charge is £8 18s. 3d. That is the railway freight. The Government finds an additional 2.6d. per ton mile terminal charge which is £3 18s. for three or four miles of haulage. It is out of all proportion to the 135 mile charge on the railway. It is unjust. I quite realise that this has been done to lessen the charge on the Treasury for the amount of money it has had to find for road haulage. That is the only reason I can see for it. If it is to continue, I do not know where it is going to end.

The Minister for Agriculture: I have paid more to have my super. carried seven miles.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: The terminal charge on super. from the railway siding to the farm was agreed to by the Transport Board.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is an average.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Whether one lives 14 miles from the siding or two miles from it, a flat rate is imposed.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you not think they are lucky to get it carted?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Everybody is lucky, according to the Minister. The time has arrived when the powers of the Transport Board, which was set up to co-ordinate the transport services of this State, should be curtailed. When this Bill was first mooted by the hon. member,

I was hopeful that that was what he had in view. I know it was a Labour Government that introduced this measure originally, and I was hopeful that it would be a Labour member who would bring about the dissolution of this board.

Hon. H. K. Watson: They have seen the light.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: After their experience while in Opposition, they have realised the dangers of such a board. I cannot understand why the Government is offering such objection to this measure, and I am not satisfied with the answer given by the Minister for Transport. I support the second reading.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [4.50]: I have rather a mixed understanding with regard to this Bill. The Minister for Railways has told us that we must have protection for the railways, and I agree with him, provided, of course, the railways are doing their best to give us what we need. The railway service is State-wide in its operations, the chief object of which is to open up areas, whether it pays or not in the initial stages. I agree that the time has come when the railways should know what amount of money it will cost to cart certain goods. Mr. Roche has suggested that there should be a flat rate on which the railway company should operate.

Hon. L. Craig: You do not believe that; you cannot believe it!

Hon. A. R. JONES: The protection of the railways has been going on for quite a number of years, and I feel that since efforts are now, after a period of years, being made to rehabilitate the system, we should still grant some protection so that the railways can, perhaps, in two or three years, give us the service to which we are entitled. We have members from the north country putting forward the argument that transport facilities for their part of the State are not adequate to handle the produce available, and the supplies which are necessary for the cultivation of that produce.

Possibly the Minister for Agriculture could let us know just what facilities are available in regard to shipping for the ports that would be served north of the 26th parallel, or perhaps Mr. Strickland could give us that information. We should know whether it is proposed that adequate shipping facilities will again be available, because I think that has a large influence on the decision we are asked to make today. We must not retard the progress of the North in any way. We must help these people wherever possible and if transport facilities are necessary, we should provide them, or the means whereby they could supply transport for themselves.

Then again, Mr. Logan said that the Midland Railway Company would be affected by this Bill. That company has rendered really good service. Unlike the

Government railways, it has been able to cope with all the freight it has been asked to handle, such as wheat, super. or other produce. I believe bananas from the North are the main concern, as are also beans and other perishable goods. If I were a producer in the north country sending my output south to Perth, I would like to know that my produce was going to get through as quickly as possible in order to avoid deterioration. I believe transferring consignments from trucks to railways is detrimental and impairs the condition of the fruit by the time it reaches the market. So when we deal with the question of transport, I think we have to consider it very thoroughly before we arrive at a decision. I think we ought to have more data before we make any such decision.

Another thing which puzzles me is that members of the Labour Party are indicating their support for this Bill. In the past—this has been my experience anyway—they have always championed the railways and supported any measures to keep the railways running and protect them from private enterprise. It is strange to me, therefore, that a Labour member in another place should introduce this Bill, which is to give private enterprise a priority over the railways. It does not tie up. I have not been able to make up my mind which way I will vote and I am sure other members will feel the same.

Perhaps Mr. Strickland could answer a few questions. The first is: What shipping service is there for the ports which will be served by transport if this Bill is passed? The second is: What freight rates are charged by the private contractors operating from the north as far as Geraldton, and will that freight rate be increased or decreased at all if the goods come right through to Perth? Thirdly: Would it be possible for the trucks loading through to Perth and taking only perishable goods back, to receive a full payable load?

There is nothing more I want to say on this measure and if the Minister for Agriculture intends to speak on it, he might be able to enlighten us with regard to certain matters, as perhaps, could Mr. Strickland also. I have very mixed feelings about it. I would like to support the second reading of the Bill and then wait and see if there were any amendments forthcoming. If we find that the transport facilities available are not sufficient to serve the people in the North for, say, the next 12 months, we could make this Bill operate for that period to relieve the position of railway transport to and from that part of the State. I support the second reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [4.58]: I did not intend to speak on this measure, but, as the question of shipping has been brought up, I would like to tell Mr. Jones that it is proposed to step up the ship-

ping position very much. Mr. Jones will probably know that one of the State steamships was sunk at Wyndham, which was a big set-back to the State Shipping Service. Since then the Government has bought a ship called the "Dongarra," and a deposit of £40,000 was paid on it only yesterday. We hope to have it here in January. That will make a difference and perhaps relieve the "Kybra" which will run only from Fremantle to Carnarvon. This will, of course, help to provide a better service than is now operating at the two ports of Shark Bay and Carnarvon. Apart from that, the Government has also asked a committee of experts to go into the whole question of planning another ship.

Hon. G. Bennetts: That would not be the one you promised me for Esperance.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, that is another one. Seeing that Mr. Bennetts has interjected, I might say how surprised we all are that he should support a measure like this when he has been considered an authority on, and a champion of, railways. That is the shipping position. I admit that it has not been satisfactory. Apart from the measures I have mentioned, we have made investigations with a view to getting some of the oversea vessels to convey meat from Wyndham to Fremantle, and I can with considerable assurance say that the shipping position will be greatly improved in the near future, even as early as next January.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.1]: I do not wish to cast a silent vote. I support the Bill because of the special difficulties that are being encountered by people who live in the North. There are times when one is compelled to break away from established practice in order to meet a contingency. To impress members with the sincerity of my attitude, I suggest that the duration of the measure be limited, say from 12 months to two years, and that will afford an opportunity to ascertain whether the Minister's forecast about increased shipping has been realised. We have to offer every possible encouragement to the people in the North, and members must realise what a serious handicap the lack of shipping has been.

Hon. L. Craig: You would not be supporting it had it been a Government railway operating up there.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: As I have stated, there are times when one has to be prepared to support almost anything to meet a contingency, and there is no doubt that the people in Carnarvon and those in other parts of the North are suffering through the lack of transport. In ordinary circumstances, I would not support such a measure, but on this occasion I must do so.

HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM (South-East) [5.3]: I oppose the second reading and I hope the House will support the Minister in his efforts to defeat the Bill. This measure recalls to my mind a very active and at one time large firm that started a service such as this to Meekatharra. It was known as Shipways. It started with a great flourish and offered a wonderful service for a certain type of traffic.

If one had a small heavy parcel to be transported, one could get it delivered almost to one's door. It was really wonderful. But when anybody wanted something urgent, if it was of large dimensions, Shipways let the applicant down. That service was not a success. It was run in opposition to the railway. In bad weather the service was put out of gear and the delivery of goods was delayed. Whether that would apply in this instance is beside the question; the road as far as Geraldton at least is good.

There is another point that ought to be taken into consideration. There is news in today's paper that should give cause for grave concern. Our railways are in their present parlous condition because of the tremendous amount of work they were called upon to do—work far beyond their capacity—during the war years. No system of road transport could have coped with that volume of work; yet the railways had to do it and do it at a great loss. No private concern or even big organisation could possibly have met the requirements demanded of the railways during the war years.

Now we are being asked to sanction a service to the North and permit it to choose its own freight. Already there are three forms of transport to the greater portion of the district proposed to be served. If we now give a private firm the right to choose what traffic it will transport to the North, we shall bring about a set of circumstances similar to those that necessitated the recent complete closure of a short line in the North—a course to which most of the people in the North were opposed. The reason given for the failure of that short line was the growth of road transport, which had been permitted to compete with the railway. If we give permission to another firm, it will mean that another of these northern lines will meet its end by slow strangulation or starvation. When that time comes, will members who are supporting this Bill approve of another measure that will have to be brought down to close this other line and leave the taxpayers to bear the loss?

We must think ahead. If the Bill is passed, what will happen to our shipping service? That service was hard pressed during the war years and it will be hard pressed again. In the event of another war occurring, there is a possibility of fuel restrictions being reimposed,

and what would happen to the proposed new service then? People would demand that the railways undertake the traffic again at a loss. This is a short-sighted policy and I trust that members will consider the position carefully before supporting the second reading.

HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (North—in reply) [5.7]: I have two regrets—one that members have not studied the proposed amendment on the notice paper and the other that I was unable to give a full explanation of the Bill when moving the second reading. The attendance that day was not large, and I had not much time to introduce the Bill, but I stated that I would be prepared to give a full explanation when replying to the second reading debate.

This is a very simple measure, and I am sorry that a lot of red herrings have been drawn across the path and that so much extraneous matter should have been introduced into the debate. It is not right to say that profitable services to the North will be interfered with if this measure is passed. We have no service to the North; the only licensed goods service between Perth and the North-West is that provided by MacRobertson-Miller Airways, but people could not possibly pay the freight rates required to send their goods by air.

The Minister for Transport: You have three good road systems from Geraldton northwards.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I was speaking of a service between Perth and the North-West. The Minister, in reply to a question only a few days ago, told me what I have just stated. The Midland Railway Company pays no license fees whatever and contributes nothing by way of petrol tax towards the building or maintenance of the main highway. The Midland road service carries passengers and parcels, but if a washaway occurred on that line, it could not transport bananas from Geraldton to Perth.

The Minister for Transport: But you have a service.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: We have a service only from Carnarvon to Geraldton, and the small community of 80 or 90 people living at Shark Bay have no service whatever. The nearest air strip to them is at Carnarvon 180 miles away while the distance to Geraldton is 200 miles.

The Minister for Transport: The fish company is running a service.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That company experienced quite a lot of difficulty before it was able to convey any freight back to the North. How much freight could be put in an icebox on a truck? The company was denied permission to

carry back anything for people who had no service whatever. A firm has just bought out two of the transport companies and is operating between Carnarvon and Geraldton, but I suppose the Minister wants to see the goods for the people at Shark Bay dumped on the roadside at the turnoff, which is 90 miles from Shark Bay.

The Minister for Transport: How do they get their goods now?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The only way is under a permit issued on sufferance by the Transport Board to carry a few things from Perth. It was not until the Leader of the Opposition brought some pressure to bear that the fish company was permitted to carry anything back to the North, and even so a charge of 10s. per ton was made by the Transport Board. A man might take a few groceries back for his wife, but that is about all.

The board definitely stated that the Midland Railway Company had protested very strongly against goods being conveyed up the Great Northern Highway, and I gather that that was why the Bill come to this House in its present form. The board did not administer the Act as it was intended to be applied. If it did so, all the freight would have to be put on the railway to Ajana, but no objection is raised to the running of 70 miles alongside a Government railway to Geraldton and then putting the freight on the Midland railway.

The Minister for Transport: That was a concession to the people.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Yes, and the board claims that it is charged with the duty of administering the Act to prevent pirating. I should like to know whether there is any better illustration of pirating than that of the action of the Midland Railway Company, which launched a number of prosecutions against owner-drivers of trucks—men who were trying to make a living and pay off the purchase price of their trucks.

Let me give an illustration of pirating. If the Act were applied literally, all goods would have to be carried on the Government line from Ajana to Geraldton, but that section of the Government railways is by-passed. The run is made to Geraldton and the goods are loaded in the Government railway yards at Geraldton and into Government vans. They are hauled from Geraldton in a Government train down to Walkaway. That applies to all goods going to and coming from the North, and explains how the Midland Company can make a profit while the State railways show a loss. From Walkaway the Midland Railway Company takes over with a train crew and hauls it to Midland Junction where the Government supplies a train crew and brings it to

Perth. The Government also supplies the goods accommodation, does the invoicing and takes all the risks.

Hon. L. Craig: For which it is paid.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Yes. The full freight on bananas—I would not be certain of all goods—is 45s. 4d. per ton from Geraldton to Perth, of which the Midland Railway Company receives 41s. 5d. and the Government railways 3s. 11d.

The Minister for Transport: You know why that is.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Yes.

The Minister for Transport: It is a concession to the people.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I would call it pirating, because it is something in between. It is worked out on a mileage basis. The Midland Railway Company is responsible for 277 miles, and no invoicing, and takes no risks, but it gets paid at exactly the same rate as the Government. But that is not the principle for which I desire to get the measure through. I do not care what the Midland Railway Company does. My argument with the company is that it is using the Transport Board, which is yielding to its pressure, to inflict hardships and obstruct road traffic from the North.

The Minister for Transport: That concession applied before the Transport Board was constituted.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Which concession?

The Minister for Transport: The through routing at both ends for bananas.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Yes. When Mr. Willcock and Mr. Millington spoke in favour of the measure, they were speaking of the areas between here and Geraldton. No-one envisaged that this would apply to the far North. We had a good boat service consisting of three State ships and four Blue Funnel liners running a regular service.

The Minister for Agriculture: You will have four State ships in January.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The shipping will soon overtake the Midland Railway Company unless its gets protection against shipping, because the people will not pay £10 5s. a ton on goods from here to Carnarvon when they can be carried by ship for £2 as general cargo.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: What is the road freight?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Between £10 and £11.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: They would object to paying that, the same as they would the train freight.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I could not give the figure for through transport because no-one desires to cart everything

through. The railways will still be used. People in Shark Bay are affected, and the banana and bean growers at Carnarvon. The flat rate for beans is 3d. per lb. They are picked up at the plantation and taken right to the market. It works out at £25 10s. a ton, which, over 620 miles, is about 5.5d. per ton mile. The bean carters have to return empty to Geraldton—another 316 miles—so they really travel 900 miles for that amount. It actually works out, therefore, at about 3.6d. per ton mile. The Minister said that road transport costs 1s. per ton mile.

The Minister for Transport: That is an over-all figure for small loads and short hauls, as well as big loads.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It costs £7 per ton to bring bananas to Geraldton, and that works out at about 6.7d. per ton mile. We consider that is a high freight. If hauliers can operate on these rates, there is something wrong with the figures of the Transport Board.

The Minister for Transport: No, those figures are accurate.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Would the goods be carried out at the same price, if they had back loading?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: They might be. It is not a question of cost, but one of urgency with respect to perishable goods. Bananas leave Carnarvon on Tuesday and arrive here on the Saturday morning. They are loaded on to a truck on Tuesday in Carnarvon, and are off-loaded into railway trucks in Geraldton on Thursday. Some arrive in Perth on Friday night and some on Saturday morning. As a rule, two trains are sent. They cannot be marketed before Monday.

The Minister for Transport: It takes that time for them to ripen.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: A lot of them go into the ripening rooms. The trouble is that in the hot months of the flush period—February and March principally, and January to a lesser extent—the bananas, unless kept at the pulp temperature of less than 90 deg., deteriorate and become unmarketable. My main concern, however, is in connection with the bean transporters. They have to travel all the way to Perth and then return empty over a distance of 300 miles. The people at Shark Bay have no opportunity of getting stores of any kind.

Hon. L. Craig: They can get permits.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The Minister said the authorities would be sympathetic, but that is not so. We have great trouble in getting materials for State Housing Commission jobs. Messrs. Sandwell and Wood have a contract to erect another six houses in Carnarvon, making a total of 12, and an officer of that company wrote to say—

I would like to convey our thanks for assisting us with our road transport problem. The few loads we have been able to send by road have helped us considerably to speed up the jobs and to hold down the cost, for freight by rail and road is much dearer than by road only.

That firm had difficulty with the Transport Board in getting permission for the bean trucks to pick up prefabricated houses in Perth to take to Carnarvon. The board wanted the houses to be railed to Geraldton and taken by road from there. At the finish Sandwell and Wood were allowed to have them taken from Perth, but they had to pay 10s. a ton for the right to do so. These things would irritate anyone who was contributing to a railway system that had never done anything for the North.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I thought you said that all goods for the North had to go to Geraldton.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Only because shipping cannot carry them. If our State ships were State ships instead of interstate ships, there would be no trouble, but they are interstate vessels travelling from here to Darwin. They top up with North-West goods if they have space, because they get a freight rate of £7 10s. to Darwin and about 50s. along the coast.

The Minister for Agriculture: Darwin is not in a State.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Well, where is it?

The Minister for Agriculture: It is in Federal territory. Surely you do not object to the "Koolinda" going to Darwin.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I object to it leaving behind North-West goods and passengers so that it may go to Darwin. The boat would never reach Darwin if it were filled with North-West goods and passengers.

The Minister for Agriculture: The Darwin trade is very helpful.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Like the State railways, the State ships were established to serve Western Australia.

The Minister for Agriculture: We were glad to get the Darwin trade.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: This has nothing to do with the Bill.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do not the Geraldton people like to sell a few tomatoes to Darwin?

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Does not the Minister think the Carnarvon people like to sell their produce in Perth? Tomatoes were grown in Carnarvon before they were grown in Geraldton. We had the metropolitan as well as the Melbourne market at one time. It is not possible to grow them in Carnarvon now

because they have to be carted along dusty roads to Geraldton where they are off-loaded into railway trucks, and they are handled again when they reach Perth, which makes it uneconomical. This will not affect the railway at all, if members will agree to an amendment.

On the notice paper I have an amendment seeking to delete Clause 3, and the effect of that will be to protect only Government-owned railways. I propose further to move to delete, in Clause 4, all the words after the word "by" and to insert in lieu the words—

inserting after the word "be" in line 3 of the last paragraph of paragraph 12 of such Schedule the words "except where the carriage of any goods is to or from any part of the State situate north of the twenty-sixth parallel of south latitude."

That would attain the required objective and would not interfere with the Midland Railway Coy. This clause in the First Schedule would then read—

For the purposes of this Schedule the term "the railway station or town nearest to such property" shall mean that station or town most accessible to the property or farm, as the case may be, except where the carriage of any goods is to or from any part of the State situate north of the twenty-sixth parallel of south latitude, and the term "railway station" shall, notwithstanding the definition of "railway" in this Act, include any railway station whatsoever.

That would merely exempt places north of the 26th parallel and would cover only such small towns as Shark Bay, with 80 inhabitants in and around the town, and Carnarvon itself. As I have explained, they would not then be paying £10 and £11 a ton freight by road.

There were only two or three consecutive weeks when the carriage of bananas was around the 200 tons mark. It has now dropped to about a third of that figure. I trust the House will agree to the Bill so that in Committee I can move the amendments I have suggested. I will also accept Mr. Jones's proposal for the imposition of a time limit. If a time limit of 12 months is put on the measure, it can be varied, or the provision struck out altogether, when the measure comes up for review.

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

Ayes	.....	11
Noes	.....	15
Majority against	.....	4

Ayes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. A. R. Jones
Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. W. R. Hall	(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. J. G. Hialop	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. J. Cunningham
Hon. W. J. Mann	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived; Bill defeated.

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 20, 21, 22, 27, 31, 39, 41, 47 and 49 made by the Council, had disagreed to Nos. 2 to 4, 7, 8, 11, 13 to 19, 23 to 26, 28 to 30, 32 to 38, 42 to 46 and 48, and had agreed to No. 40 subject to a further amendment.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Minister for Transport in charge of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: As has been mentioned on more than one occasion, this is mainly a conference Bill and, instead of occupying a great deal of time in discussing the merits and demerits of all these amendments to which the Legislative Assembly has disagreed, I suggest that we insist on all our amendments en bloc. That will lead to the inevitable result of the Assembly asking for a conference, to which we could accede, allowing the managers to be appointed and to attend to their business as soon as possible. It would save a lot of time, and I move—

That the amendments made by the Council and disagreed to by the Assembly be dealt with en bloc.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The Legislative Assembly has moved an amendment to our amendment No. 40, and I think we should consider that immediately.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall deal with that separately.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I have no great desire to oppose this motion, but I would like to know what we are going to ask the conference to consider. We are handing over the powers of 30 members to our three managers for them to make the laws of the State, and we must decide on a course of action. Does it mean that we cannot discuss these amendments, or if I vote against the motion moved by the Minister, will there be discussion on all the amendments?

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Committee is that consideration of the amendments disagreed to by the Legislative Assembly be taken en bloc. If that is agreed to, then we can insist on our amendments.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: But supposing I vote against it.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must have sufficient support. All the amendments in question would have to be discussed seriatim if the hon. member had a majority to vote against the motion.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The Legislative Assembly has made a further amendment to our amendment No. 40. Is that included in the motion before the Chair?

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Logan asked that identical question a few moments ago, and I replied that we would deal with that separately.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Very well.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move—

That the amendments be insisted on.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I do not feel inclined to vote in favour of the motion. We do not know what the amendments are.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has just decided to deal with the Council's amendments en bloc.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: With one exception.

The CHAIRMAN: That is so. The Committee cannot go back on its decision.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments insisted on.

No. 40. Clause 13—Add a further section after Section 15B to stand as Section 15C, as follows:—

15C. It shall be the obligation of the lessee to permit the lessor to enter and inspect the leased premises not more than once in any month upon not less than 48 hours' notice given by the lessor to the lessee provided that such notice is for an inspection to be made between the hours of 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. and failure to comply with this provision shall give the lessor ground to issue to the lessee notice to quit. Provided, however that this section shall not affect any written contract between the parties.

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly has agreed to the Council's amendment subject to the following further amendment:—

Delete the word "month" in line 4 of the proposed new Section 15C and insert in lieu the word "year."

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move—

That the amendment, as amended, be agreed to.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I do not desire to embark upon a lengthy discussion of this matter but the Assembly's amendment is quite ridiculous, to put it mildly. There has been so much trouble that the matter should receive attention. Tenants have refused landlords the right to inspect their premises because the law, as interpreted by the courts, is that a statutory lease gives no right to the landlord to enter and inspect his premises, as does common law. A tenant may play ducks and drakes with the landlord's property and yet at present the landlord has no right to enter the premises for the purposes of inspection or even to carry out repairs. I thought the Council's amendment was a very mild request, particularly in view of the fact that 48 hours' notice had to be given to the tenant and the inspection was confined to once a month. Once a year! Why not hand over the property completely to the tenant? It is too ridiculous for words!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I regard the Assembly's amendment as reasonable. I do not think anyone would desire the landlord inspecting premises at any time he chose. If the landlord were to see the tenant, there would probably be no objection to his making an inspection occasionally. But why make this provision in the Bill?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The reason for it is that tenants have objected.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: This will mean that some landlords will be able to do some stickybeaking and be in and out almost every day.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: This will apply to houses that are let furnished, often on leases. In the circumstances it is only reasonable that a landlord should have this privilege. I know of instances where furniture has been taken away from leased premises and has even been smashed up.

Question put and negatived; the Assembly's amendment to the Council's amendment not agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: The effect of the Committee's decision is that the Council insists on its amendment.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—SEEDS.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Council's amendments.

BILL—LUNACY ACT AMENDMENT.*Assembly's Message.*

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Council's amendments.

Sitting suspended from 5.46 to 8.0 p.m.

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).*Assembly's Request for Conference.*

Message from the Assembly received and read requesting a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council, and notifying that at such conference the Assembly would be represented by four managers.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move—

That the Assembly's request for a conference be agreed to, that the managers for the Council be the Minister for Transport, Hon. E. M. Davies, Hon. H. L. Roche and Hon. H. K. Watson, and that the conference be held in the President's room at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

Sitting suspended from 8.3 p.m. to 5.27 p.m. (Friday).

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).*Conference Managers' Report.*

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I beg to report that the conference managers met in conference on the Bill and reached the following agreement:—

No. 2.—Not agreed to.

No. 3.—Agreed to.

No. 4.—Clause 5—After the figures "1949" in line 33 insert the word "or" and insert the following paragraph—

(b) in respect of premises the lessee whereof is the Crown or any Crown instrumentality.

No. 7.—Agreed to.

No. 8.—Agreed to with the substitution of the word "thirty" for the word "thirty-five."

No. 11.—Clause 6, page 3—Insert after paragraph (b) paragraphs (iiib) and (iiic) as follows:—

(iiib) After the commencement of the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment Act, 1950, and in respect of premises being a dwelling house or used or occupied for the purposes of residence and first leased prior to the first day of January, 1948, any lessor may give to the lessee one month's notice in

writing that the rent of the premises shall as from the date of the expiration of such notice be increased by twenty per centum of the amount of the standard rent of the premises and unless prior to such date the tenant applies to the Court for determination of the fair rent the rent shall be increased in accordance with the notice. If the tenant applies to the Court for such determination the Court shall make the determination and the rent shall apply as determined by the Court as from the date of the lessee's application: Provided that in respect of premises first leased as aforesaid but for which an increase on the standard rent has been made prior to the commencement of the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment Act, 1950, by order of the Court or otherwise the increase of rent provided for in this section shall be inclusive of and not additional to the increase already made.

(iiic) Any lessor who has not given a notice under the provisions of the last preceding paragraph may at any time make an application to the Court for a variation of the percentage increase fixed by the last preceding paragraph and the Court shall have jurisdiction to hear the application and to fix such other percentage increase being not more than fifty per centum of the standard rent as the Court thinks fit; or alternatively the Court may at its discretion determine the fair rent of the premises.

A further amendment agreed upon is to substitute the word "lessor" for the word "landlord" and also to substitute the word "lessee" for the word "tenant" wherever occurring in Clause 6.

No. 13.—Clause 7, page 4—Delete all the words after the word "follows" in line 2 and substitute—

11. In determining the fair rent the Court may take into consideration any factors which the Court considers relevant.

Nos. 14 to 19 (both inclusive).—Not agreed to.

No. 23.—Clause 11, paragraph (a)—Insert after the figure in brackets "(2)" the following words "and substituting the following:—

(2) The lessor of shared accommodation who personally occupies portion of such accommodation may give to a lessee thereof—

(a) where the lessee is unmarried two months' notice, or

(b) where the lessee is married six months' notice,—

to terminate the lease and on the expiration of the period stated in the notice the provisions of this section shall cease to apply in respect of those premises.

No. 24.—Clause 11—Delete the words “being a dwelling house” from paragraph (c).

No. 25.—Clause 11—Insert a new paragraph (d) as follows:—

(d) By adding a subsection as follows:—

(5) The provisions of this section shall not apply as between the principal lessor and his lessee in respect of premises where such lessee without the consent of the principal lessor has sublet the premises either wholly or in part to sub-lessees or lodgers or has granted leave or license to any person to use the same either wholly or in part.

No. 26.—Clause 12, pages 6-8—Delete all words from line 39 on page 6 to line 15 on page 8, all inclusive, and substitute the following:—

15 (A). (1) Subject to subsection (7) of this section where the lessor has been or becomes the owner of premises and has resided in the Commonwealth for not less than two years and requires the premises for his own occupation or for the occupation of his married son or married daughter who has resided in the Commonwealth for a period of not less than two years, and after making a statutory declaration to that effect, he may serve on the lessee notice to quit and deliver up possession of the premises at the expiration of a period which—

(a) in the case of a lessor who, for not less than three years, has owned the premises being a dwelling house or premises leased for the purpose of residence, shall be at least three months expiring on or after the thirtieth day of June, 1951;

(b) in the case of a lessor who, for less than three years but for more than six months has owned the premises being a dwelling house or premises leased for the purpose of residence shall be at least six months expiring on or after the thirtieth day of September, 1951;

(c) in the case of a lessor who, for not less than three years, has owned the premises not being a dwelling house or premises leased for the pur-

pose of residence shall be at least three months expiring on or after the thirtieth day of September, 1951;

(d) in the case of a lessor who, for less than three years but for more than one year, has owned the premises not being a dwelling house or premises leased for the purpose of residence, shall be at least six months expiring on or after the thirty-first day of December, 1951,

and such notice shall at its expiration determine the rightful occupation of the lessee notwithstanding the Common Law condition requiring the notice to quit to expire on a periodical day of the tenancy.

(2) At any time after the expiration of the notice to quit the lessor may apply to the Court for an order for recovery of possession of the premises and for the ejectment of the lessee and any other person, if any, therefrom, and on proof of the facts referred to in subsection (1) of this section the Court shall make the order and may award mesne profits or damages.

Nos. 28 to 36 (both inclusive).—Not agreed to, but covered by recommendations in No. 26.

No. 37.—Not agreed to.

No. 38.—Not agreed to; already covered by the recommendations as to No. 26.

No. 40.—In proposed new section 15 (c) delete the word “month” and substitute the words “period of three months.”

Nos. 42 to 45 (both inclusive).—Clause 17—Delete paragraph (d).

No. 46.—Agreed to, subject to the deletion of the word “thereupon” and the words “in priority to all other applicants.”

No. 48.—Agreed to.

I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—LOAN, £14,366,000.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [5.38]
in moving the second reading said: This is the familiar measure by which, during each session of Parliament, authority is sought by the Government to obtain by loan the necessary funds to meet the proposed capital expenditure on public works. Although the expenditure provided for in

the Loan Estimates amounts to £16,798,276, the Bill asks for a sum of £14,366,000 only. This figure, when supplemented by the unexpended balance of previous authorisations, is estimated to be sufficient to meet proposed expenditure until such time as Parliament re-assembles.

A glance at the schedule to the Bill will indicate the individual amounts making up the sum to which I have referred. It may be noted that the individual totals do not, in every case, coincide with those submitted in the Estimates. This is caused, as I have explained, by there being available for use in some instances, unspent balances from previous authorisations.

At the 30th June last the net public debt amounted to £109,479,162, an increase of £5,853,241 over last year's figure. Notwithstanding this increase, our gain in population increased the debt per person by £2 0s. 2d. only to £196 11s. The face value of the debt redeemed during the year was £1,040,923, including £275,907, on overseas securities. Approximately £1,200,000 will be available in the sinking fund for use during the current year. Further satisfactory conversions were effected last year and the average rate of interest on the total debt is now £3 2s. 5d. per cent. as compared with last year's percentage of £3 3s. 3d.

The authorisation asked for in this Bill is the greatest in the history of the State. It is £2,646,000 in excess of that requested last year, which was more than double the highest amount ever sought before. However, the reasons for these expanding sums are obvious. Firstly, we have to deal with the declining value of the £. Then again we have had to contend with the substantial accumulation of public works that were deferred owing to the war, a problem which is not peculiar to this State or to the Commonwealth.

The delicate situation which has arisen in international relationships and the peculiarly vulnerable position in which Australia finds itself in world politics, make it essential that, from a defence point of view, the economy of Australia should be substantially strengthened. In order to strengthen our economy, more population is needed, and to this end a vigorous migration policy has been adopted by the Commonwealth and the State Governments. The rapid increase in the population of all the States since the end of the war, due largely to migration, is evidence of the success of this policy.

While increased population is most desirable, it is obvious that the best use cannot be made of our increased numbers unless we have the necessary facilities available. The basic industries, which would form the backbone of a strong defence organisation, cannot function to full efficiency unless they are pro-

vided with power, light, water and transport. In Australia, as compared, for instance, with the United States, the provision of these services is mainly a Government responsibility. The Governments of the States are therefore faced with the urgent need, not only to expend large sums in the construction of deferred public works, but to provide the capacity to meet the needs of expanding industry and of increasing population.

I propose to give members, as briefly as is consistent with the importance of the matter, an explanation of the expenditure contemplated in the schedule to the Bill. Last year's expenditure of £3,350,000 was considerably less than that contemplated under the Bill. The main reason for the disparity is payment for materials which are now arriving for the regeneration of our railways and for electricity supply. Approximately £8,000,000 has been allocated to the purchase of plant, machinery and equipment, £6,000,000 of which will be spent overseas, and £2,000,000 in Australia.

With regard to the railways the provision for 1950-51 is £6,000,000 comprising £3,000,000 for additions and improvements to opened railways and £4,000,000 for rollingstock. Included in this amount is provision for payment of the balance due on 60 "W" class locomotives which are expected towards the end of the current financial year. This will absorb approximately £1,554,000. An amount of £97,000 has been provided to clear the sum due on the "PM" locomotives delivered last year. Provision has also been made for a substantial programme of wagon and coach stock replacement. It is proposed to arrange for construction, by contract, of 107 coaches for country travel, and £350,000 has been set aside for the purpose this year.

The new wagon stock programme contemplates the acquisition of a total of 4,160 vehicles, mainly for replacement of wagons due for retirement. It is expected that orders will be placed for upwards of 3,000 of these vehicles during the current year, covering the following types:—

Sheep	....	300
Cattle	....	300
High side	....	600
Medium side	....	500
Low side	....	250
Covered loured	....	1,000

The provision in the Estimates for these vehicles is £1,945,000. A substantial proportion of the provision for additions and improvements to opened railways is represented by rails for permanent way needs and sleepers, crossing timbers and bridge materials. It is expected that rail deliveries during the year will total some 15,000 tons, of which only about 2,000 tons will be of Australian origin. Work shop machinery deliveries are expected to cost £87,000.

In previous years expenditure of this nature would have been partly charged to revenue. However, under the proposals for the placing of the railway accounts on a more realistic basis, which includes the writing-down of the department's capital liability, as from this year replacements will be made in their entirety from the Loan Fund, and an annual depreciation provision made from revenue to cover the extinguishment of the liability of the respective assets during their anticipated lives. An amount of £220,000 has been made available for staff-housing and a similar sum for station yard improvements and additions. Other amounts provide for main line improvements on the South-West railways, track ballasting and the provision of buildings, including a new building in Perth for a telephone exchange and administrative offices.

As regards tramways, a sufficient sum has been set aside, which when augmented by previous unspent authorisations, will allow for the purchase of 50 bus chassis and their locally-built bodies and for payment on seven buses which were not delivered last year. Provision has been made for the conversion to trolley-bus routes of the Mt. Hawthorn, Bulwer-street and Walcott-street tram services.

Dealing with electricity and gas supplies, for which the allocation is £1,500,000 and to which will also be added unspent previous authorisations, the total expenditure is estimated to be a little over £3,000,000 of which nearly £2,000,000 will be on the South Fremantle power station, the first section of which will include two 25,000 kilowatt sets generating at 50 cycles. The second section is designed for a further two sets of the same capacity, making in all a total of 100,000 kilowatts for the station. Good progress was made on the construction work during the year. The buildings for the "A" station are complete and work on the first two boiler units and on the first turbo-alternator of 25,000 kilowatt capacity has reached an advanced stage. It is expected that power will flow from the station prior to next winter.

The foundations for the "B" section of the South Fremantle power station have been completed and the erection of the framework is now proceeding. A large quantity of the equipment to be installed in "B" section is already here and the balance is being received regularly from overseas sources in gradually increasing quantities. Progress in connection with the installation of three 2,500 k.w. generating sets at the Collie power station has been satisfactory and work on transmission lines in the South-West is proceeding according to plan.

An additional boiler was ordered in 1949 for the East Perth power station, on which it is anticipated that some loan expenditure will be incurred during the year. The Electricity Commission is planning well ahead in order to prevent the metropolitan system or the South-West system from ever again suffering a shortage of supply of electricity such as has been experienced over the last three years.

A site has been selected on the west side of Leschenault Estuary, approximately one mile north of the town of Bunbury, on which the next power station is to be erected. The foundations are now being tested by boring, and an early commencement will be made on the design of the first section of this power station. Provision will be made for the ultimate development on this site of a power station with a capacity three or four times that of South Fremantle "A" and "B" stations combined, but, of course, this will only be constructed progressively as the demand on the system grows.

The station at Bunbury will supply electricity both for the South-West system and to the metropolitan area and will ultimately be linked by mains running directly north through Waroona and Pinjarra to Perth, and by a ring main connecting up through Collie, Narrogin, Brookton, Pingelly, York and Northam with Perth. It is essential that such a large power station be built adjacent to an immense volume of relatively cold water, such as the ocean, in order that the efficiency of the turbo condensers may be high. Owing to the limited quantity of water available at Collie it is not economical to enlarge the power station beyond the capacity of the machines now being installed.

In order to cope with services for the rapidly increasing metropolitan population and at the same time make progress in overcoming arrears of work accumulated during the war, the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Department has been obliged to provide for a substantial programme of extensions and improvements. At Mt. Yokine work is proceeding on the service reservoirs, which are being installed to meet the increasing peak loads of summer. No. 1 reservoir is practically completed, and endeavours are being made to have the second reservoir of 30,000,000 gallons ready for service by the summer of 1950-51. The provision for these works is about £90,000. Other works in progress include the 36in. trunk main from Belmont to Mt. Yokine, and the 30-in. main from Mt. Yokine to Mt. Hawthorn. Mains are being laid across the new Causeway as the bridgework proceeds.

For new water supply projects, the amount provided in the current year is £150,000, including provision for work on a 30in. feeder main from Mt. Eliza to Swanbourne. Other new works proposed

include a third service reservoir at Mt. Yokine to meet the requirements of peak summer demand two years hence. The estimated cost of this reservoir is £130,000 but during the current year work will be largely confined to the commencement of excavation and preparation of tanks and will involve the expenditure of about £15,800. The more noteworthy of the remaining provisions for new works and improvements are for the concrete lining and general reconditioning of the trunk main from Canning Dam to Kelmescott, and for 12in. feeder mains in the metropolitan area.

In the sewerage section of the department, provision has been made for the expenditure of £300,000. For works in progress, the provision of £190,000 is made and covers reticulation extensions in the Fremantle, Claremont, Subiaco, South Perth, Bayswater, Perth and Midland Junction districts, the reconditioning of the main sewer between Lake Monger and the treatment works, the construction of additional digesters at the works, and the laying of the 21in. sewer line over the new Causeway.

An amount of £100,000 has been set aside for new works. Under this authority new sewerage areas are listed for construction during the year in Fremantle, Claremont, Subiaco, South Perth, Victoria Park, Bassendean and Midland Junction. The amount in the Estimates of last year for other water supply undertakings, including the comprehensive agricultural scheme and the Goldfields water supply was £799,000. Actual expenditure was £504,000.

Provision has been made for the expenditure of £800,000 this year on work connected with the comprehensive water supply scheme. The first stage of this scheme consists principally of the laying of steel mains to carry water through the areas to be reticulated, these to be followed at a later stage by the small distribution mains. Owing to shortages of coal, shipping hold-ups, etc. the output from the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. has been limited to such a degree that only a very small tonnage of steel plate has been available for the manufacture of pipes for these main conduits.

Because of the urgency of the scheme, the Government has been forced to place contracts overseas for the supply of the necessary steel plate, even though the cost landed in Western Australia has been approximately twice that of the Australian plate. Contracts have been let in Japan, Belgium, France and England for thousands of tons of plate. It is regrettable that the concentration by these countries on either the Korean war or defence needs has greatly retarded delivery of the plates, and progress is slower than was expected. It is hoped to have the whole of the main arteries laid within

three years, and the laying of the smaller reticulation pipes will be progressively pushed ahead as supplies of these pipes become available.

A contract has been let for a new electrically powered pumping station at Mundaring to replace Nos. 1 and 2 steam pumping stations now in operation. Another has been let for the two pumping stations to be installed on the Wellington Dam-Narrogin main. The Mundaring Weir raising, for which £250,000 has been provided on the Estimates, is making satisfactory progress. The top of the wall was raised 3ft. prior to June last. In regard to the Wellington Dam raising, £50,000 has been provided for this work during the current year. This will cover the preliminary operations such as preparation of foundations, erection of plant, camps, etc. As sections of the work at Mundaring Weir are completed, the men and equipment will be transferred to Wellington Dam.

As to country towns sewerage, £72,000 has been provided. At present the department is continuing the sewerage of the town of Albany, which was commenced approximately two years ago. The pumping station and rising main will be completed within a few months and connection of houses will then be proceeded with. Work on the sewerage of the central portion of the town of Collie has been commenced, and arrangements have been made with the Geraldton Municipal Council to take over the sewerage system of that town, to provide a new sea outfall, and convert the system from septic tank effluent to the treatment of all sewage, approved trade wastes, etc. The system will also be extended outside its present boundaries. Particular attention will be given during the current 12 months to water supplies to towns in the areas between Perth and Geraldton. The shortage of pipes, however, has seriously held up this work.

As regards agricultural areas water supplies, the provision of large key dams in the districts outside the boundaries of the comprehensive water supply scheme is being continued. It is intended to roof a number of these but, due to the housing position and the shortage of materials, this work has had to be postponed for the present. Once these key dams have been roofed and filled, the effect of droughts will be materially alleviated. Following the completion of Stirling Dam, the construction of new irrigation channels north and south of Harvey is being accelerated, as it is realised that production can be obtained only from the water stored in the dam by supplying it to the land in the form of irrigation. For this work £85,000 has been provided. Drainage of the large area of land between Albany and Denmark is progressing

slowly, at an estimated cost of £30,000, which has been provided on this year's Estimates.

A sum of £33,000 has been set aside for the completion of the Port Hedland water supply and £25,000 for the Wittenoom Gorge supply. An amount of £10,000 has been allocated for the improvement of stock routes in the East Kimberleys leading to the Wyndham Meat Works, the Commonwealth paying a similar sum. Loan funds are to be made available for the improvement to water supplies in North-West towns, also to hospitals, jetties and other stock routes.

For improvements at Fremantle harbour, £150,000 has been provided. These works will include the reconditioning of berths, the provision of sidings and rail connections at Leighton, work on the implementation of the first stage of the Tydeman plan, and additions to the bulk wheat buildings and equipment. An amount of £300,000 has been included for expenditure on the Bunbury harbour development scheme. Dumping of stone on the breakwater groynes is proceeding, also on the sand groyne extension on the east side of the bay, and on the new groyne being built immediately north of the Turkey Point cut. The Turkey Point cut will connect Leschenault Inlet to the ocean and will enable the Preston, Ferguson, Collie, Wokalup, Brunswick and Wellesley rivers to discharge direct into the ocean instead of into the Bunbury harbour, where their load of silt has previously been discharged.

For Albany harbour, £250,000 has been made available, the first stage of the proposed work involving the reclamation of approximately 60 acres of land and the construction of two deepwater berths. With regard to jetty improvements at Busselton, for which £20,000 has been provided, this involves lengthening the shipping berth and general improvement at the head of the jetty so that the handling of shipping may be facilitated. A sum of £1,000,000 has been allocated to cover a wide range of new construction work and improvements in regard to public buildings, this including education, hospital and other essential purposes.

Then again, £300,000 has been set aside for pine planting and forest regeneration, while £150,000 will be spent on pine plantations which, in view of the likely decline in hardwood output in the next thirty or forty years, will be expanded to supply plywood manufacturers, timber for cases and containers and probably raw materials for pulping and wall boards. For the current year the total provision for the development of agriculture, excluding forests, is £225,000 of which a substantial sum is represented by additional capital needed by the Rural and Industries Bank for expanding business.

Other important provisions relate to the reorganisation and remodelling of the abattoirs and saleyards, land purchases and development, and new buildings and improvements at research stations. A sum of £36,000 has been earmarked for the continuance of deep drilling operations at Collie, and £114,000 for development of mining, this including provision for general loans for the development of mines and erection of plant. Provision is being made for the purchase of a mobile compressor for hire to mine owners in the Marble Bar-Nullagine area.

For charcoal-iron production £225,000 is made available. During the last financial year £165,000 was spent on the charcoal-iron and steel industry. This sum is accounted for by an excess cost of operating, amounting to £56,000, and an increase in assets of £109,000. The loss on the operation of the works is being treated as preliminary expenses. The Loan Estimates for this year provide for the installation of a 200 k.w. diesel generating set to provide additional power. It is also proposed to install a pig machine to aid the production of pig-iron, a new blower for the furnace, additional facilities for the production of more charcoal and a suitable crusher for the ore which will be obtained from Koolyanobbing. When these plant additions have been made the annual production of pig-iron will be increased to 12,000 tons, sawn timber to 6,000 loads and acetic acid to 440 tons.

In this year's Estimates an amount of £125,000 has been provided for the purchase of a new vessel which will go into commission in the New Year. This is a single screw vessel powered by twin engines. The ship promises to be economical to operate, particularly on the side of fuel and maintenance costs. About the same size as the "Dorrigo" or the "Dulverton," it has a gross register of 2,700 tons with capacity for the carriage of about 37 passengers, 220 to 230 cattle, 140 tons of refrigeration, and 1,800 to 2,000 tons of general cargo.

An amount of £600,000 is available for the purchase of plant under the control of the Plant Engineer. It is hoped that heavy earth-moving equipment can be obtained through the Commonwealth dollar loan. Those are the main provisions in the Bill, but I might add that the Estimates were prepared prior to the increase in the Federal basic wage, which will have a marked effect on our ability to carry out the programme envisaged by the Estimates. It may be necessary either to curtail this programme or to obtain extra Loan funds. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Assembly's Further Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the conference managers' report.

Sitting suspended from 6.7 to 7.0 p.m.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [7.1] in moving the second reading said: This is the annual Bill to appropriate the amounts required for the services of the year as detailed in the Estimates of expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and the General Loan Fund, which have been passed by another place. A Supply Bill has already been passed granting £6,000,000 and this Bill authorises further supply up to the maximum detailed in Schedule "A".

The total amount required from the Consolidated Revenue fund is £26,739,549. Of this sum, £5,521,853 is permanently appropriated by Special Acts, and Clause 3 appropriates the balance £21,217,696, as summarised in Schedule "B". The estimated expenditure from the General Loan Fund is £16,798,276, and from the Public Account for Advance to Treasurer, £2,000,000, and these amounts are also appropriated by Clause 3 for the purposes set out in Schedules "C" and "D".

Clause 3 further confirms the appropriation of expenditure from "Advance to Treasurer 1949-1950," being the amount spent in excess of the sums voted for that year. Full details of this expenditure are set out in Schedules "E" and "F". Clause 4 of the Bill approves of expenditure from the Reforestation Fund, a summary of the proposed expenditure being supplied in Schedule "G".

Full details of the proposed expenditure were contained in the financial statement made by the Premier when introducing the Budget on the 28th September last. This speech, together with numerous returns and tabulations, has been printed in booklet form and made available to members. For this reason, I

do not think it is necessary for me to perhaps weary the House by recapitulating these details. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and *passed*.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: In accordance with the usual custom at this time of the year, it has fallen to my lot to extend good wishes and courtesies to you, Mr. President, to members and all those associated with the business of this Chamber. May I extend to you, Sir, particularly, the good wishes of all the members of this House. On their behalf, and on my own, I thank you for the courtesy and consideration you have extended to us all, and for the ready help you have always given us when the occasion required it.

I would like particularly to thank you, Sir, and all of the members of this House for their assistance and the consideration shown to me when I took over my ministerial responsibilities at short notice and quite unexpectedly. I would like to thank all parties for the consideration I have received. For me it has been a happy time in the realisation that members have been so co-operative. I also desire to place on record my appreciation of the service rendered by my colleague, Mr. Wood. He would like to have been here at the close of the session I feel sure, but unfortunately he had to leave today to pay a scheduled trip to the country.

My thanks are due to the Chairman of Committees and his deputies for the work they have done. There were times in the passage of Bills that the Chairman of Committees was called upon to face up to a very onerous task. He performed it on each occasion with credit and distinction. With regard to the officers of the House, I think we are all extremely sorry that the Clerk of Parliaments, Mr. Leake, has had to be absent on account of sickness. We all wish him a speedy recovery to his normal good health.

I would like to pay a special tribute to Mr. Sparks, who was called upon to take his place. He had to assume the full duties of the Clerk of the Council at short notice and we must all agree that he has carried them out particularly well. We know the strain that has devolved upon him, particularly during the last two weeks. We all appreciate how difficult it is at times to take over duties that are sometimes new. We have to re-

member that there are all sorts of other tasks that others have to perform and their duties were to them to some extent new as well.

Both they and Mr. Sparks who, of course, had to bear the whole of the responsibility for the conduct of the House, have rendered wonderful service and we are grateful to them. Mr. Browne and Mr. Courts have come to our assistance and have done a good job just as they have in past years. I cannot omit to mention the members of the "Hansard" staff, who have carried out their work, as always, with courtesy and efficiency. Mr. Roberts and his staff have also given us the attention that we would expect. On my own behalf, I am truly appreciative of those occasions when they went out of their way to assist me.

The members of the Press have always treated us very well and I join with my colleagues on the floor of the House in wishing them the compliments of the season. I hope that there will be a continuance of those good relations which have always existed between them and ourselves. If I might give a hint at this stage, I would like our Press friends always to bear in mind that under our system of parliamentary government there are two Chambers which are complementary to each other. The Press could render good service in presenting a balanced picture of the responsibilities of the two Houses in relation to each other. Once again I wish to express my very grateful thanks to all who have been so kind to me since I have been in ministerial office and my personal good wishes for the coming Christmas and the ensuing New Year.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: The Leader of the House seems to have covered all the ground usually traversed in the course of the sessional complimentary remarks. I desire to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the good health you have enjoyed throughout the session and I trust that happy condition will continue as it has during the past year. I am particularly grateful to Mr. Leake and subsequently to Mr. Sparks for the very great assistance they have at all times rendered to me in my capacity as Chairman of Committees.

I desire to thank the Deputy Chairmen of Committees for the ready help and assistance they have given to me at all times. I trust Mr. Leake will soon be restored to good health and that he will return to us next session. The members of the "Hansard" staff, of course, have carried out their task in the usual satisfactory way and made good speeches out of speeches that were not so good. We appreciate all they do for us. Mr. Roberts has always been a tower of strength in the conduct of his branch of parliamentary work and he and his staff have always carried out their jobs in a very able manner.

I thank members for the kindly consideration extended to me during some very strenuous times when we have been dealing with Bills. They have been very considerate and I appreciate it very much. I shall not labour the matter but shall wish members and everyone associated with Parliament House a very happy Christmas and, I trust, a peaceful 1951.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I desire to support the remarks of the Leader of the House and Mr. Dimmitt. Mr. Simpson may be an apprentice, so to speak, in ministerial office, but he has carried out his duties during the session in a splendid manner. There is no doubt that he has tact, and it has been a pleasure to work with him. Despite the diversity of opinion among members, the proceedings of this House have been conducted in a very happy manner throughout the session.

May I congratulate you, Mr. President, on the manner in which you have presided over the Chamber? I join with the Minister and Mr. Dimmitt in expressing great pleasure that you have enjoyed good health during the past 12 months. I hope that happy state of affairs will continue. I am sorry that Clerk of Parliaments, Mr. Leake, is so sick. Some of us saw him yesterday and we hope he will speedily recover and be back with us again. I endorse the remarks about Mr. Sparks and Mr. Browne. Every officer of the House has done a good job. All the officials, including the officers themselves, the dining-room staff, the waiters, the telephone assistants, and everyone else, including Mr. Courts, have rendered valuable assistance to us.

Considering the times in which we live and the great difficulty experienced in securing efficient labour, Mr. Roberts has certainly done a splendid job. He is surrounded by men and women who are a credit to Parliament House and to himself. I nearly forgot to mention my friends, the "Hansard" staff. They have always been a very great help to us and have carried out their difficult task in splendid fashion. I wish you, Mr. President, the Leader of the House, and everyone associated with Parliament House, a very happy Christmas and I pray for a peaceful New Year.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: On behalf of the Country Party members of this House, I endorse wholeheartedly all the kindly references made to you, Mr. President, and to members of the parliamentary staff. In Western Australia we are very fortunate in our officers. We seem to be able to select officers of the House who not only become of great assistance to us, but also our friends. I am certain we would miss any one of them because of the close relationships that exist between them and members generally.

May I offer my congratulations to the Leader of the House. He has done an excellent job.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That is particularly so considering his comparatively short association with the political life of this State. I consider he has done an outstanding job in this House during the past session. I offer my congratulations and thanks to him. I also express my very best wishes to you, Mr. President, and my thanks for the courtesies you have extended to me and the members of the party for whom I speak. My thanks are also extended to the officers, the "Hansard" staff and everyone else associated with the House. I cannot say more than those gentlemen are more than officials; they are our friends.

To the Press I want to say that while I and other members sometimes think we have not always received the deal we would like, generally speaking the Press treats us exceedingly well, much better than the politicians in the Eastern States are treated by the Press over there. Whether it is that the members of this House are better or that the Press is animated by more kindly feelings, I do not know.

I wish you, Mr. President, the Ministers, all members and the officers of the House a very happy Christmas. I trust that the war clouds that lower over the world will drift away and that with the clearing of the skies, peace will come to all lands. Again, I wish everyone a very happy Christmas and I trust a peaceful New Year.

The PRESIDENT: In expressing my appreciation of the very kindly remarks made by the Minister and other members, may I say that the work of this House has been carried out in the usual spirit of kindness and tolerance that has characterised its proceedings in the past. The standard set by members is a very high one and one which has made for the expeditious performance of our duties.

We have been unfortunate in that our Clerk, Mr. Leake, has been so seriously ill. We extend to him our sympathy and regrets that he has been laid aside. Mr. Sparks and Mr. Browne have carried on his work in addition to their own, with the assistance of Mr. Courts. That work has been done very efficiently, and those officers deserve our highest thanks and appreciation. The work of the "Hansard" staff and the typists has been performed in their usual quiet, but very efficient manner and I am sure we are all grateful to them for the way they edit our speeches and record the high standard of debate in "Hansard."

During the year, Mr. Roberts and his staff have carried out their work efficiently, and we have been well fed and looked after. No matter what time of the day or night we were working, always something was provided to cheer us up and enable us to carry out our duties satisfactorily. The Ministers have helped us generously. They have replied to ques-

tions asked in a way which has indicated that they have endeavoured to give the clearest answers and the greatest assistance to members. I feel sure they have maintained the high standard that has been established in this Chamber for so many years.

We are indebted to the Press for the consideration extended to us. Under present-day conditions, space is very valuable, but our debates have been reported in a way that has reflected a close interest in the proceedings and an endeavour to give to the people a clear picture of what we are trying to do.

I join with other speakers in expressing the hope that Christmas will be a time of brightness and rejoicing and that the year to come will be marked by a return to a spirit of understanding and sympathy between the nations in place of the antagonism that seems to be displayed today. I feel sure that if that could be achieved, not only would Western Australia advance by leaps and bounds, but the whole world would enter upon a period of prosperity and contentment greater than has ever been witnessed in the past. I trust that members will have a happy and a pleasant New Year.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to a date to be fixed.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 7.25 p.m.