

# Legislative Assembly

Friday, 7th December, 1956.

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## RAILWAYS.

### Metropolitan Fare Comparisons.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

With reference to questions I asked on the 21st November, 1956, regarding "Railways—Metropolitan Fare Comparisons," will he advise—

- (1) What is the approximate average number of single tickets sold per week for each single fare up to 2s. 4d. on the metropolitan railways?
- (2) What is the approximate average number of weekly tickets sold per week for each weekly fare up to 16s. 3d. on the metropolitan railways?
- (3) Will he please check the answer given to Question No. 6 on the date mentioned in No. (1)? Is not the W.A. Transport Board's standard fare schedule compiled on a mileage basis?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) and (2) The information sought is contained in the attached statement.

(3) The W.A. Transport Board's standard fare schedule is compiled on a sectional basis. Each section up to 12 miles is approximately one mile but from 13 miles onward the sections are shorter.

Western Australian Government Railways.

Statement showing the approximate average number of single and weekly tickets sold per week on the metropolitan railways.

Single Tickets		Weekly Tickets	
Fare	No. of issues	Fare	No. of issues
s.d.		s.d.	
4	6,371	3 6	31
6	13,165	4 3	158
8	7,097	4 9	252
10	9,566	5 0	652
1 0	9,793	5 9	503
1 2	6,107	6 6	341
1 4	1,377	7 6	581
1 5	3,838	8 6	330
1 6	890	9 0	238
1 8	484	9 6	429
1 10	738	10 3	119
2 0	517	10 9	216
2 2	555	11 6	110
2 4	297	12 3	33
		13 3	21
	60,795	13 9	41
		14 6	7
		15 0	9
		15 6	26
		16 3	2
			4,099

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

## QUESTIONS.

### BUILDING BY-LAWS.

#### Preparation and Finality.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

How far has the preparation of model building by-laws progressed, and when is finality expected?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied:

The Minister for Local Government has approved the by-laws, as recommended by the special committee, being sent to the Government Printer for a draft print. The draft print will not be available until some time in January owing to pressure of work at the Government Printing Office. When received it will be checked and forwarded to the Minister for Local Government for submission to Executive Council.

**COLLIE COAL.***Basis of Purchase by Government,  
Price, etc.*

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Premier:

(1) On what basis is Collie coal at present purchased from the coal companies for Government instrumentalities?

(2) To what extent, if any, do fluctuations in the quantity of coal delivered to the Government affect the price?

(3) Do the seasonal activities of the W.A.G.R. in any way affect the costs of other Government instrumentalities such as the S.E.C., which are coal consumers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied:

(1) (a) Coal is purchased from Amalgamated Collieries of W.A. Ltd. on a basis which is an extension of a previous agreement. This gives the company a fixed profit per ton above cost of production. Price is fixed each six months for previous period.

(b) Coal is purchased from the Griffin Coal Mining Co. Ltd., and Western Collieries Ltd., on a price arranged with the companies.

(2) (a) Amalgamated Collieries' position explained in No. (1).

(b) Western price has not varied since January, 1956.

(c) Griffin price has not varied between 72s. and 65s. per ton with fluctuations in orders.

(3) Variations in seasonal activities which have caused fluctuations in coal orders have affected the price.

**EDUCATION.***(a) Review of School Consolidation.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is a review made of school consolidation to determine cases where, because of changed circumstances and increased population, it is economically and otherwise preferable to re-establish schools in areas previously closed?

(2) Are there any such cases where schools have been reopened or a decision made to reopen in future?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Applications made by parents for the reopening of schools previously closed because of consolidation are always considered.

(2) Two such schools reopened at the request of parents are North Baandee, closed in 1947 and reopened in 1952, and Muntadgin, closed in 1948 and reopened in 1950.

Muntadgin was again closed at the end of 1951, at the request of the parents, and consolidated on Merredin.

*(b) General Pre-application Review.*

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Minister for Education.

Further to his reply regarding school consolidation, he said—

Applications made by parents for the reopening of schools previously closed because of consolidation are always considered.

My question was of a general nature. I wanted to know whether a review was made of school consolidation. I meant in particular a review by the department when awaiting applications from parents. Could he answer from that viewpoint?

The MINISTER replied:

Not offhand. The Director of Education and superintendents use a lot of initiative and commonsense in the course of their work. They are in touch with the parents and citizens' associations and the headmasters of the schools in their areas all the time, and the matter is under constant attention and consideration. If the hon. member will particularise or give a specific case I will be very pleased to investigate it. As I have said, the matter is under constant consideration by officers of the department. There is the instance of Muntadgin and North Baandee where parents felt that their children—some of them of tender years—should not be transported by bus to the consolidated schools and requested the reopening of a school. No matter how small it is, provided it complies with the regulations, the Education Department is always anxious to ensure that facilities are made available in this regard. If the hon. member would like any details of a particular case I would be pleased to try to supply the information.

**MOTOR SPIRITS ROYAL COMMISSION.***Report and Proposed Legislation.*

Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

(1) Has Cabinet considered the report of the Royal Commission on matters relating to retailing of motor spirits and accessories?

(2) Is legislative action proposed this session?

The PREMIER replied:

Yes.

**HOUSING.***(a) Wandana Flats Tenants, Fees, etc.*

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) When a tenant takes over a flat at Wandana does the tenant have to pay any fee, deposit, or sum of money?

(2) If so—

- (a) to whom is this payable;
- (b) what is the amount of money involved;
- (c) under what circumstances, if any, can it be recovered;
- (d) why must it be paid?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) To State Housing Commission.
- (b) Dependent on the flat concerned. Payments consist of—
  - (i) two weeks rent;
  - (ii) £10 deposit;
  - (iii) stamp duty of £1 on tenancy agreement. (This is paid to Stamp Office by the commission.)
- (c) Deposit is refunded on vacation of the flat in good order and condition.
- (d) (i) All State Housing Commission rents are payable two weeks in advance;
- (ii) as guarantee of rent payments and against damage beyond fair wear and tear;
- (iii) required by Stamp Duties Act.

(b) *Fly-screens, Wandana Flats.*

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Do flats at Wandana have windows and doors fitted with fly-screens?
- (2) If not, can tenants buy and fit, or have fitted such screens themselves?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) Fly screens are fitted to lounge and kitchen windows up to and including the 2nd floor of each block.
- (2) Tenants may have extra screens and doors fitted at their own expense provided work is carried out by the approved supplier to ensure uniformity.

(c) *Approved Authority for Fittings.*

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

In his reply to my question regarding Wandana Flats tenants, he referred to an "approved authority." Who is the approved authority?

The MINISTER replied:

At present it happens to be Bairds Ltd. I might explain that in connection with certain fittings, such as canvas blinds and fly-wire doors and screens, it will be appreciated that there should be some sort of harmony with regard to installation. Arrangements have been made, after the calling for tenders, for the supply of these requirements for a period and arrangements are made with the firm to supply on application by the individual tenants.

## NARROWS BRIDGE.

*Tabling Plan of Reclaimed Areas, etc.*

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Will he table a scale plan showing how the reclaimed areas of Perth water will be used when the reclamation work is completed?

(2) Will he state how the land on either side of Mounts Bay-rd. in the vicinity of the northerly end of the Narrows bridge will be integrated with the reclaimed area?

(3) Will he also show on the scale plan mentioned in No. (1) the integrated region mentioned in No. (2)?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, when a final plan taking account of adequate detail has been prepared.

(2) The existing Mounts Bay-rd between the Narrows bridge and Spring-st. will become a two-way service road, connected at each end with the new bridge approaches and giving access to the existing frontages. Access to and exit from the service road will be possible at each end.

(3) Yes.

## TOWN PLANNING.

(a) *Area Involved in Interim Order.*

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Town Planning:

Will he inform the House the total area involved in the metropolitan area under the interim order issued under the Town Planning and Development Act?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied:

The total area involved is the area of the metropolitan region, viz., approximately 2,000 sq. miles or 1,280,000 acres: roughly between Yanchep in the north, Safety Bay in the south and the water catchment area in the east.

Only a comparatively small section of this is subject to any restriction or regulation under the order. This section is indicated by Notations 1, 2, 3, and 4 on the map accompanying the order.

The remaining large portion of the region is available for normal development under existing statutory control.

(b) *Regional Development Plan, Orders, Compensation, etc.*

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is there any maximum period of time to which current blanket-town planning orders apply to land included in the regional development plan?

(2) If so, what is the period?

(3) Can the owners be given immediate decisions on the fate of their land and so remove disturbing uncertainty?

(4) Can compensation be paid in the immediate future to land-owners, whose land is required for future public purposes under the plan?

(5) If such compensation is not payable, at the request of a land-owner, does he not consider an injustice is being done to the land-owner?

(6) In view of the very considerable concern that prevails amongst land-owners, whose land has been blanketed, as to its future use, would he state the Government's attitude towards such owners?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Interim development order No. 1 has already been promulgated and expires on the 31st December, 1956.

(3) No.

(4) Yes, if and when a decision is made to acquire. There have already been a number of settlements in this direction.

(5) Answered by No. (4).

(6) The position of land-owners affected by the interim development order is fully appreciated and it is the Government's policy to bring the plan to finality as soon as possible.

Already considerable progress has been made in regard to some sections of the plan and owners have been informed of the position.

### TRAFFIC.

(a) *Stirling Highway Fatalities, Municipal Lighting Responsibility.*

Mr. POTTER (without notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

(1) Referring to Gavin Casey's series "Let's Stop this Highway Carnage" in "The Daily News" of the 4th and 5th December, are the Cottesloe and Claremont Municipalities responsible for illuminating Stirling Highway through their territories?

(2) If the answer is "Yes," what revenue do they receive from—

(a) Traffic fees;

(b) Transport Board?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied:

(1) It is part of the obligations of the municipalities referred to to provide street lighting, but there is nothing to compel them to provide it.

(2) Cottesloe Municipality—

(a) £6,523 for the municipal year ended the 31st October, 1956

(b) £337 for the municipal year ended the 31st October, 1956.

Claremont Municipality—

(a) £7,425 for the municipal year ended the 31st October, 1956.

(b) £414 for the municipal year ended the 31st October, 1956.

(b) *Queensland Police and Car Parking Offences.*

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Transport:

Is he aware that in Queensland although the Act gives authority to the police to remove cars parked illegally, that portion of the Act is not now being enforced?

The MINISTER replied:

I was not aware of that fact, although I indicated to the House when introducing my Bill that for certain reasons the Government had decided not to proceed with this activity, an activity which is used very seldom because it has a disciplinary effect.

### BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

1, Land and Income Tax Assessment Act Amendment.

2, Land Tax Act Amendment.

3, Vermin Act Amendment (No. 2). Transmitted to the Council.

### BILL—CHILD WELFARE ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

#### *Second Reading.*

MR. MARSHALL (Wembley Beaches) [2.33] in moving the second reading said: To reiterate the remarks of the Minister for Justice, this is a simple Bill but it is of considerable importance to those whom it concerns. The first part of the measure proposes to amend Section 34 of the Child Welfare Act, because it is felt that that section contains an anomaly, brought about by the fact that various Acts deal with offenders against the law, and as the Child Welfare Act deals particularly with juvenile offenders, this measure will fill the need which has been made apparent by comments conveyed to me from time to time by those who deal with juvenile offenders.

Section 709 of the Criminal Code deals with indictable offences and for a juvenile offender of from 14 to 18 years the maximum penalty that can be inflicted is three months imprisonment. Under the police Act—these offences are classed as simple offences—some offences carry a penalty of up to 18 months, while for breaches of the Traffic Act, the offences in some cases carry a penalty of up to 12 months. To illustrate my point, Section 709 of the Criminal Code states—

When a young person is charged with committing or attempting to commit any indictable offence other than treason, wilful murder, murder, or manslaughter, and whose age at the time of the commission or attempted commission of the offence was over 12 years, but did not, in the opinion of the justices before whom

he is brought, exceed the age of 18 years, the justices may deal with the charge summarily. The offender is liable on such summary conviction to imprisonment with hard labour for three months, or to a fine of £10; and if the offender is a male the justices may, either in addition to or instead of any other punishment, adjudge that the offender be, as soon as practicable, privately whipped with not more than twelve strokes of a birch rod, cane or leather strap, in the presence of some police officer of higher rank than a constable, and also in the presence, if he desires to be present, of the parent or guardian of the offender.

I think it will be recalled that last year the Child Welfare Act was amended by Bill No. 45 of 1955 and under that measure any child under the age of 14 years was not liable to imprisonment, but there was no stipulation as to what should be the maximum penalty for a child between 14 and 18 years of age. Thus it will be seen that for any indictable offence other than the exception quoted above, a juvenile over the age of 14 and under 18 years could be sentenced to a maximum of three months imprisonment. I wish to quote the example of a lad under 18 years of age who was arrested in the country on a charge of stealing, which is an indictable offence but which can be dealt with summarily on a plea of guilty and the offender electing to be dealt with summarily while in the lock-up.

After being placed in the lock-up, he got out and unlawfully assumed control of a motorcar, but was apprehended shortly afterwards. I think it will be agreed, from what we have been told, that in the country districts the supervision over the prisoners in the lock-ups is not so strict as it is in the metropolitan area.

I can recall one of the members of this House quoting an instance that occurred either in Kalgoorlie or Boulder which illustrated that the restriction placed on the prisoners was not so severe as to ensure that they remained in the lock-up in a manner similar to that exercised over prisoners in the metropolitan area and that sometimes the prisoners were taken out so that they could do some gardening, around the police station or around the house of the sergeant in charge. I have also been told that if any prisoner wished to buy something up the street he was allowed to stroll out and return at his leisure.

The lad I am referring to was in the country and, as I have said, after he walked out of the lock-up he unlawfully assumed control of a motorcar. As a result, a further charge was preferred against him of breaking out of the lock-up, which was brought under the rogue and vagabond section of the Act and he was also

charged with assuming control of a motorcar. The penalty for breaking out of gaol is 18 months' imprisonment and for unlawfully assuming control of a motorcar it is 12 months' imprisonment. Yet, the maximum penalty that could be imposed upon him for the principal offence he committed is only three months. Stealing is an indictable offence, but the charge of breaking out of gaol or unlawfully assuming control of a vehicle is regarded as being only a minor offence. Therefore that is an anomaly which should be rectified.

I submit that the maximum penalty that should be inflicted on any juvenile should be in accordance with Section 709 of the Criminal Code and if this were done, it would bring about uniformity. I would like to mention some of the problems that confront the people who deal with juvenile offenders. In this House we have had many discussions on matters relating to juvenile delinquency. The latest figures available to me of the number of convictions recorded against juveniles are for the year ended the 30th June, 1955. These convictions exclude those recorded against neglected children and aborigines. The number of convictions recorded against males was 2,205 and against females was 145. On the charge of breaking and entering the number of convictions recorded was 204 against males and two against females. On the charge of stealing there were 504 convictions recorded against males and 58 against females. On the charge of receiving, the figures were 22 against males and one against females and for the charge of false pretences seven against males and three against females. On the charge of unlawful carnal knowledge nine convictions were recorded against males.

All these charges come under the provisions of the Criminal Code, whereas other charges are lodged under the Police Act, Traffic Act, Child Welfare Act, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, Licensing Act, Navigation Act, Firearms and Guns Act, Health Act, Betting Control Act and others. So it will be seen that in Acts providing for summary conviction, such as the Police Act, greater power is granted for imposing a penalty of imprisonment than there is under the Criminal Code, which is designed to cover all types of indictable offences and which makes provision for a maximum penalty of three months' imprisonment in the case of a child between the ages of 14 and 18 years.

I am of the opinion that the penalties that can be inflicted under other Acts should be brought into line with those provided for under the provisions of the Criminal Code. Therefore, this proposed amendment to the Child Welfare Act seeks to provide that apart from the offences stipulated, the maximum penalty that can be inflicted upon a child shall be three months.

A further clause in this Bill proposes to amend Section 138 of the Child Welfare Act and in introducing this amendment, the question of children being conveyed from one town to another without any questions being asked, is one of the reasons why I seek to insert this provision in the principal Act. In support of the amendment, I would like to mention a case that has been brought to my notice. In a suburb in my constituency resides a family which is well known and respected, but it appears that one of their sons, aged 14 years, is suffering what can only be described as a mania for running away from home.

He has done this on several occasions, and during one of his escapades he jumped a train as far as Coolgardie. When he discovered that it looked as if he might be apprehended as a result of the vigilance of the conductor, he left the train at Coolgardie. He then got a lift in a motor-vehicle from Coolgardie to Kalgoorlie and eventually he was found walking along the Trans-Australian railway line after he had flagged down the Trains train. He was taken back to Kalgoorlie and eventually he was returned to his home. Considerable expense was incurred by the father—who could ill afford it—in arranging transport for the boy back to Perth.

Not satisfied with this, the boy ran away again and he is now believed to be still absent in South Australia. There is no doubt that the means of travel adopted by this youth was by accepting lifts given to him by other people. On the last occasion he obtained a lift from Northam to Kalgoorlie. On previous occasions the boy's father questioned him about his means of transport and the lad freely admitted that it was no trouble to cadge a lift. I made some inquiries about this practice and I found that it is very prevalent and the Police Department is put to considerable expense and trouble in endeavouring to locate children who have either run away from home or who have absconded from a school or institution.

Apart from the expense involved in locating them and bringing them back, great distress is caused to the family because they do not know where their child is. In the case I have just referred to, considerable distress has been suffered by other members of that boy's family.

Mr. Roberts: Is that the only case you know of?

Mr. MARSHALL: I have just mentioned that the Police Department could cite hundreds of such cases. I referred to this one only to illustrate or to support my reason for the introduction of this amendment. The Bill seeks to suppress this type of activity and to bring pressure on the motorist who gives a lift to a child without question. I know it is quite common for motorists to pick up children when they

are walking along the street and take them to school. That practice is quite prevalent in country districts.

But there are, of course, the motorists who more or less know the children they are picking up. It is not the intention under this Bill to frown on that practice and there is no intention to prevent the continuance of it, but the Bill does endeavour to prevent the motorist from picking up a lad or a child and taking him from place to place without some reasonable explanation.

Mr. Roberts: You say this is a common occurrence?

Mr. MARSHALL: Surely the person giving a child a lift over a long distance, must realise that no child would be wanting to go about the countryside unless something was wrong.

Mr. Oldfield: How old was this child?

Mr. MARSHALL: Fourteen. The circumstances suggest that the child had run away from home. It did happen in this case and it could happen countless times. That is what the police say. It may be considered that the onus of proof being on the driver is unfair, but is it? How else can the matter be overcome if the driver of the vehicle cannot have pressure brought to bear on him? If one knows that a certain thing is an offence in law, then one does not do such a thing, or if one did know that one was taking the risk of being caught and if one did get caught, one cannot blame any other person but one's self.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: When a person is caught, the onus is on him to prove his innocence.

Mr. MARSHALL: If the child gave a reasonable excuse for requiring to travel, an excuse that was lawful and possible, then the driver of the vehicle is automatically protected for he did, in fact, obtain from the child to his reasonable satisfaction information that the child had a good and lawful reason for such conveyance. That is the reason for the amendment. But if he picked up a child on the road and did not even bother to inquire for what reason the child wished to travel and conveyed him 200 or 300 miles away, surely no one would expect the law to protect the driver under those circumstances!

In any case there would have to be some circumstances surrounding the issue before action would be taken, and the purport of this Bill is in the interests of and for the protection of children. If a motorist knows full well that he is subjecting himself to a penalty if he conveys a child without having first obtained a good and valid reason, he will make sure that he gets that reason first. If it is not a good reason, then he will either refuse to convey the child, or he will convey the child to the nearest police station. That aspect has been covered by

the Bill. I do not feel that any injustice is being done to the motorist by placing the onus of proof upon him when it is in the interests of the child if this legislation is passed. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. F. Watts, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

Returned from the Council with amendments.

## **BILL—MOTOR SPIRITS RETAIL CONTROL.**

### *Second Reading.*

**MR. OLDFIELD** (Mt. Lawley) [3.56] in moving the second reading said: Members will recall that at this time last year a Bill was introduced into this House the purpose of which was to set up some form of legislation to attempt to bring back stability to the retailers of motor spirits. That Bill met with opposition from one or two members in this House, but it passed through both the second and third reading stages without a division. When it reached another place the reaction of members was more or less evenly divided. Subsequently a select committee was appointed and that in turn was made into an Honorary Royal Commission. The report of the Royal Commission was tabled in both Houses in recent months.

The Bill now before us has been drafted entirely in conformity with the recommendations contained in that report, with the exception of recommendations No. 1 and No. 17. The reason for excluding them from the Bill was, in the case of the first, that it contained a recommendation to set up a control authority along certain lines. As a private member cannot be given a Message by the Governor, it was not possible to provide for the setting up of such an authority, and therefore I took the only other alternative offering, and that was to make use of an existing control authority. It was therefore decided to select the Chief Inspector of Factories to exercise control.

**Mr. Bovell:** Does the Bill apply to outside the metropolitan area?

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** I have already said that the Bill is in complete conformity with the recommendations contained in the report, and that has been tabled for six weeks. If any member was interested in the report or in this legislation he would have read the report referred to. I propose to make this speech as short as possible and not to delay the House unnecessarily. This matter has been before the House for some time and most members have seen the recommendations. For the benefit of those who have not and for the information of the member for Vasse, the

Bill refers to the metropolitan area only; any area outside can be brought in by regulation prescribed by the control authority.

**Mr. Bovell:** I am reading the Bill quickly. I am only concerned with that and not with the report.

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** The recommendations contained in the report consist of only five columns, and no one would be so busy that he could not find the time to read them.

**Mr. Bovell:** The report is not the Bill.

**Mr. OLDFIELD:** Recommendation No. 17, which is not contained in the Bill refers to the fees collected for pump certificates and set out that such moneys should be applied to the authority referred to in recommendation No. 1. If members go to the trouble of checking the Bill with the Royal Commission's recommendations, they will find that one clause does not altogether tally with the recommendations, because a proviso was inadvertently omitted in the drafting of the Bill. It is proposed, however, to insert it at the Committee stage, if the Bill gets that far. The proviso has reference to the clause dealing with a wholesaler committing an offence by refusing to supply a retailer with motor spirits and/or pump equipment. The proviso is to the effect that the wholesaler can refuse the retailer unless the latter agrees to enter into a solo-brand agreement in respect of petrol.

After spending many months taking evidence, the Royal Commission came to the conclusion that solo-brand marketing of petrol was desirable in a modified form and under certain controls. The proviso will be inserted to conform with that recommendation. The Bill proposes to set up an authority to have power to regulate sites. It permits to continue the solo-brand marketing of petrol such as we have at present, but makes it possible for the multiple sale of lubricating oils to take place. The commissioners in their wisdom decided that it was desirable to retain solo-brand marketing unless the wholesalers and the retailers were agreeable in certain circumstances to the marketing of multiple brands.

It was found most unsatisfactory and unfair to resellers and to the motoring public that there should be any restraint of trade in regard to lubricating oils, because the general motoring public are not greatly interested in the brand of motor spirit with which they propel their vehicle, but most of them are concerned with the type of oil used as a lubricant. It was found that certain companies within Australia, and this State in particular, were being forced out of business because they specialised in lubricating oils and were not concerned with the reselling of petrol and other oil fuels.

Another provision in the Bill relates to the control of trading hours within the metropolitan area and any other area that may be prescribed by regulation. Under the Bill the reselling of petrol is permitted from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Mondays to Fridays; from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays; and from 9 a.m. to 12 noon on Sundays. The hours for public holidays are the same as for week days except that there is to be a complete closure on Christmas Day, Good Friday and Anzac Day, those being more or less sacred days to most members of the community.

There has been added to the clause dealing with trading hours, a subclause empowering regulations to be framed to permit the retailing of motor spirits in circumstances of emergency. That was strongly recommended by the Royal Commission.

When I made my decision to introduce this measure, I instructed the draftsman not to go beyond the recommendations of the Royal Commission, and to go just as far as circumstances would permit, bearing in mind that I was a private member. This he has done. The reason for my instructions was that I considered it did not behove me or any other person who might introduce similar legislation to contradict or act contrary in any way, in the initial stages, to the recommendations made by members of another place who spent so many hours over such a long period inquiring into what was the best course to take with regard to this industry.

I trust that if members have any doubts about anything in the Bill, they will express them during the Committee stage. I hope, of course, that the Bill will pass the second reading and will be dealt with in Committee, and that members who are really interested will give their full views on the various clauses. I feel certain that if Parliament deviates from the findings of the commission, those gentlemen will understand that, after all, Parliament must have its say. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—CITY OF PERTH PARKING FACILITIES.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 4th December.

**MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON** (Cottesloe) [3.5]: The reason why I said "No" so loudly when the vote was taken a moment ago as to whether the debate on the motion for the discontinuance of certain railways should be taken after the consideration of this Bill, was that I did not know that this item was to be taken before the other. I did feel that possibly the Minister for Works or the Minister in charge of the Bill could have let me know.

The Minister for Transport: The debate was postponed until today at your request.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** I realise that, and I was very grateful to the Minister for permitting that to be done. My opposition to the present change was brought about because I had no knowledge that it was contemplated until the Minister for Works moved his motion a moment ago.

The Minister for Transport: You merely make your speech now instead of in an hour or two; that is all.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** I think that the Minister might have made a protest if he had been in my position. It is a small thing—just a matter of a courtesy that could have been extended to me.

I view this Bill with very mixed feelings. Firstly, I view it with some pleasure because an attempt is being made to assist in solving the car parking problem in the city of Perth. Secondly, I view it with some alarm because motorists can be subjected, through the installation of parking meters, to costs additional to the already high imposts they bear at present. Further, I view it with alarm and a sense of outrage on behalf of the public when I consider the tyrannical tow-away provisions contained in the Bill. Thirdly, I view the Bill with some confusion because the public is somewhat confused about certain aspects of parking at present and the lack of co-ordination between this aspect of town planning and further aspects that are projected and in the planning stage at present.

This feeling of confusion I have has been enhanced by two newspaper reports that contradict each other, one having appeared in the "Daily News" and the other in "The West Australian." It is quite likely that the contradiction has arisen through an error.

The Minister for Transport: I think that if you confined yourself to the Bill and forgot about the newspapers, you would get nearer to the truth.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** Please allow me to make my point! These contradictory statements were probably made in error, but they do exemplify the confusion that exists in the public mind at present. In the "Daily News" on Wednesday, the 5th December, under the heading of "First Meters in Less Busy Zones", this appears—

Perth City Council would probably install parking meters in the city within the next few months, Lord Mayor Howard said today. However, the meters would not be put in Hay-st. or the more congested areas initially.



The following day in "The West Australian," under the heading, "City Centre First for Meters", the following statement was made:—

The Lord Mayor (Mr. H. R. Howard) said yesterday that kerbside meters would probably be installed first in central Perth streets where there was most traffic congestion.

That is probably something that can be explained away fairly satisfactorily, but it does not add to the general satisfaction of the motoring public.

Mr. Norton: It sounds like good reporting.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I am saying that it exemplifies the confusion in the public mind at present. I am not trying to make a big item out of it.

The Minister for Transport: I repeat that if you dealt with the legislation and not with what the newspapers are saying, you would get somewhere.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Once again, the Minister is trying to get the last word, and I am trying to make my point. As I am on my feet, I suggest that I have the right to have the last word in regard to that matter.

The SPEAKER: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Generally, speaking, the purpose of the Bill may be said to be to enable the council to control and regulate parking zones and facilities in the City of Perth. It gives the council authority to borrow up to £447,000. There is a further provision giving power to the council to install parking meters, and the Bill also provides for the creation of a parking fund to cater for financial measures pertaining to this Bill. Those and other powers are given under general ministerial control in order, as the Minister said, that nothing derogatory or harmful or contradictory should take place, and possibly counter the overall traffic control or town-planning projects.

There are also a number of provisions on which I shall comment at the appropriate stage in my remarks. It appears to me that more co-operation is required between the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Works in regard to the handling of traffic and their town-planning project. The Bill has a great bearing on the Stephenson plan—upon town planning generally—and I feel it should be studied in conjunction with the overall town-planning effort. This is just a part of a whole. I request that the Minister for Transport give greater consideration to expanding the co-ordination that already exists between the two departments, because I believe there is great necessity for it.

I wish to make some observations upon the parking station that is planned at the foot of Mill-st. I think the Minister said it would accommodate up to 1,600 cars. The Minister, during the course of his speech, mentioned that the parking station planned east of the Supreme Court gardens would use only 50 per cent. of its space for actual car parking. I ask the Minister now: Is it intended that only 50 per cent. of the area of the car parking station at the foot of Mill-st. shall be used for actual car parking?

A large part of the car park at the foot of Mill-st. is to be on land that will be reclaimed from the Swan River. I have very definite views on this question, and I believe the public has, too. I think it is utterly wrong that the lovely area of Perth Water should be reduced for the purpose of car parking. In the matter of approaches to the Narrows bridge, and in the matter of access ways, where dire necessity forces reclamation work, the public is reconciled to the fact that the work must take place; but when this lovely area of Perth Water is to be reduced for the purpose of car parking, I consider that a stand should be made.

Personally, I believe the people would like strong views expressed against it because, by reducing the area of Perth Water, we reduce Perth's greatest charm; its greatest asset—that stretch of water of the Swan River itself. Without the Swan River, Perth would be just another city. With the river, it is an outstanding city among the lovely cities of the world. As I have said, the people condone the reclamation work on the Swan, but only in so far as it is essential in the project of the Narrows bridge.

The Minister said that the car park would present quite nice views; that it was intended it should be in the nature of a garden park and that trees should be planted profusely within it. Even if in some distant future time it does look a fairly respectable site, it still will not compare with the sweep of the river that would remain there were it not for the car park. If this is merely to conform with a certain section of the Stephenson plan, then, let us alter that section of the plan; let us change that line along the river frontage. I would say that the Government is politically dishonest in building a car park on land reclaimed from the Swan River.

The Minister for Works: In following the Stephenson plan, the Government is dishonest?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Minister had knowledge of the Stephenson plan when he gave an answer to the question some 12 months ago.

The Minister for Works: That does not make any difference.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** It makes a great deal of difference. In the meantime there has been an election. I say again that the Government has been politically dishonest.

**The Minister for Works:** Because it has followed the Stephenson plan.

**Mr. Court:** That is not the point.

**The Minister for Works:** That is what he said. Whether it is the point or not, it is what he said.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Cottesloe.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** I say again, so that the Minister for Works need be under no misapprehension, that the Government has been politically dishonest with regard to putting a car park on land reclaimed from the Swan River, because the member for South Perth—at the time it was Mr. George Yates—asked the Minister—

Will any part of the reclamation work going on in that region be utilised as a car park?

**The Minister,** in his reply, did not hum and ha about it; he did not make any stipulation but said—"No." So I say he is dishonest at the present time.

**The Minister for Works:** That is still correct.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** The Minister has subsequently stated that a portion of this car park will be on land reclaimed from the Swan River.

**The Minister for Works:** Yes, but different land; not the land to which the member for South Perth referred.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** Is not that quibbling? It is absolute quibble, and would not stand up! I am amazed that the Minister for Works should try to get out of it. He should accept this as it is. He should not try to argue with me on this, because the facts are quite straightforward.

**The Minister for Works:** Unfortunately for you, they are.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** Goodness gracious! This reminds me of arguments I have had with the Minister for Works over things where he has been proven wrong. He is one of those people who thinks he is the only one who can ever be right; that he never makes a mistake. He is probably bringing in his divine right again.

**The Minister for Works:** I am sticking to the facts.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** The Minister made that answer to the question.

**The Minister for Works:** And it was correct.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** Now he has changed his mind and is building a car park there.

**The Minister for Works:** No, I have not.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** So I say it is a great pity—it is more than that; it is a great shame—that any portion of the river should be utilised as a car park. We, and the people, I think, will condone the reclamation work as long as it is essential for the Narrows bridge project. So I make a strong protest on this point.

**The Minister for Transport:** This Bill does not make or unmake the car park.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** The Bill has to do with car parking. The Minister mentioned that 1,600 cars will be parked in this section.

**The Minister for Transport:** That will still become a car park if the Bill is defeated.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** All right; but I am still entitled to make my protest about it now because it is part and parcel of the car parking plan outlined by the Minister for Transport.

Another point I would like to mention at this stage is that the Bill should have been brought down much earlier. It is absolutely wrong in principle, and not conducive to good legislation for a Bill of the importance of this one—this has a great impact on the people—to be brought down in the dying hours of the session.

**Mr. Marshall:** We are knocking off.

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** I think the hon. member ought to knock off.

**The Minister for Transport:** Do you want to do nothing in the last two or three weeks of Parliament?

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** Not at all. I cannot mention what is left on the notice paper to be discussed, but there is a great deal. I make the point that important legislation, particularly legislation like this which could have been introduced earlier, should not be introduced at this stage. I am not opposing the Bill.

**Mr. Norton:** Are you stonewalling it?

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** See the obvious look of relief on the Minister's face! The next point I desire to make concerns the Minister for Transport. I have very decided views on the tow away provision in the Bill. This tow away principle is an interference with private property by people in a distinctive type of uniform, and the provision for it is a most objectionable feature of the Bill. I oppose it whole-heartedly. Just imagine the people who are going to tow away these cars owned by parking offenders. What shall we call these people—Graham's Grabbers, perhaps. I think that would be an excellent name for them—Graham's Grabbers, or Herbie's Horrors! The tow away provision in the Bill finds no favour with me. Surely the laws of the land are sufficient to deal with parking offenders.

I agree with the Minister that there should be a tightening up with regard to people who break parking laws; and indeed there has been a tightening up. Recently the parking regulations have been enforced much more strictly than on previous occasions—and with that I agree. I commend the Minister for it. But do not let us fall for the tow away business which appears to me to be arbitrary, unjust and unnecessary when the laws of the land can operate.

We are putting a police control in the hands of people who do not know; and where the control is not warranted. This is foreign to our ideas and ideals. The Minister made reference to the tow away provision and he mentioned that it had been imposed in a suburb of Brisbane. He said it had had an electrifying effect on the motorist. That is not to be wondered at. No doubt if the Minister for Transport were to include in the Bill a provision saying that parking offenders were to be put up against a wall and shot that, too, would have an electrifying effect on motorists.

The Minister for Transport: If you were ever to make a commonsense remark, that would have an electrifying effect on members of this Chamber.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I do not think the Minister liked my remark about Graham's Grabbers.

The Minister for Transport: You are making a clown of yourself.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I would say that the Minister is making a clown of himself; he tries to make himself a little dictator and one who is not responsive to any criticism. He is a chap who can dish it out but he does not like taking it. So on this occasion I suggest he take it, because I can remember him dishing it out on many occasions.

The SPEAKER: I suggest that the hon. member get back to the Bill.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I must answer the interjections of the Minister.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I was referring to the electrifying effect on motorists in Brisbane when the tow away service was implemented in a suburb there. No doubt the Minister will find that when that service is implemented here, he will be the one who will be shocked. The Minister also mentioned that this tow away action was suspended in Brisbane for a time just prior to an election. To quote his own words, he said—

I understand the dogs were called off because of an impending election a few months ago.

Let us consider that statement. This tow away business was suspended because of an impending election. The Minister

says that the dogs were called off—apparently he used it in a metaphorical sense—because of an impending election, obviously because the people there did not like it and the people in Western Australia will like it a jolly sight less. The people here will dislike this tyrannical tow away service.

Provision is made in the Bill that if any damage is caused to the car while it is being towed away, the motorist has no redress and cannot claim damages. That car could be damaged to any extent and there is a get-out clause in the Bill which completely exonerates the officers, or Graham's Grabbers, who are doing the job. It also exonerates the Minister and the State Government. So it will be seen that, added to the indignity of having his car taken away, the motorist is liable to suffer damages to his car to an unspecified extent. That is shameful treatment. There is nothing in the Bill to cover the protection or preservation of property, and that should be uppermost in our minds.

Even if these tow away people were to exercise a great deal of care and judgment in lifting these cars and taking them away, and no obvious damage was done, a certain amount of damage could be caused to the steering mechanism. If a car is towed away on its front wheels, with the back of the car lifted, it is within the bounds of possibility that the steering could be upset and subsequently the same motorist could be involved in an accident with that car.

I do not like the provision and it is my intention to oppose it in Committee. As regards parking meters, in essence they are another form of tax on the motorist who is already a pretty overtaxed person. Already this Government has increased licence fees and the motorist pays for his roads through the petrol tax. Indeed, the motorists have the right to park on the roads—the roads belong to motorists because they pay for them.

The Minister for Works: Do they?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: If the Minister for Works will control himself—he is out of order anyway—

The Minister for Works: Right for the first time!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I have been right on many other occasions but the Minister just will not give in. He dies very hard, does the Minister for Works. At present I do not actively oppose the provision regarding parking meters because from the research that I have undertaken, I find that the Royal Automobile Club is not opposed to it and, to a great extent, although not completely, that body represents the motorists of this State. As the R.A.C. does not oppose it, I am rather reluctant actively to oppose it myself.

Mr. Norton: Haven't you a mind of your own?

Mr. Johnson: That is obvious.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: At least I have not the idea of the Minister for Works regarding the Divine Right of Tonkin.

The SPEAKER: That has nothing to do with parking meters.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: If the Minister for Works will be quiet, I will not have to refer to him.

Mr. Jamieson: He has not said anything for five minutes.

The Minister for Works: The hon. member was wrong that time.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: If it was not the Minister for Works, then someone made an under-the-lap remark. I would like to address a query to the Minister with regard to parking and it is this: Could he let us know at this stage—although I know it is not within his province and that the Perth City Council will deal with it—the approximate cost of car parking within the parking stations he mentioned. I think that is something that should be known as soon as possible. Also, I am interested in what will happen when these car parks are filled to capacity, as they will be very quickly, and as the Minister himself suggested they would be. He even mentioned that multi-storeyed buildings and tunnels may be used in the future.

Mr. I. W. Manning: They might like to fill in some more of the river and put some there.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: We must try to avoid that at all costs. When we think of multi-storeyed buildings, tunnels and the like in regard to car parking, we really must be right on the ball as regards co-ordination with town planning generally. I wonder whether at this stage the Minister would be able to give us any more information on that point.

One part of the Bill makes mention of the City Council being able to engage in trading or business ventures of its own volition. I do not like that provision although I know that it is subject to ministerial control. I feel strongly about the Perth City Council being able to engage in business or trading ventures, especially when it could lease the area to a private individual or company.

Indeed, the Minister, very sensibly I thought, mentioned that particular fact and said that he supposed the Perth City Council would take that action and instead of operating business ventures itself, such as the selling of petrol and oil, car cleaning and so on, it would no doubt lease portion of the parking area to a private concern. I hope that that is so. I intend to move an amendment along those lines incorporating my ideas and

enabling the council to lease the land but not to utilise it on its own behalf for a sort of semi-socialistic enterprise.

Mr. Potter: Hutchinson's hallucinations again!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Minister said that as regards the moneys raised from parking meters and the like objection could perhaps be raised because the council might fill its coffers at the motorists' expense. There is some degree of truth in that and some objection could be raised. But I appreciated the Minister's remark. It will impose a tax on the motorist and where the objection does lie is in the council's being able to enter into business ventures such as the selling of petrol and the like.

Further, I would like to ask the Minister this question: How long can parking stations on flat land remain as car parking places when our city develops? Probably this land will become far too valuable to continue to be used as car parks. The Minister began to touch upon that point in his speech and I think he might amplify it a little further when he replies. He could combine it with his remarks on multi-storeyed buildings and thus elucidate his earlier remarks.

There are one or two minor points upon which I wish to touch and I think the Minister should be able to clear them up fairly easily when he replies. I would ask why there is such a great distance allowed where parking is prevented from the corners to where the parking stalls are marked out? Previously I think the distance was 30 ft. from the corner but now it seems to have been increased considerably. If the Minister were to allow parking nearer the corner in some of these side streets, I feel sure he would be able to accommodate at least another two cars and perhaps even another four in some of those parking areas.

The Minister for Transport: What side streets have you in mind?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: All the side streets in Perth. If the Minister had a look at the stalls marked in Pier-st. he would find that they end quite a distance from the corner. Cars should be permitted to park nearer the corners of some of these side streets than they are at present.

*Sitting suspended from 3.46 to 4.5 p.m.*

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Prior to the suspension, I was referring to the fact that I felt certain extra stalls could have been provided in side streets like Pier-st. I feel, too, that space could possibly have been utilised better than it has been so far, and I am wondering whether the size of the stalls is a little bigger than it need be. I do not say this as criticism, but I wondered whether they could have been nearer to drive-ins of business premises

and that perhaps more stalls might have been provided in the city area than there are at the present time.

There is a point I probably should know, but I do not; it is probably ignorance on my part. I notice in the evening a number of commercial stands are left vacant by private motorists. I presume that the motorists do not know they may use them at night. Perhaps the Minister could inform me on that point. In moving around the city, I did notice that the parking stalls marked in yellow were vacant and I felt motorists would have been glad to use them. I noticed some commercial stalls were marked "no parking at any time," whilst others just had the yellow mark.

The Minister for Transport: They are the stalls near theatres and places of entertainment to allow for taxis and private motorists to pick people up.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I have another point which is quite a minor one but I think it should be brought up. Would it not be possible to utilise spaces near hydrants, theatres and churches for taxi stands and eliminate the present taxi stands? I would also like to ask the Minister about momentary parking for the picking up and setting down of passengers. I do not know whether I gauged from his remarks at one time, that the interpretation of this particular regulation might be relaxed at some time. I would urge that the momentary parking for the picking up and setting down of passengers could be more realistic than it is at the present time. The aspect of personal convenience to people appears to have been completely overlooked.

To sum up, I would say I do not intend to oppose the Bill. Where I have spoken strongly, it has been in opposition to certain clauses. I have strong opposition to the tow away proposal and have some objection to further taxation of motorists, but, in the interests of the whole, I suppose I must agree. As I have already intimated, I desire to give further notice of my intention to amend a clause of the Bill which permits the Perth City Council to engage in business ventures of parking stations. Apart from that, I support the Bill.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [4.9]:** The member for Cottesloe devoted quite a lot of the time of his speech to dealing with proposals to provide car parking facilities in the vicinity of the Narrows bridge and he endeavoured to establish that, in connection with parking facilities, I had at some time or other deliberately misled this House and the people generally. The hon. member stated that in giving certain answers to questions I was politically dishonest, meaning, of course, I did not tell the truth. I think it is as well for me

to put, not only the member for Cottesloe right, but anybody else who has been thinking the same way.

The questions to which he referred were asked on the 10th August last year by the then member for South Perth, Mr. Yates. He asked a series of questions, but it is only necessary for me to deal with the first three. The first one was—

On whose authority was the present reclamation of Perth Water authorised for the building of a bridge across the Narrows?

To that, my answer was—

The reclamation was authorised by the State Government.

That was correct then and it is correct now. The second question was—

What is the total extent of the reclamations proposed?

My answer was—

Approximately 43 acres.

At that time the proposal was to resume or reclaim 43 acres. The third question was—

Is it intended that any portion of the reclaimed area will be used for parking facilities for motor-vehicles?

My reply was—

No.

And I repeat that was perfectly truthful.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Is it truthful now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am making this speech. We intended to reclaim and we did not propose, when this question was asked, to use any of it for car parking. Subsequently a scheme was submitted to the Perth City Council which involved further reclamation beyond this 43 acres and on which it was intended to accommodate some hundreds of motorcars. The Perth City Council pointed out that they could not provide the parking facilities with the necessary landscaping, without intruding 3½ acres into the 43 acres, in connection with which I had no intention of providing car parking. However, the argument was so logical and sound with regard to the necessity to adequately landscape this area that I could not continue to object to allowing the use of 3½ acres out of the 43 acres originally reclaimed.

Mr. Speaker, I repeat that at the time the question was asked, neither I nor anybody in the Main Roads Department had any intention of utilising a square yard of that ground for car parking. But I ask you, Sir, if it was subsequently shown to you that in order to make a thoroughly satisfactory job, it was necessary to intrude a very short way into an area where it was never intended to park cars, should you be prevented from agreeing because

you gave an answer in Parliament which said no such land was to be used for car parking?

Mr. Court: If you had given that explanation when subsequent questions were asked, a lot of misunderstanding would have been removed in regard to the matter. Three and a half acres of city land is not a small area.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would not have satisfied the member for Cottesloe. I am not arguing as to whether 3½ acres is a large area or not. The point at issue is whether, in giving these replies, I was dishonest, politically or otherwise.

Mr. Court: If you had been more frank when giving answers to subsequent questions—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Cottesloe has not dealt with subsequent questions; he dealt with these questions, and he said that in giving my answers to these questions, I was politically dishonest.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Your subsequent actions make you politically dishonest.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is impossible to get the hon. member to accept any situation which is contrary to the views which he already has in his head.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: But you have just explained a situation in which you were wrong.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member said that these answers were not correct answers, and I say that they were.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: But they are not true now. They have not been borne out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Should one waste time with the hon. member, when the situation must be perfectly clear even to a child who has been only six months at school?

Hon. L. Thorn: He dined at Government House last night!

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do not be jealous!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Even though it does not concern me much whether or not the hon. member can be convinced, I hope members generally will be able to appreciate the position. If subsequent events cause an alteration or modification of one's plans, that does not in any way detract from an answer which might have been given previously, or prove it wrong. If at the time I gave those answers, I had had plans for doing something else, or even an idea of doing something else, the hon. member's criticism would be justified, but at the time when those answers were given, it was not the intention of the department nor my intention to use one square yard of that land for parking purposes, and so there is no

question of dishonesty, political or otherwise, in connection with that matter. If the hon. member wants now to change his ground and refer to subsequent answers, he is still no better off.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: But I have not changed my ground.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member is still no better off, because the subsequent answers were also perfectly factual. The question of parking certainly must be discussed in connection with this Bill but it will be in no way affected by the passage or otherwise of the measure, because the plan for providing certain parking space to meet the request of the Perth City Council, will still have to be determined. The additional reclamation work being undertaken is being done because the Government feels that is the correct course to follow, but it does not in any way indicate that the Government's views in connection with this matter were previously wrong or that any dishonesty was involved in giving information in reply to questions.

MR. CROMMELIN (Claremont) [4.20]: I support the Bill in principle although I do not like the tow away clause. Many people have already said that the fact that there are parking meters in Melbourne and Sydney is no reason for us to have them here, and they point out that licence fees are going up and that parking meters would be a still further imposition on the motorist. To some extent, I agree with that contention but I also feel that it is better for a lot of people to get a little bit of parking accommodation than for a great many people to get no parking space at all.

It is also fairly evident that most of our traffic jams occur in our three or four main streets and not in the side streets to the same degree. I think that parking for longer periods occurs more often in the smaller streets owing to the fact that the traffic officers concentrate more in the main streets where people are not prepared to take the chance of staying as long as they will in the side streets. That applies also in Melbourne where a count of the vehicles in the main streets was taken towards the end of 1954 and again at the end of 1955.

The count had reference to cars parked along the kerb.

In 1954 there were 23,199 cars parked and in 1955 there were 23,913, an increase of 714 cars or 3 per cent. In the so-called little streets in 1954, there were 6,653 cars parked and in 1955 9,468, or an increase of 2,815 cars, or 29 per cent., which proved that in most cases people take the risk of parking longer in the side streets. The installation of the parking meters in those side streets had a tremendous effect on the turnover to the extent that it was 26 per cent. more in the small streets than in the main streets.

I hope that if this power is given to the Perth City Council, it will, under the Minister's administration, take a reasonable attitude towards this subject. I do not think it is fair that motorists should be able to feed the meters and I think the time should be limited to what is set down originally, as otherwise a man with a pocketful of sixpenny pieces could leave his car in the same place all day and that would defeat the object of the legislation.

The Minister for Transport: At the expiration of one period, the vehicle is required to move on.

Mr. CROMMELIN: I presume that the meters will cease operating at a certain time in the evening—possibly 7 p.m.—as they do in the Eastern States, except for special parking places. Another point which might be of concern to a number of people is the coloured signs and markings on roadways. There is a great number of people who are colour-blind. I, for one, am totally colour-blind and should I park where I think the marking is red, whereas it is really green, I might be fined. I do not think that is fair, and I hope the Minister will give attention to that question. In my opinion, the time will come when it will be utterly impossible for heavy vehicles to deliver goods in the city in day-time. Such deliveries are totally prohibited in Melbourne and delivery by heavy vehicles is not allowed between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Although at the outset that system caused consternation among the big stores and possibly also the transport people, it is now working reasonably well.

Although the Minister says the tow away provision has had a dramatic effect, I do not think it is quite fair, because there is a provision in motor-vehicle insurance policies which says that if a car is damaged while being towed, the insurance company has the right to claim against the tow for any damage. The measure would prevent the insurance companies from making that claim and possibly, as a result of that, the insurance companies will take that clause out of their policies. For that reason I think the provision is too severe.

The ideal way, if we could adopt it, to ease our traffic problems, would be to stagger the hours for the big stores. I appreciate that that is not a Government matter, but if the retail traders would agree that the employees of some of them should start an hour or an hour and a half earlier—as I am sure they would be happy to do in summer-time—and knock off that much earlier, I am convinced that that would do a tremendous amount towards overcoming the difficulty in future.

I suppose that when the large parking areas are provided and vested in the Perth City Council, some attempt will be made

by the Minister to provide services, perhaps from Mount's Bay-rd. across to the Wellington-st. area or even right around the city, as the distance would be too far for car-owners to walk after having parked their vehicles. I would like to see a provision that the Perth City Council should provide taxi stands on the new parking lots as I think many people would be glad to pay a taxi fare from the parking station to their offices, and particularly if there was provision to guard against racketeering and ensure that the taxi should take four people on the trip for the same price as it would charge for one.

It is reasonable to assume that in the near future we will run out of land on which to provide the number of parking areas which will be required. I do not favour multi-storey buildings for parking, because with from 600 to 800 cars parked in such a structure there would be even bigger traffic jams than one finds in the streets when all those vehicles attempted to leave at 5 p.m.

There are some squares in the near metropolitan area, such as Hyde Park and Wellington Square which, to my mind, would be ideal for underground parking. In these days it may seem fantastic to talk about underground parking, but with the progress we are making and in view of the increasing number of vehicle registrations every year, it would be much better to provide for underground parking in the places I have mentioned and still preserve the parks above for the children, than to have multiple-storied buildings for parking which would, in any event, be far from attractive.

It behoves the Minister, if possible in the near future, to make some attempt to lessen the parking space allotted to buses. I do not know whether the buses that now park on the east side of the Christian Brothers' College are allowed to park there all day free of charge and are to continue parking there, or whether they are to be pushed further out and leave that place available for meter stalls. It would be a help if a little parking space could be set aside to enable taxis to pick up passengers. Even if only in a modified form, I think some taxis could be permitted to cruise. I realise that taxis cruising at a slow speed constitute a traffic hazard, but if they were allowed to cruise at a reasonable speed and to stop long enough to pick up their passengers, I consider that such a proposal would be reasonable.

The other day, as the Minister pointed out, people were standing in the rain in long queues waiting to catch buses. It is only logical that if a person could hail a taxi without walking a few hundred yards to the nearest taxi stand, it would be a great convenience. With the exception of the tow away clause and in the hope that

the Minister may accept some of my suggestions in regard to stands on the larger parking lots, I support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Mr. O'Brien, debate adjourned.

### MOTION—RAILWAYS.

#### *Discontinuance of Certain Lines.*

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by the Minister for Transport:—

That in the opinion of this House, having regard particularly to the considerations referred to in Appendix "A" to this motion, the services provided by the railways listed in Appendix "B" to this motion should, notwithstanding certain other considerations, be discontinued and that such railways should cease to be operated.

#### Appendix "A."

(1) The annual cash deficits of the State railways.

(2) The condition of State railways generally and particularly of the railways listed in Appendix "B."

(3) The need for improvements in the economical operation of the State railways, and for the concentration of railway resources to permit of all-round improvements in the cost of operating the railways.

(4) The facts that the railways listed in Appendix "B" are unprofitable and that their rehabilitation and operation would involve heavy expenditure when compared with existing and anticipated future traffic on those railways.

(5) The rising costs of operating railways.

(6) The need to avoid, to every possible extent, any necessity to increase rail freights on the remaining railways, and to provide for the adequate rehabilitation and operation of the remaining railways.

(7) The recovery of materials for use on other railways.

(8) The availability and use of other means of transport.

(9) The most satisfactory and economical employment of staff.

#### Appendix "B."

##### Railways.

	Length of Railways. Miles.
Meekatharra to Wiluna .....	111
Cue to Big Bell .....	19
Malcolm to Laverton .....	64
Geraldton to Ajana .....	67
Wokarina to Yuna .....	38
Burakin to Bonnie Rock .....	76
Mukinbudin to Lake Brown .....	8
Lake Brown to Bullfinch .....	50

Bullfinch to Southern Cross .....	22
Boddington to Narrogin .....	51
Busselton to Margaret River .....	38
Margaret River to Flinders Bay .....	29
Elleker to Nornalup .....	61
Brookton to Corrigin .....	56
Lake Grace to Hyden .....	58
Katanning to Pingrup .....	59
Gnowangerup to Ongerup .....	35

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**MR. O'BRIEN** (Murchison) [4.35]: This motion has created a great deal of interest among, and much concern to, the people of Wiluna, Laverton and Big Bell, especially the business people. The Minister for Transport, representing the Minister for Railways, gave a thorough explanation of the whole position. He submitted reasons why certain railway lines should be discontinued. I have lived practically all my life on the Murchison goldfields and it can be expected of me that I know all the facts of the case in the district concerned.

At present we have a railway giving a service from Meekatharra to Wiluna. The line travels through very good mining and pastoral country. I have travelled that route both by car and on horseback. This country has a definite future which is not ours to see. I have seen mining towns rise and fall many times. One centre at present that is proving to be of great interest to the whole of the State, is Mt. Magnet. Some time ago that centre declined, but in recent years it has again made a substantial revival.

Wiluna is by no means finished; far from it. Around Paroo Siding there is a belt of heavy country which, if irrigated, would prove to be excellent pastoral country. There is a strip of land there which is 30 miles long and 10 miles wide each side of Wiluna which, if irrigated, would have an excellent future. Wiluna lies above an artesian basin and I know that the water in some of the wells is plentiful and of good quality. The potentialities of Wiluna have already been proved. As I have said, there is plenty of water available and the country will carry cattle and sheep.

Many minerals are also to be found there. At the present time, about 30 miles north of Wiluna a company is producing copper ore which has a very high percentage of copper. That company employs 30 men and it intends to double its output in the near future. There are other places to the east and to the south-east, such as Kathleen Valley, which also hold out great possibilities for the production of copper.

Further south lies Mt. Sir Samuel where a State battery is operating and where there are several prospectors in the field. There are many other centres right through to Sandstone and Agnew. At



Lawlers many small mines are still in production which could be increased if worked on up-to-date methods. On from there are Leonora, Murrin Murrin and then Morgans and Laverton. In the past all of these towns have been large gold producers and they could be again. There is the Morgan mine, for example, which is identical with the famous Hill 50 goldmine at Boogardie,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles west of Mt. Magnet. That mine has produced 13,839 fine ounces of gold from 4,591 tons of ore. That is over three ounces to the ton. The late Mr. J. Fox, who was a well-known mining promoter, lived in this area prior to his death and he put the Morgan goldmine on a payable basis in the same way as the Hill 50 goldmine, of which he was a director.

The previous Minister for Railways has said, "Cut the dead wood." That means cutting off these railway line branches. Without hesitation, I say that if we give nourishment to the tree, the branches will bear fruit aplenty. In the last few weeks I have led several deputations to the Minister for Railways and the Minister representing the Minister for Railways. At the moment, I am waiting for the Minister for Railways to return to his office so that I can introduce another deputation to him. In my opinion, to discontinue the railway line between Meekatharra and Wiluna, and between Malcolm and Laverton would be to jeopardise the chances of the prospectors who are operating in that area at present.

Gold is what we want today and plenty of it. Gold is the answer to our economic problem. In the 1890's, Western Australia took its first step forward as the result of the discovery of gold. Subsequently gold stood this State in good stead, especially in the early 1930's, following upon the last depression. Gold is the yardstick of value throughout the world. Although the benefits it has granted to this State have been most considerable, the benefits it has conferred on the country as a whole are even greater. It is Australia's greatest dollar earner. It is Australia's direct means of restoring overseas credits.

The goldmining industry indirectly supports more than 50,000 Western Australians and spends over £5,000,000 on stores and equipment. It pays wages exceeding £5,000,000 per annum. Western Australia owes much to the goldmining industry. So let us stop and think. Let us think of the pioneers of yesteryear and of the goldmines of today and tomorrow.

The Minister for Transport: This motion is to close certain railway lines, not the goldmines.

Mr. O'BRIEN: In closing the railway lines, the Minister will close the goldmines as well. Taking the technically trained men, the miners, the mineralogists, the geologists and the mechanical engineers—from one who knows—I would say that the industry has a fascinating, adventurous and remunerative career for any young

man. That is the reason why I appeal to the Government today not to discontinue the lines.

I am not blaming the Government for all the disabilities to be found associated with the railways, but we must remember that gold is required, and that is what I have at heart. It will get Australia out of her difficult financial position and repay the millions that we owe to Great Britain, the U.S.A. and overseas. Surely we should take into consideration what those gold-mining towns have produced in the past and what they can produce in the future if they are not strangled or cut off from the large cities and ports. I say that the railway is the lifeline of the goldmining industry. We have heard it barked around that Wiluna is dead, but Wiluna produced 1,468,162 oz. of gold.

Hon. L. Thorn: It is producing good lucerne now.

Mr. O'BRIEN: It definitely is. Wiluna produced a total of 1,873,325 fine oz. What about the position of Lancefield? In 1955, only two years ago, the State battery there crushed 40,962 tons of ore and that kept the battery going. Without the railway line to Laverton, that mine would close within a week. That is why I am making this appeal for the continuance of that line. The Lancefield produced thousands of fine ounces of gold, in exact figures 4,687 oz., and also 220 oz. of silver.

Then there is the production in the district between Malcolm, Murrin Murrin, Morgan and Laverton. It is not a question of the line going from one town to the other. It serves the district on either side of the line. We should make the best use of the land on each side, and pastoral lands are included, by closer settlement, if possible. Malcolm produced over 53,000 oz.; Murrin Murrin, which is on the line to Laverton, produced 109,340 oz.; and Morgan, from 71,000 tons of ore produced 52,328 oz. which is practically an oz. to the ton.

Mr. Oldfield: What are they producing today besides kangaroos and emus?

Mr. O'BRIEN: I wish to refer to the discontinuance of the Sandstone line and to the debate contained in 1948 Hansard. In moving the second reading of the Bill relating to the closing of that line, the Minister for Railways (Hon. H. S. Seward) said—

This Bill is introduced for the purpose of authorising the closing and pulling up of the Mt. Magnet-Black Range railway. Before proceeding with the Bill, I desire to express regret that it has been brought down at such a late stage of the session. I was desirous of obviating the need for introducing it, if that were possible, but in order to give members a warning that it might be introduced, notice of it was given some days ago. The sole reason for its being brought down is the inability of

the Railway Department to obtain rails with which to carry on urgently required maintenance work.

The department was short of rails and I do not dispute that, but I can say that I watched where the rails that were taken up went to. I know that a lot of them were stacked at the Mt. Magnet railway yard and were used for cattle ramps by the pastoralists in the surrounding district. Some Governments will give any excuse at all to close down a railway line which may mean so much to the State. He went on to say—

Orders have been placed in the Eastern States but it is impossible to obtain the rails required. It reveals an alarming state of affairs in Australia when we realise that urgently-needed steel rails are obtainable in such very limited quantities, and yet only last week we received a circular from the United States offering thousands of tons of rails. Unfortunately they would not be usable here. But that shows that rails are being manufactured elsewhere in required quantities, whereas we are not able to keep pace with requirements. All other sources of supply having failed, the only alternative left to the department was to look to some of the lesser used or unpayable lines with the object of taking them up and using the rails for maintenance work.

We know the result. I have asked questions in this House concerning the Sandstone railway line and how much it cost to dismantle it.

Mr. Oldfield: This motion does not say that the lines are to be dismantled.

The Minister for Transport: Yet.

Mr. O'BRIEN: The Sandstone-Black Range line was built way back in the 1900's. I want members to bear that in mind. I have travelled on the Meekatharra-Wiluna line. I was very much concerned about it in 1953 and I took a special trip on that line with the district engineer and travelled in his coach on the back of the train to find out if it was in a good state of repair. It was in a very fair condition. That line was opened in 1932, and the distance is 117 miles. The Act authorising its construction was passed in 1927. The capital cost was over £381,000. The Laverton line was opened in 1905 and consists of 64 miles. The Act was passed in 1902 and the capital cost to construct was £64,073.

Recently I asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways the following question:—

How much Collie coal was used by the Western Australian Government Railways for the following years:—1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956 to 30th June?

The Minister for Transport, who represents the Minister for Railways, gave the following reply:—

Collie coal used for all purposes was—

Year ended the 30th June	tons
1951 ....	367,935
1952 ....	358,049
1953 ....	281,996 (metal trades strike)
1954 ....	381,875
1955 ....	353,262
1956 ....	303,711

I also asked him the following:—

(1) How many steam engines are out of commission due to the introduction of diesels?

(2) What was the cost of the diesels purchased?

(3) What is the estimated value of the steam engines now idle?

(4) What is the class of each engine?

The replies were—

(1) The advent of dieselisation has enabled 57 steam locomotives to be released. Of these, 40 have since been written off and 14 are waiting to be written off. Three serviceable oil-burning locomotives remain.

(2) "X" class—£72,400 approximately. Final cost not yet determined.

"XA" class—£74,400 approximately. Final cost not yet determined.

"Y" class—£33,907.

"Z" class—£16,023.

(3) The three serviceable locomotives are valued at approximately £10,400 each.

(4) The locomotives referred to in No. (2) above are:—

Class.	Number.
"ASG" ....	11
"B" ....	3
"CS" ....	6
"DS" ....	1
"ES" ....	6
"G" ....	1
"L" ....	11
"O" ....	9
"N" ....	6
"U" ....	3
Total ....	57

Of the total the "U" class are 10 years old, the "ASG" about the same, while the rest range between 40 and 58 years of age.

The reason why I asked those questions was, even to take the dimmest view of the days ahead, the condition of the line could be overcome to some extent by using lighter engines over it rather than heavy ones. I have worked on the railways and

the tramways. I worked in them in the days when we were obliged to go into the gravel pits and shovel gravel by hand. I have worked on ballast trains and ploughed the gravel onto sections of the line. I have done the work of resleepering and bedding sleepers. I know what I am speaking about when I say that the cost can be reduced by at least one-tenth with up-to-date methods, with front-end loaders instead of using the hand method of shovelling. Present-day costs can be drastically reduced. One does not need to have too many brains to nut that out.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Tell them about the manganese railway.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I know that the Minister is in the position to have this legislation passed, at least through this Chamber; but I ask him to give careful consideration to this matter. I feel sure he is capable of handling the situation with which he is confronted. I refer to the Minister representing the Minister for Railways. He is the responsible man in this Chamber. I ask that before any final decision is reached to discontinue this line, consideration be given to providing a sealed road.

Of course, I know that opinions about sealed roads differ greatly. I have travelled over this road in the summer when there has been no rain. But if there is a fall of a couple of inches—and sometimes there is as much as five or six inches in a few days—the position is hopeless, and remains so for some considerable time. I consider that a sealed road is the only one that could be considered an all-weather road. Back in 1948 the people in the Sandstone-Black Range area were told that they would be given an all-weather road. I have travelled along that road in a light car, and I say that it is not an all-weather road.

Mr. Bovell: A lot of work will have to be done on the Laverton road to make it an all-weather road.

Mr. O'BRIEN: It is a dangerous road. I have travelled through the Murchison with the present Minister for Transport.

Mr. Bovell: That would be nice.

Mr. O'BRIEN: We were caught in a shower of rain, and he will confirm my statement that twice we slipped of the road.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Who was driving?

Mr. O'BRIEN: The Minister. I would have been more cautious, knowing the road.

Mr. Rodoreda: Did you get back again?

Mr. O'BRIEN: Over the last few weeks we have been confronted with a difficulty concerning water. Originally water was provided for the steam trains. Now, with

the advent of dieselisation, the department wants to pull down the overhead water tanks.

Mr. Sewell: They are doing so.

Mr. O'BRIEN: Those tanks are necessary for use by the townspeople. But the department was going ahead with the pulling them down till I kicked up a fuss. The people could be allowed to go short of water.

Mr. I. W. Manning: They will leave the railway line there if you kick up a fuss.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I sincerely hope they will. Nobody wants to be responsible for this water. The railway is to go and nobody will accept responsibility for the water supply. But somebody will have to be responsible so long as I am the member for Murchison.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. O'BRIEN: We have heard a lot about cutting down costs in the railways. The department has a machine that costs £20,000 a year to hire.

Mr. Sewell: It is £22,000 per year.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I may be wrong. I apologise; £22,000. That is what it costs to hire that wonderful machine that is supposed to do away with labour. But I notice that there has been no decrease in the number employed.

Mr. Court: That is not the fault of the machine.

Mr. O'BRIEN: That is one way in which costs could be reduced. We should continue to have inquiries made into Railway Department affairs until costs are reduced. Figures show that the number of clerks employed by the Secretary of Railways was 53. That has been reduced to 49. The industrial staff of 12 has grown to 14. The advertising staff, etc., was 34, and is now 33; and in the accounts branch, there are 261 as against 258.

The Minister for Transport: That appears to be information in answer to questions by members of Parliament.

Mr. O'BRIEN: In transportation and traffic the number is 3,332, as against 3,241. On road services 133 are employed, compared with 139 originally.

Mr. Ackland: How many are employed at the Midland Junction Workshops?

Mr. O'BRIEN: Some other figures are as follows:—traffic motive power, 3,040; now, 3,078. Mechanical, 2,898; now 2,977. Civil Engineer's Department, 3,189; now, 3,224. The grand total is now 13,974 as against 13,656, or an increase of 293.

Hon. L. Thorn: How many are employed in the workshops?

Mr. O'BRIEN: I have not got those figures. I am dealing with the railways.

Hon. L. Thorn: That is part of the railways.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I have here an A.B.C. news statement of the 1st November, 1956. It is as follows:—

There was a slight improvement in Western Australian Government finances in October, and Treasury figures released today by the Premier, Mr. Hawke, show a continued improvement in railway finances.

The overall deficit for October was £270,000, compared with £770,000 in October last year.

Railway finances improved by more than £600,000 on the October figures last year.

The progressive State deficit this year now exceeds £2,000,000—about £230,000 less than the accumulated deficit for the same period last year.

Mr. I. W. Manning: That is pretty good going.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Excellent.

Mr. O'BRIEN: That's that!

Mr. Ackland: You have put up a good case.

Mr. O'BRIEN: Coming back to the pulling up of the Sandstone railway line by a previous Government, I blame all previous Governments—whether Liberal, Labour or any other kind—for what occurred.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You are fair; that is one thing.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I want to be fair. I know that there is a big problem involved, but it was not created by the Murchison people. I stand for the Murchison people, and against the closure of these railways. I have here some questions that I asked the Minister for Railways with regard to the Sandstone-Mt. Magnet line. They are as follows:—

(1) What was the actual cost of the pulling up of the Sandstone-Mt. Magnet railway line?

(2) How much money was paid to the contractors who pulled up the line and transported the material to Mt. Magnet?

(3) How many tons of sleepers were suitable for further use, or for any other purpose?

The answers to those questions were as follows:—

(1) £15,068.

(2) £13,377.

(3) 1,200 tons.

All the sleepers are practically out there. Half of them I would say have been tipped over and left there because that line was put down at ground level. When a sleeper is put in with cement on each side it is reinforced and will last indefinitely. It is only a matter of strengthening the joint sleeper and one intermediate sleeper when

a light engine is being run like the one which travelled over the line once a fortnight.

However, despite the low cost to the State and the potentialities that existed in that area, it was decided to pull up the railway. The present commissioners have to blame something; and the heads of departments blame the blokes under them, and they blame the ones under them, and so on; and in the end, something has to be done and any excuse is offered. My next questions were—

(4) How many tons of rails were considered to be in good condition and fit for further use by the department?

(5) How much is paid by way of subsidy to the road hauliers now on the same route?

(6) How much have the road hauliers received from the State Government since the closure of the line?

The following are the answers:—

(4) 6,200 tons.

(5) In 1956, £3,927 17s. 6d. was paid as subsidy on this route.

(6) £19,433 17s. 6d.

I know where the rails referred to in question No. (4) have been used; I have already told the House. The amount of £19,433 referred to in No. (6) has been paid to the road hauliers by way of subsidy, but we have received no gold. So we are killing the goose that laid the golden eggs. If the discontinuance of these further lines is agreed to and the subsidy is reducible by one-seventh each year, in seven years there will be no subsidy at all.

Mr. Bovell: And no line from Kalgoorlie to Leonora.

Mr. O'BRIEN: There will be no line, no subsidy—and no people outback. Because the people there are determined not to remain; and rightly so. Why should they stay there and suffer all sorts of adversities for the city slickers down here? For that is all they are. Let the railways go! We may get extra sewerage or an extra house or two; but so long as we get those things in the metropolitan area, that is all we care about. That seems to be the spirit. That is where Western Australia is going to fail. I may not be in Parliament in three or four years' time, but one thing I will say is that I represent people who are honest toilers and who deserve a fair go.

Members representing people in the areas where it is suggested the lines will be discontinued will, no doubt, know the opinions of their electors. I say the discontinuance of the lines would be a retrograde step for any Government to take. It would, as far as the Murchison is concerned, be cutting the lifeline of those who live there. In that district millions of ounces of gold can be produced; the fields have never been touched, and with

up-to-date methods, gold could be produced in sufficient quantities to balance our budget within a very short time.

Only recently I heard a whisper from the Mines Department that it is the intention to bore a mine that was a very rich producer in the early days—the Aroya at Sandstone, but Sandstone is now without a railway despite the fact that it has two good natural dams that are nearly always full of water, and which could be used by the railways.

The places that have never had a railway will not miss having one, but those places never advance as they should. Recently I led a deputation to the Minister for Mines concerning the Lancefield mine at Laverton. The directors of the mine told the Minister that if the railway was discontinued then, overnight, they could say, "Goodbye Laverton!" We must produce gold if we wish to do the right thing.

Hon. L. Thorn: According to you it is there, and all we have to do is cart it away.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I have studied the road problem. The Minister for Works may have the answer sealed away somewhere.

The Minister for Works: There is no road problem.

Mr. O'BRIEN: There are plenty of road problems up my way. The roads will cost a terrible lot of money. From where are we to get that money? I have told Parliament where we can get it, and there is not such a big risk involved because these goldmines have been proved over the years.

Of course, the Minister has stated that no men will lose their jobs. That will be so for a certain period because they can be employed in strengthening the other sections of line, but then those sections will be overloaded with employees. I have worked on railway lines, and I know what is expected with respect to maintenance work.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member's time has expired.

On motion by Mr. Crommelin, time extended.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I have read carefully the inter-departmental committee's report, and I have checked it because I have had experience not only on the railways but on the tramways.

Mr. Bovell: You realise that as soon as the Laverton-Malcolm line goes, the Kalgoorlie-Leonora line will go.

Mr. O'BRIEN: The first recommendation is to cut off so many railway lines. The first to go will be the Meekatharra-Wiluna line and the Malcolm-Laverton line. In the second bite, the Government, if it takes notice of the inter-departmental committee, will discontinue the Mullewa-Meekatharra line and so isolate that area. The people in these parts are living under a fear. The Government should explain

to them whether it is the intention to carry out the inter-departmental committee's report in its entirety. The committee made this recommendation—

That the degree of protection by the railways should remain the function of the Transport Board as part of its duty of co-ordination of services.

From Meekatharra we have many trucks going north. What has been stated by other speakers is quite true. These trucks encounter difficult condition at times. I have met a number that have been broken down and bogged on various roads. I say that this is not a time to build railway lines, but it is necessary to maintain those that we already have; and this applies to the Meekatharra line.

I must give credit where it is due, and I say that today we have trucks that are capable of carrying sheep and cattle, in huge numbers, to the rail-head. Good cattle and sheep men will, however, tell us that although, through drought conditions, they are obliged to travel their stock by these vehicles, the stock does not arrive at the market in the same condition as if it had been droved steadily along by the drover of yesteryear.

For a few minutes I shall deal with the 1947 Royal Commission that inquired into the question of railways. The commission had this to say—

For the purpose of focusing attention on certain features of the construction of railways in Western Australia, we consider it necessary to give a brief historical review of railway development in this State.

Being in occupation of a country of wide open spaces and long distances, the people of the Colony realised during the nineteenth century that transport was one of their major problems. The most efficient and reliable means in those days was the railway and wherever any industry needed an outlet, or where development took place, a railway was constructed.

#### First Railway Built by Private Enterprise.

It is interesting to record that private enterprise took the initiative when, in 1870, the Rockingham Jarrah Timber Company approached the Government to obtain a concession to build a line from the Canning to Rockingham to develop timber production. The line was constructed in the following year, two of the conditions being, (a) that the gauge was to be 3 ft. 6 in., and (b) that the line was to be open to the public. In 1871 a line, 12 miles long, was built by the Western Australian Timber Company to connect their jetty at the Vasse with the timber forests.

With the population of Western Australia at over 25,000 and the exports valued at over £200,000 per annum, the Government decided in 1872 to enter the field of railway construction for the purpose of developing

the Colony. At that time the only railways were the two timber lines referred to above.

#### Discovery of Base Metals.

Copper and lead had been discovered in the Champion Bay district in 1848, and from 1850 onward, these base metals had been mined and exported. In 1872 there were 10 mines operating between Geraldton and Northampton and it was decided to construct a railway between these two towns. The construction of the line, 33 miles long, was authorised in 1873, but it was not until 1879 that it was opened for traffic.

It is interesting to record that in 1876, W. E. Victor, the Superintendent of Engineering, reported that—

The object in the construction of this line is the reduction in carriage fares on lead and copper ore, from the present rate of about 1s. per ton per mile to something less than 6d.

The idea of building these lines was to help the mining industry. Had it not been for the 1914 war, the Great Fingal mine would perhaps be working today. The war, through no fault of ours, is to blame for the present disability of the railways, because, as a result of a shortage of labour, the lines were not serviced or maintained as they should have been.

I am not sure whether this State has received any consideration from the Commonwealth Government, but it should have because, as I have said, since the 1914 war, the railways have declined. Since then we have had another war. Both these wars, which were big ones, have been responsible for the State having a huge debt, and they have affected our railway system, as well.

As regards development of agricultural areas, the report states—

While the construction of the northern railway was still under way, it became apparent that steps would have to be taken to improve the means of transport in the agricultural area . . .

And rightly so. The farming areas should receive some consideration. We have been dependent to a large degree on these areas and even today we are on the sheep's back. We have been on the farmer's back—wheat farmers and other—and the time is just about ripe for us to turn to gold because during the last depression we were obliged to turn to that commodity.

In the not too distant future we in this country—that is the whole of Australia and not only this State—will be obliged to turn to gold to get us out of our difficulties, and we are in a bad way at present. The report goes on—

With the development of the Murchison Goldfields, the Narngulu-Mullewa line was extended to Cue in

1898, further extended to Nannine in June, 1903, and eventually to Meekatharra in August, 1910.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Did you say that it went to Cue in 1898?

Mr. O'BRIEN: Yes.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I think you have the figures a little wrong.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I know that it was at Meekatharra in 1910. The report goes on—

The following further railway development took place in this Goldfields area, viz.:—

Mt. Magnet-Sandstone, 93 miles, opened in 1910.

Meekatharra-Paroo, 67 miles, opened in 1931.

The Mt. Magnet-Sandstone line was pulled up in 1948, 38 years after it was put there, and the people in that area are still crying and grizzling, and they have every right to grizzle because that line should never have been shifted.

Hon. L. Thorn: What line was that?

Mr. O'BRIEN: The Mt. Magnet-Sandstone line. The report goes on—

Paroo-Wiluna, 44 miles, opened in 1932.

Cue-Big Bell, 19 miles, opened in 1938.

That is a comparatively new railway line. As regards Big Bell, it is possible that a £30,000 option will be taken up any tick of the clock on a mine which is held by three aged prospectors in that district. Mark my words, that mine is likely to be a bigger project than the original Bill Bell mine. If, with the permission of the prospectors, that mine can be drilled, it will prove to be a very good project.

One of the prospectors—I would say the most capable one and the one with the most experience—will not take anything less than £150,000 for it and the future will prove its worth. I have not the time to read any more from the report of the Royal Commission but I appeal to the Minister and the Government, on behalf of the people I represent—the people of the Murchison—to give further consideration to the discontinuance of the Meekatharra-Wiluna, the Malcolm-Laverton and the Cue-Big Bell railway lines, because I feel sure that those places will come again like Mt. Magnet has already done. If we can continue those lines for a few more years so that those areas can be properly tested, I am sure that the districts will come into their own again because I know that they are gold and mineral-bearing areas.

MR. HALL (Albany) [5.35]: There is no doubt that the Government has a thankless task to perform in the closure of railway lines but I implore it to look carefully at certain lines before closing

them. If the tree has to be pruned, let us make sure that its limbs are not fertile and perhaps, at a small cost, could be put into a working condition.

For example, would it not be possible in the more remote areas to introduce concrete sleepers which could be moulded from the raw materials on the spot, similar to the block type with a stringer of steel running through it, as is used in France today? That would avoid the heavy costs of hauling sleepers to those remote areas and would also be a step in the right direction where light diesel-class engines could be used on these light lines. This would lessen the need for the heavy maintenance costs incurred on heavy steam trains.

Will it be necessary, with a reduction of the proposed lines, to carry the already top-heavy administration? I fail to see that these people will work any harder than at present and when we look at the fact that one commissioner previously carried the administration of the tramways, the ferries and the railways, plus the Electricity Commission, I feel sure that something more could be done. I cannot see how three commissioners will work any harder with a reduction in lines.

Mr. Ackland: They are not working as well as one was.

Mr. HALL: With careful checking, I think we could eliminate many faults. If the management is faulty, it will reflect from the top to the bottom of the service. Another point we should look closely into is the reduction of grades. Grades force up hauling charges and must be carefully considered if we are to reduce costs.

Recently I asked a question as to the introduction of a buffet servery for country passenger trains, by taking one sleeper compartment off the corridor trains. The reply was to the effect that from past experience on the Bunbury line it was not considered economical. What they did not tell me was that it failed through lack of supervision and control. I believe that by that suggestion we could have reduced the haulage and increased the efficiency of the service as well as reduced the cost of the refreshment rooms. But it was totally ignored.

I would now like to touch on the question of the Ongerup-Gnowangerup line. I might say that for many years my father was the inspector on this line and he assisted in its construction. Its history in that period proves that it was almost a paying concern at that stage, and that is many years ago. The farmers of that area realise that something very drastic has to be done but feel that the proposed step is much too drastic. It will be a heavy blow to the cereal production in the district and if drastic action is to be taken, it should be evenly distributed over the whole State and not applied to one area that is definitely producing.

In this district two-thirds of the grain produced is grown in the area where it is proposed to close the lines, and, in addition, there is a good deal of wool production, stock, etc. The present railway terminus is at Ongerup, 30 miles west of Jerramongup, which is one of the largest war service land settlement areas in the Commonwealth. The proposed terminus at Gnowangerup would put the rail-head 65 miles away. This would affect the new settlers particularly because they have not the same finance as the older settlers to meet extra costs. All this area, old and new, sends its produce to Albany and its future development goes hand in hand with the port of Albany.

Last season, which was well below average, 900,000 bushels of grain were delivered to C.B.H. from the Borden-Ongerup area plus a large amount of bagged grain sent direct to Perth. Other points that arise in connection with this matter are concerned with two questions—

- (1) The importance and necessity of the railway to serve all that area east of Gnowangerup to Jerramongup and 20 miles north and south of the line.
- (2) The need of organised road transport for the rest. This would almost surely go to Albany.

They are gradually moving out into the new area which is an asset to this State.

It also appears that the question of closing this section may really have arisen from the very bad state of repair that the line has been allowed to get into and the added damage done by the floods. Perhaps the railway on this occasion should have some special flood relief. It is hard to realise that after all these years of having a railway, just when the district is booming and becoming very solid and production is rising fast, with a potential greater than ever, there is a danger of losing it. That is why I appeal to the Government to reconsider the question. Members opposite say that I opposed the motion moved last night; I am standing up here to defend a line in the interests of my electorate. The suggestion that all farmers' produce must be railed from Gnowangerup is surely unfair, and I fail to see how this traffic will not become congested at Gnowangerup. There is also the question of land values. For over 40 years farmers in the district have bought land and developed the area, and to a large extent the distance from a railway is all-important to valuations. Under this heading alone the district would lose many thousands of pounds, I believe, without being consulted at all respecting this matter.

Business interests in Ongerup and Borden are agreed that the thought of all district supplies having to be rehandled in Gnowangerup is a nightmare, plus the added costs. I agree with that contention.

Further facts in connection with the Gnowangerup railway are that the last two years have been well below the average. Last year was the flood year and the year before the drought year. Average figures would be the 1953-54 year and when we get back to normal figures we will see at least a 30 per cent. rise on the 1953-54 year in cereal production.

Damage done by the flood to the Ongerup-Gnowangerup section of line is probably proving quite a worry to the railways. It is also adding unfairly to the costs charged to the line. The costs of rehandling grain if road transport were brought in from Gnowangerup to Ongerup would be very serious to farmers; it would mean extra road transport, together with extra charges in and out of the bin at Gnowangerup. This will have a very serious effect on the general cereal production and the grain going to Albany.

The present production is rising and is likely to increase considerably. I recently made a tour of that area and the new development in that district is staggering. With that increased production, I fail to see how road transport could compete on an economic basis with the railways. If we have a closer look at the bin storage, we find the following total storage facilities at sidings east of Gnowangerup:—

	Bushels.
Formby .....	60,000
Kebaringup .....	69,700
Borden .....	446,320
Toompup .....	163,700
Ongerup .....	563,510

That, Mr. Speaker, will give you an idea of the storage facilities in that area. We are doing all we can to ensure that with the added production in that area, the grain will flow more easily.

On motion by Mr. Ackland, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. COURT** (Nedlands) [5.48]: This Bill deals with two main factors. Firstly, it gives the Transport Board the right to erect bus shelters in any area regardless of the provisions of any other Act. At the same time it gives the Transport Board the right to deduct the cost from amounts which are paid to the local authorities from the Transport Board's funds. With the second part I am in complete agreement because it follows on a matter which was debated during amendments moved to the Traffic Act. At that time I took the stand that it was most inappropriate for the Government to seek to divert from motor licence fees an amount which would be used for the payment of bus shelters.

As a result, the Minister for Transport then indicated that he would give consideration to an amendment to the State Transport Co-ordination Act with a view to making it legal to pay to the local authorities from the Transport Board's funds the cost of the shelter sheds. As I understand the measure, it only means that the Transport Board can, if it so desires, erect bus shelters. I am taking for granted—and I would like the Minister's assurance on this—that the Transport Board will not, willy nilly, go into different areas and erect bus shelters without prior consultation with the local authorities, because such intrusion by a Government department could cause a lot of friction.

I should imagine that in the ordinary course of administering a department such as the Transport Board, agreement would be reached with the local authority and other people with whom it deals, in 90 per cent. of the cases involved—it might possibly be as high as 95 per cent.—and it should only be in the odd case that it would need to use legislative power to achieve its objective. The Minister can comment on that when he is replying to the debate. As for power being given to the board to erect bus shelters regardless of the provisions of any other Act, I have some grave doubt in my mind as to whether this legislation, in its present form, should be passed.

However, I would not oppose the measure if the Minister could give us an explanation as to how it is proposed to administer the particular section involved. I suppose we could boil this issue down to an argument, or a difference of opinion, or a negotiation, whichever you like, Mr. Speaker, between the State Government, past and present, and the City of Perth. To bring it more pointedly to the minds of members we could refer to St. George's Terrace where we have a very large footage of bus space and where there are no bus shelters that I know of between Victoria Avenue and the Barracks.

The Minister for Transport: And unfortunately no verandahs on buildings.

**MR. COURT:** That is so. It is a unique street, though a very beautiful one. It has the disadvantage that whilst it has aesthetic beauty to which trees are added, there are no bus shelters. The argument over the years has not been an objection by the City of Perth to the erection of bus shelters, but the need for knowledge, as to what is to be the ultimate passenger transport plan for this metropolis.

If the ultimate decision is to take over all the private bus companies and run them as a transport trust under the one authority, then certain things are possible under the one authority which are not practicable, though not impossible, under the present set-up where there are private



companies and Government operators servicing the metropolitan area. If bus shelters were provided they could prove to be redundant and to be an embarrassment within a period of three, five or 10 years.

Furthermore, if an attempt were made to provide shelters for all waiting passengers in Perth today, which has over 3,000 ft. of bus stands between Victoria Avenue and the Barracks, there would be a practically continuous line of bus shelters in certain streets. I refer to Murray-st and St. George's Terrace. That would be ever-increasing, and there must be a limit. If we continue as we are going, we will have to completely ban private parking in certain streets even for limited periods of parking and make them into bus stops. This would be what I consider, is an illogical conclusion, but which would appear to be logical the way things are developing at the moment.

The City of Perth has some obligation in this matter, but we must have regard for its position as a capital city. As such it inherits a large proportion of Government offices which are rate free. Being a terminal point for many people, it is faced with the problem that those using the conveniences of the city, such as the bus stops, live beyond the city area. It is rather like a municipality with a popular beach in its district. It has to provide facilities for people from all over the State, greater in number than the people living in its own area. So it is with the City of Perth.

Against that it could be argued that the city gains the advantage of trade from the people pouring into its midst. For that reason it can afford to provide these facilities because in turn the ratable values would rise to such an extent that it would obtain greater revenue. I have never heard of the City of Perth refusing to provide shelters. What it says is that when transport co-ordination is agreed upon, it will play its part. It has an objection to erecting a mass of shelters all over the city which could eventually prove to be redundant and, in fact, unsightly.

Another point which seems to be worrying the Perth City Council according to its published statements is the fact that to be effective, a bus shelter must keep out the rain to a reasonable extent. If we are not prepared to put up a bus shelter with its back to the road on one side of St. George's Terrace, we would have to build a comparatively wide shelter which would have a very detrimental effect on the flow of pedestrian traffic on the footpath. There are designs which could be conceived, such as the glassed-in designs and those which provide shelter for only a portion of the people, to enable some of the passengers to be taken care of without congesting the Terrace itself.

I would not like to see an unbroken chain of bus shelters. I cannot conceive for one moment that the Minister envisages anything of that description. It would be

ugly and would not achieve the objective desired. The number of people who could get into the sheds would be comparatively small. The main problem arises during wet weather when people have to wait in the driving rain for the arrival of buses. I do not think the problem is so acute in the summer. While the heat is unbearable to some people, the main embarrassment is during the driving rain.

The City of Perth has to its credit the fact that it has expended approximately three times as much money on improvements to passenger bus routes as it receives from this fund. That is not hard to understand because there are some 50.6 miles of road in the city area which are, in fact, bus routes. Members will realise that bus routes have to be brought up to a certain standard of development. I understand the original cost of these routes was about £800,000.

Since then the council has had to spend money on the strengthening and widening of those particular routes. Added to that is another factor. When the trams ceased to run, they were replaced by other forms of transport such as trolley-buses and omnibuses which in turn made heavy demands on the roads. A certain minimum of width must be provided before buses can operate. The roads certainly have to be stronger than they would otherwise require to be. In addition to that, we have the problem of Government transport not making a contribution to the transport fund.

The Minister for Transport: It does make a contribution.

Mr. COURT: I am wrong in saying it made no contribution. It makes a small contribution, but not 6 per cent.

The Minister for Transport: Many private operators do not pay 6 per cent. either. Some are paying a nominal fee and are getting more back in the way of subsidy.

Mr. COURT: That is the case with some operators. The Government operators pay a nominal percentage but nothing like the contribution of 6 per cent. envisaged for private operators. It therefore follows that by the time the pool has been split up amongst the local authorities that have omnibuses operating in their areas, a full contribution is not made by the Government-operated transport for the use it gets of the roads.

When the present law was introduced in 1946—I refer in particular to Section 60 of the parent Act—the present Minister for Transport, who was then a private member of the House, successfully moved to amend Subsection (3) which was being inserted as a new subsection in Section 60. He moved the following amendment:—

That in line 4 of paragraph (a) of proposed new Subsection (3) after the word "roads" the words "(including

the erection of shelter sheds or other amenities along such routes)" be inserted.

I will not read the speeches that followed, but suffice to say the present Minister for Transport, as mover of that amendment, and all other speakers including the then Minister for Transport—I think it was Mr. Marshall—insisted that this amendment was permissive and not mandatory.

It was not intended to direct something to be done by local authorities or make it mandatory, whereas the legislation we are considering at the moment does give the Transport Board the right to do these things regardless of the provisions of any other Act, and it also gives it the indisputable right of taking the cost out of these funds. So we are changing from a permissive thing to something which is compulsory.

The Minister for Transport: We are not changing, because the permissive will still be there and the compulsory will be used only in bad cases where deemed necessary.

Mr. COURT: From a legislative point of view, we have to assume the greater will always include the lesser; we have to review legislation in the light that the local authority will not co-operate and, that being so, under this subsection the Transport Board will erect these shelters. In the average type of suburb, it would not be serious as most are well ahead and the little bit added to achieve the desired result will not matter. The big argument is between the Government and the Perth City Council. In supporting the second reading I would like an assurance from the Minister that under no circumstances will this power be used brutally—brutally is not the word—

The Minister for Transport: In a high-handed manner.

Mr. COURT: —In a high-handed manner and not used or enforced until after proper consultation and the matter has been brought before the Perth City Council. It would be foolish to take action under this measure to erect shelter sheds in the City of Perth until finality is reached with the policy for handling metropolitan passenger transport. The Government would be subject to criticism; the City Council would be subject to criticism and the public would accuse the Government of official bungling. With those qualifications, I support the second reading.

On motion by Mr. Lapham, debate adjourned.

#### BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Returned from the Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 6.3 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Tuesday, 11th December, 1956.

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

### QUESTION.

#### WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT.

##### *Cost of Farm Improvements.*

Hon. A. R. JONES asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Will he inform the House as to the total costs per acre as calculated by the Land Settlement Board for each of the areas—

Rocky Gully;  
Many Peaks;  
South Stirling

for improvements as set out hereunder:—

- Rabbit netting fencing;
- Sheep netting or ringlock fencing;
- Logging or rolling;
- Knocking down of heavy timber with the hi-ball method;
- Logging up and burning?

(2) What are the average costs of all clearing for—

- Rock Gully area;
- Many Peaks area;
- South Stirling?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Rocky Gully—

- Nil.
- Average cost all fencing £2 11s. 6d. per acre.
- Nil.
- £2 10s.
- £8.

Many Peaks—

- Nil.
- Average cost all fencing £2 15s 5d. per acre.