

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 28th November, 1979

The **SPEAKER** (Mr Thompson) took the Chair at 10.30 a.m., and read prayers.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Precedence

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [10.34 a.m.]: I thought I should rise, Mr Speaker, on a point of information in case you have not been advised. By arrangement with the Opposition we have brought private members' business forward to be given preference until the luncheon adjournment, which I understand will be at 12.45 p.m. We will then proceed with Government business.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 4)

Third Reading

MR O'NEIL (East Melville—Deputy Premier) [10.35 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

I am moving the third reading of this Bill as the Minister will be absent from the Chamber for a little while. During the debate, the member for Geraldton raised a query about the numbering of the clauses within the Bill. It is my understanding that where two clauses appear to have been allocated the same number, it is an automatic process to renumber them.

It has always been my understanding that one of the reasons it is not advisable to refer to clauses during the second reading stage of a Bill is that during the Committee stage the Bill could take on a different form. For instance, if a clause were added, the reference to specific clauses during the second reading stage no longer pertains and anyone desiring to relate the introductory speech to the legislation at a later stage could become quite confused.

I believe that explains the matter raised by the honourable member. When a new clause is added, subsequent clauses are renumbered automatically when the Bill becomes an Act.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

HEALTH: TRONADO MACHINE

Experimental Study: Motion

Debate resumed, from the 31st October, on the following motion by Mr Davies (Leader of the Opposition)—

That in the opinion of this House immediate action should be taken by the Government, notwithstanding any lack of co-operation by the National Health and Medical Research Council, to have an experimental study carried out on the effects of very high frequency radiation using the Tronado machine on solid malignant tumours in pursuance of recommendations contained in the Report of the Tronado Case Evaluation Committee established by the Government in 1975 and the Report of the Medical Advisory Committee of Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital 1978.

MR YOUNG (Scarborough—Minister for Health) [10.36 a.m.]: The speech of the Leader of the Opposition to this motion indicated to a great extent that the Opposition is moving away from what might have been considered in the past to be a reasonably political stance and perhaps could have been described as falling into the category of carping criticism to one which indicated, at least to me and to other members of the House, that the Opposition was moving into an area of more restrained concern about treatment with the Tronado machine.

Everyone in the House is appreciative of the fact that an issue as important as this ought to be treated with the utmost co-operation between the Government and the Opposition.

Mr Davies: Hear, hear!

MR YOUNG: It might also be fairly clear to the Opposition and to any one else who listened to my speech last year and to other statements I made before and since then that I was particularly interested also to see that the methods used by the Tronado machine were given a fair go.

The National Health and Medical Research Council received the report of the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital clinical staff. This was passed on at my request by the board of the hospital. That request was received only three months ago.

I know that the Leader of the Opposition pointed out—and many people would agree with him—that that appears to have taken an inordinately long time and to have produced no tangible result up to date. However, the report has been referred by the NHMRC to the

appropriate subcommittee—the Therapeutic Devices Subcommittee.

The NHMRC is not being unco-operative in the matter. As a body it accomplishes a tremendous amount of work, although its members do not sit on a permanent basis in that particular field of expertise. The council is composed of experts from many scientific areas, and from all parts of the medical profession. It does not meet as regularly as it would like to, and perhaps as we would like it to.

Therefore, the amount of time taken to evaluate the matter, to discuss it properly, and to obtain the opinion of other members of the council in respect of the work being done is obviously considerable. It does not seek out the sort of work that has been passed on to the council in this instance by the Government; in fact, it would be more accurate to say that the job has been thrust upon the council and probably is just another job to it. The NHMRC being the most eminent body in medical research and science in this country, this becomes just one of a legion of matters referred to it for its expert opinion.

Obviously the council cannot do this sort of work overnight, and I thought I would take a couple of moments to explain the situation to the House. Also, I would like to give the House and the Leader of the Opposition an undertaking that I will attempt to have the NHMRC expedite the matter as the Government believes it is as important as obviously the Leader of the Opposition believes it to be.

The motion before the House really cannot be supported in this or any other form by the Government for a couple of reasons which I will explain. Firstly, the motion virtually calls upon the House to agree to two particular lines of action. It finishes with the following words—

...in pursuance of recommendations contained in the Report of the Tronado Case Evaluation Committee established by the Government in 1975 and the Report of the Medical Advisory Committee of Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital 1978.

To support the motion would be in effect to support two different points of view. It asks the House to agree to support two different recommendations, because the Tronado Case Evaluation Committee recommended an experimental study which ethically and practically could be carried out only on animals with certain types of tumours, and the Medical Advisory Committee on the other hand recommended a randomised clinical trial, which is

in effect a study of human patients known to be suffering from cancer. Of course, the results would be contingent on the answers provided by the study undertaken by the NHMRC. Therefore, I put it to the House that it simply would not be practical to support the motion. I do not say that with acrimony, nor do I suggest that the general thrust of the motion lacks substance. I simply suggest it is not practical to support it.

I want to go into a little more detail about comments the Leader of the Opposition made in regard to what the Government is doing in this field. As I understand his speech, I assume that if I am able to indicate progress which is satisfactory to him, the Opposition would have no desire to pursue the matter. I think I can do that, and I will in a moment. During the course of his speech the Leader of the Opposition made the following quote—

People have indicated to me that they would be interested in continuing trials. It has been indicated to me privately that they would be prepared to do this. Of course we must decide whether these are the most competent persons with the required knowledge in this field to do the research.

I would like to assure the Leader of the Opposition that I would be very happy to meet those persons. The Government has never objected to the type of clinical research referred to by the Leader of the Opposition. The Government would always support any meaningful research by scientists or medicos in respect of cancer, provided, of course, the methodology recommended appeared to be practical, and the line of research appeared to be reasonable.

I can state categorically, however, that no approach has been made to the Government in respect of that type of clinical research. I would go so far as to say I would welcome a proposal. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would agree with me that any such proposal would have to be subject to the most rigorous examination to ensure it had adequate scientific appraisal, and that any results coming from it would stand the scrutiny of the scientific community.

The question we are really asking ourselves is whether we are talking about the Tronado machine or about hyperthermia and microwave treatment.

Mr Davies: I think we are talking about hyperthermia and microwave treatment, but "Tronado" sums it up in one word.

Mr YOUNG: Yes, I think what the Leader of the Opposition says is true. However, one of the

great problems which has arisen during the course of debates and discussion on this matter is the fact that constant reference to the Tronado machine makes it a little difficult to know what we are talking about because the machine itself has changed considerably in its usage and in its design over the years. A number of modifications have been made to it. Notwithstanding that, obviously the scientific community has no question in its mind that persons engaged in the research of cancer are certain that hyperthermia has some curative effect, is beneficial to some extent, and is a useful adjunct to the treatment of cancer. Also, there is no question in the minds of those people that microwave treatment can induce the heat which might bring about those beneficial effects.

I put it to the Leader of the Opposition and to the House that perhaps we are really talking about hyperthermia and microwave treatment, and constant reference to that treatment as Tronado treatment tends to confuse the issue within the scientific community. I will give an example. The recent paper by Drs Holt and Nelson did not refer to the Tronado machine at all; the paper was basically about the use of microwaves. I understand the machine has been modified so considerably that the original version which was called the Tronado perhaps has no great relationship to the present machine.

Mr Skidmore: It does the same thing.

Mr YOUNG: It uses microwave therapy to induce heat, but the problem is that people will continue to say the Tronado machine is being used in 18 countries throughout the world, as was mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition in his speech. Throughout all the medical writings in the world the Tronado machine has been written off. There is no Tronado machine.

Mr Skidmore: That is a fine distinction.

Mr YOUNG: I am not trying to be controversial, I am simply trying to say it would be better if we, like everyone else, did not use the word "Tronado" which has become a little tainted as a result of the controversy. We should stick to the scientifically acceptable term so that people can recognise what we are talking about and accept our comments as being scientific, rather than talk about the use of the Tronado machine and then suddenly finding someone buying into the argument and saying, "It is not used anywhere in the world."

I think members opposite would agree that if we are talking about hyperthermia to increase tumour heat, or the use of microwave therapy, that is what we should say. Then the matter is on

a clear plane and everyone knows what we are talking about. The treatment can be compared with other research in other parts of the world on that basis.

The problem is that when we compare local treatments with the hyperthermia and microwave treatment carried out at the Hammersmith Hospital, we immediately have an argument on our hands if we refer to the local treatment as being given by a Tronado machine.

Mr Skidmore: The minute you mention Tronado, professional people don't want to know about it.

Mr YOUNG: One of the problems is that there is also at large a feeling that the medical profession for some reason or other does not want to accept the Tronado machine. The member for Swan is a classic example; he says the profession does not want to accept treatment for patient's if the machine is referred to as Tronado.

Mr Skidmore: That is a lot of rubbish! Of course the profession accepts it!

Mr YOUNG: The member for Swan should not take me to task when he is not really listening to what I am saying. The suggestion is that the medical profession is not interested in the machine. However, doctors are interested in the method, and in assessing the value of the method used, and the research being carried out into microwave heat processes as an adjunct to the treatment of cancer—leaving aside the continued use of the term "Tronado machine" which simply gets a number of people in the medical profession offside with their colleagues.

The Leader of the Opposition said that if I were able to say, "Yes, things are under way. We are making progress in respect of further research into the matter", he would be reasonably happy. He concluded by saying he would be content if I could indicate to him that the National Health and Medical Research Council was going ahead and carrying out the work it had been requested to do.

I believe I can do better than that. The Government is anxious to resolve this entire question to allow some sort of orderly progress and development in the research and treatment of cancer in Western Australia. The Board of Management of the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital has agreed to consider an appointment to its clinical staff in an endeavour to attract a person of eminence in some field of oncology. The appointment would be for a term of only one or two years, and the appointee, during that period, would carry out the following—

- (a) Review the present endeavours in oncology in Western Australia using the clinical and statistical records which are available.
- (b) Recommend measures to improve co-ordination between the various specialty groups involved in the management of patients with cancer.
- (c) If considered appropriate, recommend suitable areas of research for Western Australia.

Obviously, the protocol for a research programme into the areas of radiotherapy and hyperthermia would be most appropriate. One would hope the appointee would make a significant contribution to the work in oncology generally in Western Australia.

There is no question in my mind that the work being carried out on the machine by Drs Holt and Nelson is of tremendous value. It must of necessity be very helpful to the appointee we hope to attract to Western Australia in that he will have available case histories and a build-up of information using the techniques employed at the clinic.

I have no doubt that the result of Western Australia attracting a person of such eminence to work in this field—particularly if clinical trials are carried out also by the NHMRC—will be to possibly open up a field of research into the treatment, maintenance, and management of cancer which is not equalled anywhere else in the world.

Finally, the Opposition should be satisfied for the Government to defeat the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I emphasise again that we intend to oppose the motion, not with any acrimony, but simply because I do not believe in the light of what I have been told that the motion is practical.

No-one would doubt the sincerity of Dr Holt and Dr Nelson; nor would people doubt the sincerity of the Hon. J. T. Tonkin. Equally, I would hope nobody would doubt the sincerity of the staff of the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, the advisers to the Medical Department, and the Government itself. All these people have a tremendous interest in making sure a matter which is too important to allow division in high places is receiving serious attention.

I hope we can go on positively from this point, particularly in respect of the new appointee to whom I have referred, and the possibility of clinical trials being undertaken by the NHMRC.

Mr Davies: What is the status of that? Have you had any further correspondence with the NHMRC subcommittee?

Mr YOUNG: It is still with the subcommittee.

Mr Davies: You have had nothing further?

Mr YOUNG: No. I believe we can look forward in the near future to important research carried out in this area. Perhaps the Opposition and the Government might be able to work together on this matter and accept the fact that each is trying to play its part in an appropriate and responsible manner.

Therefore, I recommend to members that the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition be defeated.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [10.57 a.m.]: I thank the Minister for Health for the encouragement he has given on this subject. I am sure you, too, would be pleased to hear what has happened, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Crane), because I know on an earlier occasion you expressed your interest in this matter and, indeed, voted for some work to be done in this field.

I am sorry if the Minister for Health thought this motion was moved in a political atmosphere; that was never intended. Perhaps the Minister's attitude was due to the reaction we received from the Government at a time when we would have thought there would be a more rational approach by the Government to this entire matter.

As the Minister pointed out, it is very true that changing attitudes have brought about a rationalisation of thinking. This in turn has meant we are able to consider more objectively the method of treatment, rather than merely point scoring. I hope I have never been guilty of acting in such a manner.

I know another member who sat on this side of the House had deeper feelings than I, and probably felt that what was being done was insufficient to justify the benefits which could be obtained. The result of this debate shows one thing quite clearly; namely, that that person was right. We have a great deal for which to thank my former leader (the Hon. J. T. Tonkin) for the manner in which he pursued this subject. He might have pursued it more doggedly than I; he might have pursued it without looking directly at all the side issues. However, no-one would doubt at any time that he pursued the matter because he believed it had many benefits and that the method needed to be introduced into Western Australia.

I thank the Minister for his acknowledgment of the work done by John Tonkin. I believe it is

because of that work we have reached this situation today. Whether we take this in a political sense or not, the fact is I am pleased steps are being taken to have further work carried out in this very important area. I have always felt that if there was to be any breakthrough with this Government the present Minister would be our best bet. He has come-up trumps and given us some hope for the future.

There are some positive steps being taken, but I am certainly not excited about the attitude of the NHMRC. If it were to be left entirely to that body, with no other action taken, I would be most unhappy indeed. We have only to look at the recommendations made by the NHMRC in its first report back in 1975—it is undated—which were as follows—

1. The Tronado Machine should not be used as a basis of diagnosis or localization of malignant neoplasms.
2. It should not be used in place of, nor associated with, proven forms of therapy of malignant neoplasms.
3. No clinical trials of the hyperthermic treatment of malignant neoplasms should be undertaken with the Tronado Machine, nor with any other U.H.F. apparatus, until that apparatus has been demonstrated to be capable of producing a controllable rise of temperature uniformly throughout an appropriate volume of tissue.

What worried me was that that body indicated it did not want to have anything to do with the Tronado machine.

Mr Young: I do not think that is so. That is why I was trying to draw out the difference between the sorts of treatment being referred to and the machine itself.

Mr DAVIES: I am coming to that. I shall quote the next recommendations as follows—

4. Any clinical investigation of the non-thermal effects of U.H.F. and microwave therapy must be based on the results of sound laboratory experiments, and must conform to accepted ethical standards.
5. The U.H.F. therapy presently being used in Western Australia is ineffective and undesirable.

That was in 1975. One of those machines and an updated model are still doing creditable work and the wavelength being used in the machines is exactly the same as the wavelength used at that time.

I could dispute the statement by the Minister that the Tronado machine is not being used anywhere in the world. The fact is that other countries are using the same wavelength for the treatment of cancer. That is the important thing to note. It is a pity we talk only of the Tronado machine; but this is done because of convenience. It is easier to say and people can relate to it much easier than would be the case if we spoke about hyperthermia, microwave therapy, UHF, or anything else. That is important to note.

Irrespective of what we are calling it, the same wavelength is being used. Whether it is being administered by the same type of machine or other machines is of little significance. The basic principle is what is important.

I am concerned that the subcommittee of the NHMRC could be trying to do some work in the Eastern States. That body operates out of Melbourne, while quite obviously the work needs to be done here in Western Australia. This is where this type of treatment is being used extensively and this is where the clinical trials must be carried out.

I can understand the members of the NHMRC, as busy as they must be, might be reluctant to come across, and use that as an excuse not to push the matter forward. Obviously, it will not be able to send a group of people over from Melbourne to conduct extensive clinical trials here. It must look for "agents" to do its work. I made mention in my previous speech that the people who conducted the trials would need to be properly qualified. The list of seven persons who signed this report are quite distinguished in their own fields. Certainly they could not come across here for any kind of extended clinical trials.

What concerned me was that since July, when the matter was referred to the NHMRC, there had been no response. I am grateful the Minister has given an indication of his intention to take the matter up with the NHMRC and ask what is happening. We cannot expect the NHMRC members to come over here themselves. They will have to appoint agents or other responsible people to conduct the trials on their behalf. It would be nice if its members could come across; but the practicalities are such that it is quite impossible for that to happen.

The work has to be done here by people who are competent. I will pass the message to the people whose names have been mentioned to me as willing to co-operate in regard to any trials. I am sure if they are genuine in wanting to do the work they would be only too happy to make their services available to the Minister. I am pleased

there is to be a person appointed who, perhaps, we might term a "hyperthermologist".

Mr Young: Oncologist.

Mr DAVIES: That sounds as reasonable as anything. Provided that person has an open mind and is adequately qualified, he could do a tremendous amount of work in the three directions the Minister mentioned.

The Minister said he wanted the NHMRC to review the present endeavours, he wanted to improve co-ordination between the various branches of this particular field, and he wanted a recommendation as to what research might be necessary. That is the most encouraging news I have heard for some time because there is so little done in regard to research.

If we start to jump with joy because of the likelihood of this research being carried out, we should still be circumspect, because I know, just as all members undoubtedly will know, that research costs money and Governments have been somewhat reluctant to allocate money for research. Taken on face value, we can expect some action in this field from the present Minister.

The motion as it stands does not mean that the two types of research are in conflict. Unfortunately I cannot get the recommendation from the 1975 committee; I do not seem to have it on my file. I am referring to the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital committee established in 1978 which made it quite clear that it is possible for the trials to be carried out. It said—

That a prospective, randomised, clinical trial of treatment should be undertaken for a sufficient period, depending on statistical advice, for a clear conclusion to be reached. Such a trial should take place as soon as the N.H. and M.R.C. declares that the Tronado Machine to be used in the trial is working to specification. Subject to this declaration the N.H. and M.R.C. should be asked to establish a Subcommittee to advise on the protocol and ensure adequate supervision of the trial.

It was following that recommendation in 1978 that the subsequent approaches to the NHMRC were made. It has been disappointing that there has been no response.

The Minister has attacked this problem in two forks. He is suggesting the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital take up the suggestion of conducting clinical trials through the NHMRC. That would be in accordance with the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital recommendation of 1978.

(171)

Secondly, he said the board will seek the appointment of a suitable person to do three specific things which he has mentioned and I also have mentioned. I do not think there is any need to go over them. So, there are two prongs to the attack.

I do not know of the timetabling for the appointment of this specialist. The Minister did not give any indication, although he said a suitable person was being sought. I am concerned that we may find ourselves in a situation where there will be an inordinately long delay in dealing with this matter.

Mr Young: I would like it to happen as soon as possible. I hope inquiries can be made in the very near future about a suitable person. It has to be remembered that this person would be coming here to do a number of different things with oncology and not just with hyperthermia treatment; therefore we have to look for such a person.

Mr DAVIES: We certainly cannot cavil at this person doing work in other fields associated with oncology. However, we hope the hyperthermia will not be lost sight of.

Mr Young: Whilst hyperthermia is not the most important, it is very important and will not be lost sight of.

Mr DAVIES: It could easily be done. I do not know of the type of control there will be; we do not direct the hospital boards, we merely indicate our thoughts and hopefully they will take up our wishes.

When I say "we" I mean the Government or Parliament as a whole. Whilst we may be able to grant approval for the necessary salary, it is not possible for us to do very much else except lay down the conditions under which the appointment should be made if the Government is to pick up the salary tab.

I am pleased with the Minister's attitude, but we are still not moving fast enough. I hope there will be some quick move on the appointment of this person and that we will be able to impress on the NHMRC the need for it to take some positive action as quickly as possible. If, in view of its earlier report, it will be disinterested, then let it say so. We should not be left hanging by our thumbs while the NHMRC fails to acknowledge in a positive way a request made to it.

After all, the machines are in constant use here; people are being treated with good results. These may not be acceptable in the clinical sense, but the patients benefiting from the machines do not care very much about clinical sense. It seems a pity we have this treatment being done without

positive steps being taken properly to assess the results.

I do not believe there is a conflict with regard to the two reports and I do not think they should be altered in any way. I will watch the position very closely to ascertain the outcome of the undertakings given here today. I do not doubt the Minister's desires or his sincerity in regard to it, but he is not the only person who will have a say in this type of matter.

There are some people who still have blinkers on, despite the fact that this form of treatment is being more widely used in many parts of the world. This treatment has been in use here with results to show for it for over three years. We are not moving as fast as we should be. I think we should put this to the vote on the voices.

Question put and negatived.

Motion defeated.

BILLS (3): RETURNED

1. State Energy Commission Bill.
Bill returned from the Council with amendments.
2. Electricity Act Amendment Bill.
3. Gas Standards Act Amendment Bill.
Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

ENERGY: NUCLEAR POWER STATION

Planning: Motion

Debate resumed, from the 19th September, on the following motion by Mr T. H. Jones—

That in the opinion of this House, planning for a nuclear power plant in W.A. should not proceed, because a nuclear power plant in W.A. cannot be justified in terms of need, cost and potential risk and because of overwhelming public opposition to the Government's proposals to build a nuclear power plant in this State.

To which Mr Stephens had moved an amendment—

Delete all words after the word "House" in line 1 and substitute the following—

The Government should monitor and document all technological and scientific developments in nuclear power generation but without committing the State to the erection of a nuclear power station. At the same time the Government should permit the mining, milling and export of uranium.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [11.17 a.m.]: We are dealing with the amendment to the motion. I think we will make short shrift of this amendment which has been moved by the National Party, the object of which is apparently to put the Opposition over a barrel.

Its members are trying to offer support on the one hand in regard to the development of a nuclear power station and on the other hand agree to the mining and exporting of uranium. Those two matters are not associated and we do not believe that the National Party is dinkum in moving such an amendment.

Obviously it knows the Australian Labor Party's stand on the mining and exporting of uranium. We are not satisfied that the necessary safeguards are there. One of the members of the National Party has been convinced that nuclear power is necessary without ensuring there are no dangers in handling uranium. If he can give me satisfactory proof that there are no dangers in the handling of uranium I would be delighted.

Mr McPharlin: I never said that.

MR DAVIES: All right then. So that is the way I have interpreted it. The member came into the House with a box of some harmless substance and said that uranium was as simple as that to handle. I do not believe there are satisfactory safeguards in regard to the handling of uranium.

I would be the first to support the mining and exporting of uranium—although exporting is somewhat different—if it could be guaranteed that there is no danger whatsoever to life or limb in the handling of it. The Opposition is not inclined to argue the amendment any further.

Mr Stephens: Do you support the mining of coal and give a guarantee that there is no danger to life or limb?

MR DAVIES: Of course I do. The honourable member who has just interjected probably believes there is no danger in mining blue asbestos, but those dangers are all about us at the present time and are becoming more apparent. At the time I would probably have said there was no danger in mining blue asbestos; I did not know enough. I believe we have been alerted to the dangers of mining uranium to such a degree that we are required to pay attention to it now, not in 20 years' time when it will be too late to reverse the effects. It is as simple as that and we can argue all day about it.

We reject the amendment out of hand because it contains that condition. One cannot have two bob each way, and as in many other things the National Party does it wants two bob each way. It does not want nuclear power but we can go on

mining and exporting uranium. If the National Party wants a debate on nuclear power or the mining and export of uranium, we are prepared to enter into it. These issues are now contained in the one motion, and if the National Party does not want to divorce them, all we can do is vote against the amendment because it is a gimmick and, as I said, an attempt to have two bob each way.

MR McPHARLIN (Mt. Marshall) [11.22 a.m.]: In reply to the Leader of the Opposition, who has commented on my attitude after returning from a study tour in connection with nuclear power development, I want to put the record straight. On the numerous occasions I have had the opportunity to comment, I have made the point that no scientist one talks to about the development of nuclear power will say there are not some hazards associated with it. Because uranium is a radioactive substance, there are some hazards associated with the development of nuclear power stations, but they can be overcome.

The amendment asks the Government to monitor and document in detail all technological and scientific developments in the generation of nuclear power so that we will have the latest information on the progress of nuclear power stations in other parts of the world. It suggests to the Government that perhaps it would be advisable not to commit the State to the installation of a power station at this stage. It also refers to the mining and export of uranium.

In planning for a nuclear power station, it takes at least a decade from the time the site is selected for the station to come on stream and for power to be fed into the grid system. A tremendous amount of work has to be done and I think the Government would be remiss if it did not give consideration to planning for the future.

The motion says a nuclear power station is not needed and cannot be justified. Perhaps that may be argued at the present time, but who knows what the situation will be in a few years time? Who knows what will be the oil supplies in the world? The member for Collie said in this House that oil can be extracted from Collie coal. Oil has been extracted from coal in some parts of the world. It is a costly exercise but it can be done. If we had a shortage of oil supplies, naturally we would turn to coal for the extraction of oil, and that would deplete our coal supplies. So there is a need to consider what might eventuate in the future in order not to jeopardise power supplies, not only in this State but elsewhere in the world.

A great deal of thought must be given to the construction of a power station. The justification

for capital investment must be assessed. The construction of a coal or oil-fired power station is expensive but power can be generated more cheaply. The size of the unit has to be taken into account from an economic point of view. There may be an argument that because Western Australia has not a great demand or a heavy load, we could not build an economic nuclear power station.

Mr T. H. Jones: What about the capital costs of a nuclear power station? What is your latest figure?

Mr McPHARLIN: For a 1 000-megawatt station we would be looking at about \$700 million.

Mr H. D. Evans: And the rest!

Mr McPHARLIN: A coal-fired power station would not be far below that, because the cost of developing power stations is increasing each year.

Mr T. H. Jones: Have you also studied coal, or only nuclear?

Mr McPHARLIN: No, I have not had time, but I have done some reading.

Site selection is very important. The type of reactor or unit required—and there is a number of them—has to be examined. All the safety factors must be considered. Regulations must be laid down and key staff must be trained. In a State like Western Australia where we have not the trained personnel, added costs would be involved in training people to the required level of expertise, which I believe would cause the development of a unit to take longer in Western Australia than in other parts of the world.

A great deal of work goes into selecting a suitable site. It is necessary to consider water supplies, geography, ownership, cooling water, height above sea level, boundaries, accessibility by rail, road, or sea, and test boring must be undertaken to determine the most desirable route for cooling water intake. A great deal of research is needed, so the building of a nuclear power station in Western Australia would not be envisaged within a decade, I would think, and none of us can say accurately what the situation will be in the future.

A considerable number of letters are being written to the Press currently in regard to the dangers of nuclear power stations and the disposal of radioactive waste. Of course, disposal of the waste is one of the major areas of concern in the development of nuclear energy. Scientists are working on this matter in many parts of the world, and techniques are being improved.

One of the criticisms made by the member for Collie when he spoke previously referred to the decommissioning of a nuclear power unit after its lifespan of 25 or 30 years. I noticed a report in the *Daily News* of Wednesday, the 20th September, 1978, in which the Chairman of Britain's Atomic Energy Commission announced that Britain had made a breakthrough in the decommissioning of the core of a fast-breeder reactor. It is now possible to walk through parts of a plant which only a few months ago were extremely dangerous. Progress has been made. Scientists never let up. They are continually experimenting, researching, and improving the methods to make nuclear reactors more and more safe. Scientists all over the world who are responsible for researching all aspects of nuclear energy are making progress in the matter of safety.

In this morning's issue of *The West Australian* there appeared a letter from Sir (John) Phillip Baxter, a previous Chairman of the Australian Atomic Energy Commission. In his letter he commented on a previous letter which appeared in the newspaper of the 17th November. I do not intend to read out the letter, but I suggest that members read it for themselves. It is a most interesting letter in which Sir (John) Phillip Baxter criticised the report of another professor, and showed clearly that the criticism made by the previous writer had no basis on fact. The part of the letter to which I wish to make particular reference is that which refers to the dangers inherent in coal-fired power stations. The member for Collie probably will disagree with the remarks made, and I hope he has read the letter.

Mr T. H. Jones: I read many letters. I read the Senate report produced in the United States, too. Did you read that?

Mr McPHARLIN: The following part of the letter is most interesting—

That "the biological and medical evidence against them is devastating" is a statement contrary to the findings of scientific authorities, in particular the committee of the American Medical Association (August 1978) which found that coal caused 400 times as many deaths as nuclear power.

Mr T. H. Jones: Come back home and tell me the number of deaths that have occurred in this State.

Mr McPHARLIN: I do not know.

Mr T. H. Jones: No, you do not know your subject; you don't know what you are talking about.

Mr McPHARLIN: Perhaps the member for Collie could tell us.

Mr T. H. Jones: I could tell you. You are making a speech on a matter you know nothing about.

Mr Stephens: How many persons have we lost to nuclear power in this State?

Mr McPHARLIN: The letter continues—

The nuclear industry has yet to have a worker killed or injured in a radiation-connected accident (IAEA statement).

Mr Bryce: My godfather! What a dreadfully inaccurate statement.

Sir Charles Court: It happens to be Professor Baxter. Have you no faith in Titterton?

Mr Jamieson: No, he created the monster.

Sir Charles Court: That is a lovely thing for you to say.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Crane): Order! One at a time, please!

Mr Bryce: I wonder whether the member for Mt. Marshall would repeat that.

Mr Tonkin: Titterton is a politician who happens to have scientific degrees.

Sir Charles Court: I would back his judgment any time.

Mr McPHARLIN: Professor Baxter's letter continues as follows—

Intensive studies of 75 000 children conceived by highly radiated Japanese parents after the atom bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, including electron microscopic examination of genes, have shown absolutely no increase in the number of abnormalities. Nor have mutations ever been observed in man as a result of exposure to radiation (AIRAC 3).

That was written by a past Chairman of the Australian Atomic Energy Commission. Surely he must have some knowledge of the industry; surely he must have a responsibility to the public of Australia, and he must be conscious of the hazards involved in the use of radioactive materials. Therefore, the criticisms presented against the development of nuclear energy have been magnified.

Mr T. H. Jones: I wish I had your confidence.

Mr McPHARLIN: The Leader of the Opposition referred to a piece of glass I held in my hand when reporting to the House on my trip to a CPA meeting. At the time I said the piece of glass was of a size that would represent the amount of highly radioactive liquid waste which would be produced during the life of a person of

70 years of age if all the energy he used in his life were produced by nuclear power. The piece of glass would fit in the palm of a man's hand. It was a solidified glass ball of the type which is now used to bury highly radioactive liquid waste. This is a method scientists are continuing to assess in an endeavour to provide the safety factors which the public rightfully demand.

I do not think any normal person would want the development of a power station of any sort if hazards were created and the public were not protected.

The amendment asks that the Government monitor the technological and scientific developments in respect of nuclear energy. I believe the Government would be doing that in any case, but the amendment goes a little further by saying perhaps it is not advisable to commit ourselves at this stage to nuclear power, and perhaps there is reason to say it may not be the best way to produce energy.

Mr H. D. Evans: Then why are you pushing it forward now?

Mr McPHARLIN: I believe it is necessary to plan so that if something unforeseen occurs in the future we will be able to continue to supply energy. We should plan so that we can guarantee an alternative source of energy in the future.

The matter of mining, milling, and the export of uranium is also referred to in the words proposed to be added. I have supported those things in the past, and of course I support them again. However, I believe we ought to go further than that. We ought to look at the enrichment of uranium. It is done in other countries, which sell enriched uranium at a very high profit, and make a great deal of money. Countries all over the world send uranium to various places for the enrichment process. America is doing it in great amounts in a couple of areas; and England does it.

I believe the Government ought to consider the installation of an enrichment plant here because we have the uranium. We have an opportunity to go ahead with that aspect of it. Such action would provide employment, and it would provide a source of income for the future.

If we do not use our resources, and if we do not take advantage of what we have after providing for our own needs, we are not meeting the obligations that we, as a part of the world of nations, have. Overall, the proposed words convey the thought that perhaps it may be better not to commit the State at this stage but to go ahead with planning. I am certainly not against proceeding with the planning for such a development.

MR COWAN (Merredin) [11.41 a.m.]: The amendment before the House seeks to delete certain words in the motion moved by the member for Collie. We in the National Party could not support the motion moved by the member for Collie, and we felt we had no recourse but to amend his motion and introduce words that would be in complete accord with the policy of the National Party and that is what we have done.

We have sought to delete the words after the word "House", and we intend to substitute the words—

The Government should monitor and document all technological and scientific developments in nuclear power generation but without committing the State to the erection of a nuclear power station. At the same time the Government should permit the mining, milling and export of uranium.

The words we seek to substitute are in complete accord with our party's policy.

We were disappointed to hear the Leader of the Opposition saying that we were "having two bob each way", because that is definitely not the case. I cannot see anything in that claim.

We support the milling and the mining of uranium. I think it can be shown without doubt that very rigorous controls exist in uranium mining today. There are no greater risks in the mining of uranium than there are in mining some of our other natural resources. I refer specifically to the mining of coal, particularly in relation to deep mining.

I would think, if the experience in the North Sea is any indication, the extraction of some of our resources that lie off the North-West Shelf, with the deep-sea recovery of gas and oil, is a very risky business. I am not talking about the risk to capital; I am talking about human lives. Anybody who has been to the North Sea knows that such extraction is extremely hazardous.

However, our party supports the concept of mining and milling, and perhaps exporting, our uranium ore as yellow cake. We do not see any reason for this country's denying any other country the opportunity to utilise nuclear power if it is in a situation where it cannot find any other, more conventional power source.

With reference to the establishment of a reactor in Western Australia, we firmly believe there is definitely a need for monitoring and documentation of all technological changes that take place in the nuclear power industry in other countries. Until it can be proved there is a need for a nuclear power plant or reactor in Western Australia, we should be utilising fully the

resources that now exist in the State of Western Australia. There are some doubts about a nuclear power plant.

I am certainly not going to make any claims as to the safety of the operation of a nuclear power plant. I am aware that there have been claims of no deaths attributable to nuclear power plants. I am aware also that people say there is no known method of being 100 per cent certain about the storage of nuclear waste material. I accept that scientists can be wrong at times. Consequently, we are not yet prepared to agree to the establishment of a nuclear power plant in Western Australia. Certainly, we are quite happy to see the planning stages progress so that if it can be shown, at some future time, that there is no alternative, or that waste disposal is now completely safe, we can introduce a nuclear power plant very quickly.

There are one or two other factors which are very important. If the world were to convert to uranium power only for its energy source, which of course would not happen, the amount of uranium ore reserves in the whole of the world would supply the needs of power generation for five years only. It can be shown from that that the use of uranium as an energy source is very transitional in the world today.

There is also the matter of technological change. There is hope that in the 1990s the scientists of the world will be able to harness fusion power. It has already been done for a very brief time. Of course, fusion power is completely clean.

The most significant factor about this is that less than five years ago it was stated there was no way fusion power could be harnessed; that scientists would not be able to find the plasma in which there would be the fusion reaction and it could not be harnessed for at least 30 years. They have been able to accomplish a fusion reaction within five years.

I would suggest that with the rapidity of technological know-how or change it would do us very well to wait till the last possible moment before we committed this State to a fission power plant.

There is a last comment I would like to make, and that relates to the Government's attitude towards our amendment. We have not yet heard from the Government on it. I would be very interested to hear the Government's attitude, because we were somewhat surprised when, on the 31st October you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Crane), put a question to the Premier about the positioning of a nuclear power plant in your

electorate. We were pleased with the Premier's answer, because it supported the policy of the National Party. I will read the last part of the Premier's answer, because it bears repeating—

Mr T. H. Jones: Where do you get a copy of your policy?

Mr COWAN: I will send one to the member.

Mr H. D. Evans: Both pages?

Mr COWAN: If the member for Warren wants one, I will send him all 30 pages of the document, if he can read that much.

Mr B. T. Burke: Get out of the gutter.

Mr COWAN: I would like to read the Premier's last paragraph in answer to the question on the 31st October. He said—

The Government firmly believes that nuclear power has a logical part to play in solving Western Australia's future energy problems and is taking the necessary steps to ensure that the State can proceed with the installation of a nuclear power plant when required and with appropriate safeguards for ensuring the health and safety of the community.

Now, of course, the operative words are "when required". We believe that really expresses our policy, particularly if this power is to be utilised as a last resort.

Therefore, I hope a member from the Government benches will stand up and indicate the Government's support for the amendment which we have moved, because we see it as being in complete accord with the policies of the National Party.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [11.51 a.m.]: I rise not to assure the member that we intend to support his amendment, but to assure him that we do not intend to do so. I felt a brief word should be said by the Government in connection with the amendment so that a vote is not taken without a clear understanding of the Government's attitude. We have made it clear that we are opposed to the motion, and there is no need for me to go over that; but we regard the qualification contained in the amendment moved by the representative of the National Party as being something we cannot accept.

The member who has just resumed his seat referred to the answers I gave to a question he asked. He was trying to take my words out of context. I want to make sure there is no misunderstanding about this. The words "when required" are not intended to indicate any hesitancy on the part of the Government regarding this medium of power generation. On

the contrary, "when required" is a suitable way to explain it will be fitted into the grid system at the time when the power needs of this State call for a plant of that size.

It is a fact of life that with nuclear power generation we have to have a unit which has a very large capacity and when we fit any unit into a grid system, the largest unit we have is the one that determines the security of that particular grid. In other words, we have to make sure that if the largest unit, through sabotage, technical or mechanical failure, is out of action, the grid system can service the community it is destined to serve.

This is why we have projected as far forward as 1995, because it appears from the growth pattern of power required for this State up to that point, we would be overcommitting our coal resources and doing Collie a disservice in the absence of big coal finds in the future if we do not provide alternatives. Therefore, it is not by accident or chance that we have nominated that date as the potential one when we will need to have such a plant not only installed, but also commissioned.

Some people believe that is a long way away, but members must realise the long lead times required in the use of modern technology and plants of this type. Lead times for such plants are much greater than used to be the case with a 30-megawatt or 60-megawatt plant using coal, oil, or natural gas. That type of plant was much easier to order and install; but even today when we talk about a 200-megawatt conventional power plant—and later on a 400-megawatt unit—we are looking at a much bigger and more complex situation and the lead times are much greater. Not only is this the case in the designing stages, but it is true also for the ordering and delivery of the unit, because one has to allow for industrial trouble at the point of manufacture, then time must be allocated for transport, installation, and commissioning.

We cannot accept the limitation imposed by the amendment moved by the National Party which, on the one hand, supports uranium mining, milling, and export, but on the other hand poses the query as to whether they would be prepared to go the last furlong and agree to the installation of a plant after the monitoring had been done.

Mr Bryce: Aren't you going to call them saboteurs?

Sir CHARLES COURT: We want to make it quite clear that, after all the studies we have done and a review of the safety factors of all forms of power generation, we still believe nuclear power is the safest. It might surprise members to know that scientific studies which have been undertaken and evaluations which have been made of all forms of energy point out that, with the exception of natural gas, nuclear energy is the safest form of power generation.

Mr Jamieson: That does not include the whole site. You are only including the generation at the power house.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am talking about the safety aspects as far as human beings are concerned.

Mr Jamieson: The safety aspects of generation at the power house only.

Sir CHARLES COURT: That is not correct. I am talking about the whole cycle from mining through to the generation of electricity.

Without prolonging the debate, because I do not want to take up private members' time, I should like to point out to members—

Several members interjected.

Mr B. T. Burke: Nuclear energy is not safer than solar energy.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to tell the member for Balcatta that it is safer than solar energy. All the scientific research on these forms of energy generation has demonstrated that if we are looking at the matter in terms of human safety, solar energy is more dangerous by far than nuclear energy, if we take the total cycle.

Mr Bryce: Whose research are you quoting now?

Mr B. T. Burke: It is Bill Mitchell's research.

Mr Jamieson: It sounds like it!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Crane): Order! The member for Balcatta is interjecting whilst he is not sitting in his seat.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am looking at this matter from the point of view of human safety in relation to the mining, extraction, processing, transport and generation of energy. I am referring

to the total cycle, because people are involved all the way through. I am not talking about a particular power house, but the total involvement of human beings from the source of materials to the generation of energy.

Mr Bryce: Point us in the direction of your research. Give us the name of one scientist or authority.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I have a paper before me which demonstrates the respective human factors so far as different types of power generation are concerned and I emphasise, so that I am not quoted out of context, that from the extraction of the raw material from the ground to the generation of electricity, nuclear energy is safer than solar energy. When we talk about solar energy we are not talking only about the sun, but we are referring also to a great mass of metal.

Mr Bryce: It is the sun. You refuse point blank to tell us the source of your information.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is getting a terrible reputation as a distorter.

Mr Bryce: You have not even got an authority to quote and you reckon we are distorting matters!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Crane): Order! The Premier will resume his seat. There are far too many interjections and the Premier is being prevented from explaining what he has to say to the House which is of great value to us all.

Mr Jamieson: That is impartial!

The ACTING SPEAKER: I do not consider the comment made by the member for Welshpool to be very funny.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to return to a point made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, because he implied that when we talk about solar energy we talk about the sun only. In fact that is not correct, because we are talking also about a great mass of metals and that is why I say I do not want to be quoted out of context.

When one talks about any form of energy, one has to go right back to the minerals and metals used in the generation operation and it is as a result of this evaluation that it has been found solar energy is not as safe as one would believe when we consider the human beings involved from the beginning of the process through to the generation of energy.

Mr Bryce: Aren't you going to tell us who your source is?

Sir CHARLES COURT: A paper which is very enlightening has been sent to me and it is being researched further.

Mr Bryce: Yesterday you laughed at me when I quoted an article from the *Sunday Independent*. Today you are not even prepared to tell us the source of this very fundamental theory.

Mr Clarko: That is the sixth time you have said that.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am not prepared to divulge the source, because I cannot recall the exact name of the scientist involved. However, I want to tell the member that it happens to be true. This is an evaluation of the involvement of human beings and the human safety aspect from the beginning of the process through to the generation of power. We have to get the idea out of our heads that the safety aspects which must be considered are only those in the power house itself.

I want to tell the member that it is a fact recorded in this analysis that solar energy is not as safe as nuclear energy when we consider the total involvement of human beings from the point of mining through to the actual production of energy.

I want to make a point that, whilst it will not please the mover of the amendment, the Government cannot accept the qualification he envisages, because it believes the National Party wants to have a little bit each way; it wants to support uranium mining on the one hand, but, on the other hand, it does not want to commit itself to power generation. To my mind, that is inconsistent.

If we are prepared to sell uranium products to other countries for use in power generation, we should be prepared to undertake power generation ourselves.

As far as enrichment is concerned, which was raised by the member for Mt. Marshall, we are well on the move in our representations with the Commonwealth Government. We are one of the States stating our case as suitable to undertake enrichment. I agree it is of tremendous value, and has tremendous technological content from which I believe our young scientists should benefit. There is also the added value to the uranium which is of tremendous importance.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 3

Mr Cowan
Mr Stephens

Mr McPharlin

(Teller)

Noes 46

Mr Barnett	Mr Jamieson	
Mr Bertram	Mr P. V. Jones	
Mr Blaikie	Mr T. H. Jones	
Mr Bryce	Mr Laurance	
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr MacKinnon	
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr McIver	
Mr Carr	Mr Nanovich	
Mr Clarko	Mr O'Connor	
Sir Charles Court	Mr Old	
Mr Coyne	Mr O'Neil	
Mrs Craig	Mr Pearce	
Mr Crane	Mr Rushton	
Dr Dadour	Mr Sibson	
Mr Davies	Mr Skidmore	
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Sodeman	
Mr T. D. Evans	Mr Spriggs	
Mr Grayden	Mr Tonkin	
Mr Grewar	Mr Watt	
Mr Grill	Mr Williams	
Mr Harman	Mr Wilson	
Mr Hassell	Mr Young	
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Bateman	(Teller)
Mr Hodge	Mr Shalders	(Teller)

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.06 p.m.]: I would like to support the motion put to this House by the member for Collie because I think he has articulated three very sound reasons based on the hazards, the cost, and the lack of justification for our not proceeding with the planning of a nuclear power station at the present time. He has very clearly demonstrated to the House that the actual cost of producing electricity in a coal-fired power station is only two-thirds the average normal cost of generating electricity from nuclear energy sources.

The member for Collie mentioned in some detail the enormous difference in the capital cost—and I am certain he will come back to the comments of the member for Mt. Marshall in his closing remarks to this debate—and he actually illustrated in detail the difference in capital costs between establishing a conventional power generation station compared with a nuclear generated power station.

I draw to the attention of the member for Mt. Marshall an example I observed on a visit to the United States in 1977. A power station has been constructed at Diablo Canyon at a cost of \$2 300 million, and it still is not actually producing electricity. It has been under construction for a period of 10 years, and it still had not produced a single watt of electricity at that stage.

The member for Collie illustrated a point which I would like to repeat and emphasise. There is practically no basis for logical comparison

between Western Australia and the Western European nations such as France and Austria. In France the Government is paying \$60 a ton for coal whereas in Western Australia the Government pays somewhere in the vicinity of \$14 a ton for coal.

I simply cannot understand how a Government, which spends so much of its time in its public comments talking about the future energy industry in this State, refuses to undertake a drilling programme in the vicinity of Collie. Collie is the State's only recognised producing deposit of coal. I would have thought it was fairly basic to the concern of any Government that there was a need to define fairly accurately the extent of the reserves of Collie coal. They are very important indeed, especially when the world Press tells us, day after day, that there will be an energy crisis as we enter the decade of the 1980s and through the last decade of the century.

This State Government simply refuses to acknowledge that it is so very important to define the extent of the coal reserves in Collie. The New South Wales Government has carried out a survey and it has proved significant additions to the reserves of coal in that State. I wonder why the Premier is so frightened of finding out how much coal there is at Collie.

Sir Charles Court: The more Collie coal or any other coal we have here, the better we like it, but you still must realise you must have a balanced energy programme.

Mr BRYCE: Is the Premier suggesting seriously that if his Government finances a drilling programme, that produces a significant increase—

Sir Charles Court: Coal is being looked for in this State.

Mr BRYCE: It is not being looked for by the Government of the State, and if the Government is concerned about the welfare of the citizens of the State and their future—

Sir Charles Court: There are others who can do it better.

Mr BRYCE: Presumably the Premier is now talking of the proprietors of the Collie coal companies.

Sir Charles Court: It goes beyond coal.

Mr BRYCE: I would have thought the Government has a basic responsibility in this matter. The Government is turning its back on that basic responsibility.

Sir Charles Court: We are encouraging everybody who wants to look for coal, and far beyond Collie.

Mr BRYCE: The Government is encouraging other people, but it is doing nothing itself.

Sir Charles Court: Don't you know we are looking far beyond Collie?

Mr BRYCE: Is the Government doing it itself, as a Government?

Sir Charles Court: Others can do it better, and not at a cost to the taxpayer.

Mr BRYCE: That is a pathetic explanation, and the Premier demonstrates his incompetence in this particular area. He feels incompetent to handle the task of defining the State's coal reserves.

Mr Clarko: Is oil found by oil companies or Governments?

Mr BRYCE: To answer the question of the member for Karrinyup, I believe there ought to be a national hydrocarbon organisation to be involved in the business of finding oil.

Sir Charles Court: We know that.

Several members interjected.

Mr Shalders: That is where our philosophies part company.

Mr BRYCE: Exactly, and I am prepared to concede that point. However, that does not make the view of Government members right—they have made a value judgment. Practically every country in the western industrialised world, including France, New Zealand, Germany, and Great Britain, has recognised the need for national Governments to try to locate oil reserves.

Mr Clarko: Private companies have found almost all the oil in the world.

Mr BRYCE: It is fascinating to realise that the British Government, through BP, and the Dutch Government, through Dutch Shell, will have a greater interest in the north-west gas field than us; these countries will have a greater nationalised interest in that field than will the people of Western Australia, and all because nationalised companies at that international level have shown their nous. The Governments realised the projects are far bigger than international private oil companies can handle. They require a partnership, and so a very sensible decision was made in the national interest.

Sir Charles Court: Don't talk rot.

Mr Shalders: If it comes to nothing, the British and Dutch taxpayers foot the bill.

Mr BRYCE: I know that members would like me to return to some of the fallacious arguments put to this House in opposition to the motion moved by the member for Collie.

Mr Clarko: Well, you lost that argument.

Mr BRYCE: I was astonished to hear a person as responsible as the Minister for Fuel and Energy say in the course of this debate that to the best of his knowledge no serious dangers or deaths have been associated with the generation of nuclear power. I asked the member for Mt. Marshall to repeat a comment he made because it was with a sense of great disbelief I heard him say that no deaths or injuries had been associated with the generation of power in this industry anywhere in the world.

Mr McPharlin: I quoted that from this letter.

Mr Laurance: And he acknowledged his source.

Mr BRYCE: I am a little astonished that people rely on these opinion letters to the Press.

Mr Laurance: I will tell you again that it says the nuclear industry is yet to have a worker killed or injured.

Mr BRYCE: Who said this?

Mr Laurance: Sir Philip Baxter.

Mr P. V. Jones: And he quotes the source.

Mr McPharlin: There have been some deaths in experimental reactors.

Mr Skidmore: There was a death in a reactor in America.

Mr BRYCE: During the course of the time available to me, for the sake of the record I intend to give numerous instances where individual workers—people related directly with the generation of power—have been killed. I will refer to other cases of workers who have died from cancer and leukemia as a result of irradiation in nuclear power plants in Western Europe and the United States. I will be very happy to provide a reading list to be incorporated in *Hansard* for the sake of members who still feel disbelief at the end of my speech.

Mr Clarko: It is pretty selective, too!

Mr BRYCE: There is nothing selective about it. The Minister for Fuel and Energy said that to the best of his knowledge there have been no deaths associated with the generation of nuclear power. I simply intend to fill in some of the gaps in his knowledge.

Mr Clarko: Why don't you write to Baxter about this and see what he says?

Mr Jamieson: It would be the same as writing to Titterton.

Mr BRYCE: Some of these people have a vested interest in justifying some mistakes they have made.

The member for Mundaring is not here at the present time, but during the original debate on this subject he also demonstrated a fairly

appalling degree of ignorance about the disposal of waste. I will paraphrase his remarks, but I feel certain he said that the method of disposal used off the coast in Western Europe and off the coast of the United States—both east and west—of putting quantities of low-level radioactive waste in 55-gallon drums was perfectly safe. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that is not a very safe exercise.

So on the basis not only of cost but also in view of the hazards to people who mine uranium, those involved in the industry which generates nuclear power, and those who live in proximity to a plant reprocessing nuclear waste, the other alternatives must be considered.

Another hazard is the probability that, with the expansion of nuclear power stations for the production of energy, the proliferation of nuclear weapons throughout the world will increase significantly.

Many people have had a false sense of security about this matter. They believed that the peaceful application of nuclear technology was not related to the spread of nuclear weapons. The experience in recent years, particularly in Pakistan and India, has proved that this is certainly not the case. Certainly there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that South Africa now has "the bomb", and many of the unstable countries throughout the world have developed this technology.

Mr Jamieson: And probably the very unstable North Korea.

Mr BRYCE: I was astonished that Government members could suggest there have been no deaths or serious accidents associated with the generation of nuclear energy. I would like to fill in some of the gaps in the knowledge of these members by referring to some experiences, not only in other parts of the world, but also in Australia.

Mr Clarko: Will you give the comparative death and accident rates for the coalmining industry?

Mr BRYCE: If the member for Karrinyup would like to move for an extension of time for me, I will follow him up any little tangential alley he likes!

In October, 1957, at the power generation plant at Windscale in England, there was a fire caused by human error at the Windscale No. 1 nuclear reactor. This was the result of a defective procedure. Eleven tons of uranium blazed, and this released a vast cloud of radioisotopes from the melted fuel. Milk from an area of more than 500 square kilometres—approximately two million litres—was poured into the rivers and the sea as unsafe for human consumption. Farmers were compensated by the Government—and I am

not surprised, given their influence—but how people living near Windscale were affected is not known.

Nor is it known how much radioactivity descended over Westmorland and Cumberland. Local inhabitants say there is a high incidence of cancer deaths in the area, but the Government did not carry out any medical or statistical checks. The point I emphasise is that both Windscale reactors have since been filled with concrete and entombed. I concede there were no deaths directly related to that incident.

The story gets worse; I have selected only 13 examples out of 30 or 40 serious accidents at nuclear reactors. On the 18th October, 1958, a nuclear reactor overheated at the Boris Kidric Institute in Vinca, Yugoslavia. Six scientists were irradiated. They were taken to France for treatment, and one died.

In 1958, at Los Alamos, USA, one death was caused by radiation in the uranium enrichment plant. Plutonium had been allowed to accumulate inside a mixing vessel. An error was made, as a result of which somebody died.

In 1961, at Idaho Falls, USA, an incident occurred which was reported as the first major reactor accident in the United States. The Premier no doubt would be interested in this one. This accident did not occur within an alien nation; it occurred in the United States in 1961.

Sir Charles Court: I take it you are going to give us statistics relating to deaths in non-nuclear generating plants as well?

Mr BRYCE: I am replying to the absurd allegation by the Minister for Fuel and Energy that there are no deaths associated with this form of energy.

Sir Charles Court: Do not mislead the House and say there have been no deaths in other forms of energy production.

Mr BRYCE: That has never been maintained. The Premier, in association with the Minister for Fuel and Energy, had the hide to say nuclear power generation was the safest form of energy production. Yet the Premier did not have the decency to inform his parliamentary colleagues of the source of his assertion.

Sir Charles Court: It happens to be the safest.

Mr BRYCE: The Premier is not prepared to quote his source.

Sir Charles Court: From the figures you have given so far, you have proved that nuclear power generation is the safest.

Mr BRYCE: If the Premier is prepared to move to extend my time, I will quote them all.

Sir Charles Court: You are using up private members' time; that is your business.

Mr BRYCE: I return to the accident at Idaho Falls in 1961. An explosion occurred, and three men were killed instantly. Their bodies were so severely irradiated that their exposed hands and heads had to be severed from their bodies and buried in a dump for radioactive waste. It took years to disassemble the wrecked plant, and the burial ground will have to be guarded forever. Rescuers received high radiation doses.

In 1964, at Wood River, USA, there was one death from radioactivity in a uranium enrichment plant.

On the 21st January, 1969, at the Lycens reactor in Switzerland, there occurred a partial meltdown of the reactor core. A release of radioactivity occurred, and the reactor was destroyed. The reactor was in a rock cavern and has been converted into a storage area for waste disposal. The reactor was so completely destroyed and the area so contaminated that it has become a makeshift dump for waste.

During an earlier part of this debate, the member for Mundaring expressed a high level of confidence in the practice of dumping concentrated quantities of low level radioactive waste into the oceans off the coast of the United States of America and Western Europe.

In September, 1970, Captain Jacques Cousteau, speaking to the Council of Europe, said of the barrels of waste lying at the bottom of the sea, "They have been photographed lying open yawning like oysters." So much for a safe method of disposal! The source of this statement is page 4 of a document by N. Thieberger, which I intend to seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard*.

On the same matter, on the 14th June, 1972, a Dutch fisherman found a metal barrel with the words "highly radioactive" printed on it, just off the coast of Holland.

In 1972, in Surry, USA, two radiation deaths were due to the failure of a valve. Investigation detected more than 500 faulty welding spots.

In 1973, in New Jersey, USA, a dockworker accidentally spilt plutonium on himself while handling a leaking box of liquid waste. Four years later his hand, then his arm and shoulder were amputated because of a rare form of cancer, from which he died, aged 39. The company responsible refused to pay him compensation before he died. Given the attitude expressed to this matter by the Premier and the Minister for Fuel and Energy, one can well imagine companies refusing to accept their responsibilities.

Mr Skidmore: One would certainly doubt their credibility on this issue.

Mr BRYCE: In 1974, it was revealed that Charlevoix County in Michigan, USA, had an infant mortality rate 44 per cent higher than the national average. Immature infant deaths were 18 per cent higher. Leukemia was 400 per cent higher than the national average, while cancer deaths were 15 per cent more numerous. Congenital defects were 230 per cent higher than the national average.

It is significant that Charlevoix County is the home of the Big Rock Point nuclear power plant. The above diseases were not caused by an accident; no insurance company or corporation will acknowledge a link between the plant and outside sicknesses. Of course, that frame of mind is well understood.

In 1975, at Gundremmingen, in the Federal Republic of Germany, two people died as a result of the leakage of 800 litres of radioactive steam during vent repairs.

Particularly for the Premier's edification I return all the way back to Australia. One would imagine the Premier would know what was going on in his own country; however, it is obvious he does not.

Australia's first victim died in 1977 as a result of being exposed to radiation at the Atomic Energy Commission's nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights. The man contracted leukemia. The Atomic Energy Commission admitted liability by paying compensation to the man's widow. Two years before his death, other workers had complained of a health problem which they thought was related to their work with epoxies.

Once again, for the interest of the member for Mundaring, I shall quote further and relate an incident which happened in 1978 at Idaho Falls in the United States—

Plutonium waste dug up after seven years because it was leaking from the barrels in which it had been buried, causing a threat to the water supply.

I shall conclude in respect of this particular facet of my argument by touching on the whole question of the impact and effect on people of low levels of radiation. I can imagine certain members of the Government suggesting to people who work in this industry that they should have no concern for their welfare, that low levels of radiation can be tolerated, and that people who work in those environments are quite safe.

We heard certain leaders of industry and the Government using those arguments about a town

called Wittenoom as far as asbestosis was concerned. There is a very similar argument which applies to people who work in association with low levels of radiation, whether it is in respect of the mining of uranium or the actual nuclear industry itself.

To illustrate the point I am making I shall quote a situation which was highlighted in February, 1979, in the United Kingdom as follows—

British dockyard workers exposed to radiation while working on nuclear submarines show a greater than normal incidence of damaged chromosomes. These results are based on a ten year study.

I guess that is one of the facets of this argument I would like to emphasise. Well may a Government say to an individual employee that it is safe for him to work in that industry. In fact, at this time Governments do not know what the cumulative effect will be over 10 or 20 years for any individual who works in this particular type of environment.

However, there is a disturbing amount of evidence which has come to light involving individuals who have been working in places like naval dockyards and working on nuclear vessels which indicates they are dying like flies with leukemia and cancer. So-called experts, the type the Premier is inclined to quote, have said that working with low levels of radiation is quite safe. If I happened to know any of those workers I am sure they would be very inclined to want to exchange positions with someone like the Premier, who is rapidly becoming known as the "mad miner". He is ready to mine anything at any cost, whether that cost is to the community or to the individuals concerned. I shall quote further from the incident in the UK as follows—

The greater the radiation dose the worker received the greater the number of cells showing chromosome damage. Damage occurs even when radiation exposures are below internationally agreed Safety standards.

For the sake of people who are looking for sources of information, on our own "Nationwide" programme on the 23rd July this year, in a discussion on this subject as it related to Radium Hill in South Australia, I can supply certain information. Members are entitled to doubt the validity of it if they wish, but I would like them to consider the information presented by the ABC interviewer who had done a considerable amount of homework on this subject. I quote as follows—

40% or 1 200 of the 3 000 miners who worked at Radium Hill up to its closure in 1962 have either died of, or have developed cancer.

The death toll is rising as more are discovering they have cancer.

Workers were contaminated with radon gas at a time when the dangers of uranium mining were internationally known. As early as 1920 radon was a known killer.

Safety procedures at the mine were substandard. Most miners did not know of the tremendous risk they were taking. Many miners are still not aware of the danger. Other miners have only recently found out, after public statements were made. Medical examinations have now shown a number have developed cancer. None were privately informed.

None were privately informed by the companies concerned.

For the sake of this particular debate, the Premier suggested to this House that the generation of nuclear energy was the safest form of energy production known to man. I found that to be an astonishing claim. He said we must consider all phases of the cycle; but he did not inform the House of the name or source of his authority. As a member of the Opposition, I find it particularly galling to listen to such unsubstantiated arguments from a man as experienced as the Premier.

Certainly neither my colleague, the member for Collie, nor I, has made any comment to indicate there have not been deaths caused by the mining of coal, the mining of iron ore, or the drilling for oil. No-one has suggested from this side that a significant number of accidents have not occurred in those fields.

Mr Jamieson: In any industry using heavy equipment.

Mr BRYCE: We have not said there were no deaths in industries, as the member for Welshpool has said, where heavy equipment was being operated by human beings. Obviously there will be accidents.

But it is a complete and utter distortion of the truth for the Premier and the Minister for Fuel and Energy to say that deaths and significantly dangerous accidents have not occurred with this particular type of technology. The member for Collie demonstrated on the grounds of cost, on the grounds of the hazards involved, and on the grounds of available alternatives which exist in this State, that there is no need or justification for

this Government to race in boots and all, without qualification, to endorse the building of nuclear power stations in Western Australia.

In very recent times the Premier has reinforced in the minds of the people of Western Australia to the fairly vulgar degree to which he is prepared to go to denigrate people who do not agree with him 100 per cent. We have seen how he treated Dr Chittleborough. We have seen how he treated the now Minister for Health over the Tresillian affair. We have seen how he split the Country Party and forced half of its members out of the coalition. We have seen how he treats his own members on the Government benches. We saw what happened recently when the member for Gascoyne was instructed to leave the Chamber if he could not refrain from interjecting.

Mr B. T. Burke: And didn't he get dirty?

Mr BRYCE: When the member for Gascoyne left the Chamber in a huff, he made a rude gesture to either the Premier or the Leader of the Opposition. This is how the Premier treats people with whom he works. Anyone who dares to raise a genuine, logical reservation or question about anything the Premier proposes to do, whether it is to close Tresillian to get the people there removed from his own backyard, whether it is the closure of a railway line, or whether it relates to any development project, the Premier resorts to blackguarding all such people as subversives, obstructionists, fifth columnists or fellow travellers. Apparently anyone who is not 100 per cent in agreement with him is irresponsibly subverting the economy and social security of the State.

I shall conclude on this point by emphasising that that in itself is a very dangerous frame of mind for any leader of any political party of any political system to lapse into.

The Premier really enjoys dressing up in a colonel's uniform and enjoys dishing out rather British military discipline to his own members. The Government Whip, just like the Minister who sits in front of him, also jumps to his tune and says, "Yes, sir, how high, sir." When the Premier says, "Jump", they all do so, in a very regimented fashion, and very well.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: That is why so many people in Western Australia have been defamed by this particular individual—the Leader of the Government. Any protestor, or anyone who has taken a different view is denigrated. It is a pity that none of the Premier's researchers have researched these matters to the same depth as we have.

Sir Charles Court: Is this giving you personal satisfaction?

Mr BRYCE: This particular issue is a fine example of the people the Premier has denigrated. The Premier has denigrated, in the most highly possible personal terms, anyone who has disagreed with him on this issue. The Premier grossly distorts their point of view and denigrates them as people who go about the business of subverting this society.

Sir Charles Court: You are saying that, not me.

Mr BRYCE: The Premier is an individual who stoops to the lowest measures possible personally to denigrate people who do not agree with him. I am prepared to take this from him; I can take all he dishes out; but there are innocent people removed from politics who are entitled to their perfectly valid views without abuse. People are entitled to have differences of opinion with the leader of this State in respect of a wide range of issues. They do not deserve the degree of abuse they receive.

When the Premier returned from overseas—having failed dismally to attract a great package of investment capital—just to make sure he had not failed in the eyes of the people, he announced to the people of Western Australia that a nuclear power station would be built. He made that statement so that the shine would not be taken off his trip.

When the Premier made this announcement the SEC went into a state of panic. The SEC had not anticipated the announcement. I have been told, on very good authority, the commission learnt of this from the newspapers. Its officers learnt through the Premier's Press release that the State was planning a nuclear power station.

The Premier has set himself the task of abusing and denigrating anyone who dares to raise his head and question the authority or the validity of what he is doing. It is a great pity for the standard of political debate in this State that the Premier is not prepared to listen to other people's points of view. He is ready to jump on anyone who does not agree with him.

Mr O'Connor: Why not get back to the motion and end this personal attack?

Mr BRYCE: It is not a personal attack at all.

Sir Charles Court: Will you promise to keep this up until the election?

Mr BRYCE: I just hope the Premier keeps up his personal denigration of these people until the election. I hope he picks off all the community groups as he has been doing.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: The day that people in this State succumb to the temptation to be silenced by this man will be the day that democracy begins to die. That is the basic attitude to this particular question. It is not a Bill before the House; it is a debate on whether the State ought to have nuclear power.

Leave to Continue Speech

Mr BRYCE: Mr Speaker, there are some pearls of wisdom I have yet to relate to the House, therefore I move—

That I be given leave to continue my speech at the next sitting of the House.

Motion put and passed.

Debate thus adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 12.45 to 2.15 p.m.

**TRANSPORT COMMISSION ACT
AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 22nd November.

MR McIVER (Avon) [2.15 p.m.]: This is a very important measure; it has taken several years to compile the information to prepare it. I want to say right at the outset the Opposition is bitterly disappointed with the Bill, and as the debate unfolds I will give the reason for our opposition.

When the announcement about this legislation was first made to the Parliament and to the public of Western Australia, we thought it would offer very tangible alterations to the transport policy in this State. Unfortunately that will not be the case. In fact, there will be very little change to the status quo.

I will deal with the clauses of the Bill at a later stage, but I would like to refer to the motivation for this measure. The transport industry is very important to any State, and its various facets are most complex. In Western Australia most people are interested in their particular mode of transport and as long as they are catered for, they are not interested in the repercussion of decisions in other areas. For years the Opposition has said we must have a comprehensive policy to suit all needs. Unfortunately the Bill does not provide that policy.

When this legislation was announced to the State by the Premier and the Minister through Press releases, television, and other media, it received more publicity than Sophia Loren would have had had she walked through this Chamber topless. When I read the Press releases I believed

the legislation would be dynamic and it would really change the transport system in this State.

Mr Crane: Come to the point!

Mr McIVER: We were very disillusioned. In fact, the Opposition opposes the measure in its entirety.

The Southern Western Australian Transport Study was very comprehensive. In his second reading speech the Minister complimented all those people associated with the report for their work. I concur wholeheartedly in those compliments. However, when theorists and economists set out on such an inquiry with no shortage of finance, it is like giving strawberries and cream to children at a picnic—they love it. They draw up a policy on paper and insist that it has to work. The theorists and economists do not have to deal with the people associated with the industry. They do not have direct contact with the companies and all those people whose day-to-day lives are affected by changes in the transport system. They do their job and that is it.

The officers of the Transport Commission and of the various companies and Government instrumentalities have to take the flak, the backwash of the criticisms of the Government's transport policy. So it is not unexpected to find that already the Government has come under fire from the Farmers' Union and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association. These are the only two organisations whom I know to have expressed criticism as their remarks have appeared in the Press. There may be others of whom I am not aware at this stage.

Mr Coyne: They were only low-key objections.

Mr McIVER: It depends on what the member for Murchison-Eyre means by "low-key". I know that often he is defeated at golf at Mt. Magnet. He might say, "I was only at low key" when in fact he was trying very hard. So, that expression is open to debate.

Mr Clarko: He never loses, not only at golf.

Mr Jamieson: I saw him in a loss situation last night!

Mr McIVER: Members know what led up to the SWATS report. I believe we should examine the finances of SWATS, who was involved and other relevant factors because it is important in relation to this Bill; it is these recommendations upon which the Government is basing its policy.

Naturally, as the Opposition spokesman on transport, I was very interested in the establishment and progress of SWATS. On Wednesday, the 2nd August, 1978, I asked the Minister the following question—

(1) Would the Minister advise—

(a) the total cost of the Southern Western Australia Transport Study Report

The reply I received was that, to date, it was \$602 720.

Later that month, when the situation with SWATS changed and the study returned to the country area, I asked another question, this time on the 22nd August, assuming additional finance would be involved. Again, I was told that the total cost to that time was \$602 720.

Even as late as Tuesday, the 27th November, 1979—that is, yesterday—despite the work which has gone on with SWATS and the additional people who have been involved, I was informed that the total cost remained at \$602 720.

Mr Sibson: Good housekeeping.

Mr McIVER: I appreciate the amount of work and research necessary to extract this sort of figure. However, when the Government is dealing with public money, the Opposition has a responsibility to see how it is being spent. That was one of the reasons I asked my questions.

I also asked the Minister the composition of the SWATS team. The Minister answered as follows—

	\$
(1) Team leader (Wilbur Smith & Associates Pty. Ltd.).....	139 836
Economists	78 909
Computer Analysts	128 708
Dr Affleck*	5 870
P. A. Consultants	69 813
Administrative and office costs	57 012
Printing of main and technical reports.....	25 289
From Director General of Transport.....	44 594
Other team members	52 689
	\$602 720

*No team.

Members should bear in mind that "other team members" comprises Westrail officers, officers from the Transport Commission, and any other people associated with the formation of transport policy; they were co-opted to sit on the study team.

When the present Minister for Transport took over the reins of his new portfolio, the SWATS situation was placed in his lap. I must be fair and accept that at the time he was not fully conversant with SWATS. He had to make himself familiar with the situation. The Minister took a team of officers to the country to ascertain

the opinion of people in the country. However, he spoke only to those people who were interested principally in their own little environment; he did not consider people's attitudes regarding the broad spectrum of transport.

In other words, the Minister and his team spoke to those people who were interested only in getting everything carted at reduced rates to their doors, and who would employ that mode of transport only if it suited them; they were not worried about the total transport system within Western Australia. Many of the people who discussed this matter with the Minister and his team of advisers were very selfish, narrow, and warped in their ideas.

The Minister was the spokesman for the group; he did most of the talking. When departments were criticised, people were not permitted to follow up that criticism and outline in technical detail the implications of what they were requesting, and how it would affect the people. I would say that was a very poor exercise indeed. It was a waste of time and a waste of the public's money.

Having said that, I believe the position of Director General of Transport should be examined closely when Mr Knox retires. I am not conducting a witch hunt against the present Director General of Transport. I believe he has done his job conscientiously as far as Governments have allowed him to do so. But when he was appointed to fill this very important position with its very high salary, he was appointed to advise the Government. Surely more of the policies he puts forward should be adopted. They have not been because many of them were politically unpalatable and, consequently, were changed to suit the purpose of the Government of the day.

I wonder whether this position was really necessary in the first place. I hasten to add I believe it was merely a matter of political gimmickry.

Mr O'Connor: Why didn't you abolish it while you were in Government?

Mr McIVER: That question really surprises me, as the Minister should know that position was established by an Act of Parliament and it requires a further Act of Parliament to abolish it. If our Government had been able to pass such legislation through this House, would he really expect the upper House to have accepted it, especially when the position was established by a Liberal Government?

Mr Sibson: That is a defeatist attitude.

Mr McIVER: As the member for Bunbury usually sleeps before lunch, it is not unusual to hear him at this time. He needs to be aware the reserves match is over and the main match is now in progress. If he wants to interject he should wait until he comes to a subject about which he has some knowledge.

Mr Sibson: You can only drive trains.

Mr McIVER: Considering the amount of money allocated to this department, I cannot understand why the commission generally could not take over these duties. The position should be examined closely when the director general retires, because the expense involved with his department appears unnecessary and unwarranted.

When the director general does put forward a recommendation it is never put into effect completely. This Bill indicates the programme will be implemented within seven years rather than the recommended 15 years. To refresh the minds of members, at the completion of the SWATS report we had a further co-director's report compiled by the director general and the former Commissioner of Railways (Mr Pascoe).

Mr O'Connor: A good man.

Mr McIVER: No-one would deny that. Their recommendation was that the SWATS report be implemented in its entirety, not piecemeal as the Government is doing with this Bill. Does the Minister for Transport disagree with that?

Mr Rushton: They support what we are doing.

Mr McIVER: I am only quoting from the report in which it is strongly recommended that the "D" regulations be implemented over a period of 15 years, not in half that time. So the Minister is implementing a Liberal Party policy. The Minister will have an opportunity to dispute that when he replies. Those two gentlemen indicated it was essential the SWATS report should not be handled in a piecemeal fashion.

The Minister may have presented his submission to the Cabinet in the same form, because a Press article indicated the Cabinet had instructed the Minister to obtain further information which was to be collated and brought before Cabinet. So I do not hold the Minister solely responsible; the Government collectively is to blame.

Despite several years of research and the expenditure of thousands of dollars to consultants, economists and other people, it is quite obvious this decision was made at a Cabinet meeting with perhaps two or three people involved.

Do we need to call for these reports on these complex problems dealing with transport rather than leave these matters with the people who are responsible for transport, and who have been in the game for years?

Mr Rushton: Would you tell me why you are opposing the Bill?

Mr McIVER: I do not intend to rush into this very important issue. The Minister will get that information as it unfolds. I wish to make certain valid and pertinent points in the unlimited time available to me. If the Minister is patient he will get the answer to his question.

The main changes after the 14th April will be that, in specified zones, hauliers will be able to cart a maximum of an additional 9 tonnes of freight. For instance, a haulier carting freight to Albany who may have been permitted to carry 9 tonnes of goods, can now carry a further 9 tonnes if his vehicle is large enough. In essence, it means the LCL—the lower than cart load—can be carried on the most economical basis for the person who will utilise that freight. He will have a choice.

This sounds all right in theory, but on this matter there is a great deal involved which needs to be examined. I suppose in the long term we will see how it works only after it has been implemented and after it has progressed with trial and error. It will affect Westrail in the long term; perhaps not freight rates, but as it concerns individuals who work in freight sheds in centres such as Kewdale and other country areas.

The Minister has given an assurance that no retrenchments will be made and when a job becomes redundant as a result of this policy the Minister has said there will be no change. No doubt the person who worked in that redundant job will be transferred to another section of the operations of Westrail.

This is an important matter and I would like the Minister to give us a double assurance on it, because these individuals commenced working in a particular section of Westrail at 15 years of age. For 39 to 40 years they have served with that particular department, during which time various Governments have been in office. These people are more than numbers on a pay sheet and they should be recognised personally and the services they have rendered should be recognised also. They should not be put into another section of Westrail where they will suffer a drop in income.

It is of no use the Government saying, "We will do this", because its track record in relation to these problems in the past has been very poor. This is one of the major reasons railway unions

are opposed to this legislation. They are not at all happy about it.

I make these comments on behalf of railway unions to emphasise the point, because they feel redundancies will occur for the reasons I have outlined. The unions are concerned also with the amount of freight which road hauliers have been allowed to transport and they do not want Westrail to be left with the rubbish. This is a matter which is exercising the minds of railway union members.

Road hauliers carry the bulk of the freight for Woolworths and large chain stores in Bunbury, for example, and Westrail is left to carry flowers, plants, and fragile consignments. If we are to have a competitive situation, Westrail must have freedom to set its rates on these commodities and there must be no political interference.

Years ago Westrail used to carry stock and I can recall that on a Tuesday night after the stock sales at Northam, train after train took stock to the metropolitan area. However, under the new rates scheme a special rate was fixed for stock and, of course, road hauliers were able to undercut Westrail after the war. If Westrail charged £11 a wagon, the road hauliers would say, "We will cart it for £7." If members put themselves in the position of the farmers, they would realise it was logical for the farmers to use the service provided by the road hauliers. For £7 a wagon the road haulier would pick up the stock and deliver it to the consignee's door.

Of course, as the years have passed the road haulier has made inroads into the stock traffic. However, when it comes to individual stock carting—whether two horses or two cows are involved—who obtains the work then? The farmers are not interested in the road haulier; they go to Westrail.

No reference is made in the Bill to the common carrier clause. I am open to correction, but I assume that to remove the common carrier clause the Government would have to introduce amending legislation to Parliament.

Mr Rushton: We will do that next session.

Mr McIVER: I just wanted clarification on that, because the matter was not mentioned in this Bill. I have had little time to research the legislation properly since it was introduced. Under the common carrier clause if a farmer wants to use Westrail for the cartage of two or three sheep, he will have the opportunity to do so at the rates set by Westrail.

Little excitement will be created in the road transport industry as a result of this legislation, when we bear in mind the fact that the railways

have reduced the rate for carting steel from a special rate to an "M" rate. Under the old rate the cost of carting steel from Kewdale to Northam was \$16.80 for small quantities. That is the first-class rate. It has now been reduced to the "M" rate which is \$8 for a minimum of 20 tonnes. That is not a bad rate for 20 tonnes of steel to be carted from Kewdale to Northam.

We have heard a great deal from the Government in relation to the Bill about the fact that freedom of choice should be offered and it is imperative that this is the case.

I want to turn now to the carting of wool. After the 14th April a farmer will be able to cart wool if Westrail does not provide a wagon at a siding four days after the time of watering. If Westrail cannot get a railcar into a siding four days after watering, it does not deserve to cart the wool. Of course, there are sections of rail in Western Australia which have limited services. The Darkan locality has always been a thorn in the side of Westrail as far as the delivery of trucks is concerned. As the Minister knows, road trucks go to these isolated areas and collect the wool.

Mr Rushton: Are you advocating it should all be done by Westrail?

Mr McIVER: The Minister should not get excited. The SWATS report said this facility should be expanded. In fact, the SWATS report should be called the "Mc" report, because I put forward exactly the same proposals as are in that report, and I charged the Government nothing for doing so. I have put forward this policy since 1968 and it is included in the SWATS report. It did not cost me thousands of dollars to work it out.

In an area in which both railway and road services operate, if the person concerned is likely to be disadvantaged, he should be able to cart the wool himself if it is not possible to send a railway truck there to pick it up. It is of paramount importance that Westrail should not lose wool traffic; if it does the deficit per annum will be increased. That is a commodity which must be retained at all costs, and I have made that statement at meetings of farmers.

Mr Cowan: At all costs to whom?

Mr McIVER: I will deal with that in a minute. I do not want to become too involved because I know the member for Stirling has a motion on the notice paper with regard to the carting of wool.

The farmers will have to realise that if they want to cart their own wool, right throughout the State, and have open slather on that commodity they will impose additional costs on other commodities such as grain. It is essential they appreciate this point, particularly as there will be

an increase in fuel costs in the next few years. We have seen signs of increased fuel costs already. Statements have been made in the Press, and although the Federal Minister, Mr Anthony, has not said it outright, he has indicated there could be rationing.

I can understand the frustration of the primary producers because of today's costs. I can understand their wanting to cart their own wool, but they have to look at the overall situation. They have to allow for the farmers living in isolated areas who will be affected greatly if this legislation is introduced.

The income to Westrail from wool, each year, is \$3.445 million. The Minister has quoted in the Press a figure of \$1 million. I do not know from where he got that figure, but it is false. The figure provided to a member in another place a couple of weeks ago was \$3 445 million as the total income to Westrail from the cartage of wool. I assume that figure is authentic because it came from the Minister.

For years farming organisations, and the pastoralists and graziers, have been pressing to be allowed to cart their own wool. As I have indicated, that will transfer the problem of costs to the cartage of grain, and those costs already are too high. I concede that point.

Mr Cowan: Not every farmer wants to cart his own wool.

Mr McIVER: I agree with the member, but they cannot have the best of both worlds. They want to utilise only that part of Westrail operations which suits them.

Mr Cowan: What is wrong with that?

Mr McIVER: They want to cart their own wool, and they want the cheapest rates. However, they are not worried about others who must use the rail service and subsidise those who cart their own wool.

Mr Cowan: The farmers use the railways more than anybody else.

Mr McIVER: I am surprised the member for Merredin is interjecting because his statement in the *Merredin Mercury* a short time ago was absolutely scandalous.

Mr Cowan: Why was it scandalous?

Mr McIVER: The member made a statement in an endeavour to gain some political capital. He advocated the closure of the Bruce Rock-Pantapin line.

Mr Cowan: No, I did not.

Mr McIVER: Yes the member did.

Mr Cowan: The member for Avon is sounding more and more like the Government. The Government is making similar statements: If the cartage of wool is taken away from Westrail other costs will be increased immediately!

Mr McIVER: I know the Acting Speaker (Mr Watt) will not allow me to debate this with the member for Merredin. The situation is that if farmers want to persevere with their claim to cart their own wool, they will dig their own graves—not now, but for the future.

Mr Cowan: If there is a bad season and the grain crop drops to something like two million tonnes, we do not hear statements to the effect that Westrail will close its lines. We are talking about commodities of probably 300 000 tonnes.

Mr McIVER: I appreciate that the income from the wool clip may drop because of a reduction in prices. Let me refer to the area covered by the member for Mt. Marshall—the Kalannie and Bonnie Rock lines—where the farmers rely on Westrail for the transport of their wool, particularly when the Kalannie section of the rail is closed. That wool is picked up by Westrail road trucks. We have to look at this matter in perspective, and ask what has motivated the primary producer to want to cart his own wool.

It is very frustrating for a farmer to go to a siding where a rail truck is not easily accessible and, after manoeuvring his vehicle to get it into position, he opens the doors of the rail truck to find the floor to be extremely dirty and useless to him.

When this new policy is implemented the best thing we can do is to rule a line under it, forget the past, and go forward in co-operation. We should go forward with a uniform effort, and everyone will have to play his part if the transport policy is to work. It will commence with the human element, whether it is in Westrail or whether it is with the private contractors who do the job.

At one time wagons were delivered to sidings, and usually the guard of a train or a transport officer would allocate those wagons to such-and-such a siding. They were delivered for the loading of wool. The situation is not so bad now that we have standard gauge because the trucks are very suitable.

The situation is frustrating and that is the major reason farmers want to cart their own wool at their own convenience. However, there are some forms of transport which we must retain.

Mr Cowan: What about costs?

Mr McIVER: With regard to costs, if all primary producers were to accept this policy, and if they were all to utilise Westrail services for the cartage of wool, there would be an increase in revenue and most certainly costs could be reviewed with the idea of reducing them.

I am promoting the cartage of wool by Westrail, but the submissions from the wool brokers, and others associated with the industry, will have to be examined. In no way do those people want the status quo changed, and nor do the majority of farmers. If a referendum on this matter was held it would be found that the majority would want the status quo retained for the reasons I have outlined. They do not want costs added to other commodities, such as grain.

Questions are asked with regard to concessions allowed on the cartage of iron ore. However, two different commodities are involved. Wool is carted only at certain times of the year, and it is carted on lines which desperately need the freight to make them efficient. I refer to branch lines such as the Bruce Rock-Pantapin-York line. If superphosphate is delivered, and Westrail cannot backload wool, members can imagine the deficit involved on those branch lines. The Government of the day would have the strongest argument to close those lines. If farmers are to cart their own wool, the freight on other commodities will increase.

Mr Cowan: What percentage of the total rail freight would wool comprise?

Mr McIVER: I cannot answer that off-the-cuff.

Mr Cowan: It is a little over 2 per cent.

Mr McIVER: Many people cart wool in areas where there is no rail. In respect of iron ore, we are looking at block work, because thousands of tonnes of iron ore is transported throughout the 12 months of the year from Koolyanobbing through to Kwinana on wagons which are specifically designed to cart it. Those trains have only a driver, an observer, and a guard, and the efficiency of that operation is terrific. However, in respect of wool traffic, the train must stop at every little siding on the branch line to pick up wool, and this occurs for only three or four months of the year.

Mr Cowan: One way to encourage it is to put wheat on the railway.

Mr McIVER: I promise the member I will deal with wheat in a moment. I want to try to get the message across that we must have co-operation.

Although the Opposition is totally opposed to the Bill, I will deal with its clauses in the

Committee stage. They are only machinery clauses and more or less only delete and add words to the principal Act. At this time I think the story has to be told if we are going to make this transport policy work. Therefore, irrespective of the request from the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, it is vital that in the long term the matter of farmers using their own vehicles be considered because of the repercussions it will have. No instrumentality can afford to lose \$3 million a year. It is as simple as that.

If the people who belong to the farmers and graziers' associations want branch lines to be retained, they must show their sincerity and use the lines.

Mr Stephens: Where do you get this loss of \$3 million? Even Westrail did not claim it was that much.

Mr McIVER: I did not say it was a loss. I said no instrumentality can afford to lose revenue of \$3.55 million.

We must consider also the hypothetical question of freedom of choice. But when we are talking about transport, we must have control, otherwise utter chaos will result. One has only to consider the other States in Australia the policies of which are not as good as ours to realise the mess they are getting into as a result of their lack of strict control over transport operations. I do not want to dwell on that because I will say more about it later.

We must get the message through to Westrail that co-operation must exist between it and primary producers. If a certain truck is in the yard, Westrail employees should not have to ask the commission if it can be utilised; there must be negotiation in respect of freight rates on the site. If a farmer says he is shearing and asks when the trucks will be consigned and he is told they will be consigned in two days' time, then he should be able to work out a freight rate with Westrail on the spot. That must occur if Westrail is to be competitive, as it must be.

We must have greater flexibility and more teamwork than has occurred in the past.

The matter of wheat was raised. Although it is not mentioned in the Bill, the Minister mentioned wheat in his speech. Of course, the third schedule to the Act will have to be brought to Parliament again to be amended.

Last season nearly 250 000 tonnes of wheat were carted to the respective ports by illegal operators. That is a great deal of revenue which Westrail did not receive.

Mr Cowan: It is not illegal to cart wheat.

Mr McIVER: Let us sort that out now. A farmer may cart his own wheat to the port. However, he cannot cart wheat belonging to his brother, his uncle, or his cousin; nor can a contractor who has not a licence. I know of a contractor who carted in excess of 30 000 tonnes of wheat illegally.

Mr Sibson: What did you do about it?

Mr McIVER: Hello, here is the "B"-grader again.

The same situation applies with superphosphate; a person can cart his own super, but not that of his neighbour or his relations. But how many of them do it? In all fairness, if I were a farmer in Morawa or Perenjori and I thought I could get a truckload of super up to my farm, I would do it; but that is the law.

Mr Sibson: You just said it was illegal.

Mr McIVER: What are we going to do with him!

After the 1st November, 1980, farmers will be permitted to cart their wheat only to the grain head, which is where it should go. When one considers the amount of money farmers have invested through CBH in grain-handling facilities, one wonders why they should want to bypass such facilities in order to save a few dollars. Of course, as is the case in all walks of life there is always an element of a few who will spoil the situation for all. However, the fact remains that over the last five years Westrail has lost millions of dollars through illegal carting.

I omitted to make a point when referring to wool. I do not know why the Minister for Transport hedges and fools around with Press statements. He should tell the farmers straight that they cannot cart their own wool. Irrespective of whether an election is impending, the farmers must know where they stand. I represent a large agricultural area, and I have never made any secret of my position. I will be judged on the decision I have made. Surely the Government should be prepared to do that. Let the Minister tell them straight that we cannot afford to permit farmers to cart their own wool, and that is the reason it is prohibited. Whether it is seven years or 15 years hence, I cannot for the life of me understand how the cartage of wool will be regulated. It is a commodity which must be handled by Westrail because of its bulk, and Westrail must retain the revenue.

Mr Stephens: Is Northam in a free transport zone?

Mr McIVER: Not in respect of wool, but in respect of other commodities it is. Under an

amendment made to the Transport Commission Act several years ago when the alumina project at Pinjarra was mooted, areas within 100 kilometres of the Perth GPO were declared free.

I think I have given members the main theme of my message. It is up to members opposite to assist to get the message home to farming organisations rather than to hinder. We must let farming organisations know how important it is not to try to pick up a few votes on the cheap. That is the important thing; it is the important issue.

Mr Jamieson: What about seizing their trucks when they get caught illegally carting, like they do with the fishermen who get caught fishing illegally.

Mr McIVER: To continue—

Mr Sibson: You are ignoring the member for Welshpool.

Mr McIVER: With such an important measure before the House, it is important to make this point. I also want to touch on the second reading speech of the Minister. In that speech he said—

At the end of the policy's implementation, we will have a stronger and more independent Westrail, free to concentrate on doing all those transport jobs it does well, actively seeking out traffic in the open market place, quoting competitive rates, and "packaging" its services from door to door, fully integrating them into the road transport connections at each end of the journey.

Of course, that will be only as strong as the Government of the day permits it to be. The various clauses in the Bill give to the commission special powers and, most certainly, great discretion; although the Bill is mostly one of regulation and gazettal. It will be up to the Government of the day how strong it makes the powers.

The allocation of funds is important, as is the unaffected administration. That brings me to the point that if ever the position of Director General of Transport were abolished, I would hope not to see a ministry of transport with a bigger bureaucracy and more public servants to be a buffer between the Minister and his commissioners. I hope there will always be free access; and the commissioners should not have to go through various channels of the Public Service to reach the Minister. That is why I am opposed to a ministry of transport.

I have been speaking to people who have far greater knowledge of the transport field than I do.

They have also indicated such fears to me; so I am not speaking just from the top of my head.

In the second reading speech, the Minister also said—

The users of transport will benefit from a new freedom of choice. Where rail suits their purposes, they will be free to use rail; where road transport suits, they will be free to use road. The new competition between the suppliers of transport will work to the positive advantage of the users of transport. The market place will replace the present restrictions as the major source of discipline to ensure that users' requirements are met at reasonable cost.

The requirements of the users cannot be met by Westrail unless they are permitted to cater for door-to-door services with Westrail vehicles. That is not done now. If Westrail were to enter into the competitive field, it would have to be able to deliver its goods in the isolated areas. In the attempt to be competitive, it should deliver the goods from door to door, in the same way as the private road hauliers do.

I have strongly emphasised the points made in the second reading speech and I do not want to traverse that ground again; but the Minister said that the morale of railwaymen was very high, and that there was a terrific feeling and a terrific atmosphere. I cannot find the relevant part of the speech at the moment. However, that was the gist of the message.

I inform the Minister—and I have said it in this House on a previous occasion; members can check *Hansard*—that the morale of the railwaymen has never been at a lower ebb. That does not apply only to the platform porter whose duties are to sweep the platform and keep the windows of the station master's office clean; it applies also to a lot of the senior officers. It saddens me when I speak with people who have served the railways for years and who say, "Well, I have only 12 months to go, and then I am retiring." This sort of attitude is not good when one expects all of the railwaymen to play their part, if the policy the Government is going to implement is to work.

One of the first things the Minister must do—and he has indicated that he will have talks with the union officials before the 14th April to receive feedback on what he is going to implement—is to make that a top priority. There is no point in speaking just to the commissioner and his subordinates. The Minister must talk to the people at a lower level. He should obtain their opinions. He should induce them to speak freely

because he wants to know. Members will find that what I am saying in this Chamber this afternoon is "spot-on".

One of the first things the Minister has to do is to raise the morale of the railwaymen. What he said in the second reading speech is utter nonsense and rubbish, because it does not portray the true situation.

One of the reasons the morale is low is that the people can see their promotional opportunities and their future being taken away from them. I spoke a while ago about night and afternoon station masters who will be removed from the great southern line. Such decisions are being made at present. I do not think there is any real haste for this sort of thing. Such decisions really disturb the people involved.

Departmental officers have been going around seeing what savings can be made. They have been cutting down, perhaps, on two hours of Saturday time in a goods shed, or on some other small job. However, the theorists up on the top floor are receiving in excess of \$20 000 a year; and more of them are being appointed.

There may be other reasons; but this is what really hurts the average worker. He thinks there is no future in the railways for him. After years of conscientious application to his job he resigns, or he works in a half-hearted manner, which certainly will not help the Government make its transport policy work. Westrail will put trucks into sidings, and the workers will say, "To hell with that. Let them load them themselves." Once the initiative is removed from the worker, the employer is in trouble. That is what the Government is doing at the present time.

I move to the Bill itself. As I indicated at the outset, the Opposition is opposed to the Bill before us. We are opposed to it in its entirety.

Mr Rushton: Tell me why.

Mr McIVER: As we see it, the Bill does not go far enough as far as transport is concerned. We feel it is giving a rubber-stamp to the Government to implement its policy as it wishes—selectively, to the detriment of others in the transport industry. It is a case where the transport commissioner and the Minister for Transport will have additional powers under the provisions of the Bill to regulate and gazette, without giving to Parliament the opportunity to debate the various changes they may make.

The attitude of members on this side of the House to this Bill is similar to that expressed in relation to the SEC legislation which we debated recently. The Government seems to be following this sort of trend. It wants to remove the

opportunity for the Opposition to express its views and debate changes.

Those are the main reasons we oppose the Bill. We wish to elaborate on certain clauses during the Committee stage. For example, clause 3 progressively removes certain measures. We would like a full explanation from the Minister, because we are unable to understand the verbiage in this clause. We may accept or reject the clause in its present form as a result of the explanation.

I do not want to take up the time of the House by referring to every clause we intend to discuss during the Committee stage. Therefore, in conclusion, I should like to repeat what I said when I commenced speaking on this measure. We are bitterly disappointed with the provisions contained in the Bill. We feel they will do little to improve the transport situation in Western Australia. Nowhere in the Bill is provision made for road hauliers, particularly in relation to freight rates about which they are mainly concerned. No effort is made in the legislation to control the various facets of the industry.

The Bill is concerned mainly with Westrail and the effects of the provisions on it. Nowhere is there reference to subcontractors, owner-drivers, and others involved in the transport industry. It is all very well for the association to say it wants to have the first bite of the cherry; but, of course, some members of the association are very concerned about the provisions.

Although I have been critical of the Bill, I have tried to be constructive. I have personal knowledge of the transport industry and have consulted people involved in it. I do not believe I have wasted the time of the Parliament on this matter. I trust the Minister has taken note of what I have said and that he will discuss it with the people concerned with a view to putting my suggestions into effect.

The Opposition opposes this measure.

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [3.25 p.m.]: I rise to support the member for Avon in his remarks on behalf of the Opposition.

Mr Shalders: Avon lady!

MR T. H. JONES: Is the member now turning himself into a professor? I usually do not get very far when I stand on my feet initially and I certainly did not get very far today.

Mr Blaikie: The only trouble with your pronunciation is it is out in the middle of the sticks.

MR T. H. JONES: We will get on to our learned teachers in Parliament and see who is right and who is wrong.

Mr Clarko: I think you are right.

MR T. H. JONES: That is the first time the member for Karrinyup and I have agreed since he entered this place approximately three years ago.

Mr Shalders: It was six years ago. It just shows how time flies.

Mr Sodeman: Regardless of the pronunciation of the word "Avon", it comes out the same way in *Hansard*.

MR T. H. JONES: There is the "hurricane lamp" on the job. From the Opposition's point of view this is an excellent piece of window-dressing on the part of the Government prior to the forthcoming election. Anyone who reads the Minister's lengthy introductory speech on the Bill and considers its clauses will see the Government has attempted to explain to the people that it is endeavouring to overcome transport problems. The Minister took a long time to elaborate on the Bill and if members look at the Bill they will find a number of matters to which the Minister referred. However, as happens frequently in this place, a number of the important changes envisaged in the legislation did not receive the attention of the Minister during his introductory speech on the Bill.

All we can assume is that, just prior to an election, the Government is trying to spell out to the people that it is attempting to look into the problems of transportation in this State. As I said, this Bill is merely a nice piece of window-dressing.

I should like to refer to the timing of this Bill which has been introduced at the end of the parliamentary session. The Minister has said it is an important piece of legislation and one would assume, in fairness to the organisations and individuals concerned—the trade unions and employer groups associated with our transport system—the Government would have made more time available during which we could discuss the changes proposed. However, such was not the case.

As my leader indicated yesterday in this place, we have had the spectacle where this Bill has arrived late. Last week when I handled the amendments to the SEC legislation I had insufficient time to research the matter properly. The same situation arose in the case of the North West Gas Development (Woodside) Agreement Bill which is being handled by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It is a great pity the Government has not given the Opposition more time to discuss the ramifications of the provisions contained in this important Bill. We should have been able to consult the parties affected by the legislation.

Mr Shalders: You could always move to extend the Government's term for another year if you would like to have more time to consider it.

Mr T. H. JONES: One wonders whether the Government will be here to implement this legislation which it is trying to sell to the people of Western Australia. Time alone will answer that question.

After the next election the Labor Party may be in office and, therefore, this legislation will be dealt with as it should have been and the provisions contained in this Bill will not remain on the Statute book.

The member for Avon mentioned the costs involved in investigations into the transport system. The Government is able to obtain all the information it requires from the Transport Commission. Mr Knox is a very able officer and is available to assist the Government. Why is it necessary to obtain the services of independent operators and to commission inquiries such as the SWATS inquiry? The Government has experts available to it. These experts have a great knowledge of the transport problems of Western Australia. Why should the taxpayer of this State be involved in additional expense? I would like the Minister to answer that. The experts available to the Government are highly paid and should be utilised in this manner. We cannot understand the necessity for obtaining alternative expertise to assist the Government with its problems.

This is in fact a Bill which is better dealt with in Committee than during the second reading debate. Anyone who has had the opportunity to examine the legislation will agree with me on that point. It must be appreciated that it is a Bill which will be governed by regulation and, as the member for Avon indicated, this is nothing new. This concept has been adopted increasingly by the Government. It is government by regulation, the decision is made by Cabinet and then approved by the Executive Council. No-one can deny that.

The energy Bill and numerous other Bills which have flowed through this Parliament during the current session are clear indications of that type of legislation and government to which the people of Western Australia are being subjected. It is government by regulation. Government by regulation means: the members of Parliament, the people who represent the taxpayers of Western Australia, do not have an opportunity to debate this type of legislation. This legislation is being introduced, a decision is made by Cabinet, it is approved by the Executive Council, and made law.

The Government is placing a formidable task on the Opposition in this State. The Government has decided that it will extend the requirements and the powers of the commission under the terms of this Bill. It will be a Bill of regulations which will become law in the manner prescribed during the current session. When Parliament resumes, the Opposition will have the opportunity to have the regulations disapproved.

In my opinion, this is not the way the Government should operate. It should be more specific in its terms. The Minister could not have spoken at the same length as he did on his second reading speech if he had had to speak to the clauses—the clauses and their content would prevent him from doing this.

I assume we have to consider the Government's policy embraced within the Bill, accepting that the implementation will be by regulation. The Government wishes to extend the power of the Minister and the commission.

Mr Rushton: The Minister would deny that; it is not a fact. The legislation has to come back here.

Mr T. H. JONES: Of course, the legislation returns and the Government allows the regulations to be laid on the Table of the House.

Mr Rushton: It has to come back by amendment to the Act.

Mr T. H. JONES: So they extend the Minister's powers under this Bill. We will look at this in the Committee stage. The Minister's powers and the commissioner's powers have been extended. That cannot be denied. The Minister could not have spoken for three-quarters of an hour on the legislation. The Minister read a speech indicating what the Government would do if it is returned after the next election. Many of the comments made in that speech were not in the second reading speech. The Minister cannot deny that.

Let us look at the changes which were mentioned in the second reading speech. In the main, the Minister indicated the seven-year programme which would, I understand, according to the SWATS report take 15 years to complete. One has to look at the Liberal Party policy to read into the Bill what changes can be expected in our road and Westrail transportation systems over the seven year period. In the reading of this Bill there cannot be found any mention of the policy for the next seven years. It is not stated. It is merely window-dressing and a cover-up.

I will now refer to the land freight transport policy for 1980. On page 1, under the photograph of Sir Charles Court, is the following statement—

Westrail has a special place in the new Policy.

On page 15 under (4)(c) it is stated—

... Westrail will be free to use its own services, provided private services are not available at suitable standards or competitive rates.

Is that giving Westrail an opportunity? How do Government members interpret that? Do they interpret it in the same way as I do? Is it that provided the private sector cannot cope, Westrail can go in and obtain a slice of the cherry?

On the first page under the signature of the Premier is the statement that "Westrail has a special place in the new Policy". That is on page 1, but if one looks through the policy which has been announced one will find that Westrail cannot operate on a commercial basis as far as transport in Western Australia is concerned.

On page 13 of the policy under the heading of, "This is how the policy will be implemented" is the following—

- (1) Road transport will be allowed greater freedoms for declared items of traffic in declared zones around main regional centres.

They have not been designated. This is the format of what we can expect. We all know the policy for Westrail in the past, but unfortunately a number of operators in this State wish to use Westrail only when it suits them. If there is a rail closure contemplated then right throughout the agricultural section there is great opposition to it. However, these people use Westrail when they want to, and use private transport when it suits them. This is the unfortunate situation which applies to Westrail in the competitive field of transport in this State. We have yet to be advised of the zone centres and regional centres.

On page 15 under item (4) it reads—

The special question of how far Westrail can go when competing with the private sector will be settled in the following way:

- (a) On rail, Westrail will become as free as any private operator to compete on a commercial basis.

Of course, this has to apply. Westrail is the only one that can provide that service on rail—it is mandatory. No-one else can provide that service because the rail facilities are not available to anyone else. Paragraph (4)(b) and (c) state—

(b) In-door-to-door services. Westrail will be free, on a commercial basis, to act as a "packager" of transport, linking rail to road transport, where required, to provide a door-to-door service.

(c) On road, Westrail will be free to use its own services, provided private services are not available at suitable standards or competitive rates.

Again, Westrail takes second place in our transport system. Why is it that, if Westrail can compete on a commercial basis a prohibition is applied?

On page 19 under the heading, "These Are the First Steps Towards Implementation" the policy reads—

From April 14, 1980, the following steps towards implementation of the new Land Freight Transport Policy will be taken:

... These licences will apply to loads of 9 tonnes or less.

... The load capacity of the vehicle may be greater than 9 tonnes, as long as the load is not. . . .

In my opinion, this will assist the private operators rather than our improve Westrail's operation within the State. One of the worst schemes is mentioned on page 29, under the heading, "This Is How Westrail Will Be Commercialised". It reads as follows—

In the next five years, major amounts anticipated to be expended are—

And it goes on—

- (a) \$58 million further expenditure for renewal of the Kwinana-Koolyanobbing standard gauge line, for which work is already in progress.
- (b) \$10 million for the upgrading of the Koolyanobbing-Kalgoorlie line.
- (c) \$14.5 million to upgrade the Kwinana-Picton Junction line.
- (d) \$3.5 million on re-railing the Kalgoorlie-Leonora line.
- (e) \$2.2 million on rerailing the Lake Grace-Hyden line and on other branch line upgrading projects.
- (f) \$16 million for locomotive additions and replacements.

No mention is made of an electrification programme in the next five years. When the closure of the Fremantle-Perth section of line was being debated in this place, the Minister said the Government had not forgotten the possibility of

electrification. Where in this five-year programme is provision made for electrification? I would like the Minister to point it out because I cannot find it. If it is there, it must be hidden. The Minister can shake his head as long as he likes, but this is the major programme.

On one hand the Government is saying, "This is how Westrail will be commercialised", and on the other hand it contradicts the policy. It expresses concern about the availability of fuel but does little or nothing in respect of the electrification of our metropolitan railways. If I am wrong and an amount is allocated for the electrification or extension of the metropolitan rail system, I would like the Minister to point it out.

It is a nice, handy document with which to try to indicate to the taxpayers of Western Australia that the Government is considering the problems. It says—

The Commissioner of Transport will have power, subject to the Minister, to apply or vary regulations, or to recommend subsidies wherever these are appropriate, to ensure that all communities receive an adequate service.

It is quite clear what will happen. The commissioner will have power to apply or vary regulations. They will be varied to suit the people who support the Government, particularly at election time. The Government will implement a policy which meets with the approval of its close friends in Western Australia.

This will be the approach to transport fuel—

Consumer choice and fuel conservation will be the main considerations in supporting trends in transport development.

The Minister knows we have a fuel problem on our hands at this very moment. He knows the position in regard to the availability of fuel from 1980 onwards. We should be looking to a programme to conserve our oil supplies and be embarking on the electrification of the rail system.

Mr H. D. Evans: Quite right.

Mr T. H. JONES: The writing is on the wall. Oil supplies are dwindling but we are extending the bus system in the metropolitan area, and it will become a problem. The Prime Minister announced last week that he is looking at the possibility of implementing a fuel rationing policy. This is in keeping with policies in other parts of the world. We know about the policy which has been implemented in New Zealand. The Government should be looking at lessening its

dependency on oil in the transport system. We require diesel oil for the railway and oil for the buses, so we are 100 per cent dependent on oil for our transport systems in this State.

We should be diversifying our activities and considering electrifying the rail system in this State to overcome the fuel problems which lay ahead.

I will have more to say in the Committee stage. I join with the member for Avon in opposing the legislation.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.03 p.m.

MR McPHARLIN (Mt. Marshall) [4.03 p.m.]: All of us were aware that any recommendations brought forward by the Southern Western Australia Transport Study would not be easy to implement. We were all looking forward to recommendations to streamline our transport industry. No member wants to see Westrail decline; it has served us well for many years. Westrail has been particularly valuable to farmers in the more isolated areas, and has become a part of the life and development of country districts.

Westrail officers concede there are areas of the service provided by the department which could be improved. I have spoken to the Westrail liaison officer, who informs me they are very concerned about the cost of breakages. The department does its best to investigate why these breakages occur, and how they can be overcome in the future.

The matter of a dual road and rail system is one which has been considered for many years. Those of us engaged in agricultural industries and who have used both rail and road transport realise the convenience and advantage of both methods. On many occasions, it is very convenient to have road transport drive onto one's property to load stock, grain, or whatever. In these cases, rail transport could not compete economically with road transport. However, when it comes to the transporting of heavy commodities, nothing can compete with rail; every farmer appreciates that fact.

In his second reading speech, the Minister made the following statement—

The Government recognises that a time will never come when the whole land freight transport system can be entirely abandoned to the exigencies of competition. Some subsidies and some regulations will always be necessary . . .

That is a fair comment. We have become used to the regulations which apply under the Transport Commission Act and we now accept there is a continuing need for the Westrail system to be

supported so that it can provide the transport service we require.

I should like the Minister to comment on some aspects of the legislation. We know our railways lose money each year. In fact, the Minister pointed out in his second reading speech that Australia-wide, railways lose some \$2 million a day. That is an astronomical sum. Fortunately, Westrail's share of that loss is only 3 or 4 per cent. However, even 3 or 4 per cent mounts up over the years, and we have not seen that deficit reduced in the way we would like it to reduce; it seems to be increasing, year by year. If it continues at its present rate, the debt will not be amortised for a considerable period of time.

The Government should aim at keeping the deficit to a reasonable level by providing improved services to attract extra patrons to Westrail and generate additional income. If we can run the railways at break-even, or a slight profit, we would allow the deficit to remain at its present level.

Freight rates must be held at a realistic level. The Minister made the following statement in his second reading speech—

We want, at the same time, to maintain a healthy, prosperous Westrail; to hold transport rates to a realistic level; to protect the farmers' interests; to give transport users a free choice wherever possible;

They are laudable motives; the farmers—the grain, wool and meat producers—provide the greatest revenue to Westrail.

The railways would encourage more freight if better facilities were available for the handling of superphosphate. A great tonnage of superphosphate is carted by road because of convenience. The farmers can have it delivered by contractors or they can cart it themselves direct from the works to their properties. If there were better facilities at the sidings or railway stations for farmers to pick up their bulk superphosphate, Westrail would attract a great deal more of the superphosphate freight.

This is another matter about which I have spoken to officers of Westrail. I understand they are interested in attempting to improve the facilities, even to the extent of examining the possibility of establishing more bulk depots in selected areas. These are the facilities the farmers are looking for to encourage them to make greater use of Westrail.

One of the matters raised with me by storekeepers in my electorate relates to the difficulty they face in competing with those storekeepers who live in areas which have

concessions enabling them to cart what they like. Those living outside these zones experience difficulties with freight rates they have to meet in order to compete with those people who have the benefit of concessions. In his second reading speech the Minister referred to the matter of extending consignments of nine tonnes or less of any goods, except on freezer-chillers, which travel within a certain distance of certain areas. I would like the Minister to indicate whether assistance will be given to storekeepers who have to pay Westrail's freight rates.

In his second reading speech the Minister also indicated that farmers had invested enormous sums of money in handling facilities for grain. He indicated that many facilities were being increasingly by-passed by the use of direct road transport. No doubt the Government has given a great deal of thought as to how this trend might be stopped.

As I have said at meetings the Minister has convened, if regulations are to be introduced stipulating that grain will have to be carted by rail, it would be advisable for attractive freight rates to be made available. It is imperative this aspect be considered fully. Attractive freight rates would help farmers choose rail services.

There is a need for a compensating factor by way of a reduction in grain transport rates, if we are to talk about regulations. None of us would say it is an easy exercise to provide an efficient, streamlined and co-ordinated service between road and rail. Even though the SWATS report was a very costly exercise, it was a very genuine effort to arrive at recommendations to provide solutions to transport problems in the south-west portion of this State. There will be areas there will be areas where there will be a need for discussion and consultation.

Mr Tonkin: We believe in that.

Mr McPHARLIN: It is imperative that as many people as possible who are involved should meet and discuss with the Minister and the Transport Commission officers those problem areas where a better application of the rail system could be utilised.

The matter of freeing the freight on wool has received a good deal of discussion over recent weeks. I will allow my colleague, the member for Merredin, to elaborate on that point. I recall bringing this matter forward for discussion some years ago, when the now Minister for Labour and Industry was the Minister for Railways, and Sir David Brand was the Premier.

It was indicated that agreement almost had been reached to allow farmers to transport their

wool by road. It is something which will eventually come about, provided the farmer carts his own wool on his own vehicle.

I am not opposing the Bill. I believe it provides for a better system. I hope it gives Westrail the opportunity to meet the requirements of those who use it, because no-one wants to see a public utility such as Westrail fall into further debt and disuse. We want to see it continue to give the tremendous service it has in the past.

Even though we may criticise Westrail at times and we may argue strongly with the commissioner, we all have a high regard for the services we have received in the past. We should do our best to try to assist, co-ordinate and streamline the service of both Westrail and road transport.

MR CRANE (Moore) [4.18 p.m.]: I would like to make a small contribution to this debate. This legislation is the culmination of years of research and study by the SWATS group, which created a great deal of interest throughout the south-west of the State.

Transport is one of the most important utilities serving the country areas of our State. Looking back at our history, we find this State was built in conjunction with the railway lines which went out into the bush and created avenues for producers to transport their goods to the market and then to bring back essential commodities for their properties.

There has been a great deal of discussion about anomalies found in the Transport Commission. The SWATS review was certainly welcomed by one and all. As a result, the Government has come forward with legislation to improve our transport system over a period of probably seven years. We accept there will be difficulties, and certain anomalies will be in need of attention. However, it should be remembered the Minister has undertaken to assess and study any anomalies which arise. That is, of course, a sensible attitude to adopt and one which any responsible Government knows it will have to keep under a watchful eye.

The aim is to make Westrail free of subsidy where it is in a position to compete with other forms of transport. It would be a ridiculous step to take to allow the freedom for all transport to go in one fell swoop. This would create problems to areas which are not served by any other form of transport but rail, because the cost of the rail would be so expensive that these areas would be seriously disadvantaged. Anyone who fails to see that point of view has not studied this legislation very seriously.

A few people have been attempting to play politics with the new system which is proposed. However, this always happens; someone is always attempting to highlight the anomalies in it. With the carting of wool, some people have not recognised that the laws of the land are made for all to obey. We know that if there are some laws which are not good laws we must endeavour to change them, but whilst they are law we must obey them. If we do not, we must be big enough to accept the consequences.

Mr H. D. Evans: Similarly if they are bad they must be changed.

Mr CRANE: We know with the subject of the handling of wool that there are many producers who would not cart the wool in their own vehicles, even if the restrictions were lifted. I do not believe it would make a great deal of difference. I know of no substantial evidence to dispute my statement.

I would not cart my own wool in my own truck. Perhaps I am not a very large producer of wool; I have only about 120 bales. Some people may wish to cart their own wool but we must remember that whilst they argue about being able to cart their own wool by road, it may not be their own trucks or their own vehicles they would be using. The transport boys would move very quickly and try to get in on the act.

I agree with the member for Mt. Marshall when he says that if farmers were permitted to cart their own wool in their own vehicles—and I emphasise in their own vehicles—there possibly would not be the anomalies we have now. We should be looking at all those regulations as soon as possible.

Mr Cowan: Members in your electorate transport by road and not by rail.

Mr CRANE: There is a large area in my electorate which is not served by the railway so the wool must be carted by road. I would like to give the member for Merredin full marks for his lack of intelligence.

The Government has shown a great deal of courage in initiating this legislation. The system will be implemented in two parts, commencing from the 14th April, 1980, for general commodities and from the 1st November, 1980, for the grain season. It will be necessary to have some regulations for that because we cannot afford to have chaos within this industry. There are some people selfish enough to look at their own needs only, without giving much thought for others.

As a responsible Government our first responsibility is to be responsible, and this is

precisely what we are doing when introducing this legislation in this manner. Over a period of years we will ease other regulations where it is possible to implement different forms of transport which can compete with the rail service.

The vast majority of farmers in the country want to retain an efficient rail system and I like anyone else believe that it is the only form of transport which can cater adequately for the needs of the heavy commodities which need to be moved; for example, grain and superphosphate.

If we carelessly lift restrictions, we will not be able to travel along many of the roads in our motorcars. The roads would not be able to cater for the heavy haulage trucks. I am sure the member for Avon, as a railwayman, must agree that the railway is the most efficient way of moving these heavy commodities.

The Minister has announced that we will be looking at the improvement of the facilities for the unloading of superphosphate. Farmers' in particular, will find this a great convenience. There would be very few members in this House, if any, who have carried more bags of superphosphate than I have. I have been carrying bags of superphosphate since 1937. I know of the problems of dragging a bag of superphosphate out of a truck at night and that there is a need for improved facilities. The Minister has promised he will do this.

When this is done more superphosphate will be carried by rail as a matter of convenience, because it can be picked up in bulk from the railhead where these facilities are to be installed. I support the move by the Government and naturally we will be looking for improvements as we go along.

It is so easy in this place to build up a case for oneself to obtain front-page headlines in the Press, but the important thing is to give a good service; a good service to the people who need it most. I am pleased to see we will be easing regulations for the movement of smaller articles with road transport. This should be encouraged. Road transport companies are providing a very good service to the communities they serve and I believe they must be encouraged to adhere fairly rigidly to the proposals which have been introduced by the Minister after many, many months of hard work, study and decisions.

I support this legislation and I believe it will eventually build up a unique and very worth-while transport system to serve the needs of Western Australia for many, many years to come.

MR COWAN (Merredin) [4.30 p.m.]: The National Party looked forward, with a great deal of anticipation, to the amendment which is before

the House. When reading the Minister's second reading speech we thought we had a panacea for Western Australia's transport problems.

It appears to me that whilst the Minister will alter quite a few aspects with his amendment, nothing will really change within the transport industry in Western Australia.

I have a copy of the Government's land-freight transport policy, 1980, and at page 5 it sets out the essence of that policy. Part I reads—

- (1) The Policy is based on recognition that Western Australia needs effective transport at minimum real cost to maintain its essential economic development.

In 1975 the SWATS report was initiated because of the losses experienced by Westrail. The Government was looking for some way to reduce those losses. In other words, it was looking to Westrail, in particular, to operate on a far more efficient basis.

The people I represent also hope to be able to operate on a more efficient basis. Unfortunately for them, the use of Westrail is not always the most efficient basis. It does not provide for them a minimum-cost means of transport. I am sure members will understand that if a primary producer has an option to transport a commodity at something like two-thirds the price charged by Westrail, he will accept that cheaper price. Primary producers are cost conscious, they are businessmen, and they will do the same as any other businessman does.

There are four aspects of this Bill to which I will refer particularly, and the first relates to the cartage of wool. The Minister is aware that there is on the notice paper a Bill introduced by my colleague, the member for Stirling, which spells out explicitly our policy with regard to wool cartage. I will have more to say on that subject when the Bill comes forward.

There are some matters which should be referred to during this debate. The Minister has made statements several times, which have appeared in the Press, that the transport of wool should remain with Westrail because if it does not we could see the closure of some of Westrail's lines. As far as I am concerned that is a lot of rubbish.

The transport of wool represents something like 2 per cent of the revenue of Westrail. Westrail has estimated it will lose no more than \$1.5 million, at the most, in wool freight. That \$1.5 million expressed in gross percentage revenue of Westrail would be no more than 1 per cent. But, we have the Minister for Transport claiming that

if Westrail loses 1 per cent of its gross revenue we will see the enforced closure of some railway lines. If I have ever heard a lot of political rubbish, that is it.

Most of the lines north of the standard gauge rail are in the position where they will not contribute a great deal from the carting of grain because of the drought. I have not heard the Minister say anything about the closure of those lines, and yet they will involve a loss of the freight on two million tonnes of grain which, in general terms, amounts to about \$20 million in freight to Westrail. However, we do not hear any claim that because of the poor season the lines around Mullewa will be closed.

Mr H. D. Evans: You cannot put down and pick up lines each year.

Mr COWAN: That is the point I am trying to make.

There is an interesting point with regard to wool carting which I would like to bring to the notice of the Minister. I do not know whether he will be able to recall that something like 50 years ago the Primary Producers Association argued very strongly for concessional freight rates on the cartage of wool. As a result of that argument a decision was reached, and I believe it was agreed that the freight on wool was to be half the freight on grain. I believe that decision was accepted by the Government of the day as being fair and reasonable.

If the Minister is not already aware, I point out that the cost of freight on wool is something like three times the cost of freight on grain at present. So, people have some justification in claiming it is uneconomical to transport wool by rail when they can either do it themselves or have it carted by a road transporter at a cheaper rate.

Quorum

Mr Pearce called attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Debate Resumed

Mr COWAN: As far as we are concerned, Westrail should have no worries about any decision to alter the wool transport industry. Few people, other than those who do so now, would avail themselves of the opportunity to transport their own wool. There are two very good reasons. Firstly, no more than about 10 per cent of the farming community would have vehicles capable of transporting wool at an economical rate and, secondly, the brokers themselves would not be keen to see wool arriving in quantity by road because they do not have the set-up to handle large quantities.

Mr McIver: Is that the reason they are opposed to this measure?

Mr COWAN: It is one of the reasons because they can see themselves having to incur additional costs, which they do not want. It is already felt by primary producers that the commission charged by brokers is far too high.

I will turn now to the cartage of grain. I made the comment some time ago that Westrail charges an unrealistic rate for the cartage of grain. The system loses something like 750 000 tonnes of grain a year because some growers have found it more convenient and cheaper to transport it themselves to the port terminals. Quite a considerable sum of money is spent by the producers on freight, and I do not believe members appreciate that it amounts to something like the return from one crop in eight years. That is a substantial amount.

We would like very much to see a reduction in grain freight rates. We would like the railways to look at grain as a single commodity, and to approach CBH and offer to transport all grain at a contract price. That is what is done with iron ore and bauxite. If members are not already aware of the fact, the average cost of transporting grain in Western Australia is \$10.10 per tonne. I understand that rate applies all over Western Australia. I cannot express the figure in cents per tonne/kilometre.

The cost of transporting iron ore on rail is \$7.55 a tonne, and the cost of transporting bauxite is 82c a tonne. What I am saying is that in a situation where grain represents such a large tonnage—much larger even than iron ore—where we have depots such as Merredin and Northam and other places along the standard gauge line, and where we have unit loads operating, surely the freight rate for grain should not be double that of iron ore.

Mr McIver: Which should be included in this Bill.

Mr COWAN: That is another point I would like to make. Many of the things that really matter will be carried out by regulation. We would like some comment by the Minister in respect of how easy it will be for a person to procure a permit to transport wool. We want to know how much will be the reduction in freight for grain from the 1st November, 1980. How long will it be before regulations are introduced to force producers off the road so that they no longer transport their produce to the port terminal?

We want the Minister to indicate whether producers will in any way be affected by coarse grains going to feed merchants in the

metropolitan area. All these things have not been specifically spelt out, and I think the Minister should give the Parliament some indication in respect of them.

The third matter to which I would like to refer briefly concerns free transport areas which are to be declared, and in which any load of less than nine tonnes will be free of a permit system. The Minister has started at the wrong end. It is those areas adjacent to the metropolitan region, or other regional centres—such as Albany, Geraldton, and Bunbury—which do not suffer from the extreme costs of our current transport system. I would have liked to see a concession which would give people in the hinterland—the areas where transport costs are so great—some relief.

Unfortunately, the Government has merely looked at the situation in the light of what it is paying to Westrail out of Consolidated Revenue, and it wants that amount to be reduced. The only way to reduce it is to pass the cost back to the producer. The producer is not prepared to pass it on to the community at large; and there is no-one else to pay it. In essence, that is really what the SWATS report will do.

I understand that Westrail does have a problem when it comes to raising money, because the majority of its funds are raised by loan. Rarely does Westrail receive money on a grant basis. Conversely, most of the money made available for the construction of roads is on a grant basis. Therefore, a person who is transporting goods by road does not have to pay—in total, anyway—the construction costs of the road. However, Westrail has built into its system the fact that it must meet the payment of the majority of moneys raised for the construction of rail lines and the maintenance and depreciation of stock.

I would like to comment on Westrail's autonomy. I cannot see Westrail ever being able to become more efficient within its administrative structure. Already it would be the most efficient rail body in Australia, and it cannot do anything further to become more efficient. All Westrail can do to retain costs is to reduce services, and that has been happening.

However, if Westrail is given autonomy and if—as the SWATS report and the Minister's second reading speech indicates, and as the Government's land freight policy indicates—Westrail is to be put into a position of being able to handle only those commodities it can transport at a reasonable profit and at a reasonable freight rate, then it will remain a very

strong organisation and a very efficient organisation.

However, Westrail certainly will not be able to do that under the existing system whereby it must go to the Government and say, "This is what we believe should be the freight rate for a certain commodity." The reason Westrail has to increase freight rates is that Governments can go to it and say, "You will contain your losses to \$21 million this year." It must budget accordingly, and that means it sets its freight rates accordingly. Westrail will never become more efficient under that system; the system will never work. We accept that, and so do all senior officers in Westrail.

I would like to make one further point. I sometimes wonder why people in rural areas are asked to accept transport regulations. I would like the Minister to say why he has not made a decision to regulate people in the metropolitan area and said they must travel on MTT buses or use the metropolitan rail system. That is what he is doing to people in the country, except in that case he is putting our produce onto rail. The only difference is that in the metropolitan area he would have to put people onto the transport system. Westrail loses less than the MTT, and the principle is exactly the same. If the Government wants to recover some of the metropolitan transport losses, or if it does not want to meet them out of Consolidated Revenue, why is it not doing something about regulating people in the metropolitan area onto rail or the MTT?

What I am saying is that the Government is being discriminatory. It has discovered—and quite rightly—that because fewer people live in country areas and because they are more conservative and are less likely to change their voting patterns, it can deliver its bitter pills to those areas and they will be swallowed. I sometimes wonder where is the equality in a system which says everything and does nothing for country people.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [4.47 p.m.]: It is unnecessary for me to say much because of the competent manner in which the matter has been handled by the member for Merredin. However, I would like to make one or two small additions to his comments.

We are dealing with a subject that is of extreme importance to the people of Western Australia. It is a subject in respect of which the Government commenced the SWATS study in 1975. Since then a tremendous number of meetings have been held and I believe the Minister has paid conscientious attention to them.

However, it has taken the Government a considerable time to present its intentions to the Parliament. It is unfortunate that the Government introduced this Bill only last Thursday, and we must debate it today.

I am surprised to see the lack of interest exhibited by back-bench members of the Government. It was most unfortunate that it was necessary to ring the bells to form a quorum. Prior to that I took a count and I found that National Party members constituted 30 per cent of Government back-bench members in the Chamber. I think we can take credit for showing our concern in respect of this most important piece of legislation.

Several members interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: It is a very important piece of legislation, on the Government's own admission. The member for Whitford would not know anything about it because when he is in the Chamber he is asleep.

It has been pointed out that most of the important actions taken under this legislation will be carried out by way of regulation. Bearing in mind the importance to the State of our transport system, here is an area, in which we could put to good use the members of the Legislative Council. This is an issue which should not be determined on partisan lines only; but we could have an all-party committee from the Legislative Council which could co-operate and assist in putting points of view and considerations in relation to making the regulations. That would be one way of obtaining effective service from the other House.

With relation to the zones that will be created where there will be an "as of right" to carry loads of up to nine tonnes, I ask the Minister why he discriminates once again against country people. I notice the zones will be 150 kilometres from the metropolitan area, but from the regional centres such as Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton, and Kalgoorlie they will be 100 kilometres only. This is discriminatory against country people.

The member for Avon was very concerned about the loss of revenue to Westrail. He indicated also he did not have a great deal of sympathy and support for the Bill which I currently have on the notice paper because it would affect adversely the revenue of Westrail. Of course, on Westrail's own admission it is not likely to be more than \$1.5 million.

Mr McIver: It will adversely affect the farmers in the long term. Don't forget that major point.

Mr STEPHENS: I do not think it will. One has to consider the farmers in different parts of the State who will be affected.

I represent an area which is fairly close to Albany. Some of the farmers could take their wool directly to the wool stores, but they are forced to travel an almost equal distance to a train; and because of the facilities available to them—

Mr McIver: This has been thrashed out time and time again. You know the reasons as well as I do. You know the reason that that comes about.

Mr STEPHENS: I know the reason; but I am making the point they have to spend some time loading the wool onto wagons which are very difficult to use. They spend more time than they would if they were allowed to transport the wool directly to the port. In some instances, they have to take the wool to the station and unload it, expending considerable time and physical effort; and then they have to backtrack past their farms to go to Albany to pick up their superphosphate. It could hardly be argued that that is efficient utilisation of our energy resources.

Mr McIver: But also, to be fair, there is a situation down there where you have a piggy back situation around the Katanning district, where the farmers' groups and the farmers' organisations do not want any alteration of what is done there at the present time.

Mr STEPHENS: The member for Katanning may be able to speak on behalf of the people in his electorate; I am speaking on behalf of the people in mine.

Mr McIver: I am referring to the people in your electorate. I have received letters from them.

Mr STEPHENS: This is one area in which the farmers have to be efficient also. We need to take into account their point of view when we are determining our transport policy.

I do not think the loss of revenue would be very worrying. Certainly it would be no more worrying than the loss of revenue that Westrail or the Transport Commission has permitted by allowing seatainers to travel from Albany to the metropolitan area. The seatainers are suited to rail transport.

Practically every time I travel to Perth by road, I pass many seatainers on road transport. What is worse, there are usually two or three of them, more or less travelling in a convoy. That makes it even more difficult to pass them.

I understand there is no facility in Albany for handling the seatainers and loading them onto the rail. As far as Westrail is concerned, capital funds should be spent on such a facility at Albany and centres similar to Albany where seatainers could be packed in the district, transported to the rail,

transferred, and brought to the city in that way. That would reduce the amount of traffic on our main highways.

Another point I wish to raise deals with the freezer goods traffic. I know it has been argued that the freezer traffic was handed over to private operators because it was uneconomic; but I cannot see that the transport of large quantities of meat from the abattoirs in Albany and Katanning to the metropolitan area by road is absolutely necessary. This is an area in which rail should be used. Some of the revenue that seems to be so vital could be regained.

The deregulation or the reregulation of grain is another matter of concern in my area. I have already received more than half a dozen phone calls from farmers who are seriously disturbed at this proposed change, particularly when one bears in mind that many of those farmers are close to the port, and their lateral movement to the rail, in many instances, would be roughly the same as their direct route through to Albany.

Mr Rushton: How far are they from the port?

Mr STEPHENS: Sixty or 70 miles.

Mr Rushton: They still have freedom.

Mr STEPHENS: Not if they are 60 miles away. That is not kilometres. We do not know precisely what the Minister means; but I am advising him that there is an area for concern. I hope he will take cognisance of that fact. It is my duty to tell him of the feelings of the people I represent.

We support this legislation as being a step in the right direction, but we will be watching it closely because it is not so much the legislation before the House that is of concern, but the manner in which it may be implemented in the future. We will be watching that very closely.

If the Government wants to utilise fully the services of members of Parliament, instead of having all the committees and commissions it proposes—this is one point I omitted to mention—it should do what I suggested. In the policy document of the Liberal Party, it indicates how the policy will be administered. There will be four areas: the Transport Advisory Committee; the Transport Commission; the Director General of Transport; and a special transport energy work party. Personally, I feel there are too many organisations involved. I would prefer to see one department of transport, which could use a parliamentary committee to assist the Government in bringing down the proposed regulations, to implement its policy.

I support the measure.

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [4.58 p.m.]: Firstly, I must thank all members who have spoken because, in the main, they have supported the policy that we have indicated for the long term.

Whilst some members indicated their opposition to the Bill for reasons of their own—and I will speak of that in a moment—it is fairly clear that they support the policy objectives of freeing the regulations and maintaining a strong railway system. I do not think one member has spoken against that objective of the Government. Some members have their personal points of view; but, in the main, they accept this.

The member for Avon has disagreed with members of the National Party. Obviously there is some difference of opinion. I could be involved in that, because one has to face up to the realities.

I would like to make clear to the House that the policy document we have put forward has a tremendous amount of support. It has received support from the previous Commissioner of Railways and the present Commissioner of Railways, the Commissioner of Transport, the Director General of Transport, the Commissioner of Main Roads, the transport association, and many other people. They have indicated their support for what we wish to achieve.

I accept it is important that the Bill be implemented satisfactorily. It is a very great challenge. Listening to the debate today gave a fair indication of the different interests one has to take into account when implementing the legislation.

In the near future I hope a booklet will be printed which will present the Government's policy. It will be available to members so that they will have a better understanding of it.

I should like to cover one or two points which were raised. Many of the matters were repeated by members, but I appreciated the presentation of the member for Avon, the Opposition spokesman on transport. Whilst the member said he opposed the legislation, he actually spoke very strongly in favour of what we are doing.

I can understand this, because he wrote to me when I invited him and many others to make representations relating to SWATS report. I appreciated the submission made by the member for Avon which, in the main, supported what we are doing today.

It is a sad day when a party political stance is taken on legislation which should be above that sort of thing, because it looks at transport needs which, for a long time, have centred around a railway system. This railway system developed the

needs of the State at the time. However, at the moment we are moving away from that, because if we do not we will lose the rail system we have.

It is sad that the member for Avon is obviously subject to the direction of the railway unions, because, having read his letter again today, it is clear that, in the main, he supports our long-term objectives of strengthening rail in bulk and rationalising the transport system so that the resources are used in the very best way.

I will not dwell on that point, but it is obvious that those people who, in the main, are responsible for administering Westrail, support this policy. The broad group of people within the railways support the policy. In fact, they support what we are doing, because they see the common sense of it. A few railway union officials, who have the power, are twisting the tail of the Opposition.

I should like to touch on a number of the matters raised by members opposite. The member for Avon mentioned the future of the office of the Director General of Transport. During the last few days I made an announcement that it is intended to review the Transport portfolio to see how it can work more satisfactorily. This has been on for a long time and it is one matter we will be considering in greater detail.

The member for Avon objected to the fact that I consulted with the country people when developing this policy. I did this in order that I could make recommendations to the Government. A great deal of consultation with the SWATS team had taken place and strong support had been received from academic people; therefore, I felt it was necessary for the Government to consult with practical people in the field who are on the receiving end of the policy. I, together with some very competent people involved in transport, travelled around the State by car and by aeroplane.

Mr McIver: But they did not speak, did they?

Mr RUSHTON: Yes, they did speak. As a matter of fact we picked up many points.

Mr McIver: My criticism emanated from the fact that I felt it was more of a political exercise than a transport one.

Mr RUSHTON: The member would be either unkind or misinformed to believe that, because these people replied to questions asked of them and I chaired the meetings in which many people participated. The discussions were very valuable and, as the member is aware, it is one matter to have a report based on theory and another matter for it to be implemented in practice. This is one of the great advantages which resulted from going

out into the field and obtaining the points of view of the people involved.

I thank the people who came with me to those centres at great inconvenience to themselves and who made vital contributions. I believe our policy would be the poorer had we not obtained this type of information. I do not believe anything more of great importance was raised by the member for Avon. On the one hand he said I should accept the recommendations of advisers as a package, and on the other hand he criticised me for doing so. We are adopting the package. However, it is rather ironical that he states we should take the advice of the advisers on this occasion, but when we take the advice of our advisers in relation to the closure of the Perth-Fremantle line he says we should not do so.

Mr McIver: Who advised you the morale situation was of a very high standard?

Mr RUSHTON: I have sampled that matter by mixing with many of the men. I have obtained reports from people in and out of railway circles.

Mr McIver: It was not in a refreshment room, was it?

Mr RUSHTON: There will always be some disgruntled people within a system of 10 000; but, in the main, we have very good people working within the railways. I mix with as many of them as is possible and, be it the ganger on the line, the engine driver, or the administrator, they are dedicated to their work and have a great understanding of what should be done.

These people have a great deal of support for what we are doing. A comment was made that we should forget the seven years and plan on a 10 to 15-year basis. I believe seven years should be our target. We should achieve it and when 10 to 15 years was advocated the detail of implementation had not been worked out; therefore, that sort of timing had to be used. I believe we are going in the right direction.

I was going to ask the following question of the Opposition: What would it do? Of course, basically the member for Avon endorsed what we have done and he said, "We want the best co-operation possible from both sides." I thank him for that. We need patience and co-operation. We need to be sincere and we must consult many people, not just one section of the community. I have talked with the unions and I shall have further discussions with them. I will talk with the users and operators to ensure the implementation of this policy is as smooth as possible.

Most of the answers have already been given to questions asked. In the main, the support has been for retaining the situation in relation to wool.

Members are aware of our policy throughout the State. As we progress, the areas of the State which do not receive a satisfactory service as a result of competition will have to be regulated by us to ensure they obtain one. I have not heard anyone speak against that.

In the main, bulk freight will be the freight carried by the railways. Therefore, the whole system will carry freight most suitable to the mode and that is our objective. In the meantime it has pleased me to hear the comments made and it appears, from the opinions expressed, that grain needs to be regulated in order that the transport resources and facilities available may be used economically and effectively. It would be reasonable to expect a reduction of rates in this regard.

I should like to refer to the comments made by the member for Collie. He asked why we should use consultants. The reason for this is that special expertise is required in certain areas and this was obtained. That was the main thrust of the argument used by the member for Collie.

The member for Mt. Marshall said he hoped the changes would improve the deficit situation of Westrail. The objective is to have the minimum deficit possible as a result of the changed policies. In fact, the policies will reflect benefits to the consumer, resulting from the expected reduction in rates. That needs to be considered and remembered.

A point which came out of the presentation was that people do not seem to remember that our railway system—our main lines and our branch lines—was the main developer of this State. The railways provided the only means of getting inland in days gone by. The development of the railway system was on the basis of subsidising the development of the country.

I was somewhat saddened by the remarks of the member for Merredin when he said that efficiency could be improved and costs could be less, without acknowledging the true position. The reason costs are not less is that the railways have to subsidise some items which are carried at a loss. The present policy will relieve Westrail of being a common courier.

I was appreciative of the remarks of the member for Moore, who as a practical farmer, uses the rail service. He did mention that handling could be improved.

The Minister for Agriculture chaired a committee handling the distribution of superphosphate. Additional centres will be tried out next year. I am looking forward to observing some of the equipment which is to be used to get

the superphosphate out of the rail trucks more effectively. The unit trains are becoming more and more efficient. I have observed some of the equipment in operation and I have been encouraged by what is being done.

The member for Mt. Marshall, in the main, supported what we are doing. Some time ago I received some correspondence from him which indicated his support.

The member for Mt. Marshall mentioned that there should be some regulation on the transport of grain and that rates should be reduced. I need to give extra thought to that matter because the grain situation is complex. There is the need to consult with the people involved in order to work out the details for the next season. It will be necessary to amend the schedule in order to make that change.

There was some criticism because we had not done everything at the one time. We have done this deliberately, because a move of this magnitude calls for a lot of consultation. We have gone this far and we will allow opportunity for members in this House, and other interested people, to have a full knowledge of our next move. For instance, amendments to enable the regulation of some grain will be introduced next year when members will have an opportunity to discuss this matter.

Mr McIver: That is, if you come back as Government.

Mr RUSHTON: I can only work with optimism because I feel that Westrail would want us to come back to carry out our obligations.

It is far preferable that we consult with the people concerned, and seek the public views relating to the changes in grain handling, than try to do everything at once. We will advise members what is to happen, and I think that is to our credit.

Many points have been raised, but I will refer specifically to the comment by the member for Merredin about licences. That will require only a phone call to the Transport Commission. Stockfeed was amongst the items he mentioned, and I can say there is no intention to regulate the transport of stockfeed by farmers. He also mentioned the regulation of the transport of grain, and this matter is to be negotiated. As I have just said, we will introduce an amendment to the schedule to the Act, and we will then be able to develop the full background.

The member for Stirling mentioned zoning, and talked about discrimination. It is important with this type of legislation for the people, first of all, to know and understand what it is all about.

Obviously, we have a long way to go yet in introducing our policy.

From the speeches which have been made today, I take it that in the main we have support for what we are doing, despite the comment from the Opposition that it will oppose the measure. However, I take that as being a direction from some unions, but even so they have indicated that what we are doing is right.

We have tried to reach a compromise and a consensus in order to do something in the best way. I have responded to requests from the transport industry and the Farmers' Union. I have been asked by them to allow a few months to implement the scheme, and that will occur.

We will discuss grain further at a later stage and there will be a full understanding of what is to take place. The Government, and this House, will make the decision relating to future amendments.

I do warn those people involved with big rigs and who are carting legally—or illegally; the member for Avon said that some were carting illegally—they should not buy big rigs from now on because we will have a phasing out period starting from now. It is difficult to carry on when people deliberately work against what is proposed. We will have further discussions on how to implement the change, but it will be related to the age of vehicles, and taxation benefits. There will be every consultation in that regard.

Obviously there will be some anomalies in the policy, and there will be need for changes. Further consideration will be given when necessary. I am aware there has been considerable debate on this Bill, and I hope that when members are able to read the policy they will ask questions in order to have a proper understanding of the changes.

In the main I accept that members have given general support to what we are doing. There has been little debate on the Bill; most of the debate has been on policy.

The member for Collie stated that the Bill would increase the number of regulations, but, in fact, it will increase the ability to allow exemptions, and it will allow our policy to be implemented.

I again thank members for what I believe is their general support of the Bill and I look forward to any comments they may make during the Committee stage.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 26

Mr Blaikie	Mr Mensaros
Mr Clarko	Mr Nanovich
Sir Charles Court	Mr O'Connor
Mr Cowan	Mr Old
Mr Coyne	Mr O'Neil
Dr Dadour	Mr Rushton
Mr Grayden	Mr Sibson
Mr Grewar	Mr Sodeman
Mr Hassell	Mr Stephens
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Watt
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Williams
Mr Laurance	Mr Young
Mr MacKinnon	Mr Shalders

(Teller)

Noes 17

Mr Barnett	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bertram	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr McIver
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Pearce
Mr Carr	Mr Skidmore
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Tonkin
Mr T. D. Evans	Mr Wilson
Mr Harman	Mr Bateman
Mr Hodge	

(Teller)

Pairs

Noes

Ayes	Dr Troy
Mr Crane	Mr Taylor
Mrs Craig	Mr Bryce
Mr Tubby	Mr Grill
Mr Spriggs	Mr Davies
Mr Ridge	

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mr Rushton (Minister for Transport) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Section 4 amended—

Mr McIVER: As I indicated in my second reading speech, the Bill contains many machinery amendments. However, I would like clarification of certain of the clauses. My first query is in relation to paragraph (b) of this clause which reads—

(b) by inserting after the word "whatever", being the last word in the interpretation, the passage "and cognate expressions shall be construed accordingly".

Mr RUSHTON: This amendment will enable the prosecution of a person who arranges transport knowing that the law is being contravened. I will give members a little background. At present some contractors arrange with subcontractors to undertake certain tasks, knowing that those tasks are illegal. At the present time only the subcontractor can be prosecuted. The objective of this provision is to

sheet home the blame to the person causing the misdemeanour.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5: Section 19 repealed and re-enacted—

Mr McIVER: This proposed new section will extend the Minister's powers a great deal. The Opposition would like to know why it is necessary for the Minister to have such wide powers. As the powers will be implemented by way of regulation and gazetting, the Opposition will not be given an opportunity to debate them.

Mr RUSHTON: These exemptions are already in the parent Act and they are to exempt vehicles in certain areas. To give the member an example in his own area, because of peculiarities relating to rail transport, it may be necessary to give an exemption to an operator to cart from the Dale area to the coast. This is part of the flexibility of our policy, and I am sure the honourable member will support it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 9 put and passed.

Clause 10: Section 34 repealed and re-enacted with amendments—

Mr McIVER: As in the other clauses, the Opposition seeks clarification from the Minister on this provision.

Mr RUSHTON: I am pleased to give that information. The new section provides for the existing 60-kilometre as-of-right licence, but permits extension of as-of-right areas by proclamation.

The honourable member knows from the policy document and my second reading speech that over the long term the extension is to spread the freedom from regulation over the whole State. We are intending to do this step by step, otherwise the impact on Westrail would be devastating.

By means of this amendment, we will be able to take these steps by regulations. This means that the regulations will lay on the Table of the Chamber and be subject to normal review by members. Basically the clause is to allow the flexibility for increasing the zones as we develop our policy in the years ahead.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 11: Section 36 amended—

Mr McIVER: Under the principal Act, the commissioner must consider the effect on existing services and meet the requirements of sections 36, 37, and 39. In essence, it means he must have regard for the various modes of transport. However, clause 11 appears to give a very wide

power to the Commissioner of Transport and the Minister. We believe it is an open cheque. Here again, we will not have the opportunity to debate a regulation to change a particular mode of transport; the regulation will be made and gazetted. That is why we oppose this clause.

Mr RUSHTON: Basically, this clause gives no extra powers. Two new criteria will be considered when an application for a licence is considered under our policy. Proposed new paragraphs (e) and (f) state as follows—

- (e) any direction given by the Minister as to the policies of the government in relation to economic development, decentralisation, or other matters; and
- (f) the interests of persons requiring transport to be provided, and of the community generally.

This means the Government of the day is able to have its policies introduced. This seems to be a fair thing.

Mr McIVER: From what are you reading?

Mr RUSHTON: From my own notes; this is the addition to which the honourable member was referring.

Mr T. H. JONES: This gets back to the point I raised about ministerial direction. Surely the Minister will not be able to change the legislation by direction. How is it going to operate? It could mean the Government could change its policies from time to time, thereby affecting important public utilities, and those changes are not subject to debate. Surely it is not as broad as that. Such widespread changes should be effected by changes to the legislation.

Mr RUSHTON: I refer the honourable member to the commencing words of proposed new section 34. I have referred to the two points the commissioner must consider. He must take into consideration Government policy; it would be unreasonable if he did not.

Mr T. H. Jones: But the legislation does not cater for Government policy.

Mr RUSHTON: What the honourable member is saying in reverse is that the commissioner should have no regard for Government policy. If we wanted to develop a transport system at, say, Southern Cross, the commissioner must have regard for the enactments which make that policy work, and the decentralisation policies of the Government.

The other point regarding the interests of persons and of the community generally is consumer oriented. It is no longer regulation-making for regulations, sake; it is not designed to

protect Westrail. The Commissioner of Transport's role will now have a great emphasis on looking after the consumer.

Mr T. H. Jones: Will it be done by regulation?

Mr RUSHTON: There are regulations.

Mr T. H. Jones: If you change Government policy, how will you change the legislation?

Mr RUSHTON: A Government makes policies. Suppose the State had the misfortune to have members opposite on the Government benches next year. That Government would have a policy, and the Transport Commission would have to take that policy into account when issuing licences.

Mr T. H. Jones: But surely the Act is broad enough to embrace that policy.

Mr RUSHTON: No, the commissioner has certain tasks which I would have to go right back through the legislation to relate to the honourable member. However, when he is issuing licences he must have regard for the things I mentioned.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister surely can give direction only within the ambit of the legislation. He has no power to go outside the Act. Is it the Minister's intention to amend the legislation by way of regulation?

Mr RUSHTON: It is clear to my mind that the commissioner will have regard for these matters. In this particular case, the commissioner must have regard for Government policy.

Mr T. H. Jones: I am not clear how it is going to work. I cannot see it working.

Mr RUSHTON: I will have a chat with the honourable member afterwards.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12 put and passed.

Clause 13: Section 50 amended—

Mr McIVER: As I stated earlier, the Opposition would like an outline of what the jargon in this clause really means.

Mr RUSHTON: This relates purely to an increase in penalties, but also includes consequential amendments to enable those who are responsible for arranging illegal transport to be penalised. The member for Avon has already stated certain people are breaking the law. The penalties are fairly low, and have not been increased for some time. They are not to be increased very greatly under this clause; however, it will act as a greater deterrent. In other words, it will give the legislation a little more teeth, although not dramatically so.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [5.37 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR McIVER (Avon) [5.38 p.m.]: I mentioned during the second reading debate that one other officer who could have been co-opted to the SWATS team was the Chairman of the Metropolitan Transport Trust (Mr George Shea).

As Mr Shea is retiring shortly, I take this opportunity to place in the *Hansard* record the Opposition's appreciation of his significant contribution to transport in Western Australia. Not only has he been a tower of strength in the transport field in this State; he has also been appreciated by other Governments throughout Australia for his great knowledge of transport.

When we travel interstate to attend transport conferences, people continually ask us to convey their best regards to Mr Shea. On many occasions when decisions have had to be made on important transport matters, Mr Shea's direction and guidance have been appreciated.

The Opposition appreciates the work he has contributed towards the transport industry in this State. We trust that he and his wife will enjoy a very long, happy, and healthy retirement away from the burdens of office. Chairmen from the MTT will come and chairmen will go, but there will be only one George Shea. We wish him the very best in retirement.

Members: Hear, hear!

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [5.41 p.m.]: I thank the member for Avon for his remarks and I am sure all members endorse what he has said. Members will have noticed that in my second reading speech I gave credit to all those involved in helping to form our transport policies. The people involved, like Mr Jim Pascoe, Mr John Knox, and others, since I have been involved with the steering committee, and officers of the various Government agencies such as Mr Stewart Hicks, who is an assistant to Mr John Knox, have done a wonderful job.

It is somewhat ironic that the member for Avon made his remarks, because one of his party's platforms is to impose a restraint on the Chairman of the MTT in that he should be

answerable to the relevant Minister. He is not and his position is quite unique.

I thank the member for Avon for his very kind comments about Mr George Shea; I am sure everyone supports his best wishes.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (5): ASSENT

Messages from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1. Public Notaries Bill.
2. Road Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 2).
3. Health Act Amendment Bill.
4. Esperance Port Authority Lands Bill.
5. Real Estate and Business Agents Act Amendment Bill.

BILLS (4): RETURNED

1. Wheat Marketing Bill.
Bill returned from the Council with amendments.
2. Constitution Act Amendment Bill.
3. Town Planning and Development Act Amendment Bill.
4. Builders' Registration Act Amendment Bill (No. 3).
Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [5.43 p.m.]: Before I move the adjournment motion, I advise members that the House will sit tomorrow at 10.30 a.m. and will sit again at 11.00 a.m. on Tuesday, the 3rd December. I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 10.30 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.45 p.m.
