

6, Fremantle Prison Site Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Premier (for the Minister for Lands).

7, Occupational Therapists.

8, Health Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Health.

9, Stipendiary Magistrates.

10, Justices Act Amendment.

11, Local Courts Act Amendment.

12, Licensing Act Amendment.

13, Companies Act Amendment.

14, Land Agents.

15, Bills of Sale Act Amendment.

16, Electoral Act Amendment.

17, Juries.

Introduced by the Minister for Justice.

18, Agent General Act Amendment.

19, Public Service.

Introduced by the Premier.

20, Bank Holidays Act Amendment.

21, Hire Purchase Agreements.

22, Credit-Sales Agreements.

Introduced by Mr. Johnson.

23, Traffic Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. Hearman.

House adjourned at 9.45 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, 25th July, 1957.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Prisons Department, dismissal of Principal Warder Thorne	435
Education, improvement of North Kalgoorlie schoolgrounds	435
Wundowie products, transport by rail and road	436
Motion : Sale of iron ore to Japan, to inquire by select committee	443
Bills : Supply (No. 1), £21,000,000, 2r.	436
Interpretation Act Amendment, 2r.	442
Local Government, 2r.	445

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

QUESTIONS.

PRISONS DEPARTMENT.

Dismissal of Principal Warder Thorne.

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

Will he table a Crown Law opinion on the following matters:—

- (1) Was it required by law that Louis Thorne should be dismissed as principal Warder at Fremantle Gaol because of his refusal, on account of his conscientious beliefs, to continue membership of the Western Australian Gaol Officers' Union of Workers, Fremantle, in view of the provisions of Clause 19 of the Gaol Officers' Agreement, 1955, which only requires a worker to apply for membership in the union but not to continue such membership?
- (2) If the dismissal was not required by law—
 - (a) could Thorne claim reinstatement in his former position?
 - (b) could the Court of Arbitration order his reinstatement?
- (3) If the answer to No. (2) (a) is "Yes," to what wages compensation or damages is Thorne entitled and who is liable to pay them?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

I am tabling a copy of an opinion obtained from the Solicitor General.

EDUCATION.

Improvement of North Kalgoorlie Schoolgrounds.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Has a decision been reached on improvements to the grounds of the North Kalgoorlie school?
- (2) If not, when will a decision be made?
- (3) If a decision has been made, will he state details of the work proposed to be done?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) No. Strong representations in this connection have been made by the parliamentary representatives concerned, and they will be advised immediately any decision is made.

(2) As soon as possible.

(3) See No. (1).

WUNDOWIE PRODUCTS.

Transport by Rail and Road.

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

How many tons of products were despatched from Wundowie Charcoal Iron Works by—

(a) rail transport;

(b) road transport,

during the year ended the 30th June, 1957?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) 650 tons.

(b) 25,110 tons.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £21,000,000.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. G. E. JEFFERY (Suburban) [4.36]: It is not my intention to delay the House at any great length at this stage. As a comparatively new member, I am rather struck by the similarity between the words "reply" and "supply." I wish to deal with some of the problems existing in the Suburban Province, which I have the privilege of representing in this Parliament; and to tell of what has happened in the last 12 months and express hope as to what might happen in the next 12 months.

Last year the major problem confronting members representing the Suburban Province was that of drainage in the Bentley and Ellam-st. swamp area. I do not think there is a more distressing experience than to go through an electorate and see water 3ft. or 4ft. high around the walls of houses, and the damage done to homes by floods. However, as the result of the activities during the last 12 months of the department and of the Canning Road Board, much of the trouble in that area has been alleviated.

It was most pleasing to tour that district recently, in company with other members and Canning Road Board members and to observe the difference between conditions now and those of 12 months ago. We saw water stains on walls, which indicated the height to which the flood waters had risen last year. This time the land was as dry as the proverbial wooden god.

The Government spent £116,000 in that area, and I would like to pay a tribute to it for the work done, and to the Road Board members. I think that what was achieved was a classic example of co-operation between a Government department and a local authority. Some of the work done by the road board in the first instance bordered on the miraculous.

A lot of costly work was undertaken in Carlisle and Victoria Park, and I think it was well worth while. I compliment

the Minister on what was achieved. I did not agree with him at the time; but a second look at the matter convinced me that it was wise to complete one job rather than to have two or three in an uncompleted condition, which would not be satisfactory either to the Government or to the people concerned. I hope that the Minister will be able to do the work at Belmont and Kewdale this year.

I was pleased to hear Mr. Simpson speak on the improvement of the Guildford-rd. at Bayswater. Most members have had to traverse that section of the highway between Slade-st. and River-rd; and having seen what has been done, I could not help wondering why it was not effected 30 years ago. It was a typical horror stretch of road and today people using it are much happier concerning the improvements made. Some motor firms may not be so happy, because more springs have been broken in that area than anywhere else in the State.

Talking about main roads, I had the pleasure of visiting the Eastern States recently; and two things impressed me in particular. One was that first and foremost we are Australians, and secondly, members of individual States. State borders are, after all, only imaginary lines. My second outstanding impression concerned the condition of the roads. I received a shock when I toured some of the so-called highways in the Eastern States and compared them with ours. Although we complain about portions of our highways, having seen in the Eastern States what I was able to in the limited time available to me, I came to the conclusion that we have a Main Roads Department which is second to none in the Commonwealth.

I think we could teach the Eastern States a great deal in this regard although we have not got the art of propaganda down to the level at which they have it, as yet. I went from Brisbane down to Coolangatta along what is supposed to be a highway; but I can tell members that I have travelled over many better roads in the suburbs here. What was called a highway in Queensland would make our citizens very irate if it were a suburban street here; and so I feel that our Main Roads Department has achieved a great deal in comparison with what has been done by its counterparts in the Eastern States.

Our State Housing Commission is to be complimented on what it has done with regard to both the design and construction of the homes it has provided, and the rentals and purchase prices. The dwellings built by the commission in this State show up very favourably alongside many of those that I saw in the Eastern States, where a man returning home after a convivial evening might well, owing to the drabness and similarity in design of the dwellings, experience some difficulty in recalling which house he lived in.

Since we debated a similar measure in this Chamber last year, the Belmont High School has been opened, and about 700 children are now enjoying in that building their first year of secondary education. I understand that further classrooms are to be built, and the contemporary architecture and colour schemes are such that many members will recall the position 30 years ago, because in those days there were only two colours used in school buildings: brown and darker brown.

Members will be well advised to visit the Midland Junction school situated to the rear of the Guildford Grammar School; and I take off my hat to our architects—and particularly our Principal Architect—who must have Sir Christopher Wren in mind in that every time he plans a building he creates another monument to himself. He is indeed doing a splendid job.

On the subject of traffic, I would remind members that disused tramlines constitute a problem and a considerable traffic hazard, particularly in Albany Highway, Victoria Park, and Guildford-rd., Maylands. As I speak the workmen are probably knocking off from their work in pulling up some of the old tramlines in the Maylands area. The sooner all those lines are done away with the better the motoring public will be able to enjoy using our roads. Being the owner of a motorcar I know that tramlines are a hazard and can cause one to skid all over the place.

The main highway is being improved in both the Belmont and Bassendean areas; and as a result, members and the public generally, are much better able to enjoy travelling in the metropolitan area. A number of improvements are being made at Bassendean. One eyesore there was the overhead bridge at the railway station; but now somebody has decided to improve it, and its appearance has been considerably enhanced.

While on the subject of highways, I wonder what stage we will arrive at with the bridge at South Guildford and the traffic bridge at Bassendean before something is done about them. Both those structures were all right when constructed, but neither is now big enough for the job it has to do. They create a terrific hazard now; and that applies particularly to the traffic bridge between South Guildford and Guildford, not only because it is too narrow but also because it requires straightening. I hope that the necessary improvements will be made and that the bottle-necks on both sides of those two bridges will be eliminated.

During this debate, mention has been made of suburban rail traffic; and I was pleased to see that in answer to a question asked in another place during the week, the information was given that the patronage by the public of our suburban lines warrants their continuance in operation.

I feel that the introduction of some innovations might result in the figures becoming even better. Without going deeply into the figures I would point out that in 1954-55 the number of passengers carried was 8,751,908; in 1955-56, it was 10,845,931; and in 1956-57, it rose to 11,848,469, an increase in two years of about 3,000,000.

With the ultimate rationalisation of our metropolitan transport system, I hope the Midland Junction railway station will be modernised and that some form of comfortable waiting rooms will be provided, preferably with a cafeteria where people can obtain cups of tea or a light meal while waiting for buses; and that the hills areas will be served by a fleet of buses in synchronisation with the metropolitan railway service.

I will now deal with two subjects that I mentioned during the debate on the Supply Bill last year. Firstly I will touch on the question of hire purchase. When reading our daily Press—and the commercial pages in particular—I have been impressed with the fact that hire purchase is fast becoming a malignant growth on the economic body of this State, and I hope that later in the session members will be given the opportunity to do something about it. I await with great interest the introduction of a measure dealing with the control of hire purchase.

Next I wish to touch on the matter of Federal and State finance; and I would like to know, not being an economist, why it is that the Federal Government can budget for over £100,000,000 surplus while most of the States find it hard to make ends meet. I believe the time has arrived when we have to put the brakes on immigration, as much as we might dislike the idea because it is obvious that this country needs a great number of people for its development. I feel that the Federal policy on migration has strained the financial structure of the State Governments to a considerable extent through the necessity to provide extra educational facilities, hospitalisation and so on. The result of the Federal policy is that the States today are carrying a great part of the burden which I think should be rightly borne by the Commonwealth.

With uniform taxation I have no argument, and I think the system of tax collection under that policy is excellent. But I believe the time is due for a review of the methods of the disbursement to the various States of the funds collected. I do not suggest that I know all the answers, but I believe a meeting of the States and the Commonwealth should be held so that those best qualified to do so might work out a more equitable system. It seems strange that some of the States which used to have favourable balances are now fast becoming mendicant States—as Western Australia is often scornfully named—and I therefore feel that a new

basis for the disbursement of funds should be arrived at. In conclusion, I trust that by this time next year the causes of the few complaints that I have made will have been removed. I support the second reading.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [448]: This measure provides for the sum of £15,000,000 from Consolidated Revenue; £4,000,000 from the General Loan Fund; and £2,000,000 as a temporary advance for the Treasurer; and I am wondering how much of the £4,000,000 from the General Loan Fund is likely to be spent in country areas during the next six months. I raise this question because of the apparently inequitable distribution of loan moneys in this State in past years. By "inequitable distribution" I mean the distribution of loan funds as between the metropolitan area and those parts of the State outside the metropolitan area.

To illustrate what I have in mind, during the years 1955, 1956 and 1957 a sum of £1,362,068 has been spent on eight high schools in the metropolitan area. Up to date, the allocation for expenditure on high schools during this financial year is £796,632, making a total in the metropolitan area in the last three years of £2,159,690. Those figures are outstanding when compared with the money that has been spent on schools outside the metropolitan area.

During 1956-57 two country high schools were built at a cost of £121,866; and the estimated expenditure on country schools this financial year is £8,370, making a total of £130,370. That does not even represent one-fifteenth of the total amount of loan money expended in this direction. I endeavoured to get the comparable figures of the amount of loan money spent on primary schools by asking the Chief Secretary a question in the House tonight, but unfortunately he was not in a position to give me the answer. I would have liked to have those figures in my possession tonight because I believe they would reveal a similar position when compared to the money that has been spent on schools in areas outside the metropolitan area, where three-sevenths of the population resides.

The type of treatment the schools in the country are receiving is revealed by the fact that funds made available for expenditure on education on country schools represent only one-fifteenth of the total. For example, one need only look at the Mt. Lawley High School. This represents a glaring example of a school which has everything, including the kitchen sink. It is lavish! A short distance away there is the Tuart Hill High School. At Mt. Lawley they have washing machines and everything that one can think of; and yet, at the same time, we are told by the Government that the first consideration, when spending money on schools, is the provision of classrooms.

Some time ago, I made representation to the Education Department for a domestic science room to be attached to the school at Mt. Helena. In the past the girls attending that school had to travel from Mt. Helena to York in order to obtain their domestic science training, which represented only a matter of a few hours. This arrangement has been altered so that they now travel to Midland Junction. However, when they do make this trip, how long a period do they get for domestic science training? And how long a period do the boys get for their manual training? They are lucky if they have three-quarters of an hour.

The Minister for Railways: How many children are there?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do not know; but there are quite a few. They travel by bus to Midland Junction. The fact that high schools in the metropolitan area are built on such a lavish scale when country school children are forced to put up with many inconveniences, makes me wonder. Not only are the country school-children subjected to such inconvenience; but, in fact, the conditions of some of the schools situated outside the metropolitan area are really disgraceful. It is no wonder that one's ire is aroused when one compares the Wanneroo school, which is in an appalling condition, with all the up-to-date facilities and lavish fittings at the Mt. Lawley High School.

I repeat, that despite the fact that the Minister and other members of the Government have told us that the first priority in their education programme is the provision of classrooms, they have approved of the addition of a gymnasium for girls at the Mt. Lawley High School; and, furthermore, they are now commencing the construction of a gymnasium for boys. I am beginning to wonder what is wrong with the Government in this State when children in the country areas continue to receive their education in substandard classrooms, which form part of buildings that were erected as far back as 1896 and where, in fact, the children are almost up against the blackboard at the front of the class. I can assure the House that in one classroom I visited there was no room to pass between the teacher's desk and the child sitting in the desk in the front row.

Those are the conditions that the children in the country have to put up with. It is therefore high time the Minister woke up to these facts and gave a fair deal to the children in the rural areas who attend schools where such appalling conditions exist. Last year, after struggling with and harassing the Education Department, I was fortunate in getting the Government to agree to build a new school at Canning Vale. That school was badly needed, and I thank the Government for its action in this matter. I visited the new building

recently, and it is really an eye-opener when one compares it with the old structure.

Nevertheless, that is not sufficient, because I want the same treatment meted out to other children in my province who are housed in schools which have similarly disgraceful conditions; and I trust that my appeal tonight will be successful in getting something done in the districts that I represent. Some consideration has been given to the building of two new classrooms at Wanneroo in this financial year. Nevertheless, if the Government can see its way clear to granting approval for the erection of two new classrooms, surely it could go a little further and agree to the provision of three; because if lavish high schools can be built in the metropolitan area such as that which has been built at Mt. Lawley, surely the Government could easily agree to leave one room out of a new high school so that the money could be used to add another room to the schools that I have just mentioned where the children are being educated in such pitiful circumstances.

Another aspect of education that I wish to speak on concerns school bus services in the country. In my opinion all the school bus arrangements in this State have been deliberately sabotaged by this Government. For what reason? Because instructions have been given to the Education Department to save £60,000 per annum in the expenditure of money on these services. What is the reason for this proposed economy? Is it to save expenditure on education generally, or is it for other purposes?

I say that the reason is to save money for another purpose, which is the policy of the Government and the Labour Party. The other purpose is the supplying of free school books to the children. Figures quoted in this House last session indicate that the amount of money spent on the issue of free school books totals £100,000 per annum. What did those free school books represent? What are they, and what does their issue amount to? All it amounts to is the issue of note-books and a few odd pencils!

Whether the Minister for Education and his colleagues are aware of what happens when these free note-books and pencils are handed out to the children I do not know. The children are not issued with only one each a year. Many members in this Chamber know that each child is issued with quite a number of them. The result is that no care is taken of the note-books. Very often they are not completely filled before a new book is issued. That is the position that has been reached.

If the parents of children residing in the country—who have to walk four miles in some instances, and at least 1½ miles, to school in all sorts of weather—are to be

penalised by having their school bus services restricted merely to provide city school children with a few free unimportant school books such as those that are now being issued, the situation has become ridiculous.

The Minister for Railways: You are opposed to it?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am very much opposed to the issue of free school books in the way the system is being worked at present. I can say that one of the officers in a high position in the Education Department is also opposed to it, and always has been. I suggest, therefore, that the Government should look closely into this matter and find out what it really means towards assisting the education of city children, and then make a comparison with the move to restrict school bus services throughout the State, to the detriment of the country school children, for the purpose of saving £60,000.

In the metropolitan area, also, there have been outcries by parents who complain that they now receive only 7s. 6d. recoup on the travelling expenses incurred by their children, whereas previously they received 12s. 6d.

The Minister for Railways: That is only over certain distances. There are many parents who pay for the transport of their children to school.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That is so; and there are plenty of parents in the country who are prepared to pay for the transport of their children to school. But what is the situation? I can give an instance in my electorate where the bus goes a certain distance, but once it gets to within four miles of the school the driver can pick up children only at his own risk and expense. He has been informed by the department that if he charges anything for conveying the children who live within four miles of the school he will be breaking his contract.

If the parents are prepared to pay the fare for the children when they are within four miles of the school, and if these children are not over-crowding the bus, surely the department should be aware of the logic of allowing such children to be picked up! When matters have come to that stage, and when similar small matters cannot be ironed out in a sensible manner, the indication is that the control of the Education Department is not as good today as it was.

I have no faith at all in the Minister for Education. For instance, he has been asked to meet deputations from parents and citizens' associations to discuss disabilities in country areas. In some cases he refused point blank and in others he made excuses for not meeting them. Surely he should be prepared to meet such deputations as long as their requests

are reasonable! He could explain to those people why this or that school could not be built. After all, these associations are doing a good job. They are raising money for school amenities in their own time and at their own expense. It is only right that the Minister should give consideration to their requests and meet them as deputations.

Some months ago I was talking to the father of two boys going to one of the primary schools. He told me he had booked his children into a secondary school; as a matter of fact, it was Hale School. He said, "What a fool I would be to spend a lot of money in sending my boys to Hale School when I can get every facility, even better than the facilities found at Hale School, in the present primary school and in the new high school at Mt. Lawley." There is a person who was prepared to send his children after the primary stage to a private secondary school, but decided against spending the money and allowed them to go to a Government school to be educated because of the better facilities available. Here the Government is making a rod for its own back in the future.

The Minister for Railways: Education is compulsory. That person is not compelled to pay for his children at the primary school.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I know that; but he was prepared to pay for their education in a private school until he became aware of the amenities to be found in the Government school.

The Minister for Railways: He can please himself in this regard.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Certainly. But can the Minister not see logic in my argument? The Government is making the position in the high schools such that there will not be any necessity to send children to private schools.

The Minister for Railways: Do you object to the establishment of similar schools in country centres?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Is the Government not trying to compete with the facilities in private schools?

The Chief Secretary: What do you want? You growl if we do not furnish the facilities and now you growl when we do.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am not complaining. I say the Government should build the extra classrooms which are needed to educate the children before supplying the lavish amenities in the high schools in the metropolitan area. This policy suits the metropolitan representatives in Parliament. They can say, "Look what the Government has done. Look at the beautiful schools." But in the country the situation is very different, and it is disgraceful.

The Minister for Railways: There are such schools at Geraldton, Merredin and Northam—all country centres.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am talking of primary schools as well. Why spend the money on junior high schools before the classrooms are built in the primary schools?

The Minister for Railways: We have to provide them all.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Is it not sound commonsense for the Government to say that the first consideration is classrooms? I would like to touch on another matter very briefly, as it has been referred to in this House. I allude to the native question. When speaking the other evening, Mrs. Hutchison stated that it was the policy of the Labour Government to give all natives citizenship rights. On a recent trip to Darwin and through the Northern Territory, I noticed how that policy had worked out. There the fullbloods have not full citizenship rights, but the caste natives have. I might not be correct in saying this; and, if so, I would ask Mr. Wise to correct me. Throughout my journey I asked the same question: "How is the matter of citizenship rights to caste natives working out?" In every instance I got the reply, "No good at all. A complete failure."

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Who from?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: From people in all walks of life—civil servants, the man in the street, taxi drivers and anybody one spoke to.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: That is an example of man's inhumanity to man.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It seems to me sound commonsense after one has seen the reaction of the people there.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Tell us what happened.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: We should not accept this policy of the Labour Party to blame everybody but the Native Welfare Department—

The Minister for Railways: And also the Federal Government.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: —and the Federal Government for the condition of the natives in this State and throughout Australia. When we can get down to a sane and sound policy for natives, and when the Government is prepared to spend some money and to accept responsibility through the Native Welfare Department, we might do some good for the natives. The present situation is that the Native Welfare Department desires to shirk as much responsibility for the care of natives of this State as it can. The Government does not want to spend very much money on native welfare. There is no rigid or definite policy for natives in existence, and that is the main trouble.

I would now refer to my concluding subject. I want to take up the matter of the future development of this State, particularly relating to primary industries. In the past we have spent quite a sum of money in developing the State for primary industry. Recently there was development of the wheatbelt, followed by development in the South-West, and the attempted development in the North.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: And whaling.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: There is no doubt that the money spent over many years in the development of primary industries in this State has more than paid dividends, because from such development has come the main source of revenue to equalise our trade balance. But we are a long way from having finished the work of primary development. Quite a lot of money is yet required for the development of parts of the State in a virgin condition or in a semi-developed condition. We have noticed much money being put into enterprises such as Wundowie and Chamberlain Industries, and guarantees have been given to other secondary industries, which in some cases are necessary for the future welfare of the State. I contend that in the future the greatest return that can be derived will be the return from primary development.

If one goes to the other States one sees within 40 miles of the centre of cities like Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney or Brisbane no large tract of undeveloped land, as is the case in Western Australia. We will not find even further out in those cities land which is capable of a very great future which is not developed 100 per cent.; but that can be seen in this State. Here one can go to the hill country and find hundreds of thousands of acres in a virgin or semi-developed state.

One can go along the coast on the west side of the Midland line and find many thousands of acres of undeveloped land, land so adjacent to the city and port that one would have thought the Government would have recognised the necessity to develop it before this. I make this plea to the Government to give consideration to allocating funds to develop such areas in this State. I refer particularly to the land stretching from Wanneroo, through the hills area to Wooroloo. The whole of that country, particularly the hills area, is second to none.

The Minister for Railways: Who is holding it: the Government or private owners?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Some is held by the Crown, and some by people who took up tracts of land when they had limited financial resources. They found themselves unable to obtain further finance for development, and they cannot borrow money from private banks because they

have been told that these are not good propositions. All sorts of excuses have been given by the private banks—that they have no money, or that they are not allowed to lend.

The Minister for Railways: I suppose there are those who will not develop their holdings, too?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: There are very few who will not develop them if given the opportunity. The main trouble is that these people have not the money and have no way of finding it.

The Minister for Railways: They would not include any squatters.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: There are quite a number of such holdings in the area between Midland Junction and Wooroloo.

Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: The non-development was caused by the lack of trace elements.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: To a certain degree that is the reason for the non-development of those areas. It is only in the past 10 years that the value of this country has been recognised, with the introduction of clover—a process which started in the South-West close on 30 years ago. It did not seem to catch on in the other areas or in the wheatbelt until later. After the war, a number of settlers in those areas did very well, but produced only to a limited capacity owing to the lack of finance. Some move should be made by the Government to assist the people in those districts who have spent thousands of pounds to develop their holdings; but who, through unforeseen circumstances were unable to get water easily or who found the cost of fencing too high. For those reasons their money ran out.

In Mr. Jones's electorate, in the country west of the Midland line, quite a number of settlers went out but discovered within a few years that they were short of finance to continue development. The same thing applies to these areas within 50 miles of Perth. The Government should, annually, put aside a certain amount of money for the purpose of development on these lines. If we can, over the years, progressively develop our primary producing areas, we will build up our State assets and improve our overseas trade balance; and probably even our trade balance with the Eastern States.

Today we buy a lot more from the Eastern States than we sell there; but with further development of the areas I am speaking of, there would be the possibility of our supplying our own needs instead of importing a lot of stuff from the other side of Australia. I trust the Ministers in this House will take some cognisance of the plea I have made.

The Minister for Railways: Isn't butter the only primary produce that comes from the East?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: No; over £1,800,000 worth of goods, including canned fruits and processed vegetables is imported from the Eastern States. In addition, butter—as the Minister has said—and many other types of primary production are imported from the Eastern States; stuff that we could well produce in the areas I have referred to. If the Government spent £500,000 a year with the object of building up a fruit industry here, I think much good would result.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: By way of advances to settlers?

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes—long-term advances; say, 25 to 30 years and with a period of three to five years before repayments became due, to allow the settlers to get established.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I think the Minister is right and that it is pretty well all Crown land.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: There is some Crown land. On one side there is the watershed of the Helena River, and there is a certain amount of forest country through that area. As that is cut out—particularly those areas on which Wundowie has practically a complete option—and developed, provided it is not replanted with pines, which seems one of the objects of the Forests Department, we would have some of the finest agricultural land in the State. It is no trouble, there, to grow clover from 12 inches to 18 inches high, and to produce the best of canning fruits. As I have said, we purchase £1,800,000 worth of stuff from the Eastern States; and if, by making the investment I suggest, we could capture only £500,000 worth of that market, it would be a good investment. I trust the Ministers in this House will try to place this idea before the Government and persuade it that something in this direction should be done.

I intend to refer to the railways, but I shall do so only briefly. This subject has, over all, been argued backwards and forwards, so that I shall refer only to an answer I received to a question tonight regarding the transport of products from Wundowie, and the accusation made against the farmers that they have not used the railways.

The Government and the Railway Department should say, "Thank heaven the farmers use the railways much more than the Government does at Wundowie!" Because in the last financial year, only 650 tons was transported by rail from Wundowie, and 25,000-odd tons by road. Just on a quick calculation, at 2.68d. per ton mile, the freight on the 25,000 tons will amount to £11,000.

It is staggering to think that an amount like this should be thrown away by the Government or the Railway Department when it is making such a song and dance about the railway losses. I trust this position will be altered in the future, and that everything from Wundowie will be transported by rail. This will at least justify the existence of the line from Northam to Perth in regard to its earning capacity and what is produced in that area, instead of relying entirely on what is produced along lines further back.

On motion by Hon. J. McL. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—INTERPRETATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS
(Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [5.18]:
Mr. President—

The PRESIDENT: Is the Minister moving the second reading himself, or on behalf of the Chief Secretary?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am moving it on behalf of the Chief Secretary.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The purpose of this Bill is to permit the use, under certain Western Australian statutes, regulations and rules, of what is termed the "Certified Mail Service."

This service was brought into operation late last year by the Postmaster-General's Department, its object being to provide an alternative to the registered post for certain classes of articles which do not require the security handling and documentation provided by the registered post. The new service is, therefore, not suitable for articles of monetary value; but when the main considerations are proof of posting and delivery, it is as useful as the registered post, and can be used for the transmission of certain types of documents.

As, exclusive of normal postage, the minimum fee for the new service is 6d., compared with 1s. 3d. for registered mail, a considerable saving could eventuate where many articles are posted by the one person, department or firm. When an article is posted by certified mail, a receipt is issued by the post office to the sender. On delivery of the article, a receipt is obtained from the person to whom the article is addressed, or from any other person at the address. This receipt is held by the post office for a period of twelve months in case proof of delivery of the article is required within this period. If an immediate acknowledgment of receipt is required by the sender, an extra fee of 9d. is paid.

Certain State statutes, etc., provide for service of documents by registered post, among these being—

Transfer of Land Act, Section 240.

Local Courts Act, Section 42 (3).

Justices Act, Section 56.

Workers' Compensation Board Rule No. 17 (3).

Rule 69 made under the Legal practitioners Act.

Order 38, Rule 24, of the Local Court Rules.

Regulation 135 made under the Milk Act.

The Registrar of Titles has advised that a considerable saving could be effected if certain notices required by Section 240 of the Transfer of Land Act to be sent by registered mail could be forwarded by certified mail. The registrar states that approximately 6,000 such notices are sent each year on caveats, writs, and warrants, apart from many other notices required under the Transfer of Land Act. The Commissioner of Titles and the registrar agree there is no practical reason why these notices could not be effectively served by certified mail, provided that in cases where it is considered necessary the more secure handling and documentation provided by the registered mail can be used.

The secretary of the Milk Board and the chairman of the Workers' Compensation Board are also required by regulation and rule to send notices by registered post; but in view of the fact that no acknowledgment of delivery is required, the use of certified mail would be more economical, so far as they are concerned. The Chief Electoral Officer has reported that his office could use the certified service whenever it was considered desirable.

The Bill seeks, therefore, that where there is statutory provision for the service of documents by registered post the alternative of certified mail may be used if desired. As certain statutes, such as the Justices Act and Local Courts Act, in the case of summons, stipulate that a receipt must be obtained from the person to whom a registered article is delivered, the Bill contains a provision covering this requirement. Under other Acts, service is deemed to be effected merely by posting by registered mail, notwithstanding that no acknowledgment is signed by the addressee, and that the addressee may never have received the notice. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. H. Simpson, debate adjourned.

MOTION—SALE OF IRON ORE TO JAPAN.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from the 17th July on the following motion by Hon. N. E. Baxter:—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the proposed sale of Koolyanobbing iron ore to Japan, with particular reference as to whether the profit likely to be derived from such sale is likely to be sufficient to finance any other venture.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [5.24]: I support the motion. In the first place we should have a full knowledge of all the available ore in Western Australia—its quality, quantity and distance from possible places where an industry could be situated, and other relevant facts, before we decide to make a sale of any of it to another country. We know, of course, that unless the Commonwealth Government gives a permit to sell we have no option. It was, however, stressed by the present Government that if 1,000,000 tons of iron ore are sold to Japan certain things will be done with the profits from the sale.

It appears that while most countries are willing to purchase iron ore, the world supply of it is not very great. If my information is correct, a large proportion of the iron ore produced in America is very low grade—getting down as low as 17 per cent. So it would seem that we must be careful about what we do with this property—the iron ore—which belongs to the whole of the Australian people. When we remember that Japan was selling steel to Australia a little while ago—if it is not still selling it—we wonder why we should be exporting any of our ore to that country. Particularly now that a new trade agreement has been entered into, we could be buying the ore back from Japan in the form of steel or steel products.

The Koolyanobbing ore is of high grade. In that deposit some 69,250,000 tons of ore is available; and at the surface it goes 62 per cent., and a lower percentage at the deeper working. If we allow this high grade iron ore to be exported to Japan, any firm in that country producing steel could export to Australia and be able to produce steel from it cheaper than if it were using a lower grade ore. This could upset the competition with local competitors.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Does that also apply to wool?

Hon. A. R. JONES: It could apply to wool, of course.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Would you suggest prohibiting the export of wool?

Hon. A. R. JONES: No, because we have plenty of it. My point is that we need to be sure that we have plenty of iron ore.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: We cannot make iron ore, but we can get more wool with extra sheep.

Hon. A. R. JONES: But at the moment we have more wool than we can ever use in Australia; and, of course, it is one of our main sources of income. I am not against the export of anything so long as its export does not jeopardise our own people, or any chance we have of securing sufficient supplies in the future. When one looks at the figures of the known sources of ore available to us and sees that it is only just over 250,000,000 tons—

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: And that is not all high-grade ore.

Hon. A. R. JONES: —including ore which has a metallic iron content of only 33 per cent., one realises that we have to be careful. Apparently iron-ore supplies are not readily available in the Eastern States; otherwise B.H.P. would not be hauling ore from the top of Western Australia around the coast to South Australia and Newcastle.

Also, we must work out whether it is economical for us to sell iron ore at the price that has been suggested in an article I saw, which information has apparently been taken from remarks made by the Premier. I asked certain questions today; and while I did not hope to have the answers, they will be ready for Tuesday so that other members may make use of them during the debate.

But it seems hardly likely that a big profit will be made from the ore if it is sold at the price which has been mentioned, particularly when one takes into account the cost of mining, handling and carting the ore from Koolyanobbing to Southern Cross, and the railway freight involved in bringing it from there to the port. We must also consider the possibility of keeping sufficient ore in this country to accommodate any steel production plant which may be set up in the future.

Surely we should keep the nearest source of supply for our own use, if there is any possibility of setting up an iron-and-steel industry. Koolyanobbing seems to be the nearest source of supply of good ore. In deciding where to establish an integrated iron-and-steel industry, apparently we have to consider places where plenty of water and fuel are available. The South-West seems to be the only part that fits in with those requirements, and Koolyanobbing is only about 300 miles from most parts of the South-West that would be suitable for the establishment of an iron-and-steel industry.

It has been suggested that if the iron is sold, the profit from the sale will be used for setting up a charcoal iron industry somewhere in Western Australia—thought to be in the South-West; and I think that is the only logical place.

Hon. H. K. Watson: It would go down the drain there.

Hon. A. R. JONES: Some years ago we had a debate in this House regarding the possibilities of a charcoal iron industry in Western Australia and I lent my support to its establishment—but I did not mean to imply that I supported it as a State enterprise. I think this is an industry that shows good possibilities for private enterprise.

From the knowledge we have gained of the iron produced at Wundowie, we must all agree that it is amongst the best, if it is not actually the best iron of its type produced in the world. Not many countries are producing charcoal iron—I believe that Sweden and Chile are the only two other countries in the world where any large quantity is produced.

Apparently there is something in our timbers which enable us to produce the right type of charcoal to make good quality charcoal iron. We must pay great attention to that aspect of the question; and provided a market can be guaranteed for our product, there is no knowing what size the industry might be, particularly if it were started in the South-West where plenty of timber and water can be found. But, as I said, I think it is wrong for it to be made a State enterprise.

There are many items on which the Government could spend any profits that might accrue from the sale of iron ore. Mr. Baxter suggested this evening, as I suggested last night, that we must foster our primary industries and our goldmining industry. There is no need to stop at gold, because every day other minerals are being found in Western Australia, the mining of which could bring considerable wealth to this State.

If the Government can make a profit of £500,000 a year, it should spend that money in assisting the goldmining industry in particular, because that is one industry which does need help; and it is an industry that we cannot afford to let go out of existence, because it has always been a money-spinner for Western Australia, and has been the means of pulling us out of the mire on more than one occasion. I have no doubt that it will do so again. At the moment the price of gold is not very high, and many of the mines which were producing a low grade of ore have been forced to close down. But if the price could be increased, and the Government could give these mines more assistance, I have no doubt that many of them would start working again.

I know of one mine, which, if the Government were prepared to make money available, could be worked again and possibly sold to somebody with capital. But mines such as this have to be proved before they can be offered for sale; and I refer in this instance to the old Lancefield mine. I believe it would take about £20,000 to prove the extent of the ore in that mine; and apparently those who hold the lease have not sufficient money to spend on it. But if the Government made a profit from the sale of iron ore, the money could be invested, and invested wisely, in propositions such as that.

Also, we have many areas of the State which at present are under-developed and in which the people are struggling. Even a sum of £1,000, spread over a period of years, would be a great lift, if it could be lent to each of the settlers in those areas. These are the things we have to bear in mind before we decide whether we sell the iron ore, even if the Federal Government gives us a permit to do so.

The Premier said that iron ore could be carted from Southern Cross to the port at a profit to the railways. Up to date, as has been pointed out previously, railway figures have been rather conflicting; and that is one aspect that wants some investigation.

Hon. H. K. Watson: The other night the Minister said that the more they carry the more they lose.

The Minister for Railways: That is right.

Hon. A. R. JONES: That has been said, but I cannot reconcile it with the Premier's remarks. He said that this iron ore can be carted on the railways at a profit; and whether the figures he gave are correct or not, I would not be able to say. I would not even hazard a guess, because we have not been able to get correct figures. I heard a figure of 2.65d. per ton mile quoted, and then I heard that iron has been carted at a cheaper rate than that. I heard that it was carted for a little over 2d. per ton mile.

Nevertheless, I consider that we have sufficient argument and sufficient good reason for this House to support a motion, such as has been moved by my colleague, that an inquiry be instituted into the question of the sale of iron ore to Japan, or any other country, before any firm decision is made on the matter. I therefore commend the motion to the House and hope that it will be well supported.

On motion by Hon. C. H. Simpson, debate adjourned.

BILL—LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [5.41]: Probably no Bill the size of this one has ever been presented to the Western Australian Parliament before, and probably

no measure has been awaited by local authorities with such keen interest as has this one. Some time in 1949, Hon. A. F. Watts, M.L.A., who was then Minister for Local Government, introduced a similar Bill in another place. That measure was referred to a Royal Commission which took evidence in 1950. Since then, two other Bills have been introduced; but they did not see the light of day, because they never even reached the second reading stage. However, this Bill, which was introduced last year in another place has met with a better fate, because it has been passed through all stages in another place and it is now presented to us for our consideration.

Naturally, a Bill containing 681 clauses becomes, in the main, a Committee Bill. Nevertheless, there are one or two features that can be referred to during a second reading speech. To commence with, the attempt, by means of this measure, to amalgamate the Municipal Corporations Act and the Road Districts Act, whilst claiming quite a deal of favour among certain local authorities, has been met, with disfavour by some road boards which consider that it would have been wiser to amend both the existing Acts, which would have meant that all road boards, and municipalities throughout the State, would have been working under the amended legislation for the past four years.

I am of much the same opinion; it would have been better, I think, to amend the existing legislation rather than amalgamate the two separate Acts. I can back up that statement with an extract from the report of the Royal Commission on Local Government, which reads as follows:—

Some of the evidence was contradictory, some witnesses strongly supporting the direct opposite of that advocated by other witnesses. In this way the different viewpoint of road board members and municipal council members was often made manifest.

I have often thought that many features of road board and municipal work are not compatible, and the efforts that have been made to bring control of their activities under one consolidated measure have been terrific. Of course, whether this consolidation will work successfully remains to be seen. I am still of the opinion that it would have been better for local authorities to continue working under their respective Acts, brought up to date by necessary amendments.

One of the principal provisions in the Bill seeks to bring cities, towns and small centres administered by road boards under the heading of municipalities. They will continue to be referred to as cities and towns, but it is now proposed to change the name of a road board to a shire. Where the word "shire" was obtained

From I do not know, because its use in this State has nothing to commend it. Had the word "district" been used, it would have been more fitting and appropriate, but I consider that the use of the existing term "road board" would have been quite sufficient. One of the reasons for the change that has been put forward is that it is necessary to alter the term "road board" because it is no longer the function of road boards specifically to maintain roads.

No doubt that is, in part, true; but fundamentally the construction and maintenance of roads represent 90 per cent. of the work of a road board. I fail to see that the reason given for the change is sound. Although the word "shire" has some tradition, it has no relation to or any bearing upon Western Australia. In an endeavour to ascertain the meaning of the word "shire" I referred to "The Concise Oxford Dictionary" which gives the following definition:—

Shire—County (chiefly now as suff. in names of certain counties and districts, as Hamp—, Hallam—, with some of which it is omissible, as Devon— or Devon, and in pl. the —s, band of counties stretching N.E. from Hamp— and Devon— ending in —, also loose term for midland counties, and for the hunting district including Leics. and Rutland and Northants);

The definition then goes on to say—
largest breed of draught horse raised esp. in Lincoln— and Cambridge—.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That has not much application to Western Australia.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: How can that term be applicable to Western Australia?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is used in New South Wales.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am not concerned with New South Wales. If that State wishes to follow the county traditions of England it can; and so can Victoria. But why should we follow New South Wales if the term is not applicable to Western Australia?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I think we are out of step with all of the States.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: No; South Australia has not followed the lead of New South Wales.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I think they call them districts in South Australia.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes; and I think that is more appropriate than the use of the word "shire." A peculiar feature in the Bill is that one clause gives power to the Governor or Minister to amalgamate one or more municipalities if a petition from all the councils has been presented; and yet, in the same clause, power is given to the Governor or the Minister to do that without such a petition. I cannot see how

a clause can put forward two propositions which are directly opposite. It does not make sense to me.

Probably, in all of this large Bill, there are only four or five really contentious clauses; and they are contentious because they endeavour to change what has pertained to either the Municipal Corporations Act or the Road Districts Act for some considerable time. One of the provisions proposes to change the rating system to make it mandatory upon all municipalities to rate on unimproved valuations. Having had some experience of owning a little land in a municipality, I say that that system of rating can be very unfair.

On the other hand I would not be surprised if the method of rating on the annual value also had its deficiencies. I should like now to quote my own experience so that members will be able to appreciate just what this changeover from rating on the annual value to rating on the unimproved value will mean. Some time ago I purchased an estate and sold portion of it—or I should say I almost gave it away—and the rest of it was valued at that time at about £200, on which I was paying an annual value of £1 a year.

The council in its wisdom decided to change from annual values to unimproved values, and the Taxation Department in its wisdom valued the property at £500. This valuation was later increased to £710; and even though I objected most strongly and lodged an appeal, no notice was taken—no notice ever is taken of appeals. Then, without the block being looked at, the next year the valuation was put up to £910. I protested again, and it was reduced to £710. The rates went from £1 a year to £35 a year; and at the same time, I was not able to dispose of the block for even half its value. That is an absolute fact. I offered the block to the council for £500 provided it paid the rates that I had paid; but the offer was not accepted. I offered it to the Water Supply Department and the Housing Commission.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You did not have the right buyer.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Apart from this, the block has been in the hands of an estate agent for over a year. So I have a block of land in my possession out of which I am getting nothing; and yet I am having to pay on unimproved values. What is the council doing to put a value on that block. Nothing at all. Accordingly, I feel that in cases such as that, rating on unimproved values is quite wrong.

On the other hand by the method of rating on annual values it is possible that people would be paying more than they should. This whole business needs more thought, and it should not be made mandatory on a municipality to accept one

particular type of rating. It should be possible to evolve some system by picking out the best features of the two.

The Chief Secretary: You have a go; they have tried it all over the world and cannot do it.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am not too sure that it would not be possible, somehow or other. Perhaps it might be possible to set up a better type of appeal committee than exists at present, particularly from the point of view of the Taxation Department, because they are pretty hard nuts to crack when it comes to trying to get a reduction in taxation value.

The Chief Secretary: They are experts.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I mentioned my personal case because I thought it might give members some idea of what could happen under the system. Another amendment, affecting road boards, concerns the election of the president. It is proposed that the president shall be elected by the ratepayers as a whole. I feel that the old method has stood the test of time, and it has been acceptable to road boards throughout the State. I see no reason why there should be an alteration.

Perhaps I could give a classical example of what could happen in my area if the president, or chairman, were to be elected by the ratepayers as a whole and not by the members as at present. We have had a chairman in the Northampton Road Board for the past 16 years; and I would venture to say—and I am sure the gentleman himself would agree with me—that he has only been chairman for those 16 years because he was elected by the members who, in turn, were elected by the ratepayers. Had his election been a matter for the ratepayers to decide, I am certain he would not have been chairman, or president as the case might be, for that number of years.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is a better system.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: This man has given the best service possible to the Northampton Road Board; the service he has given could not have been bettered. But I am certain that had his election been left to the ratepayers, he would not have occupied his present position for the period he has. After all, the members of the road board themselves have to sit under the aegis of the chairman, and it should be left to them to elect him. The proposal to permit the ratepayers to elect the president is not a good one. Indeed, it has great deficiencies. Parliament does not go to the country to ask the electors to elect the Premier; that is done by the party.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I wish he were elected by the people.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I do not see why we should alter the present mode of election. There is one matter that I find has been omitted from the present Bill, though it was included in the previous one; and that is the scale of fees set down for presiding officers, etc. In the old legislation scale of fees was set down. The Bill, however, merely says, "The council shall pay etc." in respect to officers mentioned in the scale at the end of this subsection. But there is no scale of fees at the end of this subsection. Then the Bill goes on to say, "as prescribed by regulation." It would be better if Parliament were given an opportunity to see what scale of fees is set down. Let us have them in the Bill, and see whether they are reasonable and equitable or otherwise.

Another feature of this legislation which has caused a considerable amount of comment and publicity is the alteration of the status of the elector. Under the provisions of this measure, it is proposed to grant adult franchise. It is all very well for the Labour Party to say that adult franchise is its policy; but every road board and every municipality—and I think I can safely say 90 per cent. of the branches of the Farmers' Union of Western Australia—have written asking us to oppose adult franchise.

There are something like 127 road boards in Western Australia. I do not know how many branches of the Farmers' Union there are. But the very fact that those road boards have suggested that the clause dealing with adult franchise should be removed is surely sufficient indication that it is not desirable.

Hon. G. E. Jeffrey: Have they petitioned the Premier?

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Did they petition him to put it in?

The Chief Secretary: You have to show the light to a lot of people.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Very often we find that petitions do not have the effect that is desired; indeed, sometimes they do not secure their objectives at all—because, if I remember rightly, there is still a petition from the Farmers' Union running around the country in relation to the railways; and if the answer given by the Minister in this House and the Premier in another place is any indication of what its fate is likely to be, I am certain that it will serve no useful purpose. However, this is a Committee Bill; and I will content myself at the moment by supporting the second reading.

On motion by Hon. W. F. Willesee, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6 p.m.