

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 30th September, 1953.

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

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

As to Losses on Lines.

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Chief Secretary:

Has he yet received the information requested by me some time ago, regarding the losses incurred on certain railway lines?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

No. The information is still being compiled.

FORESTS.

As to Applications for Position of Conservator.

Hon. J. MURRAY asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) In view of the fact that the "Administration" file of the Forests Department contains papers relating to the calling of applications for the position of Conservator of Forests, will he inform the House why this file was not included with those tabled on the 22nd September, in accordance with the resolution passed by the House?

(2) Is he prepared to table this file now?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) The existence of such a file was unknown to the Minister for Forests. However, the file relates to the establishment and functioning of the Forestry Advisory Committee.

(2) Yes.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Maniana Scheme, Resumptions and Compensation.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Can he say whether the Minister for Housing has seen the report appearing on pages 1 and 4 in "The West Australian" of the 29th September, 1953, dealing with the Maniana housing scheme at Queen's Park, wherein it is reported that the high-handed manner in which the Housing Commission has resumed land in Queen's Park is deprecated by some of the residents of that area?

(2) Does the Minister for Housing agree with the report?

(3) Would it not be better for the Housing Commission to give some indication to the owners of land in circumstances such as these that their land is to be resumed for Housing Commission purposes, rather than exercise the obvious haste to resume that has been displayed in this particular resumption?

(4) Is the newspaper report to the effect that residents have been endeavouring over a period of time to build up an asset in their land by improving it for stock raising and gardening purposes, true?

(5) Is it agreed that hardship will be incurred by the residents who are having their land resumed?

(6) Is the fear of the people justified—namely that the Housing Commission's compensation would be only a small percentage over taxation values which were far below the price for which the land had been recently sold in that area?

(7) Will the Minister for Housing have regard to these facts with a view to providing proper and adequate compensation to the land holders concerned?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No.

(3) The normal procedure concerning resumptions provided under the Public Works Act, 1902, and State Housing Act, 1946-52, has been followed.

(4) This report is not supported by recent inspections prior to resumption. In determining the amount of land to be resumed, every effort was made to avoid existing improvements.

(5) No.

(6) No. Compensation will not be assessed by the State Housing Commission but in accordance with the Public Works Act, 1902.

(7) The Minister for Housing will not determine compensation as this will be assessed by an independent authority under the Public Works Act, 1902.

(b) As to War Service Homes, Loans and Building.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) What is the normal period of time which expires between the date of any application for a loan made under the War Service Homes Act to the time when an applicant is ready to commence building operations, where the application for a loan is lodged and accompanied by plans, specifications, local authority approval and a builder's contract price?

(2) Is there any foundation in the rumour that in future finality for applications for loans under the War Service Homes Act will not be reached in less than six months from the date of the application being made?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Now eight months.

(2) Yes, in accordance with instructions received on the 14th August, 1953, from the Commonwealth Government through the Director, War Service Homes.

LOAN COUNCIL.

As to Interest Rate on Loan Issues.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Does the Australian Loan Council determine rates of interest in respect of all Government loan issues?

(2) Does the council determine or approve rates of interest applicable to loan issues of semi-governmental instrumentalities?

(3) Did the council decide that a rate of interest of 4½ per cent. should attach to the £50,000,000 loan just launched?

(4) How long has that rate applied to Government loans?

(5) Does the retention of that rate of 4½ per cent. indicate that the Labour Premiers of New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia, declined to cast their vote in the council in order to secure a reduction of the rate of interest?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) Yes.

(4) Since November, 1952.

(5) No.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourteenth Day—Amendment.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, to which Hon. A. L. Loton had moved an amendment to add the following words:—

But this House expresses its profound concern that Your Excellency's advisers have seen fit to drastically increase railway freights in a manner calculated to increase greatly the cost of living in country districts, particularly in those more remote from the capital, to impose a heavy additional burden on primary industry and to discourage decentralisation, without at the same time taking radical steps to reduce railway costs and to improve efficiency; and further expresses its disapproval of the recently published policy by your Minister for Railways with reference to certain railway lines classed by him as unpayable.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central—on amendment) [4.37]: I rise to support the amendment moved by Mr. Loton. To my mind, there is only one thing wrong with it—the hon. member did not word it strongly enough. My friends on the Government side would not agree with that contention, but I think stronger words could have been used to show the people of the State that this House certainly does not agree with the proposed increases in railway freights and condemns the Government's action in this respect.

In the Governor's Speech, the first paragraph mentions that the State continues to make substantial progress. It goes further and says that business confidence is strong, employment is high, and rapid population growth has continued. If the State is showing such substantial progress, there should be no need for such a huge increase in railway freights. I should say that the Government's action would give the opposite impression. The Governor's Speech continues—

Ministers are disturbed by the huge loss being incurred on railway operations . . . By the end of this year the railways should be in a position to handle all traffic offering.

If the Government is confident that by the end of this year the railways will be in a position to handle all traffic offering—and it must be because it compiled this Speech for the Governor to read to Parliament—there should have been no necessity for it to increase railway freights to the extent it has. The Government should have enough confidence in the railways to feel that they would be in a position to handle all the traffic offering with a consequent greater return reducing the necessity to increase railway freights. A little further in the Governor's Speech we find this—

The serious position of railway finance has demanded closer attention to duplication by road services . . . The setting up of a Commission with full co-ordinating powers in respect of metropolitan passenger transport is under consideration.

It appears to me that quite a lot of the loss on the railways over the past years has been due to ineffective co-ordination of transport in this State.

Some years ago a Transport Board was set up. Apparently its main function was to levy fines on those who, one way or another, broke the law in respect of the Transport Act. From its operations it does not appear that it was much concerned about the co-ordination of road and rail transport, or about reducing the actual cost of transport in this State by that means.

Last year, when the Grants Commission visited Western Australia, it advised the then Government that a huge saving could be effected in the Railway Department, but up to date nothing seems to have been done in that direction. All that seems to have occurred is that there has been more expenditure, and more employees have been engaged. We find that taking place in every administration all along the line.

The Midland Junction railway workshops have an elaborate set-up for repairing rollingstock and such other machinery as is necessary for the maintenance of the railways. But I doubt very much if that elaborate set-up is being used to the best advantage. From information I have had passed on to me, if there were a tightening up in the Midland workshops where there is this elaborate set-up, a saving could be effected. It is little use having elaborate machinery with which to handle repairs or make parts for our railways, if the men are not going to use that machinery to the best advantage, or are not going to get every ounce they can out of it and out of themselves in order to see that the railways effect savings right through.

I asked some questions in the House some few weeks ago concerning railway earnings. It is apparent to me that the Transport Board does not seem to be concerned with transport in this State to the extent it should be. I asked a question concerning electric petrol pumps which are transported on our railways at the first-class rate. The first part of my question was—

How many electric petrol pumps have been transported by rail to country centres? and how many were transported by road to country centres?

The figure given in reply appeared to me to be staggering. I find that nearly three to one were sent out by road transport. In addition, they were sent by road transport

not only to the country centres, but to the very farthest part of our country runs, namely, to Esperance. Over the shorter distance 98 were sent by trains. Does that look as if the Transport Board is trying to make the railways pay, or does there seem to be something else behind it?

Recently a concession was made to farmers to enable them to cart their produce. Concessions are welcomed in the country. But those that have been granted by the Minister for Railways are to be completely nullified because the rise in freights will cost the farmers more, even if they do cart under those concessions. I can see the position arising where the farmers will cart as much of their stuff as possible so as to avoid having to pay the high railway freights, and in the long run our railways are going to suffer, and their earnings will become less and less. If that happens, it is probable that the Minister and the Transport Board will be compelled to remove the concessions. There is also the question of the passenger services throughout the State: not only in the metropolitan area, but also in the country districts. In some cases these services are overdone. I think that is another pointer towards a lack of transport co-ordination.

It appears to me that no effort is being made by the commissioners to cut the costs of the railways; not the slightest effort is being made. Let me refer to the town of Beverley where I live. There is a diesel train leaving Perth every morning at 7.30. On three or four days of the week a bus leaves Perth at 4.30 p.m. and goes through Beverley. Every night of the week a train leaves Perth at 7.20. That goes from Perth through Beverley. We have practically the same thing on the return trip. There is one train every morning, buses two or three times a week, and a diesel nearly every day. Most of the time these trains and buses are running half-empty. If the department calls that running a service efficiently, it seems to me to be a queer way of doing so. My opinion is that it is time the commissioners woke up and got their facts together concerning the passenger services and railway services generally.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Two days a week from Katanning there are only two diesels and no trains at all.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am talking about the sections that are being overdone, and there is no doubt that those sections exist. The same situation obtains on the East-West service from Perth to Kalgoorlie. It seems to me that the commissioners have gone a bit mad in the way they have put on buses and diesels and train after train for the service of passengers. The same applies to the metropolitan area. A larger system of transport has been introduced than previously existed in the metropolitan area. The bus services we have

around the city are not justified. The position is being overdone altogether. It is little wonder that the railway finances are in such a mess. I should have thought the Government's efforts would have been directed towards putting value back into the pound. This Government has always scoffed at the McLarty-Watts Government and the present Menzies-Fadden Government, and always asked when those Governments were likely to put value back into the pound. Our present State Government, however, is going the quickest way it can to take value out of the pound by imposing the increased railway freights on country people.

What is going to happen in the country? Not only the farmers but also the business men and the working men in the country will suffer. The working man in the country should not forget this. He will have to pay for some of these freights, and will that outlay be returned to him through the basic wage? No; he will have to pay it and bear it. The same will apply to other people living in the country.

The whole trend in this State seems to be to increase costs all the time. We have an instance in the recent assessment of water rates; the local authorities are following suit, and now the railways are having their turn. Where is it going to end? It will end with our country towns being denuded of business activity. People coming to the city will make their purchases there because they will be unable to stand the rising costs of freight. This must lead to the closing up of country towns and the end of the decentralisation policy.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Do you know of any big business in Beverley that has been closed up?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: No, but before long some will be doing so if the present trend continues. The hon. member does not realise what is happening in the country towns. If he got out a little into the country, he might understand the position. This is a matter that rests with the country people, not with this House, and I assure members that the country people are taking these increased railway freights very hard indeed, and that when the opportunity is afforded them, they will retaliate. The other evening I attended a public meeting in Qualradung, and the people there are particularly bitter about the railway freight increases, and justly so.

If this sort of thing continues and the country people who constitute the smallest portion of the State's population are penalised, it will not be long before they migrate to the city, with the result that in the course of a few years unemployment will be rife. It is all very well for the Government to say that it has not the requisite money to carry on the affairs of the State, but when we look around,

we find State enterprises, like Wundowie, showing a loss of £430,000 a year. But there is no squeal about that loss because it is a State enterprise that was started by a Labour Government.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Which Government appointed the Railways Commission?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am not complaining about that, but it does not condone the mess that exists at present, and it is up to the Government of the day to see that the Railway Commissioners do their job. They are paid to run the railways and to ensure that any savings possible are made.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: This rot in the railways did not start until the last six years.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It started in 1933, and for 14 long years after that, Labour Governments had charge of affairs in this State. What happened to the railways? Not a penny was spent on them. They were allowed to go absolutely to the pack, and that was the heritage of the McLarty-Watts Government in 1947. That Government had to clean up the 14 years of neglect by successive Labour Governments. Consequently, the hon. member should not endeavour to put the whole of the blame for the railway finances on the McLarty-Watts Government. In my opinion, the Commissioners are not doing the job they were appointed to do.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Your Government made it impossible for us to get rid of them.

Hon. L. Craig: Would you like to?

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Yes.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: This House should enter the strongest protest against the increased freights. When the Address-in-reply is presented to His Excellency the Governor, I should say that his feeling would be that he would not have much confidence in the present Government, seeing that it had compiled a Speech such as the one placed in his hands to be read at the opening of Parliament, only to find that this House has felt it incumbent to pass an amendment such as the one tabled by Mr. Loton. I support the amendment and trust it will receive the whole-hearted endorsement of the House.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South—on amendment) [4.56]: Before speaking to the amendment moved by Mr. Loton, I should like to take this opportunity, the first available to me, of congratulating Mr. Fraser and Mr. Strickland upon their elevation to ministerial office. Both of them enjoy the respect of every member of this House, and Mr. Fraser particularly has a place in our regard that should ensure a comparatively easy task for him in discharging the heavy duties he has undertaken. If any one of us has any regret at his appointment, it may be that

we realise he is not likely to occupy that position for long. To Mr. Griffith, I also extend congratulations on his election to this House.

Ample justification exists for Mr. Loton, or any other member of the Country Party, in moving an amendment condemning the Government's action in increasing railway freights. The Government's decision appears to be bad and ill-considered without due regard having been given to the effect of the increase on country interests particularly and the interests of the State in general. The present Premier, before he was returned to office, gave assurances on the hustings not only in respect to railway freights but also in respect to other charges imposed by the railways. Apparently there is now to be no increase in passenger fares and nothing worth while will be done to try to overcome the losses being incurred by the metropolitan railway passenger service. Last year the loss on that service amounted to £322,872.

Despite the Government's talk about decentralisation—it must have talked about decentralisation with the tongue in the cheek—apparently the only thing it can think of is to load still more heavily the people in the country who are already working under disabilities occasioned by an inept railway service. I believe that the charges now being imposed might well result in destroying quite an amount of business that legitimately belongs to the country, as mentioned by Mr. Baxter. In future, everybody travelling from the country to Perth will consider taking back a certain proportion of his requirements purchased in the city, though I do not doubt that the Transport Board will endeavour to restrict people in any operations of the kind. When that instrumentality gets over some trouble in which it may be at the moment I have no doubt that we will have an army of pimps all around the country checking on every vehicle that leaves the city for fear that it may contain a few groceries or something of that kind, and all to bolster up a department which will not try to render to the public the service it is there to render.

The railway system of this State has ceased to be a public utility and has become merely an avenue for the employment of a large number of men. The service it renders is poor and inefficient. Unfortunately—this is what concerns members representing country areas—country dwellers have to pay freight both ways, on everything they buy and on everything they sell, and in spite of that, there is no question of their receiving service from the railways. These people consign their goods by rail because they must. They are not allowed to forward them in any other way. I have become resentful of the remark that the railways are there to serve the farmer. Nothing is further from

the truth. The farmers exist today to serve the railways and provide employment for people who render no worthwhile service.

Hon. G. Bennetts: You could not do without the railways.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I think we could. I heard only today of a man who consigned wool from Wagin last Monday week, having already sold it. That wool was received in Fremantle this morning, and the buyer has been wondering whether he can afford to carry on with his undertaking. Had he been left to his own devices he would have put that wool on a truck and transported it to the store at Fremantle. Had he been able to do that, the wool would already have been on the high seas and he would have had his cheque for it. Any member who is in business will appreciate what that means; and, after all, a farm is a business. I had a circular saw consigned to me from Narrogin on the 14th September. I do not know whether it is at my siding now, but it was not there on Monday, after a fortnight's delay. One does not even receive courtesy or consideration when one complains of that sort of thing.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Goods are now sent at the Commissioners' convenience.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Yes, and at the owner's risk. The present administration of the Railway Department seems to have no idea of economy or co-ordination; and, while on that subject, I might add that the State Transport Co-ordination Board is there only to eliminate competition. We have the spectacle not only of the diesel trains to which Mr. Baxter referred, but also railway passenger buses being run parallel with the railways; while if anyone else attempted to run such a service within miles of a Government railway, he would be chased away as though he was infected with some obnoxious disease.

A further illustration of how little attempt at economy there is, and how little is the endeavour to co-ordinate the activities of the department—one that is already overstuffed, apparently, on the administrative side—is found in the fact that since last March 566 new employees have been engaged by the Western Australian Government Railways. From all the reports one hears one would think that on some active railway work there might be justification for this increase in the number of employees; but, of the 566 engaged this year, 28 are engine-drivers, 32 are cleaners and two firemen. Presumably the others have been added to those already on the administrative or dead-end side of the department. It is only the men in traffic who earn revenue for the department.

Even assessing the recent employees to whom I have referred at the basic wage, we find a minimum of £350,000 more per

year that has to be paid in wages, with only 62 extra men in traffic. I am not in a position to say whether the stories one hears about the higher administration of the railways are true, but there is an old adage that where there is smoke there is fire. I have heard talk of three commissioners, three assistants, and sundry others, all near the top; but I do not think it is only near the top that the trouble lies, although of course a start to remedy it should be made there. To the figures I have already given must be added £64,807 which I understand is the increase paid out in margins, penalty rates and so on since last March without any decision of the Arbitration Court.

That is the sort of thing that is being done, and yet we constantly hear this moan that the railways are losing money. The department will always lose money while the service is conducted on the present basis, and while the purpose of it is not to provide service to the people but merely to make available employment and pass on all the cost to the users of the railways. We have been given to understand that most of the £5,000,000 loss which we are told the Railway Department has suffered in the last 12 months was occasioned by the metal trades strike. If that is so, we must realise that certain people, a comparatively small group, who are prepared to flout the laws of the country and ignore the Arbitration Court and even their own properly-appointed leaders, are able, although they may lose a few weeks' or months' pay, to occasion a loss of about £5,000,000 to the greatest instrumentality under Government control in this State, and then the users of that instrumentality are forced to make the loss good.

Hon. H. Hearn: That strike cost £5 per head of the population of this State.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Perhaps my figures were a little high, but what is an odd million pounds or so for our railways? So far as can be ascertained, the strike centred largely round the Midland Junction workshops, a place which, to those familiar with industry, is simply a laughing stock, without even decent work or efficiency. It is a model of go-slow and ca-canny, where nobody cares and nobody tries because no one has to, as the costs are always passed on to the public and eventually to the producer who, as I have already stated, must pay freight both ways on everything with which he deals.

We have reached the stage where, with the recent freight increases, road transport can compete with the railways, or could if it were allowed to. Even now a licensed carrier is not allowed to cart superphosphate which, for years, as the high priests of the Railway Department bemoaned, was being carried by that service at a loss. If the superphosphate is still being carted at a loss by the railways,

road transport should be allowed to take it over. I have already been approached in respect of one district where the carriers could cart super cheaper than could the railways, if they were permitted to do so.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: They did not do it any cheaper during the metal trades strike.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: They did not have to face up to a 30 per cent. increase in freights. I do not think the position of our railways will ever be healthy until there is an element of competition brought into the picture. I do not for a moment believe that one can have uncontrolled road transport, but I am certain—it is there for all to see—that we cannot go on with a 100 per cent protected, inefficient, inept and wasteful railway service. The State Transport Board does not attempt to co-ordinate anything, although that is supposed to be its purpose. It is there merely to strangle private road transport operators and keep them away from the railways. I do not believe that the railways will ever attempt to render real service until the department has to face some measure of competition.

I repeat that competition is necessary, even if at higher rates, if we are to obtain satisfactory service. Apparently some lines are to be closed down by the Government and, if they are not to be pulled up, at all events they are to be allowed to fall into disuse. I believe that in some cases, if the people in the areas concerned could be assured by the Government that they would be entirely freed from restrictions under the State Transport Co-ordination Act, and would be provided with bitumen roads, they would be better off with road transport than with their present rail services.

I know that in country districts there is considerable feeling that the residents cannot afford to do without the railways, to which they have become accustomed; but with the increase in freights and the deterioration in service, and the certainty that within the next few years there will have to be further freight increases, I honestly believe that the people in a number of districts would be better off without the railways, under the conditions I have mentioned. Under those circumstances, the loss of their present rail services would be of real benefit to them.

Another instance was brought to my notice recently. I am quoting these instances only because some members honestly believe—because they do not know much about the position—that the railways are rendering good service to the primary producers. As an example, the W.A. Egg Marketing Board has an egg floor at Narrogin, and apparently the costs charged by the board for its services were heavy enough as it was sending the eggs to Perth by road. However, the State

Transport Board has stopped that practice and the eggs are now forwarded to the city by rail, with the result that the costs are twice as much. I think the freight charged by road was 1d. a dozen, and by rail it is now 2d. a dozen. That example tends to illustrate the lower returns that primary producers are receiving for their products. If this is the sort of policy that is to be followed, decentralisation is a misnomer, and industry in the country cannot prosper under such conditions. I have no doubt of the need to support the amendment.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland—on amendment) [5.17]: I do not wish to weary the House with a long speech, but I hope the remarks and the criticism I have to offer will prove to be constructive. I have no doubt that the amendment moved by Mr. Loton needs the support of the majority of members in this House because of the grave effect that the freight increase will have on the country people, especially when we realise that they produce the main wealth of the State. By these freight increases we are making a rod for their backs, and the repercussions eventually will have a bad effect on the whole economy of Western Australia. I admit that rail freight charges should have been raised to a degree, but it was not contemplated that such great increases would be put into effect as from tomorrow.

Too great a burden has been put on the users of the railways, especially when it is taken into consideration that no effort has been made to reduce railway administration costs. For example, since the 31st March, 1953, 560 additional employees have been placed on the railways staff, and in the metropolitan area extra trains have been put into traffic. The previous Government did make an effort to reduce costs by taking unpayable trains off the track, but the present Government has seen fit to increase the number of trains that were operating before the cut in rail traffic was made by the McLarty-Watts Government. Also, it has made a reduction in fares.

It seems to me that the Government has been ill-advised, either by the Minister for Railways or by the Railways Commission. I consider it has made a terrific mistake in placing those extra trains on the line and by reducing fares, because already it has been found that only one per cent increase in passenger traffic has resulted. In consequence, the whole of this additional burden has to be borne by the people in the country and will have an adverse effect, as has been outlined already by previous speakers.

In an article appearing in "The West Australian" dated the 29th September, 1953, appeared the following, dealing with replies given by the Minister for Railways to questions in another place:—

W.A. Rail Freight Lowest of All.

Railway freights in Western Australia were now, and would be after the rise on Thursday, lower than in the other States, the Minister for Railways (Mr. Styants) told the Legislative Assembly yesterday.

That would be the position, other than for a few short-distance hauls.

Mr. Styants said that freight rates varied considerably in all States.

The percentages differed greatly according to the commodity and length of haul.

The rates which would be effective in Western Australia from Thursday were about 15 per cent. below the average rates operating in other States.

Mr. Styants was answering Mr. Johnson (Lab. Leederville).

He said that if Western Australia charged the same rates as other States it was more than likely that they would cover working expenses, plus interest.

Such rates would possibly provide a surplus.

I have some figures here to refute the Minister's claim. I will not weary the House with all of them, but I propose to quote some on wheat freight rates. In New South Wales and Queensland the carting of a greater tonnage of wheat over long distance hauls is more prevalent than in Western Australia, and in the hinterland of those States the freight rates are higher, in some instances, than in this State. In Western Australia, the freight rate for wheat on a 50-mile haul is 27s. 9d.; in South Australia it is 21s. 9d.; in Victoria, 25s. 10d.; in New South Wales, 21s. 6d.; in Queensland, 21s. 7d. Therefore, over that distance, rail freights in Western Australia are the highest of all States.

For a haul of 100 miles the rate in Western Australia is 33s. 5d. per ton; in South Australia, 30s.; and in all the other States the rates are comparable with that charged in Western Australia.

For distances of 150 miles and up to 200 miles, the freight rate in South Australia is still shillings per ton below that in Western Australia, but in some of the other States it is increased by shillings per ton. For the cartage of super, the freight charges in Western Australia are by far the highest when compared with other States. The Western Australian rate, over a distance of 50 miles, is 27s. 9d. per ton; in South Australia, 12s. per ton; in Victoria, 13s. 10d. per ton; in New South Wales, which is said to have the highest freight charges of all, it is 17s. per ton; and in Queensland it is 18s. 10d. per ton. The rail distances then range upwards to

400 miles and over that distance the freight rate for superphosphate in Western Australia is 60s. 2d.; in South Australia, 26s. 9d.; in Victoria, 45s. 6d.; New South Wales, 38s., and Queensland, 49s. 4d.

In view of those figures, how the Minister can say that our rail freights are cheaper than those in other States is beyond me. When it is considered that the rates charged for the cartage of wheat and super represent nearly one-third of the total railway revenue, it is easy to understand how hard the country people will be hit by these freight increases. As I said before, they will have to bear the brunt of these increases and the people in the city—for what reason I do not know, except perhaps for vote catching—will not be asked to bear any of the increased charges and will enjoy the benefits of cheap rail fares, which, in effect, the country people are paying for.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The people in the metropolitan area are always lucky.

Hon. A. R. JONES: The telescopic freight rates, as mentioned by Mr. Loton the other evening, are such that the effort made by the previous Government to grant those people living in the far distant areas some reasonable relief from high rail charges, as compared with those living closer to the metropolitan area, has been absolutely defeated by shifting wheat from one freight rate classification into another. Therefore, the people living in the country will be more heavily hit than ever before. An increase of £1 per ton for the cartage of wheat seems to be definitely unreasonable. Such action leaves no doubt in my mind that whoever worked out this formula for the freight increases had no business acumen or any idea of what constitutes a fair deal.

The "Farmers' Weekly" is a publication which I hope all city members read, because I think it is the best newspaper published in Western Australia. It gives more fundamental knowledge and news of country activities as a whole than any other newspaper in this State. In its issue dated the 24th September, 1953, it has a very interesting article, and although I do not propose to quote the whole of it, I will read extracts for the information of members. In this article the newspaper has published a list of the percentage increases of freights over the last five years from 1948 to 1953. Although the cry over recent years has been that farmers have been protected by the State and have not had to pay unreasonable freight rates on super and wheat, from this article it appears that since 1948 to date super freight charges have risen by 654 per cent. I am not denying that the freight charges were due for some increase, but to increase them by such a high percentage within only four years and then expect the farmers to be happy about it does not make sense.

From August, 1948, to October, 1953, the increase in rail freights for the cartage of wheat over a distance of 150 miles has been 212 per cent. Wool, which has always carried a high freight charge—even in 1948 it was 44s. 6d.—now carries a freight rate which shows an increase of 149 per cent. on the 1948 figure. Stock, the freight charges on which have also been high—£5 per truck in 1948—are now carried at a freight charge showing an increase of 114 per cent. over the 1948 figure. I do not know what Class "C" goods are, but this article states that they include cement tanks, bricks, butter, galvanised iron, lubricating oils and most timber. The freight charges on these goods have risen by 170 per cent. since 1948, and, as Mr. Thomson has said, that will not help to reduce the cost of homes.

This article also states that first-class goods include most fuels, agricultural machinery, iron tanks and several lesser-used items, and most grocery lines. The charges on those goods, since 1948, have risen by 113 per cent. Throughout, it is clear from those figures, that one section of the community will bear the burden of these freight rises. It is no wonder that the people in the country are upset, and that we often hear the question, "What are you going to do about the freight increases?" I can only suggest we are doing the best we can about the matter; and we trust very much that the Minister, if he is listening, will take to Cabinet when it meets again the arguments submitted in this House. Quite a number of charges of inefficiency have been made against the Railway Department. In recent times I have had one or two experiences of that inefficiency.

Only two months ago I went to the goods office in Perth to see if there was a parcel for me, and stood at a window where there was supposed to be an attendant. At the next window an officer was busy with a client, and further along six or seven men were leaning over the counter doing nothing. One was leaning from my side and talking to the others. I stood there for seven minutes before he inquired whether I wanted something. My reaction was fairly terse. I told him I thought he must be on holidays. That is one instance of inefficiency sticking out a mile. That fellow had no concern for me or as to what I was there for.

Hon. H. K. Watson: What were the others doing?

Hon. A. R. JONES: They were leaning over the counter and talking. I do not know what they were talking about, because I was not close enough to hear. I had another instance of inefficiency related to me at Geraldton last week. A man had some very high priced-rams railed to Geraldton from another part of the State. Their total value was £1,000. Those rams were shunted on to a line that was not a stock line where he could un-

load them. He made approaches to the station-master and was told there was no engine available, and he had to take a truck over two sets of lines in order to remove the rams. That sort of thing is not fair, especially when there is a freight rate of £22 a truck from this part of the State to Geraldton.

During the railway strike last year I had the experience of having my wool clip divided, half going to one sale and half to another, as a result of which I had a net loss, because of the drop in the price, of something like £300 or £400. This year I made sure that I would not have that sort of thing occur again. I kept the clip on the farm until it could be loaded on the trucks and all of it leave on the same day. In spite of that, one truck turned up at the wool shed five days before the other. I was fortunate that the closing date of the sale did not come within those five days, otherwise the clip would have been split again, with a possible loss to me of about £1,000. Where the other truck went to I have never been able to find out. It was shunted off the line and arrived five days later. That sort of thing is not service.

The same applies to super. A man is informed that super has left the works on the 1st of the month and, by the 10th, he is very concerned as to where it can be. After making an investigation, he finds that it is on one of the loops further down the line! I have had the experience of having to take a motor truck 30 miles and lift super from a railway truck in order to carry on seeding operations. Those are examples of inefficiency in the Railway Department.

Something has been said about the Midland Junction workshops. I can give instances that definitely indicate inefficiency. A very great friend of mine who had worked on a farm all his life found it too hard to continue, came to Perth, and obtained a job at the workshops. I met him at a football match not long ago. He is a reliable man, of whom I am prepared to take a good deal of notice. He said he was semi-retired as he was working at the Midland Junction workshops. He declared he had never seen such a scramble in all his life as when the whistle blew at the workshops at knocking-off time. One had either to duck into a laneway or run with the crowd, or else be trampled to death. He said that was the only time the men hurried during the whole of the day. Some of the men are to be seen crossing the railway bridge when the whistle blows. I have watched that myself. Such conduct shows some inefficiency in the handling of the men. I am not going to blame them, because I suppose I would do the same if I had an opportunity; but such things are proof of inefficiency.

In the workshops there is an old hand who has been there 30 years and has given of his best. Probably he still does. He told me that he is very alarmed at the general trend of the workless workers at the workshops. He told me that on Wednesdays, when races are held at Northam and various places, there is no difficulty in the men having bets at the workshops. There is a wireless from which they can obtain the results of races, and payment of winning bets can be made before they return to their homes.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Is it possible to ring up from here?

Hon. A. R. JONES: I do not know. But apparently something needs looking into; because if that sort of thing is taking place, it is no wonder that our railways do not pay, and that the workshops are not an efficient part of the system.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Mr. Lavery said that he had visited the workshops, and he reported favourably upon them. He said it was a very efficient place.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I have no doubt that Mr. Lavery is a good toiler himself, but he may have favoured others in making a report such as that.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: Mr. Simpson defended it.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I doubt whether it is the truth. Mr. Simpson is not always right, either! Mr. Roche made some reference to the possibility of road transport competing with rail transport now that freights have been increased. I can submit instances of where road transport was able to compete with rail transport even last year, when the increased charges had not been made. On account of the strike, my own wool had to be taken by road, and it was carted from the farm to the brokers at a cost of 1s. per bale less than I would have had to pay to have it taken by rail. To have a full truck-load of fuel delivered by rail and thence carted by truck to the farm cost £31. To have the same quantity delivered direct from Perth by truck would cost £23, a saving of £8. I suggest that, except perhaps with regard to the cartage of wheat, road transport can compete with rail transport even at present.

Hon. L. Craig: But you would not like to have the railways pulled up altogether?

Hon. A. R. JONES: I certainly would not. The railways exist to do a job, but they must do it efficiently and profitably. We cannot have a continuance of the practice that has prevailed in the last few years. If ever there was a time when we should pay heed to the suggestion of Dr. Hislop to follow the lead of South Australia and set up committees of parliamentarians to investigate the management of various departments, and undertakings likely to cost large sums of money, that time is now.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: You would have a lot behind you in that.

Hon. A. R. JONES: I hope the amendment will be passed and that the arguments submitted will be considered by the Ministers and supported by members opposite, because I feel that out of this debate have come some good suggestions of which notice should be taken. I would be very pleased indeed if effect were given to Dr. Hislop's proposal.

There is another thing to which I would like to refer, concerning replies to questions. It does not seem that information which is sought is obtained. On Wednesday, the 23rd September, the Minister for Transport was asked the following questions by a member in another place:—

(1) What staff was employed at the Moora railway station for the year ended the 30th June, 1953?

(2) What was the tonnage consigned to Moora for the year ended the 30th June, 1953?

(3) What was the tonnage consigned from Moora for the year ended the 30th June, 1953?

The reply received was that the information was not available as Moora is on the Midland Railway Company's line.

On the 24th September, the same member asked similar questions relating to Toodyay railway station. The purpose behind the questions was to obtain some idea of the efficiency of one railway system as compared with the other. The tonnage of paying traffic consigned from Toodyay railway station, according to the Minister's reply, was 3,299 tons. The only figures that have been available with respect to Moora concern wheat consigned from that station. This, in 1953, amounted to 3,579 tons, as against a total tonnage of 3,299 tons from Toodyay. I do not know what sundry goods would have been consigned from Moora, but it would probably be twice the quantity handled at Toodyay.

I was able to ascertain that five men are employed at Moora. From the report of the Railways Commissioners, I learnt that for 1951-52 the number of persons employed at Toodyay was seven. In view of the fact that 560 more employees have been added to the staff since the 31st March of this year, I presume that there are at least nine or ten at Toodyay now. I have been told that there are 14 but discounted that figure in view of the Minister's reply to a question in another place that there were only three. That is a deliberate lie. Whether it was meant to mislead members or to cover up some inefficiency, or whether the Minister was misled by the Commissioner, I do not know, but I make a strong protest against questions being answered so badly and, in fact, with lies.

Hon. H. K. Watson: How many did you say are employed at Toodyay?

Hon. A. R. JONES: I was told by a resident of Toodyay that there were 14. I know that the figure given in the report of the commissioners, and applying to the number of employees two years ago, was seven so I have no doubt there are still at least seven, and probably more. Yet the tonnage handled at Moora, where five men are employed, is double that handled at Toodyay. I have pleasure in supporting the amendment.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan—on amendment) [5.43]: My contribution to the debate on this amendment will not occupy much space in "Hansard" because I do not know anything about the running of railways. But I would like to sympathise with the Minister and the Government who had to raise railway freights. I also sympathise with the members of the public who have to have a railway system administered under the present method. Between the two, we find ourselves in the position in which we are placed today with Mr. Loton moving an amendment of this sort.

My experience of the railways is that they cannot be run efficiently from a business point of view, no matter how many commissioners there might be—whether it be one or five—while there is somebody sitting above them able, on political grounds, to alter their decisions or tell them how to organise their enterprise. I do not think it is possible for that to occur and at the same time for us to expect efficiency.

I do not believe any Government has been game to put the railways on a proper basis. In my opinion the railways of this State have been organised on a purely political basis, and very often they have been the centre to which men—quite often unfit men—have been sent for employment. I say that advisedly, because in the years before I came into this House I did a lot of work under the Workers' Compensation Act, and on different occasions when men had to be rehabilitated after an accident, advice came from high up to send them to the railways for employment. I do not see how any business can be run on those lines. Everyone agrees that injured men should be rehabilitated, but I do not see why one organisation should be the centre for their rehabilitation. I do not know whether that still goes on, but I know that it did before I entered the House.

The other factor in regard to railways that we must consider carefully is their relationship to expansion within the State. I feel we would be much better off if we said, "We will this year set aside a sum of money—£1,000,000 or £3,000,000 as the case may be—which we consider the railways should have in return for their efforts towards expansion within the State". Then we would say to the Commissioners, "It is your business to make

the railways pay," and we would keep the political side completely out of the railways. I think that we would then get down to a basis of an efficient railway system, and one that was not a burden on the public purse.

Another suggestion I would make is that the suburban railway service be discontinued for a trial period of one or two years, or perhaps longer. The number of trains that pass Perth to Fremantle, and probably to Midland, and are almost empty is truly amazing. The system has been completely outmoded by the expansion of ordinary road transport. In regard to goods traffic, I suggest that Midland, Perth and Fremantle be the only unloading points and distribution centres. I say this because I have asked that the suburban service be discontinued. I have been told the staffs at the various stations between Fremantle and Midland must be retained in order to maintain a freight rate, but I cannot see that that is justified, and I would make Midland, Perth and Fremantle the distributing centres.

Hon. H. Hearn: It could not possibly work.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: It probably would. Another point that could be considered is that the country traffic leaving Perth could go express to Midland Junction. In that way we could dispense with the staffs at the intermediate stations. That is a suggestion which should be considered, even though it may ultimately be found to be unworkable. I believe it has possibilities. When we realise that the loss on the suburban traffic is something like £3,000,000 per annum, we must do something along these lines or else continue to increase freights to the country, and that, as the country members have pointed out, can lead only to disaster.

I make the suggestion because it was only a short time ago when the Minister for Railways in another House made the statement that buses, to the value of £250,000, were lying idle because they were over-ordered. Therefore there would be no difficulty in organising a suburban passenger service between Midland and Fremantle. Not only would we save on the actual staffs, but the large number of engines and carriages running between Perth and Fremantle would not need to be replaced, so that the capital set aside for that purpose would be saved.

I suppose that suggestion, like all others made in this House, will be wiped off by someone and then, in 10 or 12 years' time, possibly, it will be brought forward as the advice of the department. I suggest that serious consideration be given, if not to the suggestions I have made, to some others for the limiting of the expenditure on the suburban passenger traffic; and, in fact, on all the traffic in the metropolitan area.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland—on amendment) [5.52]: I have endeavoured to find out just what the cost of the increase in freights will be to individuals in the country. Had Cabinet looked at the matter from the same angle, it probably would have altered its tune. I feel it has no idea of how the increase is likely to affect the country people. It is obvious that the Government was imbued with only one idea, namely, to raise sufficient money to carry out some of the impossible promises it made during the election campaign. It had no thought for what the worker, producer, or storekeeper in the country would have to pay.

A producer—he would be a little above the average, perhaps—producing 5,000 bushels of grain and marketing 37 bales of wool and roughly 250 sheep over a distance of 150 miles will, in 12 months, on these three items pay an additional amount of £131 in freight for which he will have no hope of getting reimbursement in any way. In the first place, he will pay extra on the super which he uses for top-dressing or to grow the grain. He will pay extra freight on his fuel and machines, and on his wheat when it is sent to the port, but he will have no chance of passing it on to anyone else. Apart from the three items on which he will pay an extra £131, there are many incidentals on which he will have to pay increased freight.

Unfortunately I have not been able to get the percentage of costs represented by rail freights on articles into store. Why the business people have not been able to give me this figure, I do not know. I do know this, however, that one hardware merchant in Geraldton will pay approximately £1,500 extra per annum in freight. If we multiply this figure by the number of storekeepers in Geraldton, we will begin to realise just what the people outside of the city will pay as a result of the increase. The man in the city will not be paying it.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: He will be paying his share.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: On what?

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Prices will go up in the city.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The price of wheat and eggs is fixed, and the price of wool and tomatoes is fixed in the market. The man here will not pay anything extra. The person who buys a case of tomatoes is not going to worry because the Geraldton man has to pay another 9d. freight per case. The tomato grower will have no opportunity of passing on the extra.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: No, but the storekeeper will pass it on to the general public.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Not if he is buying at the same price as he is today. The small grower producing 2,000 cases of

tomatoes a year will pay £75 extra in freight, with no possibility of passing it on to anyone else.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: What freight did he pay for road transport to the Eastern States?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Something like 10s. It was a case either of paying that or of going out of business altogether. And do not forget that at that particular time the growers were getting something like 42s. a case for tomatoes in Melbourne! If the hon. member would like to debate this matter, he is quite at liberty to do so. We have been twitted at different times by the Leader of the House because of our silence on various matters. It is obvious where the silence is now.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I am not very silent.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Hop up on your feet, and let us hear you.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I point out, too, the increase that will apply to petrol and distillate in the country areas. Those who live more than 77 miles from the ports will have to pay an increase of ½d. a gallon. If they live more than 120 miles, they will have to pay an extra 1d.; if more than 170 miles, they will have to pay 1½d. extra; and if more than 230 miles, an additional 2d. These places are paying something like 4s. 3d. a gallon now for petrol. In future, the extra they will pay on distillate will be 1d. for 66 miles; 1½d. for 101 miles; 1½d. for 144 miles; and 2½d. for 220 miles. For lighting kerosene the extra will be 1d. for 57 miles; 1½d. for 77 miles; 1½d. for 147 miles; and 2d. for 202 miles. The city user will not pay anything more.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: He does not use lighting kerosene.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: He uses petrol, but he will not pay any more. Some people in the city use distillate, and some use lighting kerosene in refrigerators. It will be the outback and the goldfields areas—

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: You were not much of a champion of the worker last year in connection with the Workers' Compensation Act.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Does the hon. member recall what I said on the Workers' Compensation Bill last year?

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I remember plenty.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I do not think the hon. member does. I can remember what members of the Labour Party have said before with regard to our railways.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Do not bring that up!

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It is down in black and white for everybody to read.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Then why keep repeating it?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Mr. Hall, when speaking earlier in the session, mentioned the goldmining industry, particularly the mine at Big Bell. I know something about Big Bell, because at one time it was in my province. I know that the company is working on a very fine margin, and the previous Government spent £100,000 in trying to keep it going. If these increased freights will impose a further expenditure of £10,000 a year on the company, I do not see how the mine can possibly last. If it does fail, what will happen to the machinery, the houses, and all the men employed there?

Hon. A. L. Loton: What will happen to the children?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Where will these people go? I do not know. I do not see how this particular company can absorb the proposed increases in freights. Apparently Cabinet has not given the necessary consideration to what will happen in the outback areas of the State. If the Minister in charge of the House took the same interest in this subject at Cabinet meetings as he has during the debate, then I can understand why freights are to be increased. These increases simply mean that the fellow outback will be called upon to pay for the inefficient running of the railway service. I object to that, and so does every person who lives in the outback areas. If the railways were run on an efficient basis but it was still found to be necessary to increase freights, I would not object; but I do object to one section of the community being called upon to pay for inefficiency.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Why did not the previous Government check up on all this inefficiency?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I blamed the previous Government just as much as I am blaming this one. I do not care which Government is involved. I mentioned the inefficiency to one of the Ministers in the previous Government, and he said, "What can you do about it?" I replied, "That is a poor attitude to take. Let us get down to some work and do something about it." I hope Ministers of the present Government do not take the same attitude as did Ministers of the previous Government.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It looks as though they do.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Some mention has been made of inefficiency, and people have asked, "When did it start and where does it exist?" I say that the inefficiency started when the departmental manager lost the right to hire and fire. It can all be traced back to those days and, irrespective of whether a worker is doing his job or not, the boss has no power of dismissal. A man is appointed and, in order to see that he carries out his job, the authorities appoint somebody as an overseer. In order

to see that the overseer carries out his job, a further inspector is appointed. So it has gone on, and we have inspectors inspecting inspectors all over the place. Consequently, men in the department have lost heart and, because of this inefficiency, country people are to be called upon to pay increased freights. That is entirely wrong, and the country people will tell the Government all about it in no uncertain terms.

Let us look at the effect which these increased freights will have upon the cost of a house for a working man. A two-bedroom Commonwealth-State rental home in Geraldton will cost an extra £42 10s. because of these freight increases. Those figures are not the result of guesswork; they have been calculated to the last penny. Yet this is the Government that was elected to look after the workers! Although these freight increases will result in an extra charge of £42 10s. on a two-bedroom house, the total extra charges will amount to £170—that is, for the freight of all the material necessary. These extra costs for freight must, in turn, increase the rent per week, and this has all happened when we in Western Australia thought we would see costs settling down as a result of the Federal Budget. Unfortunately, the Government of this State now wants to increase railway freights, keep the entertainments tax in force and push up water rates and, instead of people being able to enjoy some reduction in the cost of living, we shall find that it will inevitably increase.

Already, at sheep sales in country districts, people who deal in stock are deducting the extra freight charges from their market prices, and on top of that they are deducting the extra freight which they will have to pay when they send the stock to Midland Junction. These extra charges amount to approximately 1s. 9d. per sheep. Yet we find that some people tell us the city fellow will pay. The city-dweller will probably pay an increased price for timber which is transported to the metropolitan area from the South-West. But that is the only commodity which will affect him. I think I have made the position perfectly clear. The hotelkeeper in Mingenew will pay a further £450 per annum in railway freights. This means that the working men will pay extra for their beer.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: That will depend on the Prices Commissioner.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The Prices Commissioner cannot refuse to increase the price, in view of the increase in rail freights.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It has been done in the past.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The storekeeper at Corrigin will pay another £750 per annum in rail freights, and that too will have to be passed on to consumers in that district.

Now I come to the question of pulling up our railways. I can well remember two debates we had in this House on that question, and I can recall what some members had to say about it. Several of them joined with me in opposing such a move, and I only hope that those members will again side with me when any measure which has as its object the pulling up of some of our railway lines comes before the Chamber. It seems incredible that in a young country such as this, which has been for only 125 years settled we should talk about pulling up our railway lines. Surely we have sufficient faith in this country to know that we will develop it! What are we going to do with all the immigrants and the natural increase in our birthrate over the next 20 years? Are we going to clutter up the seaboard, or are we going to try to induce them to populate our outback areas?

Hon. A. L. Loton: The Government will try to get them to the metropolitan area so that these people will not have to pay increased railway freights.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: The Government wants to get them all down at Kwinana.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Surely we have sufficient faith in this country to know that we will develop it eventually! If a railway line is pulled up, all we get out of it is about 10 per cent. of its value. The policy of pulling up railway lines is quite wrong, especially when such lines are serving the outback parts of the State. When Mr. Simpson was Minister for Railways, and he mentioned that he intended to use diesels for the metropolitan-suburban service, I criticised him and said that he had ordered too many. If this Government thinks that it can run diesel passenger services to the same extent as the previous Government had in mind, I will criticise it, too.

If members look at a map of the metropolitan area they will find there is a railway line from Fremantle to Bellevue, and one from Perth to Armadale; they are fixtures that cannot be moved. Some time ago, the railways were able to cater for 10 per cent. of the passenger traffic offering in the metropolitan area, but as Perth has grown in size since that time, the percentage must be now about 7. The bigger Perth grows, the lower the percentage must be. Therefore, why suggest an increase in our suburban services when the provision of such a service would increase the costs of the railways and would result in little additional revenue?

So I hope the Government will give further consideration to the effect that this decision to increase railway freights will have on the people I have mentioned. If the Government obtains additional information, it might give further thought to the problem and, despite the fact that it wants money, there are other sources

from which it might be obtained and other undertakings which could be curtailed. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment moved by Mr. Loton.

On motion by Hon. H. K. Watson, debate adjourned.

BILLS (5)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Entertainments Tax Assessment Act Amendment.
 - 2, Collie-Griffin Mine Railway.
 - 3, Nurses Registration Act Amendment.
 - 4, Vermin Act Amendment.
 - 5, Adoption of Children Act Amendment (No 2).
- Received from the Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 6th October.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.20 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 30th September, 1953.

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