

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 29th August, 1979

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

RAILWAYS

Closure: Urgency Motion

THE PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths): Honourable members, I have received the following letter from the Hon. F. E. McKenzie addressed to me as President. It reads—

Dear Mr. President,

Re: Systematic Dismantling of the W.A. Railway System with Particular Reference to the Proposed Cessation of Passenger Services on the Perth-Fremantle Railway on the 2nd September, 1979.

In accordance with Standing Order No. 63 I wish to advise you of my intention to move today for the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing the above matter.

My reason for moving the urgency motion is because over the last two years the State Government has set about dismantling the W.A. Railway system. Its action appears to be systematic. Evidence in support of this statement is listed hereunder.

DATE	DISMANTLING PROCESS
1. 31.10.1977	Cessation Freezer Services to Public.
2. 1.12.1978	Cessation Albany Passenger Rail Service.
3. 1.5.1978	Closure Mullewa-Meekatharra Rail Service.
4. 3.7.1978	Partial Closure of Perth Parcels Depot.
5. 30.4.1979	Closure Fremantle Parcels Depot.
6. 2.9.1979	Cessation Perth-Fremantle Passenger Service.

I believe it is necessary to bring this matter under the attention of Honourable Members of the Legislative Council before the passenger services cease operating on the Perth-Fremantle railway line. As you are aware it is the Government's intention to

implement this decision on Sunday, September 2nd, 1979.

In my opinion we need to debate the proposed closure because the Legislative Council has not done so in this Session. It may well be that following the debate the Government will reverse its decision to proceed with the closure.

Furthermore, there is a rising tide of public opinion which is opposed to the closure despite the Government having had ample opportunity to state its case. A recent McNair Anderson Gallup Poll indicated that 82 per cent of those interviewed wanted the rail passenger service to continue. Another Poll, commissioned by the Sunday Independent produced a similar result.

The issue has been debated in almost every forum except the Legislative Council. It is of paramount importance to the people of Western Australia and, therefore, it is essential that the opinions of the Members of the Legislative Council should be known to the Government prior to the 2nd of September, 1979.

Yours faithfully,

FRED MCKENZIE, M.L.C.

Member for East Metropolitan Province
in the Legislative Council.

THE HON. F. E. MCKENZIE (East Metropolitan) [4.48 p.m.]: I move—

That the Council at its rising do adjourn until Monday, the 3rd September, at 11.00 a.m.

THE PRESIDENT: On this occasion, in compliance with Standing Order 63, it is required that four members must indicate their support by standing in their places.

Four member having risen in their places,

The Hon. F. E. MCKENZIE: In accordance with the terms of my letter, and the matters mentioned therein, I wish to enter into the debate because the Government is fast running out of time in which to alter its decision to close the Fremantle-Perth railway service.

I know that members in this Chamber are fully aware of the debate which has taken place outside.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: While I appreciate you have written to the President, do you think other members might have copies of the letter?

The Hon. F. E. MCKENZIE: Copies are available, if members will indicate they would like to have one.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: I thought you wanted all members to know about this matter.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Clerks have advised me that copies are being prepared and will be available to members.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Members will certainly have an opportunity to peruse copies of the letter before I have finished my contribution to this debate.

Of course we must look at the terms of the letter. On this occasion we have a chance to influence the Government because the Fremantle-Perth line is not yet closed. I thought I should bring to the attention of members the fact that this systematic dismantling process is going on and I believe it is important that it should be stopped right now before the closure of the Fremantle-Perth line because its closure will be another nail in the coffin of the railway system. Then the Perth booking office in City Arcade will be closed in December, 1980. That means that another service being operated by Westrail will be withdrawn from the public. I understand that it will be replaced by agents who will sell tickets at centres throughout the city. However, in my opinion such a system will not meet the needs of the people who naturally go to a railway station when they want to book seats on a train.

Recently I wished to book a seat on the *Prospector* and so I decided to purchase my ticket at the booking office in City Arcade. It was not necessary for me to book at this office, but I undertook the exercise to observe the service offered to the public. I discovered that many people are disgruntled at the service being offered. It took me an hour to book my seat and I did not like what I saw on that occasion. I was told that one member of the staff was away sick, but obviously no attempt had been made to replace that person. Certainly the people purchasing tickets on that day were very upset at the long delay.

I must mention that the staff members were most courteous to the public, but it is certainly not good to have people waiting so long to purchase tickets. Tourists are prepared to spend a great deal of money to travel on interstate trains, but they certainly do not want to wait around for an hour or so for the privilege of spending that money. I again point out that the staff did all they could on that occasion.

We know that this booking office is to be closed next year, and after that we will be faced with the recommendations of the Southern Western Australia Transport Study. Looking at those recommendations, it is quite obvious that unless

the Government comes to grips with the problem and decides that service to the people is more important than a simple decision on economic grounds, we will have more and more difficulties in the future. The Meekatharra-Mullewa service has been fragmented, and it is now more costly for people who want to send goods to places not serviced by Westrail.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I do not think that quite ties in with your argument.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: When I say that the system is being fragmented, I mean that people sending goods, say, from Albany to Meekatharra, must use the services of two freight hauliers and this is very expensive.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: It is only in regard to some goods that it is more expensive—not for others.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: People who send any type of commodity from Albany find that it is now more expensive than it was. With our previous centralised system, the cost became less per kilometre as the distance increased. Now, goods sent from Albany to Meekatharra must go by rail to Kewdale and then by road with Bellway Pty. Ltd. to Meekatharra. Of course, if members wish me to speak about the service by road from Belmont to Meekatharra, I will be speaking for quite a long time! Certainly the present system may be cheaper for fairly light articles, but it is not for heavier articles. I have the comparative figures here.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Would you read them to us?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I am not prepared to do so in this debate, but I have a copy of the figures and I will make it available to the honourable member.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: I would like a copy of these also.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Yes, I will see that those copies are made available. Turning now to the SWATS report, the following recommendation appears—

Close scrutiny, with possible withdrawal of service, should be given to the following lines:

Katanning-Nyabing,	Wonnerup-
Nannup,	Manjimup-Northcliffe,
Tambellup-Gnowangerup,	Donnybrook-
Katanning, Lake Grace-Newdegate,	
Bowellington-Wagin, Pinjarra-Dwellingup.	

All those lines are marked for early closure.

The Fremantle-Perth passenger service is being closed down because there is insufficient rolling stock with which to operate it. Members may not

be aware of the fact that Westrail has failed to order any new locomotives of the type necessary for these light lines. The most suitable locomotive, and the one currently in operation, is the "X"-class locomotive, and Westrail's present stocks are well past their economic life. Members will be aware that locomotives must be ordered well in advance, so it is fairly obvious that the railway service will be further dismantled when the Government implements whatever part of the SWATS report it has decided to implement. Heavy locomotives are not suitable for these lines.

Members will be aware of the Government's decision to withdraw the freezer services operated previously by Westrail. Members will be aware also that many people in country areas are most dissatisfied with the substitute service. An article appeared in *The West Australian* on the 10th May, 1978, under the heading, "Westrail not told—Pascoe". It reads as follows—

The Commissioner for Railways, Mr R. Pascoe, told people in the Goldfields yesterday that Westrail had not been consulted about the transport of fruit and vegetables to the area being given to road hauliers.

Westrail had been aware that the Government intended to transport freezer goods by road but had been disappointed to lose the perishables as well, Mr Pascoe said.

He assured people that Westrail's parcels office would not be relocated from Kalgoorlie to West Kalgoorlie.

Westrail was looking at a change of policy regarding the transport of parcels that could affect Kalgoorlie but there was no proposal to cease operations at the present office in Forrest Street, Kalgoorlie.

The point I am making is that the withdrawal of the freezer service has affected many other services. Previously the Perth parcels depot handled all types of traffic for commercial firms and private individuals. Then the freezer traffic ceased, there was a consequent decline in the amount of goods going through the parcels depot, and probably the result is that this depot is no longer economically viable. One part of the service complemented the other. Probably before very long this parcels depot will be closed down and the transport of parcels will be carried out by road hauliers.

Every member of this House receives a copy of the magazine, *Professional Fisherman*. In the April, 1979 issue I noticed an article referring to the transport of frozen goods. Many complaints have been made about the road transport of

frozen goods, and, in fact, I have here a folder full of such complaints. It would take all night for me to go through the contents of this folder, but I do not intend to do that. I will make a brief reference to some of the problems which have been pointed out to me.

I have kept a record of all the complaints, and they come from Morawa, Norseman, Kalgoorlie, Albany, Meekatharra, and other places. I will quote an article I have here because it concerns a member of this House. The article appears on page 6 of the April, 1979 edition of *Professional Fisherman* and states as follows—

Westrail demand 'extortionate'

A decision by Westrail to stop carrying fish from Western Australia's south coast is seen as a serious threat to the fishing industry.

Westrail wants fishermen to supply new containers which the men estimate will cost \$17 000, and unless agreement can be reached fish transport by rail will end on May 1.

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Ron Davies, believes such a step could well kill off the industry.

He said that as the producers of bauxite, wheat and woodchips did not have to provide special containers, he could not see why fishermen were required to.

"Westrail's reluctance to carry the catch of South Coast fishermen demonstrates the Court Government's lack of interest in medium size industries and its lack of understanding of the policies which need to be pursued to promote regional development," Mr Davies said.

"If an industry is not a multi-million, multi-national operation then the Premier, Sir Charles Court and his government do not want to know about it."

The Opposition Leader said fishing on the south coast was a comparatively small industry, but was important because it provided jobs and provided income.

"This is exactly the sort of thing required if regional centres are to grow and realise their potential," he said.

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: That is absolute garbage. More small businesses have commenced operations under the administration of Sir Charles Court than under any other Minister in this Parliament.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Perhaps, but more have gone bankrupt as well. I come now to

that part of the article which concerns a member of this House. It states as follows—

Mr Tom Knight (MLC, South Province) has described the possibility of an end to rail transport for fish as "disastrous".

"The stoppage of this service to my constituents would have a disastrous effect on the small fishermen in the area, and there are many of them," he said.

Mr Knight said any such move would see him in complete opposition.

So it can be seen that the railways affect many people in the community, including members of this House. Whilst the railways in the metropolitan area are being attacked at the moment by the Government, eventually this policy will affect every member who has a railway in his province. In fact, I can recall the Hon. Win. Piesse complaining about what has happened as a result of the withdrawal of Westrail services in her province.

The Government not only must consider the economics of the system, but also it must look to the services Westrail is able to provide to the people in the metropolitan area and in the country.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: What about the decision of the Tonkin Government to move the rail depot from Bridgetown?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: It did not close it down.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: No, but it set up a gerrymandered inquiry, as you well know. You know what happened there. Who instigated a decent inquiry into the matter? You well know that it was Sir Charles Court.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: It was not Sir Charles Court; it was because of the pressures put on the Government by the people of Bridgetown. I must say that Mr Lewis and Mr Ferry both played their parts. I was involved in that episode on behalf of the union; we worked together with the local members and we were able to keep the depot at Bridgetown.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: The Tonkin Government made the decision.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: It did not. However, perhaps we can have a discussion on that later.

The next item in the railway dismantling process was the cessation of the Albany passenger rail service on the 1st December, 1978. The Government's principal reason for moving to close down the Fremantle-Perth line is that it is running at a substantial loss. I would like to refer

members to an article which appeared in the *Daily News* of the 20th October, 1976 under the heading, "Albany train move 'unfair'". This article also involves a member of Parliament, this time a member of another House. The article states—

The Liberal MLA for Albany, Mr L. H. Watt, said today that it was unfair to compare the proposed bus service out of Albany with the present rail system.

He said it was obvious that the Albany Progress train would suffer in comparison with new buses, but there were still sound arguments for the retention of the train . . .

Mr Watt said the train would be more comfortable than the bus if the rail service was upgraded.

He said that the Government's \$2 million estimate for the replacement of the train could be radically cut by reducing the number of carriages.

I suggest the word "radically" may be a misprint; it should be "drastically". The article continues—

He said the service would be economically more viable if the train was made up of two sleeper cars and a buffet car with a small sit-up section.

A train leaving at night would also be more convenient than a bus leaving in the morning, he said.

At present, people doing a day's business in the city could leave by train in the evening, arrive in the city in the morning and then return on the train that night. A similar arrangement would not be possible on the bus, which leaves in the morning.

The member for Albany was referring to similar matters under discussion today. The Government has stated it will cost a certain amount of money to electrify the railways while the Friends of the Railways and other people dispute the Government's estimate.

The important thing arising from this argument is that members on all sides are responding to what people in their electorates are saying. The people have made it clear that notwithstanding the cost, they want this form of transport to continue.

This Government lacks imagination; it has no innovative ideas to improve our transport system. I refer members to what is happening in other parts of Australia. Let us consider what the New South Wales Government is doing to improve its railway system.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: What is it going to cost them?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The New South Wales Government is not worried about the cost because it knows what the people want.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: That is good, responsible government for you!

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The people are not worried about the cost, either.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Do you sincerely believe taxpayers are not worried about costs?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The taxpayers are very worried about the costs being incurred by the present State and Federal Governments.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: This Government may be pennywise and pound foolish; it needs to straighten out its thinking. For instance, the Government does not take into account the cost of accidents. Recently, there was a terrible accident in the country which resulted in two people losing their lives. However, if the railway between Meekatharra and Mullewa had remained in operation, commodities would still be carted between the two centres and that accident may not have occurred.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Can you guarantee that those two people would not have been driving those trucks if the railway had been operating?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: It is very interesting to learn what is proposed for the New South Wales railway system. An article in *The Australian* of Friday, the 10th August under the heading "'Bullet' trains for NSW" reads as follows—

The NSW Government will order 30 high-speed rail units as the first stage in a \$60 million plan to improve services, particularly to major country centres.

The commissioned units—10 diesel-powered and 20 passenger carriages—will cost an estimated \$17 million.

The Government aims to develop on main country routes a system similar to that of British Rail, with trains capable of 160km/h and to incorporate 100 British-designed units.

The successful tenderer for the contract, to be announced soon, is expected to be Commonwealth Engineering, of Granville, Sydney.

In the same newspaper the editorial is headed "On the right track"; members can judge from that heading just what the editor thought about the idea. This Government needs imagination and

the courage to make decisions which in the long term will be applauded.

The next item in this dismantling process to which I wish to refer is the partial closure of the Perth parcels depot. In fact, it was the Government's intention to close this depot completely, but there was such an uproar from business people in the area that it modified its original proposal.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: That is not so; we already have had debates in this place on that one.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The Minister can join in the debate if he so desires. I was part of a deputation to the Commissioner of Railways; other members of the deputation who spring to mind were Roland Smith, representing the clothing manufacturers, and John Saunders, of John R. Saunders and Co. On that occasion, business people joined with the trade union movement to express their opposition to the proposal to close the parcels depot.

I understand that subsequently, when I was no longer working for the railways union, a similar exercise took place. I can state categorically that in a survey carried out by the union, many business people in the area indicated their strong opposition to the closure of the parcels depot.

Eventually, the depot did not close completely; instead, it severely restricted the amount and type of parcels it handled. I understand that only about half a dozen parcels are accepted at the one time, none of which must weigh more than 25 kilograms. If these conditions are not met, the person faces a trip out to the Kewdale parcels depot. Of course, Skippers Transport and other firms immediately advertised that they could accommodate these people. However, this involved additional costs which were borne by the country consumers to whom the parcels were despatched. Naturally, the business people were opposed to this proposal.

A short time later, on the 30th April, 1979—despite strong protests from people in the area—the Fremantle parcels depot ceased operation, and people were asked to take their parcels to Robb Jetty.

I trust honourable members have noted what I said about the systematic dismantling of the Fremantle-Perth passenger railway service and that they support my remarks. I hope that between now and Saturday members opposite can influence the members in the Government who are responsible for making the decision to allow the service to continue beyond that date.

Let us consider the history of the closure of this Fremantle-Perth passenger rail service. An announcement was made in *The West Australian* of the 17th January, 1979, as follows—

Passenger services on the Perth-Fremantle railway are to be scrapped and replaced by a bus service in September.

Further on it said—

Later the line will be converted to a major road to ease traffic pressure on Stirling Highway. No timetable or costing has been worked out for this.

I want members to bear in mind those last few words, because I will return to that point later.

We have heard the Minister for Transport say, "The line is going to stay there and we will see how things go over the next three years. If things go all right we will reinstate the service." Once the line is closed it will be very difficult for a Government of any political colour to reinstate the service to the extent that it is currently operating. Members will be aware the Government is withdrawing the cars currently used on that section to upgrade the Armadale-Perth service. If that happens, how will the Government be able to reclaim these cars if it ever decides to reinstate the Fremantle-Perth line? To do that the Government would have to tell the people using the Armadale line that their service would have to deteriorate. There would be an uproar from these people.

The Labor Party will certainly reinstate the Fremantle-Perth service.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Regardless of cost?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Yes, regardless of cost. It will take some time to replace the service to its current operating level. The equipment will not be available and that is the very reason the service is being closed down.

No-one can trust this Government. I do not believe the Government has any intention of reinstating the service. Public transport is not one of its top priorities, whereas public transport is a top priority with the Labor Party and would remain so if it became the Government.

Another point to be considered is that the Government said it would not close the Meekatharra-Mullewa line for at least three years. On Friday, the 5th August, 1977, the Premier was reported in *The West Australian* as follows—

The Premier, Sir Charles Court, said yesterday that the Government would honour a commitment to keep the railway line to Meekatharra open at least till January 1979.

Members know that the line closed on the date stipulated in my letter; that is, the 1st May, 1978. The Government did not honour its commitment to the people.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: You know the reasons it was closed early.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: No, I do not. The Premier said it would not close before January 1979.

With respect to the Fremantle service, the Premier was reported in *The West Australian* of the 19th August, 1975, in the following terms—

Sir Charles said the adverse economics of rail operations compared with buses over the next 30 years was understood. But the Government believed that long-term considerations could not be overlooked.

The Premier has since overlooked this long-term consideration.

They are examples of Government commitments not being kept; examples of how the Government relies on the fact that people have short memories.

I refer back to the comment appearing in *The West Australian* that, "No time table or costing has been worked out for this." This, of course, relates to the conversion of the line to a major road. The Minister's remarks were the most ridiculous I have heard in my entire life.

A sensible approach to transport planning is to develop a policy and then make a decision. But what has the Government done on this occasion? It has made a decision to cease a rail passenger service and replace it with a bus service, and now it is hastily trying to develop a plan to implement it. There will not be any busways as was recommended by Dr Nielsen and Wilbur Smith in 1970; they recommended a busway system. However, the Government has no plans for such a system.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You are admitting that other people have recommended the closure of the service.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Yes; I realise they recommended the closure of the service. However, they put conditions on the recommendation and one was that busways be established. This has not been done by the Government. The Government's line bus service will be mixed with other traffic on the roads. There will be many disgruntled people. A survey indicated that 73 per cent of the people currently using this service would use private vehicles. They would not use buses as they do not like them. There will be a 20 per cent increase in the number

of private vehicles on the roads. These vehicles probably will convey just one or two people.

In response to a question I asked in this House some time ago with respect to the percentage allocated out of General Loan Funds for our urban public transport system, I was told that in 1976-77 the figure was 18.6 per cent, which in 1977-78 was reduced to 12.7 per cent.

So that we can consider what is being done in other States, I shall quote from the *Railways of Australia Network*. In the August, 1977, issue on page 5 we find the following—

The Government's Transport Policies

Independently and substantially from its own resources, N.S.W. is embarking on an all-embracing improvement of transport in the total sense.

The basic planks of that transport policy are:

The modernisation and rationalisation of public transport services and resources.

The development of a viable transport system, within the economic, social, environmental and resource constraints, to provide reasonable and equitable mobility for both public transport and private vehicles.

A fresh look at freeway planning and construction, urban rail construction works and traffic management systems.

Further on the Minister (Mr Peter Cox) had this to say—

We are engaged in a programme costing some \$1 000 million. It ranges through buses, ferries, passenger and goods rollingstock, motive power, signalling and communications, . . .

The New South Wales Government was prepared to spend that amount independently and substantially from its own resources.

Let us consider the situation in Queensland which has a National Country Party Government.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: A sensible free enterprise Government.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Members will see from the photographs I am displaying that that State is not cutting down on its refrigerated services. The State was purchasing new refrigerated units at the same time this State was dispensing with them.

The Queensland Government was prepared to listen to the people's wishes with respect to urban rail transport and it showed initiative in planning. Our Government has not done this. The Western Australian Government says it wants to do what

it thinks is best for the people rather than what the people think is best for themselves. I shall quote from the July, 1977, issue of *Railways of Australia Network*, as follows—

Brisbane's massive public transport programme received another "shot in the arm" recently with the letting of a \$19.4 million contract for electric passenger rail cars.

The 39 electric cars, to be built by Walkers-A.S.E.A. Pty. Ltd., Maryborough, will revolutionise rail travel in Brisbane.

The Queensland capital is gearing up for an exciting new rail era.

In this State we are gearing up for an "exciting" car-bus era. It might be exciting for members opposite, but it will not be exciting for the people who will suffer the extra congestion on the roads. The elderly and handicapped people, the mothers with babies in prams, the crowds which attend the football, the speedway, and the Karrakatta cemetery will all suffer because of the closure of this line. I shall continue quoting as follows—

The face of the city's rail network is progressively changing as new and reconstructed rail bridges, viaducts, tunnels and station complexes appear.

The first regular electric passenger services will be operating between Darra and Ferny Grove by mid 1979.

That means they are operating now, if the timetable was followed. To continue—

In conjunction with this the north and southside rail networks are being joined by a cross-river connection to form one complete interconnected suburban system.

The new electric trains will be the most modern in Australia and possibly in the southern hemisphere. Other comfort features include soft woollen fabric seating, tinted windows, woollen carpets in the seating sections and studded rubber floors in the vestibules.

It is quite different here; nothing new has been bought in the last 11 years. The bulk of the equipment is more than 20 years old. To continue—

Electrification will mean nearly 25 per cent faster travelling times than with the existing diesel trains.

The cars will be capable of speeds up to 120 km per hour, but the actual maximum operating speed in the suburban area will be 100 km per hour.

Theirs is a narrow 3ft. 6in. gauge system, the same as we have here. To continue—

The 39 cars will operate as 13 three-car units or six six-car trains with one spare unit. A three-car unit will comprise a driver-motor car, a central motor car and a driver-trailer car which is unmotored.

Eighty people will be seated in each of the driver-motor and driver-trailer cars, while there will be 88 seats in the central car. Passengers will be seated two-by-two on each side of the aisle. The total carrying capacity of a six-car train will exceed 1000 passengers.

The new electric cars will have stringent inbuilt safety features.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I thank you, Mr President, and members for allowing the debate proceed. To continue—

These include energy absorbing couplings, anti-climb bars on the ends of cars, power operated automatic sliding doors and anti-telescopic end structures.

It may well be that members here would not understand what these things are because they would not have seen them; I have not either. We are so far behind the times here that these new features, which are inbuilt over there, are not available here. As we have not seen a new railcar for more than 11 years, it is natural we do not understand or have any knowledge of this type of feature.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: You are talking about antique equipment compared with the rest of the world!

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Mr Williams has been overseas so he knows that even Queensland does not have the latest models. Nevertheless, Queensland's equipment is a big improvement on what we have in Western Australia. To continue my quote—

For the first time in Queensland trains, the train crews will have radio telephone contact with the radio centre at Mayne and will also be able to make announcements over a public address system to passengers. The Maryborough based engineering firm won the prized contract from three other Queensland companies and one from New South Wales.

My Government was pleased that the lowest acceptable tender was from a Queensland firm with many years'

association with the Queensland Railways in locomotive and equipment construction.

I want members to take note of what I am about to say. The cars are being constructed in Queensland and any electric cars that are built there can be also built here, and if members go to the Midland workshop they will see a prototype of it. Mr McCaskill was working on a model prototype of an electric car. It may have been withdrawn since he has been associated with the FOR.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Or hidden somewhere.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I remember it being there. To continue—

The cars will be built in a city experiencing an economic setback

We have the same ills here. At present we have the highest unemployment in Australia. To continue—

The cars will be built in a city experiencing an economic setback precipitated by Canberra. This contract will provide employment for a significant number of people.

Work is provided for people within the area. One of the advantages accruing from the upgrading of the public transport system—if the work is carried out in one's own State—is that employment is provided; and this work can be done here.

I want members to listen closely to the next quote. Mr Wordsworth has complained bitterly about the allocation of funds from Canberra, and I agree. However, at least the Queensland Government has shown some imagination and has allocated resources from State funds. Let me read the part about funds, as follows—

The 39 electric cars are being funded by the Queensland Government from a special allocation of State funds.

The Queensland Government is not leasing the cars. It is buying them. To continue—

The Federal Government has side-stepped its responsibility to pay two-thirds of the cost of the cars.

The Commonwealth Government has done it to us, too. To continue—

The Commonwealth indicated that no funds will be available to Queensland for the electric cars but, at the same time, kept its options open by indicating that if we award the contract, it won't prejudice possible future funding for the cars or other associated urban public transport projects.

Canberra has now officially told Queensland that the Australian Urban Passenger Train Project has been scrapped.

The Australian urban passenger train project was a Whitlam innovation, but of course the Fraser Government has decided to abandon it. To continue—

(This was a plan for a standard electric train for all main line capital cities.)

Queensland has now been given the run-around on electric rollingstock by two Federal Governments.

In 1975, we had developed our own designs for electric cars but were asked to co-operate with the AUPT project by the former ALP Government.

What the Queensland Government wanted to do was to construct its own cars, but the Whitlam Labor Government said at that time, "No; we want you to adopt a standard train for use throughout Australia." Queensland did not want to do that. It wanted to construct its own. That is one of the reasons McCaskill did his here. He felt he could do a better job and provide something more suitable for Western Australia's needs. To continue—

After detailed consideration, Queensland opted to accept the offer which included several benefits.

This proposal had the Commonwealth meeting the initial design and tooling costs, supplying free of charge one six-car prototype train and funding two-thirds of the cost of subsequent production cars.

Now, after all these senseless and costly delays, the Fraser Government has decided to abandon the project and leave the State to its own devices.

I want to stress that Queensland has kept faith with the AUPT project and has done all in its power to implement the agreement.

Delivery of the electric rollingstock is now a critical item in the timetable for the Ferny Grove-Darra electrification project.

Order for the cars must be placed immediately to coincide with the completion of track work, overhead wiring and other associated works for the first regular electric passenger services to be operating in mid 1979.

However, Queensland will continue to press the Commonwealth for financial assistance for the new cars.

I am aware that the Commonwealth Government has cut back funding in respect of AUPT and in fact the whole of the urban passenger transport programme. This has had a serious effect on planning by Governments, but notwithstanding that we found that in Queensland the State Government provided \$19.4 million for the purchase of railcars. Our Government is not prepared to find any funds at all.

If we compare the population in Perth with the population in Brisbane we find that we are not very far behind, even at this stage. The figures were supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as at the 30th June, 1977—these were the latest figures I was able to obtain. The population for Perth was 843 800 and for Brisbane 995 140. The population of Perth is not very far removed from that of Brisbane and we should note that Perth is Australia's fastest growing city.

Between 1971 and 1976 the census count for the population revealed an increase of 16.62 per cent. In his report in 1976, Mr Pascoe, the commissioner of Railways, warned we were in serious trouble as far as our rail service was concerned. I quote from his report as follows—

The cut-back in Commonwealth fundings under the Urban Public Transport Improvement Programme for 1975/76 and 1976/77 has affected planned improvements to station facilities and proposals for acquisition of new rolling stock. The lack of spare diesel car capacity and the age of some of the rolling stock is a matter of increasing concern. Consideration is being given to alternative funding arrangements but meanwhile, further development of bus/train co-ordination measures cannot be implemented owing to the lack of rail capacity.

On page 16 of his report he had this to say—

The curtailment of Commonwealth money as a result of economic conditions affected the proposal to obtain new rolling stock. It is anticipated funds to complete the design work for six cars will be available 1977/78.

In conjunction with the M.T.T. studies are proceeding on long term passenger requirements in the South West Corridor. These studies are related to possible developments of further bus-train co-ordination.

In 1977, Mr Pascoe said—

It is anticipated funds to complete the design work for six cars will be available 1977/78.

That all went by the board because the funds did not arrive, and away went the six cars!

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I have had that happen to me with the Dumbleyung Hospital and police station.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: My heart goes out to the honourable member because I know he has been very concerned about those items.

What I am saying is that the Commissioner of Railways was warning this Government that it needed to replace its rolling stock and that the Railways Department was unable to carry out further development of the Armadale corridor. The situation was becoming intolerable and something had to be done. But no, the Government went on belly-aching about the funds it could not obtain from Canberra but did not contribute a cent itself.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: What money did the Tonkin Government contribute in the three years it was in office?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: It was during that time Wilbur Smith was requested to do a study. All we need is a chance to be returned to Government in 1980—if that is when the election is to be held—and we will do something. The Wran Government was elected in the same situation when the previous Liberal Government in New South Wales had failed to do anything about the State's public transport system. Have a look at the situation now and consider what has been done. We will do the same here.

In the 1978 report Mr Pascoe said—

There were no basic changes to services or schedules during the year under review but adjustments have since been made to timetables with a view to providing improved service and specifically, additional express trains.

None of it ever happened. It is still the same old service. In respect of the MTT proposal for the Armadale corridor he went on to say—

The M.T.T. is planning for improvement in road/rail co-ordination particularly in the south-west corridor which incorporates the Armadale line.

As the operator of the rail component of the co-ordinated service, Westrail is concerned at the deteriorating condition of the passenger cars. The need for the provision of funds to initiate a replacement programme has been represented to the Government.

Still no action in 1978. So what is left to be done? Nothing but to close the railway line down and salvage what is possible from the rolling stock.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You were talking about the Armadale line, and then you said all that was left to do was to close the Fremantle line. How do you link those up?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: No rolling stock has been purchased and the equipment has become older.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Your remarks were pertinent to the Armadale line and you switched straight off that and went in the opposite direction.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The reason the Fremantle-Perth railway line is being closed is that the railcars are needed to carry out some of the improvements on the Armadale line. The Government has made great play of the five new cars and trailers. I asked a question in relation to the programme for the cars. I was informed that the Government called tenders which closed on the 28th June, 1979, and that a decision would not be made on those tenders until mid-December, 1979—six months to make a decision!

Compare that with what happened in relation to the buses. The Government made a decision on the 16th January which was announced in *The West Australian* on the 17th January. No tenders were called. The Government just asked for quotes from four different people on the 17th January, the day it was announced in the newspaper. The quotes were received on that day—which is very strange—and accepted on that day, the 17th January, the very day it was announced. So much was done in a day, yet it will take the Government six months to make up its mind about rail passenger transport. I do not know what the Government intends to do with the five railcars or even whether it intends to buy them. Therefore, I am suspicious.

When we go through Mr Shea's reports we find he made remarks similar to those of Mr Pascoe. He said in the 1977-78 report—

A detailed study into Bus/Rail transport co-ordination in the South East Corridor was completed in April, 1978. The object of the study was to ensure that future planning decisions for this Corridor may be made with the full knowledge of the consequences of those decisions. Changes to the existing rail service that were considered were improved frequencies and more express trains. Up to ten additional rail cars would be needed to provide the improved services. These rail services were studied in conjunction with a

number of alternative bus systems which included feeding to rail. Bus/Rail transfer points that were considered were Armadale, Kelmscott, Gosnells, and Cannington. The study does not make any recommendations but sets out the advantages and disadvantages of a number of alternatives, together with the associated costs, as a basis for future decision making.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: He says one of the things considered was the provision of 10 new railcars. He did not say he recommended them.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: He did not get them.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: He did not say he recommended them. He was studying bus as against rail transport.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The point I am making is that he said in his 1977-78 report he wanted 10 new railcars to implement the bus-rail co-ordination in the south-east corridor.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: He did not say anything of the sort.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I will read it again. He said—

Up to ten additional rail cars would be needed to provide the improved services.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Read on.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: He goes on to say—

These rail services were studied in conjunction with a number of alternative bus systems which included feeding to rail.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You have proved my point. They were to be used as an alternative.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I will read it all. It continues—

Bus/Rail transfer points that were considered were Armadale, Kelmscott, Gosnells, and Cannington. The study does not make any recommendations but sets out the advantages and disadvantages of a number of alternatives, together with the associated costs, as a basis for future decision making.

That is being implemented in the Armadale corridor. The Minister went out there yesterday and discussed it with the people. When one reads what he said in today's or yesterday's newspaper and what Mr Shea said in his 1977-78 report, one finds basically the same plan is being implemented. To implement the plan, 10 additional railcars were needed. Whence are they to be obtained? From the Fremantle-Perth service

when it is closed down? In my opinion, that is what will happen. I could go on for hours.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I want you to go on for hours.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I will conclude before the tea suspension to give members opposite an opportunity to comment on what I have said.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I want to hear Mr Lewis reply to you.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: In the last 20 years we have had a Labor Government for only three years. Perth has gradually been turned into a motorised city. I think that is a tragedy in view of all the problems currently hanging over our heads and in view of what is likely to happen in the future in regard to oil. We will find that the planners who turned Perth into a motorised city made a great mistake.

Let us compare Perth and Melbourne. In the central business district of Perth about 90 000 people are employed. We have parking spaces for 40 200 cars, and I recently noticed an announcement that the Perth City Council will build another mammoth car park in a most unsuitable place somewhere in Pier Street. I cannot imagine a worse place for a car park to be situated.

By comparison, in the central business district of Melbourne 162 000 people are employed, with parking spaces for 34 900 cars. It is no wonder people use the public transport system.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: They do not have much option.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: We also have no option here because we do not have a decent transport system.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I travel here by bus just as quickly as by car.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Where do you live?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The honourable member is supporting my argument.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: For buses.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I am now talking about public transport, generally. I do not care whether it be by bus or rail; both modes of transport are unnecessary. The railway system has only 64.4 kilometres of track, and I think the bus routes total 1 437 kilometres, which is a considerable distance. We cannot have an economic and viable rail transport system unless we extend it. The Government is doing the reverse; it is closing part of it down. That is a crime. If the Government planned for extensions

we would discover the advantage of the public transport system.

In Sydney the loss per passenger on the public transport rail system is 47c; in Perth it is currently \$1.11. In 12 months a change has taken place. Twelve months ago the loss per passenger on buses in Perth was 27c; it is now 34c, so it has increased by 7c. The loss per passenger on the railways was \$1.14 12 months ago and it has been reduced to \$1.11.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: That points up the fact that the Government is adopting the right policies.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: There has been no long-term planning. Westrail provides all the rail facilities itself. Every taxpayer subsidises the roads which must be provided for the buses.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Who is subsidising them?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: We are looking at the costings per passenger. Part of the \$1.11 is for the track which has been provided, but licence fees are not paid on the MTT buses. We now have a system which penalises the bus service because a levy which did not apply previously has been placed on the fuel used by buses. An exemption was provided for livestock carriers, but not for public transport. The Government must be condemned for that. Westrail provides all the railway stations, but ratepayers are required to pay for the maintenance of bus shelters. One can think of many similar instances.

I want to bring to the notice of members some statements which have been made and conveniently forgotten. I thank the Friends of the Railways for a quotation from a former Minister for Transport (the Hon. Ray O'Connor) in April, 1969, which appears on the first page of their report. This is what he said 10 years ago—

We know of no city in the world that is surrendering rail rights of way for other purposes, and also we know of no city in the world over about a million people that isn't actively installing or planning to install initial or additional rail facilities . . .

The Melbourne underground is to open this year. This is the year of the electric train in Brisbane. There are many examples of such a policy in Australia, let alone other parts of the world, and we can obtain this information from our library. The then Minister for Transport also said—

It also follows that as the urban area spreads to the south the Fremantle-Perth railway line begins to assume much more importance than it has in the past. For this

reason, we think it would be folly to give away the right of way represented by the Perth-Fremantle line.

First class professional judgment by people skilled in urban transportation—and our people are paid to provide these reasoned judgments—clearly indicates that we will need all the rail access that we presently have and need it very badly.

Those remarks still apply. The problem is the Government has done no planning in regard to public transport and it has been forced into a position where it must close the Perth-Fremantle railway line. But before it is too late, I hope the Government will stop and think again. We have about two days left. I urge the Government to forget about the development in Armadale, which can be undertaken at a later stage, and not close the Fremantle-Perth line, because it will be very difficult to reinstate it later on.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 p.m.

THE HON. G. E. MASTERS (West) [7.30 p.m.]: I will not speak at any great length on this motion. However, I feel that one or two things need to be said in view of the comments and the fairly lengthy speech by the Hon. Fred McKenzie.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: A very excellent speech.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I do not know about that. I think the whole motion is a piece of mischief.

Mr McKenzie went into details of railway equipment at great length. He could have done that on a previous occasion if he had wished. Nevertheless, it was a lengthy speech he made, and I am a little surprised that it was made at this time as a matter of urgency. I know he gave a reason but it can hardly be justified.

We have had a fairly easy time in this part of the session, and there has been ample opportunity for the member to move such a motion and it could have been debated with ease. However, instead of that, he has moved it at the last minute, when it looks as though the Fremantle-Perth passenger service will be closed in a few days. I would suggest the member has done this to gain the absolutely maximum amount of publicity. That is the purpose of the motion today. He will probably obtain some Press coverage of his actions.

This debate easily could have taken place during the last few weeks, but it is all part of the ALP campaign for the coming election. The ALP would be stupid if it did not try to gain some

ground as a result of the Hon. Fred McKenzie's actions.

It is obvious that the campaign to save the railway originally started with people of very good intentions who were genuinely concerned about the cessation of the railway's operations. People from all parties were genuinely concerned. There were people from our party, from the Labor Party, and from other parties in existence. However, the ALP, following its usual tradition, has infiltrated and obtained control of the group involved in the campaign.

There is no point in anyone saying that the ALP did not do that, because the leader and spokesman of the campaign is a man called Grounds who has now been endorsed by the ALP for the seat of Cottesloe. He will not have much success in his fight for that seat; nevertheless, he has nominated and he has used the closure of the railway as part of his campaign. He says he is now ducking out because he does not want to have the Friends of the Railways regarded as a political group. Of course it is a political group.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: You had the opportunity to move in and infiltrate.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: That is not our style.

The Hon. D. K. Dans interjected.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: It cannot be said that Mr Grounds has just joined the Labor Party. He has been a member of the Labor Party for many years. He has used the party effectively in this campaign.

A march was organised last week. Certainly it was well attended, and it was led by Labor members of Parliament.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: What about the other members of the group? What about Mr McCaskill?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What about Dr Dadour? Where does he stand on this?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: A photograph was featured in the *Weekend News*, and it showed members of the Labor Party leading the march up the terrace. It shows Mr Hetherington marching proudly beside his leader; it shows Mr Grounds; it shows Mr McMullen; and it shows Fred with his train in one hand and his banner in the other. This is in the *Weekend News* of Sunday, the 18th August, 1979.

Of course, the Labor Party is using this campaign to gain extra publicity. I have no doubt that it has been used for that purpose—

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie interjected.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: We are a responsible Government. If I were a colleague of the Hon. Fred McKenzie, I would hide my head in shame at what he said today. I will repeat some of his comments, because they are worth putting on the record again.

The more Mr McKenzie spoke, the more I was convinced we as a Government were right in our decision—

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: The truth hurts.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Mr McKenzie said that we were bereft of imagination—

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: You are. I will stand by what I said.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Mr McKenzie lives in a world of his own. He says that the cost is nothing. The cost is very important to the public—

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I suggest you go and speak to your colleagues in Queensland.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: We are in Western Australia; and we have a responsibility to the public, and part of that responsibility is in relation to cost. With the closure of this railway, we will be saving the public the sum of \$3.6 million annually.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: That is not correct.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: That is the figure I have.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie interjected.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: That is the figure I have. It might be \$5 million. What I am saying is that we are talking about millions of dollars being saved for the public. We have a responsibility to consider that saving carefully.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You have got one of your own pamphlets there?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Yes, I have. I will pass it around later, because it will save a lot of time. All the information is there. I will quote one or two figures, because they are important and relevant to the debate.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The most important thing is: are they true?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Of course they are true. Good lord, we would not produce a document like that if it was not true.

Opposition members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The interjections have to cease.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: They are all true.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Mr McKenzie can have one of these pamphlets. It indicates that the nine out of 100 Perth travellers using public transport required subsidies totalling \$28 million in 1978-79. On present trends that figure will rise to a sum of \$40 million in 1982-83. The subsidy by the taxpayer in 1978-79 was 34c per bus passenger journey, and \$1.11 per rail passenger journey. That is about the only correct figure Mr McKenzie quoted.

Surely any responsible Government must consider such figures. It must look carefully at the best way to do things with the least cost to the public.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: That is all you think about—dollars and cents.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: It is important for the Government to consider those things.

In his speech, in answer to an interjection from Mr Withers, Mr McKenzie said that the Labor Party would reinstate the railway regardless of cost.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: That is right.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I hope the Press publishes something tomorrow about that statement. It could indicate, "Mr McKenzie says the Labor Party will put the railway back, regardless of the cost to the public." That is the most irresponsible remark I have ever heard in this House—regardless of cost! It might cost \$100 million; it might cost \$200 million—

The Hon. D. K. Dans interjected.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Mr McKenzie is the spokesman in this House for transport—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Give me a prediction of the costs of buses. Get your little pamphlet out and read it.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Members of the Opposition would never hear me making a statement in this House that my party would do such-and-such regardless of the cost. That is a grossly irresponsible statement to make. I hope that in his reply Mr McKenzie will take the opportunity to change that statement.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I will not change it. It is quite feasible.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Is Mr McKenzie going to tell me that if it costs \$100 million a Labor Government would go ahead and do it?

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: If the people want it, yes.

Government members interjected.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Is Mr McKenzie going to go into his electorate and say, "We will

spend \$100 million to reopen the railway, and you will have to go without five high schools and 50 primary schools"?

Opposition members interjected.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: You know full well it would not cost that.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I asked Mr McKenzie a straight question. I suggested \$100 million. It may be \$50 million, or it may be \$200 million. I am just noting that he would come into this House and say, "regardless of cost".

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: The Government said that the cost of running the trains was too high.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Will Mr McKenzie go out to the electorate and say, "You must go without schools . . ."—

Opposition members interjected.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: If Mr McKenzie did not take the money from schools and welfare services, whence would he obtain the money? Of course, it comes out of the printing machine.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Whence has the Queensland Government got it? Whence has the New South Wales Government got it? Whence has the Victorian Government got it?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Those Governments obtained the money from the public.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: And if they can do it, so can we.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: If that sort of money is to be spent regardless of the cost, someone has to provide it. I am suggesting it must be the public. I suggest that if a certain number of dollars are required for the railways, and the public is given the option of spending those dollars elsewhere, it will do so. I said that Mr McKenzie's views are all imagination, and they are. Regardless of cost, regardless of anything else—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Give me some facts.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: For a number of years Mr McKenzie has been representing very well the trade unions involved in the railways. He has done it well tonight. He has moved this motion on behalf of the railway unions, not on behalf of the people of Western Australia.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie interjected.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am not suggesting Mr McKenzie made a bad speech. I am simply suggesting it was grossly one-sided and totally irresponsible. He has just said, "What is money? Print it! Get it from the public!" What he

does not remember is that the public are becoming sick and tired of excessive taxation simply because it is the easy way out for a Government. The Labor Party does not act responsibly. It spends money—

Opposition members interjected.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I would like to mention the letter Mr McKenzie sent to you, Mr President. In it he made the following statement—

A recent McNair Anderson Gallup Poll indicated that 82% of those interviewed wanted the rail passenger service to continue.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Is that incorrect?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am not suggesting it was incorrect. I am just wondering how the survey arrived at that conclusion. What was the question? I can think of one: "Do you want the Fremantle railway pulled up?" That may have been the question, and obviously it would have received the response that is noted. It would have received a similar response from my own electorate, from people who never use the railway. One can easily obtain that sort of response. I suppose I would answer, "No", in that case.

The fact is that our Government has no choice. The Government is considering the future travel requirements of the people. The action it has taken is the correct one.

When Mr McKenzie was speaking, he made some comments about dictating to the public, and they horrified me. I wonder what sort of techniques would be used to pay for the very expensive railway service members opposite said they would install, regardless of cost. Members opposite may want to ban cars from the city area. Two years ago the Hon. Grace Vaughan suggested such a move would be a good idea. Mr McKenzie said it would be advisable to cut down on car-parking facilities in Perth so that people would have to use the railways.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: He did not say that.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: That is my understanding of what he said. We, as members of a free enterprise Government, are not prepared to tell the public what they can and cannot do.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is a good point to take up!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: We recognise the public should have a choice and if they wish to use their cars they have a right to. We do not want members of the public to be forced to use the railways. Mr McKenzie said we should ban

cars in the city area so that people will use the railways.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I did not say that.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Is the member suggesting also we should build blocks of flats on each side of the railway line so that people will use the railway? The member is suggesting people should be regimented.

We believe members of the public should have a choice. They have a right to have a choice. Members opposite believe that, for the sake of satisfying the minority, the expenditure of any amount of funds is justified. That is the point of the matter. The Opposition would spend any amount of money to support a minority of the population.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Get on to another point.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: You have not got another point to make, so you have to play around with that one.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am simply pointing out the irresponsible attitude displayed by Mr McKenzie in his speech.

I do not have a great deal more to say, but I would like to point out that Mr McKenzie wants to force onto the public a way of life which they have rejected gradually over the last 40 or 50 years.

Members opposite have moved this motion in the House at the death knock to obtain as much publicity as they can.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: That is rubbish!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: It is not rubbish; it is exactly the reason for such a motion. We could have debated this motion over a period of weeks; but it must be finished tonight, because the passenger service is to be closed on Saturday.

I strongly oppose the motion.

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [7.47 p.m.]: I did not intend speaking in the debate, but after listening to the speech made by Mr Masters, he has tempted me onto my feet.

I should like to begin where Mr Masters left off when he said he really did not have very much to say, because I believe he had nothing at all to say. However, he did make a number of pertinent points in respect of truth and consequence.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: You have to have it one way or the other.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Two bob each way!

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Truth and consequence were the important points made by Mr Masters.

I was one of the speakers at the first meeting held in relation to the closure of the Perth-Fremantle passenger service. This meeting took place on a Saturday morning at Pioneer Reserve opposite the Fremantle railway station. I was amazed that such a large number of people attended at such short notice. Since that date I have not attended another public meeting in respect of the closure of the Fremantle-Perth passenger service; but the opposition to the closure of the line has escalated. Without a shadow of doubt I can say no-one could point the bone in the direction of any political party to which the people who oppose the closure of the railway line belong. I do not believe anyone could deny that.

The public in this State are becoming increasingly annoyed and agitated about rule by decree.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Rubbish!

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Despite the fact that Mr Pike says, "Rubbish!" I believe that is what is stirring the people. When members opposite talk about costs, they should look at the monument to public opinion which stands at the top of St. George's Terrace; I am referring to the Barracks Arch.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: And how many people worry about it now?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I am one of those people who has never worried about it; but the Barracks Arch is a monument to public opinion.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Is it a good or bad monument?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: The Government completely discredits public opinion not only in relation to the railways, but also on a whole host of other issues.

Mr Masters virtually challenged the right of my colleague (Mr McKenzie) to move an urgency motion in this House. It is not the first time I have heard that argument used. Let me assure members we have a set of Standing Orders and any member of this Chamber is entitled to act within those Standing Orders. Mr Masters did not have much to say other than a few pertinent remarks in relation to truth and consequence.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You said he made several pertinent points.

Several members interjected.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Mr McKenzie obeyed the Standing Orders and this House, including Mr Masters, granted him the opportunity to move his motion. It is no good members opposite squealing about this being the eleventh hour and

saying we are taking this action only for political purposes.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Of course you are.

Several members interjected.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Listen to the baying of the hounds! We are in the business of politics and as members opposite have talked about truth, we should look at the Liberal Party initiatives which are contained in these little booklets I have in my hand. These would be the worst documents ever produced by a Government.

Mr McKenzie has pointed out the contradictory statements made by the former Minister for Railways (Mr O'Connor). He referred also to the commitment made by Sir Charles Court that the Government would "stay with the railways". Governments all over the world are retaining railway lines and making provision to build new ones.

Let us look at what has happened to the Fremantle-Perth line. You, Sir, are aware of the situation which obtained in Fremantle some years ago. At that time the city and suburbs were serviced by trams and all the tram lines terminated outside the front of the Fremantle railway station. Despite repeated efforts by the city fathers of Fremantle long before the closure of the line was suggested to have the buses terminate outside the front of the railway station, this has never been acceded to. If, in fact, the buses did terminate in front of the Fremantle railway station a greater number of people would use the railway service than do so at the present time.

It will be interesting to see what happens when the Royal Show or the grand final of the football is held.

We are in the midst of an energy crisis. To some extent the Government has capitulated on its initial attempt to close the railway line by decree, despite the fact that approximately 100 000 people have said they do not want it closed. It will be closed regardless. However, the Government has said it will retain the railway line for another three years. It will allow the goods trains to travel up and down the line and in the meantime it will examine the situation.

I have already seen the articulated buses travelling around the City of Fremantle. They have great difficulty turning corners and the people of Fremantle have problems driving their cars through the streets when the buses are operating.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: They are all catching buses.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I saw the smiles on the faces of members opposite and these cannot be recorded in the Press. Members opposite were smiling at some of the statements made by Mr McKenzie; but I challenge them to come to Fremantle and watch one of these buses turning from Queen Street into Adelaide Terrace. They have to move up onto the pedestrian refuge in order to get around the corner. The situation is ridiculous. While the buses are turning, the rest of the traffic is held up. That is one spin-off of the closure of the line.

Let us look at the congestion which will occur on Stirling Highway. This is already a very congested road, because of the easy access provided by Stirling Bridge.

I am aware of the problems affecting the railways. No-one has come forward and said that in two or three years' time the problems associated with cost which Mr Masters tried to articulate will not be affecting the bus service also. In fact, the situation could be even worse.

There might have been some validity in the Government's action had the opportunity been taken to do something with the area on which the railway line is situated at present. However, as a result of the Government's decision, when the railway line is pulled up eventually there will be no rail access to the busiest part of the port, which is the north side. That will be removed completely and with it will come a whole host of problems. This will occur in the not-too-distant future. I can see it beginning within the next three years when the goods line is removed, if that is what the Government decides to do.

I have heard Mr Rushton say on television, "We will give it three years and see what happens." Once the decision has been made to rip up the line, it will be ripped up. Members should not make any mistake about that. As a result, we will have problems. It is no good anyone referring to the costs in the manner adopted by Mr Masters. Everyone has to be aware of costs in this day and age; but the case has not been advanced that, in the long term, the closure of the Fremantle passenger service and the eventual removal of the railway line will not, in fact, result in increased costs which we may not be able to meet. We are not only talking about the Fremantle-Perth passenger service; we are also talking about the impending closure of the freight link. According to the Government, public opinion counts for nothing.

In his motion, Mr McKenzie outlined clearly the manner in which the Government is eroding the railway service in this State. He referred to

the decision in relation to the freezer service to the public; the decision in relation to the Albany passenger rail service; the decision in relation to the closure of the Mullewa-Meckatharra rail service; and other decisions which have been made by the Government. Had the founding fathers of this State, regardless of their political complexion, been overly concerned about the amount of money they might lose when using the small amount of royalties available to them to install railway lines throughout the length and breadth of Australia, Western Australia would never have been developed.

Public transport has a role to play and I do not know of any other area in the world where the public transport system is running at a profit. It is a service. Sooner or later we have to realise that public transport is here to stay. It will become more important in the future, because greater numbers of people will be forced to use it.

I heard a professor make the comment that by taxing petrol and making it dearer and dearer we are placing an untold burden on the poorer people in the community. We will reach a point at some stage when they can no longer afford to run motor cars. Of course, this will not only happen to the poorer people; but the more affluent people will be affected also.

As a result, we will have to provide better transport systems to accommodate the number of people wishing to use them. That is not a fairy story.

I must admit that the passenger service from Fremantle to Perth is not a very attractive one. I agree with the point made by Mr McKenzie that it has been allowed to run down. I would like to reiterate the fact that the bus terminal has never been placed in front of the Fremantle railway station. It is amazing when one looks at other railway stations that one sees the buses terminating there when, in fact, more people probably travel between Perth and Fremantle. This is particularly the case in the Cottesloe area where a number of people use the rail link.

The service has been scaled down. When I made my maiden speech in this Parliament I referred to the State Shipping Service and the valuable contribution it had made to this State.

I made the observation then that the State Shipping Service had been to the north-west what the railways had been to the rest of the State. Can anyone stand up in this place and tell me when the State Shipping Service ever made a profit as a service? Can anyone stand up and tell me any year the railways made a profit as a service? I ask members to pause for a moment and think of the

profit that has accrued to the State by way of the goods carried on these railways, and the revenue, brought into this country not only by the railways, but also by the State Shipping Service. Private enterprise has never entered into this arena. Quite simply it could not because it is not profitable. I am not knocking private enterprise for that—the Government must play this role.

We need a public transport service for goods and for passengers. Mr McKenzie has pointed out already that the rest of the world is turning back to the railways. He told us what is happening currently in Brisbane. I did not know that; but we all know that in New South Wales the eastern suburbs railway has been extended recently after a very long history of attempts to get it off the ground.

Victoria is pushing forward with its underground system, and the South Australian Government is considering plans for the electrification of its railways. And yet here in Western Australia we are flying in the face of the opinion of all the world experts. Rather than close down a railway line, we should consider the feasibility of upgrading it.

Over a number of years many experts from overseas have studied our transport system. Mr Masters spoke about wasting money, and I would like to point out that the officer of Westrail could have undertaken the same studies.

There has always been a desperate need for new rolling stock for our railway system. Some of the bogeys we are using were purchased in 1898. We need new engines and a more attractive service.

Certainly I am not unaware of the geographical features of the Fremantle-Perth railway line. Obviously there are difficulties because it is bounded on one side by the sea and on the other by the river. However, we have not tried the idea of using small clipper buses to feed into the rail service. When I visited New South Wales last year, I stayed at a suburb called Sans Souci. It was a relatively simple exercise to catch a bus from Sans Souci to the Rockdale railway station. Two or three bus services brought passengers to the Rockdale railway station, and the passengers could then catch a train which stopped at all stations, or a train which went express to Sydney. These trains then connected up with the inner city circle railway line. This service operated quite well.

One of the great dangers in the closure of this railway line is that eventually the line itself will be pulled up. I venture to say that not very long after that happens we will be looking at ways and

means to reinstate it. The City of Sydney is again considering a tramways system and the experts admit that more thought should have been given to the decision to discontinue the tram service. Brisbane is also considering reinstating a tram service for two reasons: firstly, from an economic point of view, and secondly, from the point of view of moving many people quickly.

The Hon. T. Knight: That is providing the SEC does not keep going on strike.

The Hon. D. K. DANC: Mr President, what an insane interjection! That is like saying that if the sky were not well propped up it would fall!

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It fits in with your speech.

The Hon. T. Knight: You are speaking of being honest about things, and I was being honest because we need only look at what is happening to the country.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Look at what is happening tomorrow!

The Hon. D. K. DANC: One of these days we will debate an urgency motion about industrial relations. I was amazed to discover that in the workers' paradise of the western world—Germany—4.4 million days were lost last year as a result of stoppages. And that is where everyone loves one another! No matter which party is in Government, while the economy of this country continues to slide, we will have more and more stoppages because the people will not continue to carry the burden of inflation. That is the situation and it will not change.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Who carries the burden if the people do not carry it?

The Hon. D. K. DANC: There are different ways of loading a donkey or a horse.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. D. K. DANC: May I answer that interjection please, Mr President?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The interjection has absolutely nothing to do with the question before the Chair.

The Hon. D. K. DANC: I agree with you, Sir.

The PRESIDENT: I recommend to the Leader of the Opposition that he confine his remarks to the motion before the Chair.

The Hon. D. K. DANC: Mr President, this is a very wide-ranging motion. If you read it, Sir, you will find it is almost limitless.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: So is your imagination.

The Hon. D. K. DANC: Mr McKenzie put the motion together quite well to allow us to debate this issue. However, without wishing to get into

an argument, I have to answer some of the matters raised by Mr Masters and some of the insane interjections made by members opposite. The interjections tend to lead me off the motion.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Just like your speech.

The PRESIDENT: I recommend to the Leader of the Opposition that he ignore the interjections whether or not they have anything to do with the debate, and that he confine his own remarks to the contents of the member's motion.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: One of the arguments advanced by the Government for the closure of this line is that it has sustained a loss. As I have said previously, no-one can guarantee that the same situation will not be arrived at within three years when buses are being used. I believe Mr McKenzie outlined very well the funding system used for our buses. He pointed out that there are many hidden costs. I have related already to the House the great strain which will be put on Stirling Highway, not so much because of the closing of the railway line, but rather because of the operation of the articulated buses. Before very long Stirling Highway will be in the same situation as the extension of the Kwinana Freeway. I do not know whether you travel on this extension, Mr President, but I come across it every day.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: By bus?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: No, by car. There is no railway service to Attadale, fortunately or unfortunately.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: A bad slip!

The Hon. D. K. DANS: It was not a bad slip at all. This is a serious problem and members opposite do not seem to want to treat it seriously. When the bridge goes further across the river, there will be a bigger problem. Then we will build another Narrows Bridge, and another ring road.

I would like to turn now to Mr Masters' comment that Mr McKenzie said we would have to ban cars from the city.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: No, I didn't say that. I said that Mrs Vaughan said it.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I am not challenging the honourable member. His memory is very bad.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: No, you just did not listen.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: On one occasion I said we would have to look at the possibility of cars not being able to enter the city. Mr McKenzie said that transport studies throughout the world had shown that something like this must be considered. Quite wisely, the City of Melbourne

has decided to limit the number of car parks in the inner city.

When a new building is erected in St. George's Terrace, no car park can be built under it. This is a policy to try to overcome the problem which arises in busy periods when all the car parks disgorge their angry ants onto the road and cause serious congestion.

The policy in some cities has been to discourage cars in the inner city without being too heavy handed. This is a sensible approach.

The present Government is committed to the new federalism which will eventually give us double taxation, even though this will be deferred for a while now.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: The claims made about that were fascinating.

The PRESIDENT: It also has nothing to do with the motion.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I thought it did have something to do with it, Sir, because if we had double taxation, maybe we could afford the railway line.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Are you advocating that?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: The Western Australian Government has found that it cannot sustain its public transport system, including the railways, because the new federalism is not bestowing the great gifts on the State which the Government thought it would. It is interesting to note that other State Governments have generated their own funds to improve their transport systems while our Government has let ours run down.

The Federal Government wants to dissuade people from using motorcars. It is gradually increasing the tax on petrol until the people on the lower and middle economic levels will not be able to use motorcars. These people will be forced to use public transport. However, in this State we do not have an efficient public transport system. The other alternative is that the Governments—both Federal and State—will have to subsidise the purchase of petrol.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: We are talking about the Fremantle railway line. The bus service will cope better—

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I do not think Mr Masters can hear very well.

In three years the bus service will be in the same position financially in which the rail service is now. However, it will produce greater congestion on Stirling Highway. The traffic

problem will be severely aggravated by the growth of the suburbs beyond Kwinana.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You have just told us there will not be any cars because people will not be able to buy petrol.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: We will have to duplicate all the present highways. When the new bridge goes across at Bullcreek, the Kwinana Freeway will not be able to take the traffic. It cannot cope now. Mr Ferry knows what I am talking about.

I support the motion of urgency moved by Mr McKenzie. I have defended his right to move the motion.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: As we all do.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: The Government is foolhardy to pursue this course. The public has been upset more than anything by the question of government by decree. For some time now the actions of the Premier have reminded me of the actions of a person who has lost all reason and all sense of direction. We have heard him make some amazing outbursts. People are worried about these irrational outbursts.

Several members interjected.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I am telling members what the people are saying.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You are not.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I ask Government members to listen to us for a change. We are supposed to be operating in a democracy where we listen to the people and try to be responsive to their wishes. This is the way we should govern. I know that this Government, which is tied very closely to the Federal Government at present, is very unresponsive, and that is the crux of the matter. People who have never travelled on a train in their lives are up in arms at the cavalier treatment given to the expression of opposition.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You are one of those aren't you? You don't travel on a train, do you?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Let me make it quite clear again. I do not think Mr Baxter could have been listening. No, I do not travel by train. I have said that four times already. Now it is five times, and I will make it six times if Mr Baxter likes. However, like many other people in my district, I do not like the cavalier way in which the will of a whole number of people has been cast aside.

The Government should be a little more responsive to the people. Irrespective of all the mathematical calculations about the economics of the railway line the people see this decision as another big erosion of the will of the people. If the Government continues on its foolhardy course, in

the fullness of time we will be here debating how we can gain access to the north side of the Fremantle Harbour!

We are not talking about just the passenger service. The Government has given us a little sweetener there—the line buses. We cannot build a roadway for heavy vehicles in a few minutes. Mr Masters spoke of the money, but I do not know where the money will come from for that exercise. I do not know how we will move heavy objects away from the wharf by road transport.

Mr McKenzie covered the question of the closure of the railways, but more importantly he covered the entire question of a properly integrated transport system. I submit that this Government has no plan. It is operating from day to day. The public transport system in Western Australia can be said to be non-existent. Three years from now, it will be a shambles if this Government is allowed to continue in office.

THE HON. T. KNIGHT (South) [8.15 p.m.]: In replying to the motion moved by the Hon. Fred McKenzie, some points must be clarified. Mr Dans suggested that the Hon. Gordon Masters stated we wished to take away the right of Mr McKenzie to speak in this House. That obviously is not the case; in fact, after this House had been sitting for an hour we gave Mr McKenzie leave to carry on.

During his address, the Hon. F. E. McKenzie referred to me, as the member for South Province, and quoted some remarks I made regarding the decision by Westrail to discontinue carting fish to Perth. A few facts should be placed before members to clarify this point. In fact, Westrail still is carting fish from the south coast to Perth. When it was anticipated back in April that fish carting by rail would be discontinued, other local members and I appealed to the Minister and to Westrail on behalf of the fishermen and other people concerned. We made several representations to the Minister and held many meetings with fishermen from the south coast and the south-west. Finally, an arrangement was entered into that Westrail would continue to cart fish until such time as a suitable alternative means of transporting the fish was found. That situation still exists today.

As a matter of fact, some three private companies were interested in taking over the transport of fish. However, they were advised on many occasions that the figures they were quoting were not viable. I understand they now accept this to be the case after trial, and they have not proceeded with their proposals.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Did you support the closure of the Albany passenger service?

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: Just hold on a minute; I will get to that.

The cartage of fish from the south coast has been taken care of to the satisfaction of the fishermen concerned.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie also commented on the fact that the member for Albany (Mr Watt) and I opposed the closure of the passenger service from Albany. At the time this closure was foreshadowed, we did oppose it; indeed, we made strong representations over a period of some 2½ years to have the matter examined and the service retained. Through the Minister and Westrail, the local members and other people associated with this matter fought to have the rail service retained.

The member for Albany and I spent 26 hours each week sitting on the train travelling to Perth—13 hours up on Mondays and 13 hours back on Thursdays—to prove our point. We believed the rail service should be kept open. However, unfortunately, we received no support from the public in the great southern and the south-west. We talked to the people and advised them through the local Press, encouraging them to use the service to make it viable so that it would be retained. We pushed the fact that if the local people wanted a rail passenger service from Albany to Perth, they would have to use it.

During that period I can remember many occasions when the member for Albany, the member for Stirling, and I were the only passengers on that train apart from, in some cases, a few pensioners and repatriation pensioners. Over the entire period I suppose an average of about nine people a night were using a passenger train comprising a first-class coach, a second-class coach, a seated passenger area and a buffet car. Of course, it was running at a loss of several hundred thousand dollars each year.

Mr McKenzie said repairs and upgrading of the train would cost about \$2 million. Mr President, \$2 million was the cost of repairing the coaches and keeping them going; \$9 million was the cost of replacing those rail carriages.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do you blame the people for not using the service?

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: Mr Dans has had his opportunity to make his point; he should let me have mine. If Westrail was losing several hundred thousand dollars per annum using the old carriages, imagine how much would be lost using upgraded or new rolling stock; the loss would be

multiplied by 10, with no guarantee that any more people would use the service.

The people in Albany said, "Retain the train; it is a damn good thing." However, very few of them were prepared to use the service because when they reached Perth they wanted the use of their car. This defeated their own argument.

Yes, we argued against the closure of this service because we thought the people wanted it. However, it was proved after three years of using the service every week that wanting the service retained and using the service were two different things.

The same situation applies in regard to the Fremantle-Perth railway line. If members opposite are so keen for this line to be retained, they should get people to use it. They should get out in their electorates and work on people; tell them that if they do not use the service it must close because it is uneconomic. There is no business in Australia today which can afford to run at a loss and go bankrupt, and a Government is in exactly the same situation.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Is this Government going bankrupt?

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: It is obvious the Government would not consider upgrading the rail regardless of cost, as Mr McKenzie suggested. I have a great deal of respect for Mr McKenzie, but I feel that was a particularly irresponsible statement. No Government can afford to say, "We will do this regardless of cost." I am sure Mr Dans would never make such an irresponsible statement; he would not agree with what Mr McKenzie said.

This Government is trying to provide the public with a viable transport system. The train service between Perth and Fremantle is to be removed, but at the same time it will be replaced with a bus service. Members opposite have not proved that buses are not a viable alternative. If this Government and our taxpayers can save money by changing to buses, I will support such a move.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: No speaker from the Government side has said buses will be viable. However, I will not pin them to that because they will not be viable.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: Mr Dans did not prove that buses were unviable during his address so, where is his point?

Obviously from the investigations the Government has carried out, buses will be more of a proposition to the taxpayers than will be the rail system. We are supposed to be a responsible Government, and members opposite are supposed

to be a responsible Opposition. Let us look at the facts which are before us. I do not believe in accusing members opposite of politicking on this issue, although we are all guilty of playing politics at times.

The suggestion has been made that we electrify our rail system. What happens when the SEC workers go on strike? As Mr Dans bounced back and said when I interjected on him, we will not be able to use anything which runs on electricity if power supplies are cut due to strike action.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Should we go back to horses?

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: Mr Dans made the point that we cannot close the railway line. However, years ago, many people said we should never change from horses; yet, within a few years they were all driving motorcars.

Times have changed all over the world. Just because Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland are doing something, Western Australia need not do it. We have one major city of 800 000 people, with the remaining 400 000 residents spread over an area one-third the size of Australia. In Western Australia geographical problems are experienced which are not encountered in other States.

Members opposite look at issues on a narrow basis without considering the overall consequences of what they are proposing. I did not agree with the closure of the Albany passenger service until it was proved to be unviable because people refused to use it. Taxpayers have wasted their own money and then have complained about it. I did not mind when the Government finally decided to withdraw the service. Of course, many crocodile tears were shed in Albany. However, within one week, very few comments were heard about the cessation of the service. Every now and again, someone would say that he wished the service was still operating because he wanted to use the train to travel from Albany to Perth. But that would apply only once in every 10 years to that person. Of every person who complained to me about the withdrawal of the service, I asked, "How often did you use the train?" and in 99 per cent of cases the reply was, "We never used it, but there are people who want to use it and you should not take that right away from them."

What a horrible, stupid way to run the country; that is, by giving the public something that is not used, costs money—taxpayers' money—and is uneconomical. I cannot go along with that proposition. We are looking for a sound, viable alternative and buses will provide that alternative. It may be that many people would still like to use

the railway; however, not enough would use the service to make it viable. Maybe buses will be the answer.

With that, I oppose the motion.

THE HON. R. G. PIKE (North Metropolitan) [8.25 p.m.]: With some reluctance I rise to enter this debate.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is not true; you jumped up once before.

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: It is well known I hesitate to enter into controversial debate. It needs to be said in a very clear and concise way how the populations centred in the Perth and Fremantle areas use the train service. In the case of Fremantle people, principally they travel to work south to the massive industrial area; in addition, there are some who travel from Fremantle to the city. Mr Dans already has made the point that this narrow strip of line is bound by the Swan River on one side and by the ocean on the other.

If we come back to practical common sense—as indeed Mr Jamieson did when he was Minister in the last Labor Government—we will realise that because there is not a high density population along that line there will never be any prospect of massive increases—or, indeed, even the retention of existing passengers—in the numbers of people using that railway line. The only alternative is the one the Government has put *pro tem* to the local authorities concerned; namely, that the local authorities of Peppermint Grove, Mosman, Nedlands, and Subiaco agree to high rise development close to the railways to provide the service with passengers. That proposition has been repudiated. Therefore, it is not economic to retain the line because there will never be sufficient numbers of passengers to make the service pay.

Mr McKenzie said the Government relied upon the fact that people have short memories. I think he should have made those comments in regard to people in his own party. I wish to talk about the manifest hypocrisy of the Labor Party in this issue. Since Mr Jamieson successfully introduced the Bill to close the railway, the Labor Party apparently has made a cascade of discoveries and changed its mind. So, let us have a look at what Mr Jamieson did and said.

The reality is that when the Labor Party was the Government and Mr Jamieson was Minister, it successfully introduced a Bill to close the railway line. Let the House mark this well. The question before us is a proposition from the Hon. Fred McKenzie to debate an issue. I ask the question: Why is the House not debating a Bill to close the railway line? The answer to that

question is that the Bill to close the railway line has already been passed by a previous Labor Administration. Mr McKenzie said the Labor Party had only three years of Government in 20 years. But what did it do in those three years? It passed a Bill—an enabling Bill—to close the line. The public of Western Australia need to be reminded forcibly that the reason the duly assembled Parliament in Western Australia is not making a decision is that the decision already has been made by the Labor Party.

Let us now look at what Mr Jamieson said when he successfully introduced a Bill to close the railway line. Is it not remarkable that the Labor Party has not said one thing—has not given one iota of information—in regard to what Mr Jamieson stated when introducing this enabling Bill as a Minister in the Tonkin Labor Government?

I quote Mr Jamieson's comments from page 1360 of *Hansard*, of Tuesday, the 9th May, 1972—

Members are aware of the decision made by the Government to construct an underground railway through the city of Perth and to replace the existing rail passenger service between Perth and Fremantle with a bus service.

Further on he said—

Both of these proposals are part of the Government's recently announced long-term commitment to a Perth regional transport plan, which incorporates a high capacity rail rapid transit system . . .

And mark these words—

. . . and an extensive bus system feeding into rail wherever practicable.

Further on—and mark this—he said—

. . . the existing railway between Perth and Leighton should be closed and the land reserved for use as an exclusive busway.

This last quote deals with Mr Jamieson making provision for new rolling stock and new buses. He said—

. . . I would like to indicate that it is the wish of the Government to pass this legislation during this session for the obvious reason that no planning can take place before authorisation is granted.

What we have here is an exercise in pure political hypocrisy by a party once in government and now in opposition. Because of the public opinion about which Mr Dans spoke, it says the railway line should not be closed. We have a reversal. The Opposition says, "Here is not a railway train, but

a bandwagon, so let us hop on it; let us see whether we can associate ourselves with so called ruling public opinion," the purpose being, of course, to pick up a few political votes. This is political hypocrisy—the absolute worst since I have been in this House.

I believe that 90 per cent of legislation passed by Governments, whether they be Liberal-NCP or Labor socialist, would be introduced by Ministers and by Government irrespective of the political colour of the Government. I am sure my honourable friend, Mr Bob Hetherington—who says I cannot make speeches without notes—would be aware of that.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I did not say that.

The Hon. R. G. PIKE: The member did last night; his memory must be failing him.

What we are looking at is that very small 10 per cent of legislation which incorporates a political ideology; that is, the 10 per cent introduced by either socialist Governments with a centralist control ideology or Liberal-NCP Governments with a free enterprise philosophy. They are the two manifestos about which this House makes its decisions.

It is because of that 10 per cent difference in what I would call ideological legislation that we are debating tonight a proposition which is not an ideology of free enterprise and not an ideology of socialism, but a discussion of practical, common-sense, businesslike administration of this State, and, in particular, the railway in this State.

What we have is a petty exercise of political opportunism by the Labor socialist Opposition which has been manifest for the last four or five weeks. I concur with the remarks made by Mr Masters of the Opposition "hopping onto the issue in order to seek and generate political support."

Let me conclude on the point on which I began. I hold in my hand the quotes and recommendations by the former Minister (Mr Jamieson) and I remind this House and the public of Western Australia that in no way whatsoever does a Bill to close the railway need to be discussed by this House, because that decision has been made already by the previous socialist Labor Government.

Therefore, it is not necessary to have a debate except as an exercise in political semantics, which is what Mr McKenzie was indulging in, because already the decisions have been made.

THE HON. NEIL McNEILL (Lower West) [8.35 p.m.]: After that contribution by the Hon. Bob Pike, nothing more needs to be said. I am sure he has administered the *coup de grace* in

respect of Mr McKenzie's motion. If members are prepared to be a little objective in this respect—although I recognise that may well be an impossibility, despite the protestations of the Leader of the Opposition and others—they will admit that the purpose of this whole exercise is one of political content rather than a reflection of that great body of public opinion.

I am one who would agree that if we were dispassionately and objectively debating the matter of public opinion I could be arguing the other way; but I am sure we recognise in this House and at this time in relation to the railway service that we must accept that what we are doing is indulging in a purely political exercise. Mr McKenzie, Mr Dans, and any other Opposition member who may speak must acknowledge that that is, in fact, what we are doing.

As a follow-on to what the Hon. Bob Pike has said members will recall that when this Government came to its decision—was required, Mr McKenzie, to come to a decision—it did so in order to meet the requirements of the planning which Mr McKenzie would claim is not being done. In order to meet the planning requirements a decision had to be made as to when that railway would close.

I really hope Mr Pike's words and quotations will extend far beyond the limits of this Chamber. I hope the Press and the media generally will give the due weight, recognition, and publicity to his points to the same extent they have given recognition to all the other aspects and views in relation to the closure of the Fremantle-Perth railway.

If I was asked the question—in fact, I have been and I have thought about it over many years—whether I want any railway to close; do I want the Perth-Fremantle railway to close or the Bunbury-Perth railway to close, my answer would be, "No". I happen to like railways. If that was the simple and single decision required that would be my answer. But members of the Opposition know that is not the question; they know that is not the basis of the decision which has been made.

Mr McKenzie and others would draw attention to the situation that applies in New South Wales and Melbourne. Perhaps they would like to go a step further and draw a parallel with London, Toronto, or Montreal. I mention those cities because I have visited them and I have used their public transport systems. How can one compare our city with the City of Sydney? It is a great city of the world in its own right, with over 3 million people and with an opportunity for commuter

services that extend far beyond the metropolitan area.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: What about Brisbane?

The Hon. NEIL McNEILL: To borrow a term that the Hon. Sandy Lewis often uses, "I am fascinated". In this one instance the Government of Queensland suddenly finds favour in the eyes of the Opposition. Would not Premier Joh. be delighted!

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I did not say that.

The Hon. NEIL McNEILL: Because it suits the purpose of the Opposition it cites the State of Queensland.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: At least they have done one good thing; this Government has done nothing.

The Hon. NEIL McNEILL: Mr Pike very effectively dealt with the Opposition's arguments.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I do not think so.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Mr Jamieson will answer that.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. NEIL McNEILL: Being up with members of the Opposition—if not in front of them—I am sure they will be studying the 1972 *Hansard* to see what members of the present Government said in relation to Mr Jamieson's Bill. If they have not done so they should; they might get some material of interest to them.

I would like to know what was the great groundswell of public opinion at the time the Tonkin Labor Government introduced and passed that legislation. I express curiosity as to what initiatives were taken by what political parties in order to build up that groundswell of public opinion.

Several members interjected.

The Hon. NEIL McNEILL: I would be more worried if the Opposition members heard me in silence. They would not wish to do that and I can understand that they wish to try to have some rejoinder to the comments I am making. The parallel has been drawn to the Barracks Arch. Let me say again, as I have already said privately and in other places, that, yes, the Barracks Arch is there and I would have been one of those who would have been sorry to see it go. Some mention was made of this particular item in the *Daily News* last week and the Leader of the Opposition—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I don't read that paper.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: He just looks at the pictures.

The Hon. NEIL McNEILL: Even though the Leader of the Opposition does not read that paper he may have had a reminder of an article in it. In respect of the Barracks Arch I say again, as I interjected on Mr Dans—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I think it is a monstrosity.

The Hon. NEIL McNEILL: I believe all the heat went out of that exercise with respect to the Barracks Arch the day after the election in 1971.

I have reason to remember—as do other members—the detail of that emotional controversy. It had a considerable effect in my electorate as in others. It was not so much the arch itself which was of concern, as the emotions and fervour stirred by those who were peddling the issue.

I mention also the Palace Hotel. I have personal experience of what happened in respect of that establishment.

All these are emotive issues. Let me say, in case it may be said I am criticising public opinion, that far be it for me to suggest such a thing. I just ask people to recognise this fact.

I refer to the letter addressed to you, Mr President, from the Hon. Fred McKenzie in support of his wish to move an urgency motion. I quote as follows—

My reason for moving the urgency motion is because over the last two years the State Government has set about dismantling the W.A. Railway system. Its action appears to be systematic. Evidence in support of this statement is listed hereunder.

Then listed under the heading of "Dismantling process" alongside certain dates was the following—

Cessation Freezer Services to Public.
Cessation Albany Passenger Rail Service.
Closure Mullewa-Meekatharra Rail Service.
Partial Closure of Perth Parcels Depot.
Closure Fremantle Parcels Depot.
Cessation Perth-Fremantle Passenger Service.

I ask members to bear in mind the nature of these particular items—the cessations, closures, and the partial closure—and what impact and substance they have apart from the cessation of the Perth-Fremantle passenger service. These are the sum total of the items given to support the evidence Mr McKenzie would use to justify the urgency motion before the House—a motion which has taken the time of the House since approximately 4.45 p.m. this afternoon.

I ask members to note the particular nature of those services which, in the mind of Mr McKenzie and the Opposition, provide sufficient evidence of the systematic dismantling of the railway service in Western Australia by the present State Government. I hold in my hand a statement made recently by the Minister for Transport. It is not just any statement. It is a statement from a man who has the total responsibility for the correctness and accuracy of the information contained in it. I am reading part of this statement in order that it might be put on record and to enable members to tick off the items as I mention them and compare them with the example Mr McKenzie has given us when describing the dismantling process of the Government. The statement reads as follows—

The Government has fully acknowledged the vital role Western Australia's railway system has played, and will continue to play in providing essential transport services for people and industries.

Some \$97.6-million of capital funds have been expended on improvements and upgrading of the railway system since 1974.

They have included: The 80km Eneabba-Dongara railway opened in 1975; upgrading of the 259km Kalgoorlie-Leonora line began in 1976 and will be completed next year; the 41km Brunswick-Collie line has been upgraded and re-railed since 1975; the 91km Pinjarra-Picton track has been upgraded and the signalling system improved; the dual gauge connection between Kenwick Junction and Canning Vale was constructed in 1978; the Amery-Kalannie line has been improved with a major track maintenance programme over the past three years; two rail bridges on the Boyup Brook-Katanning line destroyed by fire during Cyclone Alby in April 1978 were replaced or repaired. These give an indication of the work that has gone on.

The work continues. It includes: A \$92-million plus five-year project of re-railing and re-sleepering the 503km standard gauge link between Kwinana and Koolyanobbing began in May this year; rail recovered from this project will be used to upgrade sections of Westrail's track network as and when justified; renewal of the 28km track between Mundijong and Kwinana to begin in 1981/82; work is in progress on the provision of direct rail access between the upper south west main line and lower south west line to Manjimup which will make it possible for through trains to by-pass Bunbury.

In the Perth metropolitan area, more than \$2.5-million was spent on general maintenance and improvement programmes on the Perth-Midland and Perth-Armadale lines in 1977/78 and 1978/79. This included \$536,000 on re-sleepering, ballasting and tamping on the Armadale line and \$34 000 on re-piling of the Bunbury Bridge across the Swan River.

I interpolate to say that Mr McKenzie has been almost entirely preoccupied with the question of the breakdown in rolling stock and he says that the Government has not been doing anything to improve the stock design. He believed the Government has not been doing many other things. To continue—

The Government is purchasing 10 new rail cars for the Midland and Armadale lines at a cost of about \$6-million with the first delivery expected in mid-1981, and expects to spend up to \$13-million in the 1979/84 urban public transport improvements programme for purchase of additional rail cars, bus/train transfer facilities and provision of car parks at suburban railways.

The public would also be aware of the 11 new mainline locomotives that have been acquired since 1974 at a cost of \$6.6-million to meet bulk haul requirements, that tenders were called this year for a batch of up to 13 locomotives as part of a programme of replacement of X-class light line locomotives for general traffic, that 250 special purpose wagons, including 90 for the haulage of grain, have been constructed at a cost of \$10-million, that a \$300,000 maintenance and refurbishing programme is underway on the Australind train coaches for the Perth-Bunbury passenger service, that in the past five years 11 new railway station buildings have been provided at various country centres, that a new parcels depot was built in Roe Street, Perth, and parcels facilities have been upgraded at Mullewa and Kewdale, that a substantial building was acquired for district administration purposes at Narrogin, that about \$1-million has been spent on further improvements to facilities and other equipment at the Midland Workshops, and that further upgrading of amenities there is tentatively programmed to begin in 1981.

The statement continues to deal with matters in relation to general services and refers to the extension of pensioner concessions and the like which are now available in all States in Australia except Queensland.

There are so many other matters I would like to highlight and emphasise with as much intensity as I can. I ask members—and other people throughout the entire community—to please compare that programme which I have quoted, with the simply pitiful story and submission of evidence Mr McKenzie has placed before this House in an attempt to justify the objection of the Opposition and the reason for bringing the motion forward as a matter of urgency.

I say that if anything more were needed to put the Government's case after Mr Pike's comments which referred to previous legislation, then this substantive document must be it. It absolutely destroys any credibility the Opposition might have in its claim that its actions are a reflection of nothing more nor less than public opinion. I certainly would not support the views or the motion which has been put forward by the Opposition through Mr McKenzie today.

THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) [8.56 p.m.]: It is a pity Mr Pike did not quote more of the speech Mr Jamieson made in 1972 because he would have read an outline of the extensive proposals for railway building, undergrounding, and electrification—which were the main purposes of the Bill—and the necessity to close off that line in order that construction might take place.

I am sure Mr Hetherington will add a little more to that discussion when he speaks. So there is very little to be said about Mr Pike's attempt to make a great and important point; it was a small matter indeed. It is certainly not the intention of the Labor Party to do away with railways and this fact has been made clear. As Mr McNeill mentioned, very extensive debate took place in this House. He referred also to the stirring up of public opinion by the supporters of the railways at the time of the debate on the Bill. If the political aspects of the issue were in question, then the points Mr McNeill raised hardly undermine the case put forward by Mr McKenzie.

Of course there have been extensive railway works associated with some of the resource industries and this unfortunately seems to have been almost the whole concern of the railway administration in recent times. It believes its sole role is the transport of bulk materials. When Mr McKenzie referred to the dismantling of the railways he was speaking of the range of services which the railways could provide.

I took my family on a train trip to Albany. It was something unusual because we do not live close to a railway line so do not travel by train regularly. That train journey was most

inordinately long. The train seemed to stop at every shadow along the way and a very disturbed night for us was the result. After travelling on the Albany train as a passenger I am not surprised at all that people were not anxious to use it. If the railways had taken some account of the needs of the passengers, its patronage would have improved. This is similar to the argument Mr McKenzie used when speaking to the closure of the Perth-Fremantle railway.

There is no question that if the Government had maintained the rolling stock on that line and provided more modern carriages, and had it gone out of its way to promote the line to the public and tried to draw in other linking services, its patronage would have been much greater.

Another point made about the public transport service between Perth and Fremantle is that collectively it has the highest level of patronage in the metropolitan region; that is, bus and rail combined. That phenomena exists because the dual system operates. If the rail service is taken away the total service will be less attractive and more passengers will decide to travel in their private cars.

I know the sort of bus service which operates in the locality in which I live. If I had to rely on it my electors would get a very poor service indeed because I would be able to visit them at most irregular intervals.

My own children who have needed to use that bus service have often been in difficulties because of changed timetables or because something has happened to the bus and it has not arrived. They then have had to wait for an hour or more for the next bus. A service cannot be worked on that sort of basis. It does not become an attractive proposition. Naturally, as my children grew older—as is the case with other youngsters in the area—the first thing they wanted was to obtain their own wheels in order that they might have greater mobility and no longer be forced to rely on the infrequent bus service. That sort of situation applies over a good deal of the metropolitan region.

Obviously, if one is to promote a public transport system, one must be sure the system is attractive so that more people will use it. If the service is allowed to run down, as was the case with the Fremantle-Perth line, one cannot expect additional custom. I cannot imagine any member of the Liberal Party in this place who presents himself as a competent business person expecting to run a successful business, if it presented a very tacky appearance to the public because in those

circumstances the business would not provide an economic return.

The Government has expected people to flock to the suburban passenger service which offers a tatty and unattractive service. It is most unfair that Mr Knight, and his colleagues, should have been asked to encourage more passengers onto the Albany service which was in the sort of condition I have just described. It was a hopeless request, doomed to failure from the start. If the Government had been aware of good business practices—as it claims to be—it would have set about the task in a different way.

A large number of people travel every day by private vehicles across the metropolitan area. I understand there are something like 90 000 vehicle trips per day. They would transport a large number of people and many of them could be encouraged to use public transport if we set about it in a sincere and competent manner.

Instead of the usefulness of the railways having been disproved, the incompetence of the Government has been proved. The Government has claimed that Westrail operates efficiently and effectively, and that it provides a good service. However, people will not use the service with any degree of frequency.

A great deal has been written on this subject and I have several newspaper cuttings with me. By no means do I have a complete file of all that has been recorded, but one article I would like to quote deals with the question of what will occur once the railway is closed, and the effect its closure will have on the people in the corridor. The article appeared in the *Weekend News* of the 18th August under the heading, "Buses 'add to hazard'". It was written by Bruce Phillips and, in part, reads—

Closing the Perth-Fremantle railway will worsen an already critical traffic problem in Stirling Road, Claremont.

That is only one portion of the area which will be affected. To continue—

The addition of the 70/72 bus service will bring to 10 the number of regular services operating along the road.

School buses also use the road.

Residents say peak-hour traffic already is bumper-to-bumper, particularly between Gugerri Street and Stirling Highway.

Most of the buses use this section of Stirling Road.

I will not quote all the article, but I will refer to a few of the comments from the residents in the area. They read—

"The traffic is most annoying morning and evenings. It's wicked," she said.

Another woman said school children often had difficulty crossing Stirling and Shenton Roads because of the traffic.

She said: "It is crowded enough as it is. Motorists park along the road anyway, so I just can't see how the buses are going to get through."

The article continues—

Another resident, closer to the highway, said the traffic problem "had to be seen to be believed."

She said: "Traffic is bumper-to-bumper for about two hours every morning and evening. You notice it most in the evenings. You can wait up to 20 minutes to get out of the driveway."

The independent schools in the locality are affected. The students at the St. John College conducted a poll at the college, and 95 per cent were in favour of the retention of the railway line. They expressed much greater preference for trains than buses.

The principals of Scotch College have also expressed grave concern about the hazards which will face the children attending that school once the new system begins because there will be an increased traffic hazard in Australind Road. I could refer to many other quotes, and the opinions of people residing along the bus route. They are almost uniformly in favour of the retention of the railway. Very few residents would consider it to be a wise move to close the railway, or for the service to be discontinued. They cannot see that the bus service adequately will replace the service provided by the trains.

I think it was Mr Masters who, this evening, questioned the adequacy of the Gallup poll which was reported in the Press. I have with me a report which appeared in the *Daily News* of the 23rd August, headed, "Rail-link poll opposes closure". The article sets out the questions which were asked. Since the value and the competence of the poll has been queried I think I should quote the questions which were asked. The people who were interviewed were first given an outline of the situation. They were told the railway service was to be discontinued on the 2nd September, and they were asked—

Do you favour or oppose the closure of the Perth-Fremantle passenger rail service?

Another question asked was—

If you were to use public transport between Perth and Fremantle, would you prefer to go by train or by bus?

A total of 400 people from the local government localities throughout the metropolitan region were interviewed and they represented a fair cross-section of the people in the Perth region.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: What was the outline of the proposals given to the people?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The newspaper article states—

The poll was conducted last weekend among a representative sample of 400 people aged 16 and over throughout Perth. After being reminded that the Perth-Fremantle passenger train service is due to be closed on September 2...

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Due to be closed!

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Those being interviewed in the poll were then asked the first question.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Was that correct; the line was due to be closed?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Yes.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: No, it was to be discontinued; not closed.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The member is being pedantic.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is where the people got caught.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Will those people be able to get on the train after the 2nd September?

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: No.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: One will not be able to get on the train after the 2nd September and go to Fremantle because the service will no longer operate. The member opposite will not deny that.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: The service will be discontinued; not closed.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It will be closed; one will not be able to get on a passenger train and go to Fremantle.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: But the line will not be closed.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The passenger service will be closed.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: No, discontinued.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It is the same thing. With respect, in view of that sort of understanding displayed by the member who has

been interjecting, it is no wonder we have arrived at the present situation.

That situation is one in which words are being twisted so that a service discontinued is not the same as a service closed. It is no wonder members opposite accepted the story of the Government.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Surely there is a difference between closing a debate and discontinuing a debate. The same applies to railways.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: A debate which is closed can no longer continue.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You are playing with semantics, surely.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: If a debate is closed, that is the end of it; it can no longer be debated.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: No wonder the public are having doubts about your argument.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. T. Knight): Order! Would the honourable member continue his remarks and ignore the interjections?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I think Mr Withers' interjections adequately illustrate the fallacy of the point made by Mr Baxter; that is, that closure and discontinuance are the same thing.

Like others on my side I am most concerned that the service will be discontinued—in effect closed—from the 2nd September.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Very well put.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We know the freight service will continue for a period until another line south of the river is built; or so we are told. However, quite obviously the commitment is to buses and the eventual closure of the freight service. There is no doubt that will be the end of the Perth-Fremantle passenger rail service.

As other members have said, it would be difficult to meet the capital cost of reinstating the link. Tonight we have already heard a great deal made of the cost of maintaining the present service, and of the amount of public funds which would have to be put into the service if it were to be continued effectively.

If in some years' time the question of the service being reinstated arose, we could imagine how much more the capital cost would be. The amount involved would be astronomical compared with what we must pay now to improve and maintain the current service.

I believe sufficient evidence is available to show that electrification is the obvious answer. I note

that an SEC report stated that the fuel used on the current suburban rail services represents only one-thousandth of the State's energy consumption at the moment. That is hardly worthy of consideration in the total cost of fuel to the State.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I think it is worthy of consideration.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It is worthy of consideration, but it is a very small amount in the total expenditure on fuel. It would seem to be a small price to pay to maintain the service at its present level and be in a position to move into electrification at the earliest possible opportunity.

A large question mark hangs over the costings provided by the Government in respect of electrification. Some doubt has been expressed in respect of the consultants who are currently making an assessment of electrification costs. That assessment study is an exercise of only a few weeks, whereas the chief mechanical engineer of Westrail considers it would take two years to compile detailed information. Therefore even when the report of the consultants is prepared, a large question mark will hang over the figures, and there will be grave doubt as to the adequacy of the figures bearing in mind the time taken to compile the report.

We question again whether the detailed report will be made public so that it may be examined by independent people to test its validity.

Like other members, I could probably speak for much longer on this matter. I know I would very much like a rapid transit system in my electorate running from Wanneroo to Perth. The Shire of Wanneroo is very keen for such a service to be instituted at the earliest possible time. At the moment I would simply like a road running the length of the Mitchell Freeway route so that at least we would have a road transport spine. Obviously we are a long way away from getting a rail or rail-type rapid transit system in the northern corridor.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You have a very good bus service which can beat cars.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: If I represented the area served by the Perth-Fremantle railway, like members sitting beside and behind me, or the member for Subiaco (Dr Dadour), I would be making extremely strenuous efforts to ensure the rail service was retained.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Who would catch a train from Subiaco to Perth?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Many people would be prepared to do that. The Minister must remember that not only people in the corridor use

the service. People where I live sometimes want to go to Fremantle. If they do not have their own transport they must take a bus to Perth and then a train to Fremantle.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: They would be far better off getting a bus to both places; in fact, they might not have to go through Perth at all.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Occasionally buses are provided to take people from the Scarborough area to the Royal Show, but it is difficult to obtain a timetable to ascertain the route. The practical difficulties in respect of using occasional bus services are very great indeed. It is much more convenient to take a normal bus service to Perth and to catch a train to the showground or Fremantle. In a few weeks' time the Royal Show will be held. Last year over 200 000 people caught trains to the showground. That is a colossal number of people to put in buses.

I noticed today groundwork is being carried out at the showground station for the installation of bus turnaround facilities. It is a pity the Government was not so active in this area before now; it could have made the railway service more attractive to people. It is a great pity the Government had to wait until the train service is about to be closed before taking action like this. The showground is not the only place at which work is being carried out currently; I have noticed work being carried out at several places.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: If your Government had a more generous policy, perhaps it would have done it.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Labor Government had a policy to electrify the railway service. The Wilbur Smith report was initiated during the term of the Labor Government to study the feasibility of electrification. The Wilbur Smith report is one of the documents quoted in evidence against the costings of the Government. In fact, the estimates of the Government do not stand favourable comparison with that report.

I strongly support the motion moved by Mr McKenzie. He made an excellent speech in support of it. I feel he could have spoken for twice as long as he did, because he has a mine of information in respect of this matter. It would have been better had members opposite dealt with the matter in a more calm and rational fashion, and considered the arguments seriously.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You would have to be joking!

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I would agree with one member of the Government, the Hon. Neil McNeill, who said it is a pity this debate

was not introduced earlier. I agree, but it has now become a matter of urgency. The line will be closed in only a few days, and tomorrow is the last day before the closure date on which we could debate the matter in this place. I think it was an excellent move on the part of Mr McKenzie to give us the opportunity to speak on the matter.

I very much support the motion.

THE HON. R. J. L. WILLIAMS (Metropolitan) [9.27 p.m.]: I rise to speak because I, too, am disappointed that Mr McKenzie referred in his letter to the systematic dismantling of the railway system. I have always had great respect for Mr McKenzie as a railway man. The Hon. Neil McNeill illustrated the shortcomings of the term "dismantling" by indicating that an amount of \$216 million has been or will be spent by this Government between 1974 and 1981. That amount is being spent on upgrading and improving the railways. It is not the sort of expenditure one expects when the system is being dismantled.

I am really disappointed with Mr McKenzie in this respect, because he was a railway official and a union man for a long time. I have always regarded him as an honest representative of his union.

However, he forgets a most important part of the railway system: its history. Neither Mr McKenzie nor the Labor Party care to remember the name of a person in Great Britain, effigies of whom were burnt in the streets in 1963. The people of Great Britain were protesting against the man who produced a horrendous report—I think the "in" word now is "draconian"—on the railways of Great Britain. I refer to Thomas Beeching, now Lord Beeching, who started life as a chemist and finished up as the head of British Rail. He dismantled thousands upon thousands of miles of railway line.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Now they are trying to put them back again.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: No, they are not.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Yes they are.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: The Leader of the Opposition has no case to say railway lines are being reinstalled in Great Britain. Lord Beeching's task was to rationalise the mileage of rail, and then to proceed to build up a good rail service. That is precisely what he did.

I ask Mr McKenzie not to be such a prophet of woe and doom for the railways. This is precisely what this operation is all about. The sympathy of the people has been stretched beyond imagination.

We have already said it is a lie to say that the Government will close the line. It is an outright lie. We are not closing that line. Freight traffic will still be operating on it.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: For three years.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: For three years, yes. It will be closely monitored, in conjunction with the study of the bus service. If one or the other should prove deficient, then perhaps alterations will be made.

The Leader of the Opposition claims that within three years the rail line will be torn up. In the next breath he says, "We will be the Government in the next few years."

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I did not say that.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: We are not going to tear the railway up until the appropriate study is completed.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You mean we are going to discontinue it, not close it?

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: That is right. We are just discontinuing the passenger traffic on that particular section of railway. It is a very small section indeed.

The Hon. Roy Cloughton missed a wonderful opportunity to congratulate and indeed applaud all the people who live in his electorate and in mine, north of that railway line, who have never used the railway—the people at Balga, Balcatta, Wanneroo, Warwick, Whitford, and all the rest of them. I include in that the people at Rockingham. We must realise that they are all extremely healthy; not one of them is a cripple; not one of them is mentally retarded; and not one of them has ever had a baby!

Somehow or other all of the people in the northern areas manage to get into Perth. The mothers manage to carry their pushers on the buses. They manage to send the children to school. However, the public was subjected to that pernicious form of heart-tugging when it was said that these people would be disadvantaged. There are thousands of people in Perth who have been disadvantaged for years because there is not a railway line to the northern suburbs. Where is the railway line to the northern suburbs? It is the total plan members have to consider when they talk about electrification on a night like this.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton interjected.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: When members talk about electrification on a night like this, the mind boggles. Tonight they are talking about the electrification of a railway, and yet at midnight the employees of the SEC will go on strike and hundreds of people on life support

machines will be disadvantaged. The Opposition talks about electrification! I know people who are on dialysis machines who will have the members of their families standing by pedal appliances to ensure that the dialysis machines continue in case of a blackout.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Are you sure they are going on strike? You are pretty well informed.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: I am informed by the 7.00 o'clock news. If Mr Dans has succeeded in bringing the unions and the SEC together, to come to agreement, I would congratulate him most sincerely.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I have had nothing to do with it.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: He has done a wonderful job if he has succeeded in stopping that strike. I believe it is one of the most diabolical forms of strike ever.

The closure of a particular passenger-carrying rail line is one of those things which no-one really likes to occur. However, one has to be practical about it. If Mr McKenzie were honest, he would blame the engineer who first laid down the railways here. What a terrific burden the railwaymen of this State have had to put up with because of a quarrel between an engineer in Adelaide and an engineer in Perth about the gauge to be used. Our toy gauge has carried millions of tonnes of materials and millions of people. Now it is causing so much trouble because everything costs more. This is because we have the narrow gauge instead of the standard gauge.

Who knows? Within the three-year period it may be decided that the standard gauge railway should be electrified and should run through this area. That may be feasible. Has anybody pointed out to the people with accuracy that this is a possibility? No-one has bothered to mention that. They have just stirred the public, and stirred it to such an extent that the public have been misinformed.

People from my electorate have asked me why the railway is being closed. I have pointed out that the railway is not being closed. Those people are amazed when they learn that goods traffic will still go over the line. There are one or two people who are horrified at that fact. They thought they were to be rid of the railway forever. I have had to tell them that that is not the case. The plain, simple fact is that the passenger service is temporarily suspended. That is a closer and truer description—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I am pleased to hear you say that. There is hope yet.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: I say to the Leader of the Opposition that is what I sincerely believe. If time proves me wrong, let him say so later. That passenger service is being temporarily suspended only.

Members have spoken about Sydney, Melbourne, London, and their services. Mr McKenzie mentioned Montreal and Toronto. Those are cities with populations in excess of the millions. They are not small cities.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What is the population of Toronto?

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: From the top of my head, it is about three million.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I do not think it is.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition can tell me.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The fourth largest city in the world is Sydney.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Mr Dans should tell me what is the population of Toronto, because the House wants to know.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I do not know.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Why would the Leader of the Opposition ask me? I said I thought I knew what it was.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Toronto must be the third largest white city in the world.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: If Mr Dans says so, I agree.

What I am saying is that when one considers large conurbations there is a need for services; and services are provided. The false figures given about the reduction of services in Sydney relate to the introduction of the Eastern Suburbs railway which took 37 years only to build.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It was planned 100 years ago, I think.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: Next week in this place there will be people coming to Perth from all over Australasia. They will be coming to attend a conference. The talk about bumper-to-bumper traffic jam really makes me chuckle, because within half an hour or an hour the whole thing has dissipated.

Only a few weeks ago we had people from overseas visiting Perth for the CPA executive meeting. We stood on a corner of St George's Terrace at 6.30 p.m., and one of those people said, "Where is the traffic problem I have been reading about?" I said, "Well the rush hour is over." He said, "The rush hour? When do you get that?"

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Don't peddle that line of nonsense.

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: It is a fact that the rush hour which is produced in a city of this size is not the same as the rush hour one experiences in Tokyo, or London, or New York. However, this is what people are trying to say. We are closing down nearly six miles of railway line. Disaster! We will never survive! I think it is time that we looked at the traffic jams on the Stirling Highway. Within an hour there is no traffic jam. What are they trying to come at? They have duped the public; but they cannot dupe this Parliament.

I certainly cannot support this very negative motion in any way.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [9.40 p.m.]: We all agree that this debate is centred on the statement by the Hon. Mr McKenzie that the Government is dismantling the whole railway system systematically. In the letter he addressed to you, Mr President, he outlined the details of the dismantling process.

Mr McKenzie said that on the 31st October, 1977, freezer services to the public ceased. That applied particularly in country areas. We were all very perturbed about that, because in the early stages the bus services were not very satisfactory. However, things have worked out. We have had no complaints for quite some time. The complaints ceased after we raised the issue with the Minister. The unsatisfactory situation in regard to freezer or chiller services for people in country areas has been resolved.

We have had no complaints for quite a long time. It appears that that particular situation is pretty well solved. We know that the freezer service was a costly one. As far as we know at the present time it is working fairly satisfactorily, so nobody has been badly inconvenienced.

The next occasion referred to by Mr McKenzie was the cessation of the Albany passenger rail service. We all know that over the years the passenger traffic on that service had gone down. Mr Knight illustrated that point when he told how few passengers used the service. He referred to nine passengers travelling on the line, and that number included himself, the member for Albany, and the member for Stirling. That occurred on a number of occasions.

How many of those people were full-fare paying passengers? Mr Knight referred to himself and two other members of Parliament. There were a number of pensioners who have train travel at half fare. How much money was Westrail obtaining from the nine people on the train? It would be not enough to pay for the cost

from Albany to Mt. Barker, or even to Cranbrook. That is how good the patronage was.

At the same time a fairly good passenger bus service has been running between Albany and Perth. The people are using that service to some extent. However, it is not used to the maximum extent. I could go on and mention services of this nature which have lost their patronage.

The National Country Party members have always opposed the closure of railway lines. However, we are sensible enough to realise that where passenger services lose a great deal of money and the people are not using them and cannot be persuaded to use them, they must eventually go. This is what has happened with a number of rail services in Western Australia. The passenger services have been discontinued.

There have been some instances where the goods services on some of the lines have been put on a seasonal basis. I quote the Burakin-Bonnie Rock line, which is on a seasonal basis only. It carries wheat, superphosphate, and that sort of thing. Such lines cannot be run all of the time. It is too expensive to do that.

I move to the next item mentioned by Mr McKenzie; that is, the closure of the Mullewa-Meekatharra rail service.

The Meekatharra-Mullewa railway line has not been closed; it has been discontinued. I have a letter from the Minister dated the 15th August this year and it reads as follows—

I refer to your letter of August 13th concerning the Mullewa-Meekatharra railway.

Rail services on this line ceased on May 1st, 1978 and the Government gave an assurance that the railway would remain *in situ* for a period of twelve months after services ceased.

The next paragraph reads as follows—

Despite the expiry of that period my Government has not taken any action to have the railway officially closed. There is at present no intention to implement the closure, the Government being prepared to allow the line to remain for a further period in case of future developments.

There is no urgency about the debate in relation to the discontinuance of the Meekatharra-Mullewa line. It is still in existence and could be used tomorrow if a great deal of money was spent on it to bring it up to a satisfactory standard.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: \$13 million.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The matter of the closure of the Perth parcels depot and the

Fremantle parcels depot has been dealt with by Mr McNeill.

We come now to the cessation of the Perth-Fremantle passenger service. I am glad this matter was mentioned, because the general consensus of opinion amongst the people of Western Australia is that the Perth-Fremantle line will be closed.

The people of Western Australia have formed this opinion as a result of comments made by the Friends of the Railways, Labor Party politicians, and the media—both the Press and television.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Not the ABC.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The people have been told continually that the Perth-Fremantle line will be closed. It has never been said that the passenger service will be discontinued.

When I interjected on Mr Cloughton when he referred to the poll which showed that 82 per cent of the people questioned were in favour of retaining the railway line, he admitted the people were given an outline of the proposals and the words used referred to the fact that the railway line was to be closed. Ninety-nine per cent of the people who signed the petitions were under the impression that the Government intended to close the Perth-Fremantle line. It was not mentioned that the Government proposed discontinuing the passenger service. This has never been accentuated by the media. It has not tried to tell the public the facts which are that the passenger service will be discontinued, but the railway line will not be closed at the present time.

The media in Western Australia has acted in an unfair manner. At least now that matters have been stated clearly in the House tonight the Press will be able to set out the real facts of the situation.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I think the Press has told the real facts.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The Perth-Fremantle passenger service is to be discontinued and the line will not be closed for a period of three years. Even after that period it may not be closed. It will be left *in situ* for a period of three years.

I would like to refer to the Perth Regional Railway Bill, 1972. This Bill was introduced by the then Labor Government, spearheaded by the Minister for Railways at the time. It was intended that the railway service throughout the city should be put underground and that the Perth-Fremantle line should be closed and pulled up. A bus service would operate from Fremantle to the present bus terminal west of the railway station.

Who supported and who opposed that Bill in 1972? All Labor Party members, including Mr Dans, supported the Perth Regional Railway Bill which included the closure of the Perth-Fremantle railway line.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Tell all the story. We have it here.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am telling the whole story. The Leader of the Opposition can refresh his memory by turning to page 2858 of *Hansard* of Thursday, the 24th August. You, Sir, asked the following question—

How do you define the preliminary stages?

The Hon. D. K. Dans replied—

By that I mean the preliminary planning stage and the pulling up of a most uneconomic section of railway between Perth and Fremantle.

However, the Leader of the Opposition tonight—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: When did I say that? Quote my name again.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The Hon. D. K. Dans referred to the pulling up of a most uneconomic section of railway between Perth and Fremantle.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Did I say that?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Mr Dans said that. He should read this copy of *Hansard*.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Why don't you tell all the story?

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It would be far too bad.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: We will tell all the story. You are like Mr Pike. I have anticipated this.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I have not finished the story yet.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You are reading the good parts. You are like Hedy Lamarr.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The part I have mentioned is not a good part as far as the honourable member is concerned.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is part of the whole story.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Let us look at the situation in relation to the Perth-Fremantle railway line in 1972. I do not believe Mr Dans' memory can be very good if he does not remember the extract I quoted from *Hansard* a moment ago.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: There must be more than one copy, because I said it also in this copy.

Several members interjected.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I should like to return to the Bill which was debated at that time. The members who spearheaded the investigation into the Perth regional railway system were my then colleagues, the Hon. Les Logan and the late Hon. Fred White. Those of us who were here at that time will remember this Bill resulted in a conference of managers being set up, following amendments moved in this Chamber. It was intended that this matter should be placed in its proper perspective and that a feasibility study of the whole proposition should be undertaken.

I should like to quote the words of the Hon. J. Dolan which appear on page 5172 of *Hansard* of Wednesday, the 15th November, 1972. Mr Dolan reported to the House as follows—

I have to report the results of the conference held between representatives of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council in connection with the Perth Regional Railway Bill. The managers appointed by the Council met the managers appointed by the Assembly, and reached the following agreement:—

Proposed amendment No. 2 of the Legislative Council agreed to subject to the addition of a new clause 6 as follows:—

New Clause 6.

Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (2) of section 5 of this Act that portion of the scheduled railway as is situated between a point 11 miles 9 chains and a point 12 miles 9 chains from the commencement of that railway may on a date to be proclaimed be temporarily closed as a result of traffic or engineering problems which may arise from time to time or for the purposes of this Act.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: It is a proper function of a House of Review.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I should like to turn to clause 3 of the Perth Regional Railway Bill, 1972 which reads as follows—

3. On a date to be proclaimed the scheduled railway shall cease to be operated, and on and from that date—

- (a) the material comprising the scheduled railway or any portion of that material may be—

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- (i) used in the construction or maintenance of any Government railway as defined by section 2 of the Government Railways Act, 1904;
 - (ii) used in the construction of any railway authorized to be constructed under any other Act, whether before or after the coming into operation of this Act; or
 - (iii) sold, disposed of, or otherwise dealt with; and
- (b) subject to section 4 of this Act, the costs of the scheduled railway as charged to the Government Railways Capital Account may be omitted from the accounts prepared under Part IV of the Government Railways Act, 1904.

In clause 5(1) we see the following statement—

Authority to discontinue the scheduled railway and to construct the Perth Regional Railway.

5. (1) It shall be lawful to construct each of the parts of a railway to be called "Perth Regional Railway" described respectively in the Second and Third Schedules to this Act, with all necessary, proper, and usual works in connection therewith, along the lines described respectively for those parts in those Schedules, and it shall be lawful to deviate from those lines at a distance of twenty chains on either side thereof, but no more.

We come now to the crux of the matter. Subclause (2) reads as follows—

(2) Before discontinuance in accordance with section 3 of the scheduled railway and before commencement of construction of any part of the Perth Regional Railway referred to in subsection (1) of this section, the Minister shall obtain the approval of Parliament to a report on the results of the engineering and economic studies applicable to that part, such report to be based upon a comprehensive feasibility study and plan relating to the works proposed to be prepared by a competent independent authority.

We then have a new clause, No. 6, which was inserted as a result of the conference. It was only as a result of the efforts of the then Opposition, the Liberal and National Country Party members, that the railway was retained until such

a time as a full feasibility study had been carried out and Parliament had approved of it.

It is passing strange when we look at the situation in 1972 and see that the then Labor Government of which Mr Dans was a member was fighting to close the Perth-Fremantle railway line, then turn to the situation today when some of the same people are opposing it.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: We had an overall plan for the railway. We were going to electrify it and put it underground.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The important issue is the economics of continuing the Perth-Fremantle passenger service. Even members opposite will agree it is not an economic proposition, regardless of which party is in Government.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do you think the buses are an economic proposition?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The buses are not an economic proposition; but they will not incur losses as great as those incurred by the railways.

The matter of inconvenience has been mentioned. I do not believe many people will be inconvenienced greatly by the closure of the line. People who commute to the railway line are inconvenienced to some extent, because they must either drive or walk to the station, because there may not be a bus service in their areas. The same situation will apply when the new bus service is introduced.

A number of people travel a reasonable distance to get to the railway station. Few people live a long way from the bus services in this State.

Reference has been made to the provision of a railway service to the northern parts of the city. Heaven forbid that we should install a very costly railway line to the northern part of the city which has a most efficient road service for both cars and buses at the present time.

For the greater part of my life I have lived north of the city and I would not live south of it, because the road system is not as good as that in the north. The traffic holdups when travelling from the south of the city to the metropolitan area are terrible.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Mr Williams did not say that. He said it only lasts five minutes.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: When one travels from the north of the city one has the opportunity of using many alternative routes. However, when one travels from the southern areas, particularly from the south-east, there are only two routes; one is over the Narrows Bridge and the other is over the Causeway.

If we want to talk about having more efficient transport services, I would advocate that such services are required to a greater degree in the southern areas of the city.

For many years I lived 13 miles away from the city and could travel to the city within about 20 or 25 minutes in peak hour traffic. However, if one wanted to travel to the city from the southern areas it would take a great deal longer. I still travel from the north of the city and, although I have to cover a reasonable distance, I can do it in 15 or 20 minutes.

I do not think that in the future there will be a need for a railway service north of the city. The City of Perth would need to reach a population of 4 million or 5 million people to warrant that railway.

I have covered the subject pretty well and I repeat: the people have no doubt that they have been told the railway would be closed whereas the passenger service will just be discontinued. I oppose the motion.

THE HON. V. J. FERRY (South-West) [10.01 p.m.]: I am sure Mr McKenzie must be feeling quite embarrassed.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Not at all.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: He is well respected by railway supporters, and I am very much aware of his ability as a railway man. He has my respect for that, but I do feel sorry for him. Obviously, he has had to introduce this motion. Mr McKenzie said his reason for moving the urgency motion was that during the last two years the State Government has set about dismantling the WA railway system. Previous speakers have demonstrated quite clearly that the contrary is the case.

I do not propose to canvass the area already covered, but I draw the attention of members to the situation in the south-west which I know reasonably well. It is quite pertinent to refer to the passenger service which plies between Perth and Bunbury—the well-known *Australind*. That service has been operating for a number of years and it was quite interesting to hear the Opposition say that the Government is trying to demolish the railway system and deny the people the opportunity to travel by rail.

It so happens that patronage on the *Australind* is increasing quite steadily. During the last 12 months some 79 000 passengers have used the service. Because the patronage is increasing, the Government—through Westrail—is catering for the increase. So it should. At the present time the rolling stock is in the process of being upgraded to cater for the demand. The refurbishing of four

rail coaches and one buffet car recently has been completed, and Westrail is planning to convert two rail coaches into "sit-up" accommodation. The converted coaches are to be used as required on the *Australind* service. If the Government is so anxious to demolish the railway system, why is it spending such a large sum of money to carry out that work and upgrade the service still further? That argument does not stand up; it is stupid and quite irresponsible.

Westrail's performance and future upgrading programme for its rail services in the south-west demonstrate the valued role of rail transportation in the area. The programme is ongoing, and it demonstrates the role the railway service can play, particularly in handling natural resources.

I will specially refer to the transportation of coal, wood chips, and alumina.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: And apples and potatoes.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: A number of goods are transported. The system which handles these items is able to handle many categories.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: And fish.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I will come to fish a little later. The bulk haul products are something to which I will refer. The Pinjarra-Picton section of the Westrail line will be upgraded, and a centralised traffic control signalling system will be installed at a cost of \$2 million. It is anticipated this work will be completed in 1980-81.

The Brunswick-Collie section of line will be upgraded, and a centralised traffic control signalling system will be installed at an expenditure of \$4.5 million. The track work will be completed in 1979, and the signalling will be completed in 1981. Is this the track record of a Government which is trying to demolish its rail system? What nonsense!

The Bunbury-Manjimup section of line will be upgraded at a cost of \$1 million. This work will be completed this year, 1979. All this activity indicates the value of the development of natural resources in the south-west. The development of railway services provides employment, which the Labor Party does not want to see happen. The people should understand and know what the Labor Party is up to.

The alumina refinery at Wagerup will provide additional employment opportunities in the area, and will allow further opportunity for Westrail to cater for the people involved in that industry. The Wagerup alumina project will cost something in the order of \$3 million for track work alone, and signalling will also be required. If the railways are

being demolished, why is the Government spending such vast sums of money? The Opposition should be ashamed of itself for introducing this motion. However, I am glad of the opportunity it has given members from the Government side to destroy the argument and tell the correct story. Hopefully, the correct story will get through to the public.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do you think the media tells lies to the public?

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: The people have been misled on a number of occasions.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: By the media?

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: By a number of people. There are a number of other examples which I will leave to other members to mention.

The Opposition referred to a number of minor matters which were not important. Not once did members opposite indicate the tremendous amount of work done, and the large sums of money which will be spent in the future. The Hon. Neil McNeill has mentioned the future programme, and I have added to his comments. I mentioned the established industries associated with coal, mineral sands, timber, and others.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The mineral sands are not going too well.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: Why not mention iron ore also?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: From Koolyanobbing.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: Do not mention people; they do not count!

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: Bunbury is the regional outport for the south-west region and it needs a good rail service. That is exactly what is being provided for the heavy haulage items resulting from the natural resources in the area. Without going into too much detail, I wish to state the new harbour facilities are being augmented and serviced by new rail tracks. With the upgrading of the line via the north shore a part of the railway in Bunbury will be removed. There will be some screams about that.

The section of line from Bunbury to Picton will be removed, and that will be deliberate because a better system will be provided around the north shore. It will be more efficient. The existing line which divides Bunbury will be removed, and the local people have been looking forward to that with a great deal of expectation. So, do not let us hear the Opposition claim that the line will be taken up and nothing put in its place. The plans are under way right now. The work which has been going on in the Bunbury area will cost something in the order of \$1.5 million.

Getting back to the *Australind* service, because of the increase in patronage to something like 79 000 passengers in the last 12 months, it is my considered judgment that the service will become more frequent. If the demand is there, Westrail will meet it and additional trains will be provided. Let us not hear any more of this nonsense from the Opposition that the railway system right throughout the State is to be demolished.

I will refer to the electrification of the metropolitan railway service which has been mentioned by the Opposition. There was reference to what has happened in Queensland. I will quote from a statement put out by the Minister for Transport (Mr Cyril Rushton) on the 21st August, 1979. The statement, in part, reads—

I have stated many times my complete confidence in Westrail and the Commissioner, both in regard to the operations of railways throughout Western Australia and in relation to this electrification issue.

At a time when we are embarking on an upgrading of the whole Perth suburban passenger transport and freight transport systems for Western Australia it is necessary not only for the Government to be confident of its officers' competency but also for the people to have confidence in the soundness of the advisers' recommendations.

The reflections by F.O.R. and the Opposition have called into question the competency of Westrail, and so I have decided to call in the electrical consultants for the Queensland rail electrification project, D. G. McPhee, D. Rudd and Partners, of Brisbane, to undertake an independent assessment of the requirements and costs of electrifying Perth's suburban trains system.

The Government has accepted Westrail and the transport advisers' advice that electrification of the train system would cost at least \$109-million and that it cannot be warranted at the present time.

The assessment by the consultant will test that advice and the claim by F.O.R. that electrification could be carried out for less than half that figure.

That is in line with the undertaking the Government gave, because, by suspending the passenger service on the Perth-Fremantle section for the next three years, it will be keeping faith with the people and it will explore every avenue to find out what is best for the future.

The Opposition, in making play about electrification in an airy-fairy way, is being irresponsible. The system has to be costed thoroughly, and researched on a technical basis. I do not wish to hold up the debate any longer. I reiterate that the Opposition has no case to answer.

THE HON. R. HETHERINGTON (East Metropolitan) [10.13 p.m.]: I have heard a number of members on the Government side of the House dodge around behind semantics, and take various opportunities to accuse people of doing various other things in an attempt to argue against the argument put forward by my friend, the Hon. Fred McKenzie. Before I begin to say what I want to say, I think I should make reference to the *coup de grace* delivered by Mr Pike when he said there was an Act which would allow the railway to be removed, and that Act was introduced by a Labor Government.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: He read from a debate on the Bill.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: If the Minister had listened he would have heard the Hon. Norman Baxter read further from the same Act, as it was amended by this House. I am not claiming any virtue; all I am saying is this House and the Liberal members of this House insisted on amending the Bill which was accepted by the then Government after a Conference of Managers, as Mr Baxter has pointed out.

The Parliament amended the Bill so that the line could not be closed without reference back to the Parliament. I am afraid the honourable gentleman should have researched a little further. He should have read the next volume and not stayed with the volume he had. He would have found no Act was passed under the Tonkin Government allowing the line to be closed, because it was amended by this House.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: Who is indulging in semantics now?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am not indulging in semantics. I am just pointing out that the honourable gentleman was wrong. That is all. If he is going to come in with this sort of flourish he ought to get his facts straight. That is not indulging in semantics. It is pointing out the facts. The Bill was before the Parliament in consequence of the attempt by the Tonkin Government to bring in a complete plan for electrification and an underground railway in Perth. This was to be part of it. It was a plan which was not carried out.

The Government also commissioned Wilbur Smith and Associates to do a feasibility study of

electrification. One of the terms of reference was that the underground railway must in the first stage connect with the existing suburban lines to Fremantle, Midland, and Armadale.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Did you say Fremantle?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I said Fremantle, Midland and Armadale. In other words it was not then the intention of the Government to remove the Fremantle line. But of course the Wilbur Smith report recommended that the line be removed and a busway be put along the line; not that it be stopped but that it be replaced with something else.

I remember it well because at that particular time I was not a member of this House and I lived in Claremont quite near the line. I know something about it. I did not use the railway but my children used it regularly for all sorts of purposes—to go to the football, to go to the beach, to carry their surfboards, things which are difficult to do on buses or bicycles. There was a great furore about it; people protested; the unions protested. The Government listened and it did not take steps to suspend the operation of the passenger service or to close the line. Let us remember that. The Government did not do anything to suspend the operation of the passenger service; it did not take steps to close the line. It changed its mind.

Since remarks have been made about the Hon. Colin Jamieson, I have spoken to that gentleman. He said, "What I said in May was one thing. By the time October came and the Bill was passed and amended, a lot of water had flowed under the bridge. I had looked at a lot of things and I had changed my mind."

I do not know why it is regarded by the gentlemen opposite as a vice to change one's mind. Certainly the Premier of this State seems to think it is a virtue never to budge but to stand firm, because that is a sign of strength, even when people are talking. And when they talk often enough and loud enough, and when there is a properly conducted poll—and I have spoken to one of the people who conducted it—which shows that 82 per cent of people think the railway should remain, the Premier talks about democracy and improper tactics and suggests money is coming from funny places. It is funny how Governments are pleased when pressure groups support them but sometimes make statements about the bona fides of pressure groups when they are opposing them. At some stage, I think the Hon. Gordon Masters—

The Hon. G. E. Masters: I showed a photograph of you. I thought you would be pleased.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I was not at all upset.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You had a big smile on your face.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I was quite happy to be there. I might add for the information of the honourable member that I had nothing to do with the organising of it. In fact I was organised on that occasion by my honourable friend behind me, but I was very happy to be there and rather surprised to find I was in front. It is nice to be out in front occasionally.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Pull the other leg!

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: One of these days the honourable member will find out that when I say something I do speak the truth; and in this instance I happen to be speaking the truth. Perhaps the honourable gentlemen opposite do not understand that in other people.

The question was asked—because we had a rhetorical flourish from the Hon. Gordon Masters—what question was asked to get this result in the poll. The honourable member could have read this terrible newspaper the *Daily News*. I am always interested to note that members of the Liberal and Country Parties seem quite happy when the Labor Party is maligned and lambasted by the Press. When those parties get a little of it in return occasionally they are the first to scream "Foul!" I remember the former Prime Minister of Australia (the Right Hon. William McMahon) claiming the Press had defeated him. The Premier now seems to think the Press is whipping up the fervour and that it has nothing at all to do with the way people feel. I do not think that is the case. As a matter of fact, studies have suggested that what the Press does is jump on the bandwagon and help along movements which exist; it does not create them.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It never leads; it follows.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: That is right, and if it tries to lead on an issue which does not exist it falls flat on its face. I have seen newspapers try to do that and have no success. If the *Daily News* is having success, it is because it has jumped on the bandwagon which was started by the zealots, if one likes, who were very upset about the suspension and ultimate closure of the line, so that they started to protest and in fact the movement grew. I can inform the honourable gentlemen opposite that, perhaps to our shame, it was not an initiative of the Labor Party; but the Labor Party has listened, as the Tonkin Labor

Government listened when it was in office, to the voice of the people; and the Labor Party will go on listening.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Using!

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: The Labor Party does not make a virtue of never changing its mind. As a matter of fact, we believe in democracy—something about which the Premier of course knows very little, because we do not have it in this State with our present electoral system. The Labor Party believes in democracy, which means being responsible and responsive to the people. Sometimes the people are right and sometimes they are wrong but we can be responsive to them. And sometimes, of course, Governments are wrong.

The Hon. Robert Pike has produced an alleged fact which is not a fact. Much has been said about what was said and done by people in this House and in another place at the time of the Tonkin Government, but nobody bothered to mention the fact that the railway line remained operating as a passenger service.

Before I entered this House, during an election campaign in which I was a candidate, I went around to various groups of railway men accompanied of course by the then Assistant Secretary of the ARU, who was then my friend, and who is now my friend and colleague.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: He must have been far more effective.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: My friend was very effective, and that is what worries my friends opposite. He is always effective, especially when he is speaking on the subject of railways. When I spoke to railway men at that particular stage it was a subject about which I did not know much; I have been educated since. They said, "Look at what the Government is doing. It is letting the rolling stock run down; it is not maintaining the rolling stock as it should; it is not replacing it; it is letting it get into such a position that it will be almost impossible to replace it because of the cost; it is letting the service run down so that the number of passengers will fall off, and then it will close it down." If a Government decides not to maintain something and then says it will not pay its way, it is a self-fulfilling prophecy. That was the claim made by the railway men at that time and I found it a little hard to believe because I was somewhat naive in those days. Some members opposite may say I am still naive, but I am not so naive as perhaps they hope I am. I found it hard to believe but that is precisely what has happened.

Whatever the honourable gentlemen opposite say, I do not believe that because the Government cannot close the railway now without coming back to this Parliament—and of course it does not want to do that—it does not intend to close it at the end of three years. I do not believe it does not intend to close it. I believe the Government does intend to close the line, although it has left open a small option.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Have you a crystal ball?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am stating my beliefs on the evidence before me; on the evidence of the Government's behaviour, on the evidence of what has happened to the railway, on the evidence of the predictions made to me by railway men, and on the evidence of watching their predictions come about. It may not be a crystal ball and my prophecy may be wrong, but the evidence before me is that the Government intends to close the railways.

Even the Minister for Transport, when writing a letter to the Editor of *The West Australian* on the 27th August this year, said in regard to a complaint by Fremantle councillors that the linc articulated buses are damaging the roads

The councillors are not right in claiming that a 'linc' articulated bus does as much road damage as 10 000 cars.

I wonder how many thousand cars do the same amount of damage. He went on to say—

These buses have an axle loading no greater than the conventional buses, and their road damage would be no greater than that if all their passengers drove their cars.

In fact, their new look is already attracting some people to try public transport, and as this continues there will be a reduction in road congestion, not an increase as the councillors claim.

The decision enables the Government to introduce the new bus system and to monitor it for three years.

During that period the bus service can be monitored to see whether any other improvements can be implemented, as can the attitude of the travellers, the councils and residents.

I do not see any firm notion that it is 50-50 that the railway might be put back again.

I have been a little shocked at some of the debate that has taken place here tonight. I was shocked by the argument, if one can call it that, of the Hon. John Williams, who I know is a compassionate man and who I thought would not

use the kind of argument he used tonight, when he said people to the north who are crippled and retarded and who have babies in prams can get into the city, and asked why the people from the south cannot do that.

His argument is that people to the north are disadvantaged, so why cannot the people with the advantage lose it? That is what he was saying, because if he reads the newspapers he will find there are many people who will be disadvantaged.

A statement was recently issued by the staff of the King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women about the carrying of prams. I can tell members from my own experience that if a person has twin sons he cannot get a pusher on a bus very easily and handle the twins at the same time; however, he can get them on a train. The only way my wife could get away from the house to any distance if we were not using a car was to put the pusher in a train and away she would go. It was a great boon to her.

The whole range of services provided by trains should be examined when we are costing this matter. I do not know how the Government would cost that example in terms of dollars; however, as far as I am concerned, it is very important and should be taken into consideration. Of course, living near Claremont, I am aware there is a great seasonal demand for trains. There is a great demand by young people—the youth of our community we are always talking about here—who want to travel to the beach with their surfboards. I am referring to school age youths who want to go to the beach; and why not? It is to be encouraged. There is a demand for trains from people even from the north who travel regularly to the speedway at Claremont on Friday nights. There is a demand at the time of the Royal Show.

I would suggest that had the Government provided a better service instead of allowing the rolling stock to run down and had it bothered to operate feeder buses in conjunction with the rail system, the railways may have been profitable. However, of course, the Government made sure they would not be profitable, in the same way as the Hon. Robert Pike was talking on the adjournment last night about nationalised industries "always making losses". It is not true. However, most of our nationalised industries do run at a loss because a nationalised industry which makes a profit is sold off by conservative Governments, federally, here and in the United Kingdom, which leaves only the unprofitable industries private enterprise does not want to pick up to service the public.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Tell the complete story: They make profits and pay taxes.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Of course they pay taxes; so what? Naturally they pay taxes when they make profits. Mr Pike pays taxes and I pay taxes. That does not take away from the point I am making that any public enterprise which makes a profit tends to be sold off by people who have the doctrinaire view that if it is making a profit it cannot be public enterprise and they make sure it is not by selling it, otherwise their predictions would be belied by fact. They make sure their predictions come true when they are in Government. I suggest this is what is being done with our railways.

I would have liked to see something done to make the Perth-Fremantle line and the line to Albany more attractive. I know that in other parts of the world people travel by train; it is a pleasant way of travelling. I wish we had trains like the French trains, or the trains of the French Metro, with their rubber wheels. I wish we had a whole range of things. I have seen trains in Vienna, Paris and London.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: What about South Africa? They have the best trains in the world.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: They may have; it shows that we can find good almost anywhere, does it not? I would like to see us trying to establish a really decent public transport service. Buses do not attract many people, normally, because people do not like travelling on them. If anybody asks me whether I travel on trains now, the answer is, "No".

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Do you travel by bus?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I travel by bus only occasionally, because I have a motorcar. Being a member of Parliament, I must commute backwards and forwards and the motorcar is a convenient way for me to do that. Even if we had a better public transport system I would still be using a car, as I think would most members in this House.

When I was young I travelled by train; when I was poor I travelled by train; when I was not a member of Parliament and when I was not at university I travelled by train, because it was a convenient and good way to travel. I always preferred to travel by train than by bus. In retrospect I am grateful that in pre-war Melbourne in 1937-38, instead of having buses they had electric trains, in which I travelled for 20 minutes each day when I attended high school in a Melbourne suburb. I just wish more people would use the trains in Western Australia.

I have not been particularly impressed by the arguments I have heard tonight.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Nor have we.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You have not done a very good job of convincing us.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It is very difficult to convince the invincibly ignorant.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: What a magnificent phrase from academia.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Actually, it is not a phrase from academia; I will tell Mr Lewis where it comes from one day, if he wants to know.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: The railway workshop?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: No, it does not come from there, either. We cannot convince the people who do not want to know. I would not blame members opposite if they were not so proud they are members of a House of Review. I know they are going to toe the Government line. I know they do not want to embarrass their Premier. I know that when a person has a bad argument he must use the numbers. However, I am not impressed by what they have done, and if they are not impressed by what I am saying I am not surprised.

I would like to see us looking ahead and not relying entirely on road transport but establishing a decent transport system for the future of this country.

As the Hon. Colin Jamieson said in 1972 when talking to an amendment to his Bill which had come from this place to another place, in Toronto they have grown from a population of 700 000 to 1.4 million in only two decades. We must look forward and be prepared. After all, as we so proudly hear so often in this anniversary year, Perth is the fastest growing city in Australia. Let us plan for it; let us look ahead.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Don't we have pleas from the Labor Party that Perth should not be allowed to grow any larger?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Nothing we can do will stop it in the immediate future. A Government cannot stop a city growing immediately; indeed, it cannot stop it growing, although it can reduce the rate of growth. Certainly when we get into Government next year we will do our best to reduce the growth of the Perth metropolitan area.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I am sure it will slow down very considerably then.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am sure one of the things which will slow down considerably—as it did last time when the Labor Party was in Government—is the rising unemployment rate. We managed to reduce it to the lowest in Australia instead of the highest, which is the sorry record of the Liberal Government.

A lot of things might slow down for the benefit of this State when we are in Government. However, I do not want to debate that now; we will be debating it in November or March or whenever “supreme Court” decides. I have been rather appalled by some of the arguments used by Government members tonight. I am glad the Government is maintaining and improving some of the lines and that it realises the railway is the best and most economical method of carting materials such as coal, alumina and ore.

I only wish the Government would have more consideration for people, whether or not trains are economical. Certainly, despite what members opposite might say, we on this side have not been knocked out; we are not ashamed. I am very proud of my colleague, the Hon. F. E. McKenzie; I always have been proud of him. He speaks honestly, directly and truthfully, and on this occasion he is right.

THE HON. A. A. LEWIS (Lower Central) [10.41 p.m.]: It was a disappointment this evening to hear such a shoddy speech from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, especially after his brilliant effort last night. It appears to me his contribution tonight—vitriolic though it was—had no substance. He set out to disprove the Hon. Robert Pike’s comments and played with words about whether the Bill was proclaimed in the form the Minister had introduced it, or whether it was not. Quite often, legislation is amended in this place and sometimes in the other place.

Mr Jamieson, of course, has been sacked by his own party. I think that is a great pity because he is one of the more able leaders of the Labor Party. However, knowing the peculiarities of the ALP I ask members opposite whether they have decided to reject what Mr Jamieson said in 1972. Do they reject it completely?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: We rejected it long before this; you have been in Government for six years.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Members opposite rejected long before 1972 what Mr Jamieson was going to say in that year?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Not before 1972; you know that.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Members opposite have changed their policy completely since Mr Jamieson announced it in his Bill. Is that the case?

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: The policy was for electrification.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: That is right; I am glad Mr Claughton interjected. We have heard a great deal about electrification and what it is going to cost. Mr Jamieson gave an estimate of the cost of changing over the rail system.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: That was for an underground system.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Mr Claughton has changed it to an underground system, has he?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Read *Hansard*!

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I have *Hansard* in front of me, and I see that Mr Jamieson estimated the electrification of the Perth railway system would cost \$110 million at 1972 values.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That was to sink the railway underground in the city.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Not all the railway.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: No-one said it was going to be all the railway.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I have read what your own Minister said when he was a member of the Labor Cabinet. Are members opposite repudiating what Mr Jamieson said, or are they not? Are they prepared to turn their backs on the most capable person in the Labor Party whether in this House or in the other place? They have done it once before; they have stabbed him in the back on the leadership question. Are they going to stab him in the back again on this issue?

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: That has all been repudiated. In fact, Mr Jamieson himself has repudiated it.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Is that not marvellous? Is that not typical of the ALP? Mr Jamieson said that this scheme would not commence until the 1990s.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. T. Knight): Order! I would like to hear the honourable member on his feet.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: It is fascinating to hear that the ALP has repudiated it. In 1972 Mr Jamieson said—

One of the main problems in planning for future growth in our urban public transport system is that the three existing lines radiating from the city to Midland, Armadale, and Fremantle are not located on

alignments which best meet the regional passenger transport task.

Do members opposite agree with that? Silence is the reply. It is like the Opposition's total argument. The Opposition rejects some things after having caught itself in its own trap. Reinforcements are coming in for the poor beleaguered Leader of the Opposition who, in 1972, was caught by Mr Baxter. What a whale of a catch; the Leader of the Opposition was caught by throwing out a minnow!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order! I think the *Hansard* reporter must be having a terrific problem hearing the speaker. I would like members to refrain from interjecting.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I shall now deal with several things in the motion—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Are you going to deal with the motion now?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: No-one opposite has dealt with the motion since it was introduced by Mr McKenzie. It has been demolished step by step from this side of the House. I know it touches the Leader of the Opposition in a tender spot on his hide when he has to repudiate a man of whom he is very fond.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: And I am still fond of him.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Here we have a man whom Mr Hetherington talked about having so much forethought. Mr Jamieson was talking about the 1990s. Good Lord, we have not even got into the 1980s and the Labor Party has turned on its tail again. Where does the Labor Party stand?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do you agree with what Mr Jamieson said in 1972?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I agree with the majority of what he said.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You should have been in the House to prop up your members.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: At that time Mr O'Connor went through Mr Jamieson's speech point by point and it was one of the more intelligent contributions we have had on the subject. I am not denying that Mr McKenzie is a true railway man.

I would like to quote from *Hansard*, page 1361 of 1972, with respect to the partial closure—as far as Mr Jamieson was concerned—of the Perth parcels depot. In fact, the station was to be completely demolished. I do not know what that would do to the parcels inside. Mr Jamieson was going to relocate the country parcels and

passenger depot and provide a narrow gauge passenger facility at East Perth and a narrow gauge passenger train servicing facility at Forrestfield, at a cost of \$2.3 million.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Did he do it?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: This was the Labor plan for the future. The Labor Government did not slow it down, it reversed the whole thing. This State went into reverse so fast it did not matter.

It must be hurting the Leader of the Opposition more and more as the barbs go deeper and deeper into his hide. After hearing Mr Baxter's speech, I do not know how Mr Dans can bear to sit in this place.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Should I leave?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I thoroughly enjoy having the Leader of the Opposition in the Chamber as he helps to make my speech a little longer.

Mr Hetherington spoke about the business of paying for nationalisation and different things. I refer Mr Hetherington to page 1796 of the 1972 *Hansard*.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I have read it.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I quote as follows—

Mr Court: I will be interested to see how they will finance this one.

Mr Jamieson: You will be surprised.

Mr O'CONNOR: I certainly will be surprised, and so will the Minister.

Mr Jamieson: I had a financier in my office this morning who is prepared to carry a lot of it.

Private enterprise had to carry it. We hear such utterances from Mr Hetherington; he goes on like a babbling brook. Perhaps the Labor Party had a Mr Khemlani.

Mr Hetherington said that between May and October, 1972, Mr Jamieson changed his mind. I would have thought that if Mr Jamieson had changed his mind he would have had to withdraw the Bill as it had not passed through this place. That is the normal procedure. Lord knows, those who were in the other place saw the Labor Government withdraw Bill after Bill which had been improperly prepared and which their Ministers knew nothing about—or if they knew anything it was very little. A very weak Opposition was able to force that Government to withdraw Bill after Bill.

One does not see that happening these days, because the Court Government has Bills which are prepared in a reasonable manner. I happen to be one member who gets up and tells the

Government when its Bills are not drafted correctly. When Mr Hetherington says we always toe the party line it would seem to me that he forgets his own position. I have never seen him leave his party line. He cannot say the same of me.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The honourable member should confine his remarks to the motion before the Chair.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I refer now to comments made by Opposition members with respect to the rolling stock which has run down. I remind Mr Hetherington that, probably, when he was visiting the railway unions with Mr McKenzie, he did not ask what had been done with the tracks. I remember Mr O'Connor consistently asking why maintenance was not being done on the tracks in Western Australia. This was perhaps 2½ years after the Tonkin Government had been in office. He consistently asked that Government how much it had saved by lack of maintenance on the tracks. It is fascinating to hear Mr Hetherington forget those sort of things.

Mr Dans and other Opposition members have said that Stirling Highway will become cluttered. I travel by either bus or car on that highway when I am in the city. Perhaps I come in earlier than some members. I usually arrive around 8.00 a.m. I have no trouble in driving through the peak hour traffic on Stirling Highway. I would like members opposite to point out just where the trouble will occur. I do not believe they can. That is a sign of emotionalism again. The Opposition attempts to stir up the people and say there will be traffic jams, without giving any concrete examples.

When Mr Hetherington was speaking I wondered how to interpret his remarks that public enterprise which made a profit was sold off by conservative Governments. I thought the ideals of the Labor Party were to take over businesses which were making big profits so that the ordinary members of the public could share in those profits. When we consider the disastrous effects of such nationalisation I am sure you, Mr President, would not begrudge me the opportunity to disagree with Mr Hetherington.

I know a fair bit of pre-war Melbourne. The city had trams at that time. Admittedly there were a few electric trains, but trams were the principal way of getting around the city. I would not be surprised if in those days more people were carried by trams than were carried by electric trains.

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I believe Mr McKenzie did an extremely good job in bringing this to the notice of the House. He was a little let down by his colleagues. He was the only Opposition member who had done research and who knew something of what he was talking about. The other contributions were purely emotional.

I would like to quote from the letter Mr McKenzie sent to the President. He wrote as follows—

My reason for moving the urgency motion is because over the last two years the State Government has set about dismantling the W.A. Railway system.

He then listed the evidence. He continued—

In my opinion, we need to debate the proposed closure because the Legislative Council has not done so in this Session.

He later said—

The issue has been debated in almost every forum except the Legislative Council. It is of paramount importance to the people of Western Australia and, therefore, it is essential that the opinions of the Members of the Legislative Council should be known to the Government prior to the 2nd of September, 1979.

Mr Masters talked about democracy. This issue has been running for many weeks and what Mr Masters said was quite true. The Opposition thought it could maximise its party Press; its members thought they could maximise their personal Press by bringing this motion in three days before the closure.

The Opposition had all the opportunities, week after week, of bringing in such a motion. I do not deny it the right to bring in such a motion, but it has had many weeks in which to do so. As I said at the outset, I believe it has been a very successful debate.

The only problem with this debate has been—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The problem is the railway line is going to close.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS:—that, apart from Mr McKenzie's contribution, the Opposition has had nothing concrete to say. After Mr McKenzie spoke, members opposite were shot down in flames and had to resort to highly emotional and completely nonsensical statements about triplets and strollers.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Twins—get your facts straight.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: In reality, Mr McKenzie has tried to put forward a serious

motion. Members opposite owe him an apology, because they have let him down. There is no way in the world, on the evidence produced here tonight, that anyone in his right mind would support the motion.

THE HON. O. N. B. OLIVER (West) [11.01 p.m.]: I would like to reply to the remarks made by Mr Hetherington. An excellent debate has taken place on this motion, but I wish to clarify a few points. Firstly, I would like to refer to the Perth Regional Railway Bill, 1972, which was amended after a conference of managers. The amendment was that the line would not be dismantled and the service would not cease until the completion of a proper study.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: It also says it has to come back to Parliament.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I made that remark in reply to the Hon. Norman Baxter.

The other point I wish to make relates to underground railways. I recall reading about this matter in the newspapers in 1972. I have travelled in most parts of the world which have far denser populations than Perth. I have examined also the various projects associated with the eastern suburban railway development in Sydney and the Melbourne underground. The people of Western Australia, regardless of political aspirations, regarded the proposal put forward in 1972 as pie in the sky.

The Melbourne underground rail system commenced in 1936 and experienced a series of delays. The project was frustrated by union demarcation disputes. It is an underground circuit in the city area similar to the one which has been operating in Sydney for many years.

The eastern suburban railway system in Sydney is a totally different proposition. It is now nearing completion. I have looked at the holes in the ground for some time and I believe they have been there for over 20 years; but suddenly it is coming to fruition.

I would like now to refer to the motion. It is generally regarded that Australians are one-eyed and Western Australians are particularly so. The Hon. Fred McKenzie is a railwayman and I appreciate his views. However, he is one-eyed in regard to railways. In some respects I could be one-eyed also. Most of my family some years ago were raised in railway camps as the railway lines were put through Victoria. My father was involved in the construction of the very early stages of the railway system. He worked on bridges, cuttings, and then extensions to the grain elevator in Geelong, which is similar to the CBH set-up in Western Australia.

Therefore, the Hon. Fred McKenzie and I have a little in common; but I hope I am not as one-eyed as he is. When I enter the House I am interested to hear his comments and at the same time I like to examine my conscience to ascertain my views on the matter.

I would like to explain to you, Sir, an experience I have had with the commuter system in Western Australia. In 1956 I regularly visited this State five or six times a year for approximately two weeks each time. It was necessary for me to commute daily from Perth to Fremantle. My destination in Fremantle was the Elder store which is now the Elder-GM store situated directly opposite the Fremantle railway station.

As a visitor to Perth, I used the rail system on one occasion only. The reason for this was that there was a most efficient bus service departing from St. George's Terrace. I found it fascinating to watch the manner in which the traffic moved about the city during peak hours. I believe the bus service was referred to as the "Metro service". Peak hour buses ran an express service to Fremantle. As far as I was concerned that was the only way to travel in comfort.

The other point which amazed me was the manner in which the Perth people moved along the buses. This was something I had not witnessed in Tokyo, Sydney, or in any other part of the world.

An excellent rail system is operated in Toronto. In view of the inclement winter weather there it is natural that rail is a prominent means of transport, because there are problems clearing the roads. The same situation applies in Europe in the winter months.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: It is quite nice in the summer months, too.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: According to the Hon. Fred McKenzie the population in this State is growing at a faster rate than in any other State of Australia. During the period 1971 to 1976 the population has grown at a rate of 16.2 per cent. That is very commendable and naturally it is pleasing to see our work force has kept up with the growth we have experienced in this State.

In conclusion, I would like to mention an experience I had when travelling on the transport system here. The debate this evening has been most interesting and I enjoyed listening to the contributions made by the Hon. Gordon Masters, the Hon. R. G. Pike, the Hon. Neil McNeill, the Hon. V. J. Ferry, and members on the Labor Party benches.

In view of the opposition to the closure of the Perth-Fremantle line, I made it my business to travel on it for a fortnight. I was extremely disappointed to see the number of passengers who were using it.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: We need a better service.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I carried out a quick survey and the relationship of the number of passengers to the number of officials was approximately one in six.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: How long ago did you do this?

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: During the period May-June of this year.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: It must have been in the middle of the night.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: It was during peak hour traffic. As a result of my experiences in relation to the Perth-Fremantle line I decided to travel on the Midland section of the railway system. I believe peak time is between 7.50 a.m. and 8.20 a.m.; therefore, I travelled from Midland during that period for a week. I also travelled on trains from East Guildford and Bassendean and express to the city.

One morning I decided to catch the 8.10 a.m. express to Perth. When I moved onto the station I had the choice of two railway boxes from which to buy my ticket. It was approximately five minutes past eight and about 12 people were standing on the station looking as if they intended to catch the next train.

After buying my ticket I moved towards the turnstile and discovered two very unhappy individuals crowded into the boxes on either side. The 14 commuters had a choice as to which person punched their tickets. The train pulled into the station and I discovered that, apart from the guard and the driver, there was another person on the train carrying a bag and selling tickets. I decided he had probably come from another station and was about to be repositioned. However, as we arrived at East Guildford six children boarded the train plus two more people with bags who were selling tickets also.

Eventually we arrived at Bassendean. Approximately 42 people were on the train when we left the station. We then travelled by express to Perth, where the train discharged approximately 40 people. We had to go through the turnstile and have our tickets punched again.

At this stage I had travelled with passengers the number of whom varied from 11 to 41. I was travelling to Parliament House so I moved to the

rapid transit bus service and as I reached the end of the bus, along with 20 other people, it pulled out immediately. I thought that was rather bad co-ordination.

However, within 35 to 40 seconds another bus arrived on the scene. I realised my criticism was totally unjustified and the service was in fact co-ordinated. This turned out not to be the case. A group of 25 to 30 people boarded the bus. Our tickets were not taken, but the engine of the bus was turned off and the driver went and had a cup of coffee.

At approximately 8.35 another train—not the express train but a later train—arrived at the Perth transit terminal and the people from that train boarded the bus on which I was sitting. The bus then left the station.

The whole situation was disorganised and unco-ordinated. The Hon. Bob Hetherington and the Hon. Fred McKenzie said that prior to the election they had the opportunity of being involved with union members and railwaymen. I would like to ask the following question: Is it possible to ensure that the manner in which the people who work on the railways approach their occupations is with a view to making the service profitable?

Instead of looking unhappy, the passengers' morale should be boosted to at least make the passengers who travel on the line confident enough to return. Any business is built on the service given, and the manner in which the employees or servants put forward that service.

Finally, I ask that members in no way endeavour to compare the Perth rail system with that of Sydney or Melbourne. I think Mr Taylor was the Labor Party spokesman on transport prior to the last election, and the policy as enunciated by him was for the population to be brought closer to Perth in the form of high-rise or high-density development. Therefore, if we were to embark on the programme proposed by members opposite, it would be doomed to utter failure at a tremendous cost to the taxpayer.

The situation in Sydney is totally different from the situation here in that there are highly populated outlying suburbs such as Hornsby, Liverpool, and Parramatta. If one were to ask a Sydney taxi driver to take one to Parramatta, we would reply that he would need to call at the taxi depot first to fill his tank with petrol. So it is totally incorrect to draw those comparisons.

In conclusion I would like to mention the Friends of the Railway. Like every other member, I have received telephone calls from members of the FOR. For some unknown reason some of

these people have telephoned my home during the day. When my wife has asked a caller for his telephone number so that I may reply to the call, an academic voice—in the words of my wife—has replied that no name would be volunteered in case names were handed to ASIO. Approximately 15 calls like this have been received by my wife.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: You have not had much experience with academics, mate.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: If they have a guilty conscience, that is their problem. It is all very well being a Friend of the Railways, but it is equally important to be a friend of the people. Frankly, a friend of the people is better, and the two do not necessarily mix. We are already losing \$25 million a year on public transport. That is \$1 a week out of every worker's pay packet.

Of that \$1 a week, half a dollar goes to flexible bus services carrying 8 per cent of metropolitan travellers. The other half a dollar goes to rigid railways carrying 1 per cent. The remaining 91 per cent travel in cars and get nothing except the bill. I think people need friends more than they need railways. I oppose the motion.

THE HON. J. C. TOZER (North) [11.18 p.m.]: It had been my plan to argue this issue in some detail tonight, but I think members will be delighted to know that I have thrown away my notes and I no longer wish to do that.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: I can see your Whip beaming at that.

The Hon. J. C. TOZER: I have changed my plans because the case has been canvassed so well by Government members. As a matter of fact, I do not think I have heard a debate which has covered a range of arguments in the manner we heard in this House tonight.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: They put up two basic points—I suppose that is good for them!

The Hon. J. C. TOZER: The speeches from the Government side of the House were excellent. I was not so impressed by the other speeches; I felt there was a lack of substance, relevance, and, possibly with the exception of Mr McKenzie, a lack of conviction.

I feel I have to mention particularly the quite brilliant contribution of the Hon. R. G. Pike. I had the feeling that rather like Henry Bolingbroke he "redeems himself when men least think he will".

I want to do something which, if he were in the Chair, Mr President might frown on a little. I wish to quote a few references I have here, because I believe they are relevant to the matter under discussion, and in some ways, they

illustrate the arguments already put forward to the House by Government members.

Before turning to these references, I would like to read from the Annual Report of the Director General of Transport for the year ended the 30th June, 1978. An annex to this report, under the heading, "The Statutory duties of the Director General of Transport", has this to say in part—

Section 21 of the *State Transport Co-ordination Act, 1966* states:

"(1) The Director General is charged with the duty of—

- (a) recommending to the Minister transport policy or changes in transport policy and measures for achieving policy objectives and the co-ordination of the various forms of transport service;
- (f) recommending to the Minister the provision of road transport services or additional road transport services for areas that are not, or are not adequately, served by that or any other form of transport service, the routes to be followed by that transport service and the calling of tenders, the invitation of premiums or the provision of subsidies for the establishment of that transport service;
- (g) examining, and reporting to the Minister on, any proposal for the construction of a new railway;
- (h) recommending to the Minister the closure or partial suspension of any transport service, including a railway;

Those are some of the duties of the Director General of Transport (Mr John Knox). Mr Knox is the State's top adviser on the broad strategy of the transport policy for the Government. He has held this office for some eight or nine years. I quoted from that annex to indicate to members the nature of some of the duties of the Director General of Transport, and I want now to refer to his report of the year ending the 30th June, 1977—that is, over two years ago. This first quote may help to explain the apparent surge of highly emotional and rather irrational opposition to the move that the State Government is making.

The Hon. Neil McNeill and other members have referred specifically to this matter but one paragraph in the report is particularly relevant.

Under the general heading of, "The Urban Public Transport Connection", Mr Knox has quoted some remarks of Mr L. J. Gambaccini, the

General Manager of Trans-Hudson Corporation, who had this to say when addressing an urban transport symposium of the Road and Transportation Association of Canada in April, 1977—

There may be a field of endeavour in government or business that is more replete with emotion, bias and outdated concepts than urban public transportation. If there is, I am not aware of it. As I look back over fifteen years of service as a transit operator and sometime activist on behalf of the transit community in Washington, I marvel at the welter of myths, fads and anachronisms that plague the field and distort dispassionate thinking on the subject. I single out no particular interests or disciplines nor do I suspect a discrete conspiracy. I believe most of us are subconsciously caught up in the welter of confusion about concepts and about symptoms that look like root problems.

What do we learn from this? We learn one thing—the situation in Washington and Canada is not very different from the situation in Perth, Western Australia. Mr Knox's own comment immediately following that quotation reads as follows—

In the hope that we can lift some of the emotion, bias and outdated concepts that surround discussion of public transport issues in Perth—as elsewhere—we discuss below some of the issues, as we see them, which confront almost all governments.

Mr Knox then made 10 statements covering all modes of public transport. I will not refer to all of them although I believe they are relevant. Statement No. 7 reads as follows—

Bus feed-in-to-rail, known in some circles as a “co-ordinated public transport system” will not prove popular unless, by feeding-in, the total journey time by public transport is reduced. The scope for co-ordination is limited to the Armadale and Midland railway lines and even if pursued to the ultimate, may actually increase total costs.

I then turn to statement No. 9 which reads—

As a generalisation buses are the only known public transport technology that can provide a reasonable level of service, at reasonable cost throughout our low density region.

The paragraph following this statement I found noteworthy, and it reads as follows—

For the same cost, buses can reach infinitely more front doors than can trains

and they can benefit in terms of the service they can give, from the expanding regional road system. That is not to say that we should not exploit rail's ability as a mass mover of people in at least two of our corridors to Midland and Armadale.

That was in the report for the year ended the 30th June, 1977. Turning then to the annual report for the year ended the 30th June, 1978, under the general heading of, “Passenger Transport—A Strategy for Public Passenger Transport in Metropolitan Perth” Mr Knox advanced five strategies as a basis for discussion. I will mention only two of them, as follows—

AIM 4: To upgrade the suburban railway system and other complementary facilities in those corridors where it can be clearly demonstrated that rail services have a significant role to play now, and as the demand for public transport expands, in the future.

AIM 5: To restrain the growth of the public transport subsidy by reducing costs or increasing ridership and revenue, wherever it is practical to do so.

I believe from those quotes we see that our expert in transport in Western Australia, together with his research team, has clearly laid down and illustrated to the Government the course of action which it should take.

Before I sit down I would like to mention a few matters that were referred to by Opposition speakers. Mr Dans commented on the articulated buses, but his stated experience with these buses is exactly the opposite to mine, and exactly the opposite to the opinion of experts on this matter.

I recall that I first travelled on an articulated bus when I had the opportunity to go to Europe three years ago. In Amsterdam, articulated buses almost identical to those we will see on our roads managed to handle the tightest of traffic situations in a manner that I do not think would be possible with a rigid bus.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You come to Fremantle with me and watch them going around the corners.

The Hon. J. C. TOZER: I will certainly do that.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: May be our drivers have not learnt to drive them properly yet.

The Hon. J. C. TOZER: Mr Dans also mentioned the matter of congestion on Stirling Highway. I would like to read now a short paragraph from a report entitled, “Urban Public Transport for Perth: Rail and Bus Policy”. The

report was issued by the Minister for Transport in April, 1979. In point of fact this document was to be the basis of the detailed argument I intended to present. However, I will read only a small section which refers to what Mr Dans said. The question asked was: Will buses contribute to increased congestion in the Perth-Fremantle corridor? The answer was—

The physical presence of 17 extra buses will not make any noticeable difference to traffic volumes. In terms of the effect the new Perth-Fremantle bus services will have on patronage, it is quite possible that the more frequent service to be provided by bus will attract more users who would have otherwise driven their cars to work.

Mr Cloughton referred to the Wilbur Smith report. I think that was a most unfortunate reference for him to make. Possibly he has not had a chance to study the report. It is the Perth central city railway feasibility study. Notwithstanding the fact that the Wilbur Smith report relates to the central city, it is interesting to read its conclusions. Under the heading of "Recommended System" the report stated—

Electrification of the Existing Railway has a significantly lower economic return than the Busway system which also uses the existing railway reserve.

The crux of the recommendation is as follows—

From this investigation it is concluded that the Busway System—One Metre Sink would offer the maximum advantages to the Perth Region and particularly to the Central City.

It goes on to state—

Only one alternative has a slightly higher benefit/cost ratio, the Busway System—Surface. This is more than offset by the advantages offered by a lowered profile.

I draw that to your attention, Sir, because clearly Mr Cloughton was not aware of the nature of the Wilbur Smith report. Certainly he was not aware of the conclusions reached in it.

We have heard a lot read from newspaper clippings tonight. I would like to read only one, which is part of the editorial of *The Sunday Times* of the 29th July, 1979. I quote as follows—

But the line will remain for the three-year period needed to relocate the proposed freight line south of the Swan River.

This will give the Government an opportunity to monitor the bus service and test the results of the recommendations made by its advisers.

The important aspect of this decision is that the plan does not cancel out the possibility of future rapid transit options.

Further on the editorial stated—

However, the increasing losses on the rail link make it difficult for the Government to take any course than the one it has adopted.

That is not the Minister for Transport speaking; that was written by the editor of *The Sunday Times*, and it was based on information available to him, to all other people in the metropolitan area, and to all people interested in obtaining it. It is the information that has been passed on to the House tonight by my colleagues on the Government side.

I believe the motion has no substance, and I oppose it.

THE HON. F. E. MCKENZIE (East Metropolitan) [11.35 p.m.]: I do not intend to reply to every member. I have heard nothing in the debate that would alter what I put to the House earlier tonight.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: A person convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.

The Hon. F. E. MCKENZIE: It might be all right for members opposite to convince themselves, but a great deal of money has been spent on a railway that should not be closed down.

The fact is, Mr President, that all the things I mentioned in my letter to you have happened. If members opposite think they can convince the public that the railway system is not being dismantled, let them go ahead and do it. However, they certainly have not convinced me. In fact, I know the dismantling process will continue, so there will be ample opportunity in the future for me to refute all the arguments and to remind members opposite that it is continuing.

All I ask members to do is to speak to railway men in Perth, in Midland, in the country, or anywhere. Let them ask their opinion and listen to what they say. Members have quoted what is being done by Westrail. Let them go to the Midland workshops which during the war years were responsible for keeping machinery operating in support of the war effort. Let them see how little construction work is being done at the workshops. The Government had a wonderful opportunity to construct railcars at Midland and to do something about our unemployment, which is the highest in Australia. It did not grasp the opportunity.

All I say to members opposite is: Ask the people who know. Do not believe the documents

that are read out here, because they are not always factual.

In respect of the closure of the Perth-Fremantle line, I would like to quote from a meeting of the Perth Regional Transport Study Co-ordinating Committee held on the 24th August, 1976. Under the signature of the director general (Mr Knox) we find the following—

As you know, nothing has been done for many years for the railway system and the committee believes we cannot wait any longer before committing investment on it.

A little further on, in paragraph 4, the director general said—

The current situation with the railway system is as follows:

- (1) Integration of the bus and rail system can go no further—there is insufficient railway rolling stock.
- (2) Existing capacity of peak hour trains is fully utilised and there is no additional rolling stock available.
- (3) Twenty-three per cent of the rolling stock is almost at the end of its useful life and a further thirty-five per cent will need replacement by 1985—a total of 53 rolling cars and carriages out of a fleet of 93.
- (4) Adverse public comment has been made about standards of the rail fleet and instances of overcrowding on suburban trains.

Of course, even at that time the director general recommended that because of the cost of electrification the proposal be dropped and that a programme be adopted of a system combining bus and rail which the State could fund from its own resources.

Those things were happening as far back as 1976, but nothing has been done to maintain the railway system.

I would make one other point for the benefit of Mr Ferry. He referred to the *Australind* service and its increasing patronage. I am very pleased about that. I have said before that when we see things being upgraded they end up being the next ones to go. I am worried about the *Australind* because Mr Ferry said it has been refurbished, and that is probably an ominous sign.

If members consider the situation I outlined earlier about the dismantling of the railways they will find this is so. I notice even the mice are concerned about it, because one has come into the Chamber to listen to the debate!

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You know what they say about a sinking ship.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The Mullewa-Meekatharra railway line was closed down. Why? Because the tracks were worn out. The Albany passenger service was closed down because the equipment was worn out. The Perth-Fremantle service is to cease to operate because insufficient equipment is available for it. The Government always seems to find a valid reason, but it will never accept the point that it is responsible for the reason.

I would like to conclude by drawing the attention of members to the Wilbur Smith report and remarks made earlier concerning a speech made in the other House by Mr Jamieson. I ask you, Mr President: If the Labor Government was not intent upon keeping railway lines open, why did it commission Wilbur Smith to undertake a feasibility study of electrification? Why did it include in the terms of reference for Wilbur Smith that the railway must, in the first stage, connect with the existing suburban lines to Fremantle, Midland, and Armadale?

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Connect with, not electrify.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The Government of the day had no intention of closing the Perth-Fremantle line when the report was commissioned. No matter what members might read in debates and no matter what subsequently happened, the intention was that the line should not be closed.

Another matter I wish to refer to is the Nielsen report, which also recommended the replacement of the railway by busways. What did the Nielsen report say? It said—

With regard to the public transport system, it is important to keep open the option of upgrading the busway system, both along railway reserves and freeways into some form of mass rapid transit. The most likely long term development at the moment would appear to be a high speed computer controlled, electric railway similar to that under construction in San Francisco. It is possible, of course, that other more desirable systems may be developed during the next twenty years.

They have not been developed yet. The Nielsen report said then the most likely long-term development was the construction of an electric railway. We are half way to that time, and the Government will close the railway down.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: Mr Rushton agrees with you.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: We have to consider these things in terms of money. I know it has been mentioned earlier that public transport systems are social assets as well as economic assets. In planning their use, we should not consider the economic return only. We should consider the social return.

My motion has vindicated the need for debate on this question. We have been going since about 4.45 p.m. Many members have spoken on the motion. I remain unconvinced. I have heard nothing that would suggest my bringing of this motion before the House has been unwarranted. My arguments have not been answered in any shape or form by the Government. I will have plenty of opportunities in the future to remind honourable members of that fact. I am certain of that. If this Government remains in power, I will remind the members opposite of what is happening when the dismantling process continues.

My moving of the motion has been vindicated. For that reason, I seek leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. I. G. Medcalf (Attorney General), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan—Attorney General) [11.47 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

As indicated in the long title, this Bill seeks to amend sections 2 and 52 and to repeal and re-enact section 54B of the Police Act.

The Bill is presented to Parliament following a review which was undertaken recently by the Government of the laws in relation to public assemblies. It fully recognises the need for freedom to discuss public issues on the one hand, and the need for the preservation of public safety and the convenience of the public on the other. These principles have long been recognised in the laws of this State and consolidated in the Police Act of 1892, which contained authority for the Commissioner of Police to give directions and make regulations for the route and pace to be observed by all vehicles, horses and persons, and for preventing obstruction of the streets and thoroughfares by processions, meetings or assemblies, or in case of fires; and to provide for

keeping order and preventing obstructions of thoroughfares surrounding public buildings and offices and other places of public resort, as well as preventing interference or annoyance to persons engaged in religious worship and preventing obstructions on and near the water during regattas.

This Government does not intend to erode the authority of the police to exercise control of public places in the interests of public convenience and public safety. However, this Bill provides for the updating of the law. The Police Act currently contains a patchwork of modernly drafted provisions, dealing adequately with present-day problems, alongside sections drafted and applicable only, if at all, to conditions of an age long past.

The Bill proposes to create a flow-on from section 52 to section 54B and, in doing so, will indicate clearly what are "public places" and "public meetings".

In brief, the amendments will provide for notification in regard to public meetings in public places, the granting of approval for such events with or without conditions, as well as allowing the Commissioner of Police to delegate his authority in such matters.

Although not affecting the main principles contained in the Bill, the definition of a thoroughfare is to be included in section 2. This was an omission in the interpretation section of the Principal Act, as other sections make reference to thoroughfares.

As previously mentioned, some parts of the Police Act contain a patchwork of old and modern provisions. The present section 52 clearly falls into that category, with the marginal notes indicating that its purpose is to prevent obstructions in the streets during public processions, etc. Apart from some outmoded provisions, the section contains matter more appropriately placed in another section of the Act. Hence the proposal to amend section 52(1) and repeal subsections (2), (3) and (4) and insert three new subsections.

Section 52 will then read as follows—

(1) The Commissioner of Police, from time to time, and as occasion shall require, may give instructions to members of the Police Force for the purpose of regulating the route and pace to be observed by all vehicles, horses and persons, and for preventing obstruction of the streets and thoroughfares by processions, meetings, or assemblies, or in the case of fires, and to provide for keeping order and for preventing any obstructions of the thoroughfares in the immediate

neighbourhood of all public buildings and offices, theatres and other places of public resort and in any case where the streets or thoroughfares may be thronged or may be liable to be obstructed, and to prevent any interference with or annoyance of any congregation, or meeting engaged in divine worship in any building consecrated or otherwise, and for keeping order and preventing obstructions on and near the water on which any sporting event or other assembly is held, but no such instruction shall be given for the purpose of frustrating the operation of section fifty-four B of this Act.

(2) A member of the Police Force, acting in accordance with instructions given under subsection (1) of this section, may give such directions as may seem expedient to him to give effect to those instructions.

(3) Every person who, after being acquainted with the same, fails to observe, or contravenes any directions given under subsection (2) of this section, commits an offence.

Penalty: One hundred dollars:

(4) The power vested in the Commissioner of Police by subsection (1) of this section may be exercised by any member of the Police Force of or above the rank of sergeant duly authorised by the Commissioner of Police for the purpose.

Section 54B is to be repealed and re-enacted.

There will, in future, be a requirement to give notice to the Commissioner of Police or other authorised officer, of an intention to conduct a procession or a public meeting in a public place. The terms "public meeting" and "public place" are defined in the Bill. It therefore follows that public meetings in private places and private meetings in public places are not to be subject to such notification.

Although adequate notice is required—namely, four days—provision is made for shorter notice if agreed. Clearly such things as Anzac Day, commemorative services in Perth, or Christmas pageants and the like, or other more or less regular occurrences of that nature, require adequate notice to enable the Police to deploy their forces in order to regulate those events. Four days' notice may not be necessary for other events or in other locations.

The information, required to be supplied in such detail as is practicable, is necessary to allow for such deployment and to provide to the authorised officer information which, in the first place, would enable him to ascertain whether or

not he has any grounds for withholding permission—there are constraints applied to such a decision—and, in the second place, to determine what conditions, if any, may be in the permit which, incidentally, must be in writing. Where permission is given, except in relation to ambulance, fire and police vehicles, immunity is granted to participants in respect of what would be otherwise breaches of laws relating to obstruction, but certainly not in respect of all the laws of the land.

The section will also provide for offences. It is pertinent to point out that the present proposal that an offence is committed only after the offender has been acquainted of the fact is a provision currently obtaining but which, in the recent controversy, has again—either wittingly or unwittingly—been overlooked by those who have attacked the present law.

The opinion is shared by those who have been involved in the preparation of this Bill that it provides legislation superior to that in any other State; and I commend it to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. D. K. Dans (Leader of the Opposition).

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. I. G. Medcalf (Attorney General), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan—Attorney General) [11.55 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

When senior industrial relations officers from nine Government departments and instrumentalities met over two years ago as an advisory committee, there was collective agreement on the difficulty in interpretation, clarity, and understanding of the Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act. Because of this, controversial issues had arisen the solutions of which were not readily acceptable; and a review of the Act was considered to be a necessity.

The Act was originally framed in 1945 and became law when it was assented to on the 21st January 1946.

The manner in which some sections were expressed in the Act at the time it was established is inappropriate to the changed industrial situation today and consequently causes difficulty

in interpretation. Approval was given some time ago to a revision of the Act and the inter-departmental advisory committee abovementioned set about the task of review. About the same time the Public Service Board was contemplating a revision of the Public Service Act, and that proposition came to fruition when the Public Service Act passed through Parliament last year. That Act has been proclaimed and came into operation on the 16th May, 1979.

One important change it made was to remove from the Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act the appeal provisions for officers appointed under the Public Service Act and place them in the Public Service Act. A promotions appeal board is set up under the Public Service Act which has as its chairman the Public Service Arbitrator, who is also chairman of the appeal board under the Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act.

Appeals by Public Service Act officers had formed approximately 50 per cent of the appeals heard under the Act. Consequential legislation last year also amended the Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act to the extent of transferring appeal provisions for such officers to the Public Service Act.

In its deliberations, the inter-departmental advisory committee found that there were no compelling reasons to warrant an abandonment of the basic framework of the existing appeal system. The committee was conscious of the fact that the present system had stood the test of time and catered for a wider range of employees, more so than appeal systems in other States of the Commonwealth. The revision, therefore, could be regarded as an overall tidying-up exercise which would remedy the "patching up" and deficiencies which had developed over the years since 1945.

The proposals contained in the committee's report have been circulated to nine workers' unions whose members, in the main, have used the appeal facilities; and, as well, the Civil Service Association and the WA Trades and Labor Council were sent copies for comment. The inter-departmental committee further reviewed the proposals in the light of the replies received and the Bill now put forward reflects the recommendations.

The main changes which are incorporated in this Bill are as follows:

The Bill sets out more clearly what is regarded as promotion when transfers occur. For an appeal to exist, it is considered that

the vacancy should provide promotion to both the recommended applicant and an appellant.

The manner of appointment of the employee's representative on the board, as the current Act stands, has been regarded legally as discriminatory in some cases. It is therefore, intended to alter this situation to some extent so that the representative will be nominated by the union or unions which are party to the award or industrial agreement regulating the term and conditions of employment of the vacancy. Alternatives are provided for the employee's representative on the board if there is no relevant union, and for other eventualities.

Provision is made also to alter the criteria for selecting an applicant to fill a vacancy so that an appeal can be made on the basis of "superior efficiency" alone.

A second ground of appeal now applicable, "Equal efficiency and seniority", is to be discarded, although it is within the prerogative of the promoting authority to consider seniority in the process of establishing superior efficiency.

The closing date for the lodgement of appeals has at times caused confusion in the way it is expressed and the section is to be amended to avoid difficulty and disputation in such matters.

An obligation currently placed on an appellant to serve copies of appeal forms on the recommending authority will be moved to the secretary of the board to carry out the function of advising the recommending authority of the names of all appellants following the closing date of appeals.

Acting experience in a vacant position prior to its occurring will be recognised and will be admissible in evidence in an appeal.

The penalty for lodging a frivolous appeal is to be increased to a sum not exceeding \$25.

The Bill makes provision for due regard to be given to the qualifications of a vacant position provided for in a statute as well as those in an award or industrial agreement, when determining the relative efficiency of applicants.

Finally, the practice of the chairmans' being able to rule on procedural matters over an appeal, which in practice he does at present, will be formalised.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. F. E. McKenzie.

House adjourned at 12.02 a.m. (Thursday).

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

TRANSPORT: BUSES

Linc

181. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Transport:

Further to my question 162 of Wednesday, the 22nd August, 1979, would the Minister advise—

- (1) What is the total cost in money terms that the Metropolitan Transport Trust will pay to the lessor of the Linc buses over the 10-year period using the current exchange rate?
- (2) At the completion of the 10-year lease period, are the buses then the property of the Metropolitan Transport Trust?
- (3) If not, what are the arrangements?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) The total payments over the 10-year period of the lease are equal to 146.0182 per cent of the cost of the buses. The estimated cost of the buses is \$2 430 000. The estimated payments would, therefore, be \$3 548 242. The final cost of the buses will not be known until the contract is completed and all the costs are in.
- (2) No. If the buses became the property of the Metropolitan Transport Trust, it would be a breach of Loan Council requirements.
- (3) The trust has the option to renew the lease on a six-monthly basis up to a further period of eight years.

EDUCATION

Japanese Language

182. The Hon. J. C. TOZER, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Education:

What facilities are available in Western Australia for the learning of the Japanese language by—

- (a) full-time;
- (b) part-time; and
- (c) external; study?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (a) (i) Ten primary and 13 secondary schools offer Japanese as part of their curricula.
- (ii) WA Institute of Technology—Bachelor's Degree.
- (iii) University of WA—Bachelor's Degree.
- (b) (i) Technical Education Division Certificate in Fluency—
Perth Technical College (four levels)
Bunbury Technical College (first level)
Conversational Japanese is offered as an evening adult education course and is available on demand where student numbers permit. In 1979, the following Technical Education Division centres are running courses—
Churchlands Midland
Scarborough Victoria Park.
- (ii) WA Institute of Technology—Bachelor's Degree.
- (iii) University of WA—Bachelor's Degree.
- (c) Nil.

RAILWAYS: FREMANTLE-PERTH

Closure: Buildings

183. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has the Minister given consideration to making railway buildings on the Perth-Fremantle line available for community groups after the closure of the line?
- (2) If not, how is it intended to maintain these buildings during the three year period in which the closure decision may be reversed?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) and (2) Buildings at Claremont are currently being considered for a community use. Buildings at Daglish and portion of Fremantle are already committed, but Westrail would consider proposals for alternative use of the remaining two buildings at Subiaco and Cottesloe. Necessary maintenance will continue to be carried out during the three-year period.

JETTY

Wyndham

184. The Hon. J. C. TOZER, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the projected pouring of a concrete deck on the northern approach arm of the Wyndham jetty could pose serious difficulties for the loading of live cattle?
- (2) What special steps are being taken to enable these two important undertakings (the concrete pour and the loading of cattle) to progress concurrently?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) I am aware that some inconvenience will be caused to the loading of live cattle, because of these essential works.
- (2) The Harbour and Light Department, with the co-operation of the Public Works Department, has made arrangements for this work to commence after the current meat season.

This will cause minimum disruption to the majority of shipping calling at the port.

I am advised that cattle are expected to be loaded out of Wyndham throughout the year and a system of shunting or road trains onto the jetty will, therefore, need to be utilised. This system was used successfully while the southern deck was closed due to the concreting of the southern decking.

The concreting of the northern deck is programmed for December, 1979 to the end of March, 1980. It is essential these works proceed due to the present deteriorated condition of the wooden decking.

PORT

Wyndham

185. The Hon. J. C. TOZER, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has any investigation been carried out into the practicability of providing improved navigational aids in Cambridge Gulf to serve the port of Wyndham, with the particular objective of enabling shipping to negotiate the gulf channels at night?
- (2) If so, what were the general conclusions in respect to—
 - (a) overall estimated expenditure;
 - (b) technical practicability; and
 - (c) cost/benefit for shippers, Kimberley industry and the State?
- (3) If not, is it planned that such an investigation will be undertaken?
- (4) What tonnage ships can negotiate the approach channels and the port of Wyndham at present?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) 1966—\$110 000
1972—\$181 000.
 - (b) The provision of navigation aids for this purpose is technically practicable.
 - (c) In 1972, the hours of the port were 7.30 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. and currently are 7.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. with provision for extension to 6.30 p.m. As there is no night work, it was concluded the benefits accruing did not warrant the expenditure required.
- (3) Answered by (1).
- (4) The criteria for negotiating the approach channels and the Port of Wyndham is the draft of the vessels. The maximum draft of a vessel able to negotiate the approach channels and berth at the jetty is 8.8 metres.

COMMUNICATIONS

East Kimberley

186. The Hon. J. C. TOZER, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the serious impediment to economic and commercial development, as well as normal social intercourse, occasioned by the deplorable quality of communications between the East Kimberley region and the rest of the State of Western Australia and, indeed, the rest of Australia?
- (2) Has he noted the repeated appeals from the Kimberley Regional Development Committee and other representative bodies in the Kimberley for a better deal in respect to external communications?
- (3) Will he make urgent representations to the Commonwealth Minister for Posts and Telecommunications requesting that—
 - (a) the vulnerable two-copper-wire link between Derby and Wyndham via Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek be, at least, duplicated to more nearly be able to cope with current demand; and
 - (b) a direct telephonic connection be established between Kununurra and Katherine in the Northern Territory, to provide an alternative link in case of failure or overloading on the Derby line; and/or
 - (c) the coaxial cable (or alternative micro-wave system) be taken north from Port Hedland to initially reach the East Kimberley but ultimately connect with the Adelaide-Darwin link?
- (4) At what date is it anticipated that the domestic satellite communications system will be available to serve the East Kimberley community?

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf (for the Hon G. C. MacKINNON) replied:

- (1) Yes, he is well aware of the situation.
- (2) Yes.

(3) (a) to (c) The Premier has made urgent representation on many occasions both written and verbal for improved communication links. The Minister will ensure that representations are continued either by the Premier or himself.

(4) The Commonwealth Government has announced that television services will be provided to Kimberley centres during this and the next financial year.

It is understood that the Commonwealth Government has not yet made a decision on the provision of a domestic satellite for the transmission of radio, television, and telephone services.

The State Government has been active in promoting domestic satellite as the best means of providing full communication facilities to all Kimberley residents.

TRANSPORT: BUSES

Linc

187. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Referring to my question No. 175 on Tuesday, the 28th August, 1979, will the Minister advise the names of—
 - (a) the four prospective suppliers; and
 - (b) the two who submitted quotes?
- (2) If not, will the Minister advise why it is necessary to withhold this information from Parliament?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) (a) Leyland—Unable to quote at that time.
Volvo—Unit unacceptable to MTT.
MAN.
Mercedes Benz.
(b) MAN and Mercedes Benz.
- (2) Not applicable.