

## Noes.

Mr. Evans	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Norton
Mr. Graham	Mr. Nuisen
Mr. Grayden	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hall	Mr. Potter
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Toms
Mr. Lapham	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Lawrence	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Progress reported.

## ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, State Trading Concerns Act Amendment.
- 2, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act Amendment.
- 3, Fruit Growing Industry (Trust Fund) Act Amendment.
- 4, City of Perth Scheme for Superannuation (Amendments Authorisation).

## BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

## BILL—BETTING CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT.

## Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it insisted on its amendments Nos. 1 and 2 and that it did not insist on amendment No. 3.

House adjourned at 2.40 a.m. (Friday).

## Legislative Assembly

Friday, 30th November, 1956.

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

### BILL—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD) ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Labour and read a first time.

## QUESTIONS.

## RAILWAYS.

(a) Freight Rates and Load and Tare of Wagons.

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

(1) What is the freight rate per ton for 150 miles on—

- (a) wheat;
- (b) wool;
- (c) agricultural machinery?

(2) What is the average load and tare, per wagon, of each of (a), (b) and (c)?

- (3) (a) What is the full rate for a CXA sheep wagon for 150 miles?  
 (b) What is the average tare and also gross weight of a fully loaded CXA wagon?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

- (1) (a) 39s.  
 (b) 110s. 9d.  
 (c) 131s. 11d.

(2) Assessed figures are—

- (a) Average load: 11.5 tons; Tare: 5.8 tons.  
 (b) Average load: 3.5 tons; Tare: 5.6 tons.  
 (c) The information in respect of agricultural machinery is not available as these consignments are included in first class traffic of which details of the different commodities making up the total are not recorded separately.
- (3) (a) 241s. 6d.  
 (b) Tare 6 tons 14 cwt.  
 Gross weight 10 tons 4 cwt. approximately.

*(b) Details of System.*

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

- (1) What is the length of the Western Australian railway system?  
 (2) What is the total number of people employed by the Western Australian railways?  
 (3) How many railway engines are owned by the Western Australian railways?  
 (4) How many of these engines are diesel powered?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

- (1) 4,119 route miles.  
 (2) 13,974.  
 (3) 434.  
 (4) 65.

In respect of these figures, full details can be found on pages 16, 44 and 68 of the Railway Department's annual report for year ending the 30th June, 1956.

*(c) Capacity of Dam, Wickiepin.*

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

- (1) What is the capacity of the railway dam at Wickiepin?  
 (2) How much water has been used from this dam by the Railways Department in each of the last four years?  
 (3) What is the expected usage from this dam by the W.A.G.R. in the current year?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

- (1) 4,800,000 gallons.  
 (2) 1953—2,200,000 approximately.  
 1954—2,470,000 approximately.  
 1955—3,034,000 approximately.  
 1956—3,578,000 approximately.

(3) 3½ million gallons approximately.

These figures include a very small quantity not readily ascertainable sold for private purposes.

*(d) Responsibility for Warup Fire.*

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

- (1) Will he ascertain whether the train travelling from Collie to Wagin on Wednesday, the 28th November, was responsible for starting the fire which did considerable damage to farming properties in the Warup district?  
 (2) Was the engine using Collie coal?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

- (1) Yes.  
 (2) Yes.

*(e) Refreshment Room Services.*

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

- (1) Has any decision been made regarding the reorganisation of railway refreshment services?  
 (2) If so, what is the nature of the reorganisation proposed?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

The matter is still under consideration but three country refreshment rooms are being offered for leasing to see whether private enterprise is interested.

**EDUCATION.**

*(a) Vocational Guidance Officers.*

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many vocational guidance officers are employed by the Education Department?  
 (2) Are their services made available to private schools and colleges in the metropolitan area?  
 (3) Do they visit all metropolitan high schools and State schools?  
 (4) Do these officers go to country schools; if so, what schools have been visited?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) Sixteen full time and one half time.  
 (2) Yes, if requested.  
 (3) All metropolitan and outer metropolitan high schools and the contributory primary schools are visited each year. Junior high schools and outer metropolitan primary schools are visited on request.

(4) Yes. The following country schools have been visited in the last twelve months—

Bunbury, Busselton, Burekup, Bridgetown, Collie, Harvey, Cowaramup, Pinjarra, Benger, Northam, West Northam, Albany schools (not High schools), Southern Cross, Narrogin (all schools), Pingelly, Gleneagle, Boddington, Wickiepin, Manjimup, Margaret River Convent, Nannup, Pemberton, Roelands, Roelands Native Mission, Waterloo, Geraldton, East Kalgoorlie, South Kalgoorlie, Kalgoorlie (including infants), Boulder (including infants), Bullfinch, Wagin, Quindanning, Katanning, Williams, Kojoonup, Allanson.

In addition—

- (a) a correspondence service is provided for country schools when it is not economical to send guidance officers, and
- (b) many country children are tested and parents advised at the Guidance Branch throughout the year.

(b) *Numbers of Post-primary Students, Country Areas.*

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Education:

How many post-primary students are available for attendance at five-year high schools in districts served by—

- (a) Manjimup;
- (b) Merredin;
- (c) Busselton?

The MINISTER replied:

The present post-primary numbers in these schools are:—

Manjimup—233.

Merredin—217.

Busselton—187.

Many children from these towns attend schools elsewhere because of the lack, up to the present, of five-year high school facilities.

## AGRICULTURE.

### *Drought Assistance.*

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

With regard to his answer to Question No. 15 on the notice paper of the 28th November, in the matter of drought assistance, in which information was contained to the effect that no freight concessions were granted in respect of road transport, is this considered fair and just treatment—

- (a) for those not fortunate enough to be serviced by rail;
- (b) for those at present serviced by rail, but who will lose these services shortly owing to the discontinuance of certain lines?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied:

(a) In view of the provisions of Sections 101 (a) and 101 (b) of the Land Act the answer is "Yes."

(b) The position in relation to those at present serviced by rail but who may lose those services has not been considered.

## BASIC WAGE.

### *Factors Lessening Goldfields Rate.*

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

(1) What methods are adopted by the State Government Statistician's Office to obtain figures relative to changes in the cost of living in Kalgoorlie and Boulder?

(2) To what factors can be attributed the case of the basic wage on the Goldfields being less than that prevailing for the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:

(1) A field officer of the statistician's office visits Kalgoorlie and Boulder every quarter and personally collects from representative retailers and house agents, the retail prices of the range of commodities and the house rents which comprise the regimen of the "C" series index. From these prices the statistician computes the "C" series index which is furnished quarterly to the Arbitration Court for consideration in basic wage determinations.

(2) The difference between the metropolitan basic wage and that of Kalgoorlie-Boulder is entirely due to rents, which, according to the statistician's records, have increased in the metropolitan area by some 62 per cent. since the March quarter of 1954, compared with only 5 per cent. for Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

## HOSPITALS.

### *Refrigerated Morgue, Kalgoorlie.*

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Health:

As earlier this year, approval of funds was given for the provision of a refrigerated morgue at the Kalgoorlie district hospital—

- (a) when will this be undertaken;
- (b) what amount of money was set aside for this purpose;
- (c) will the work be carried out by a local contractor?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) Tenders will be called within a fortnight.

(b) An estimate has been made but in view of the fact that tenders are being invited this figure could not be disclosed.

(c) This will be decided after consideration of tenders received.

**MEDICAL ACT.***Offences Against Section 19.*

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Police:

(1) If a police officer has evidence to prove that a person has committed an offence against Section 19 of the Medical Act, is he entitled to enter upon and search the premises of the alleged offender and to remove from and take away from such premises articles used by the person in the course of his activities?

(2) If so, under what statute or regulation does he possess such power?

(3) What becomes of the articles taken away?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Police) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Under warrant issued under Section 711 of the Criminal Code.

(3) Articles so seized are disposed of at the direction of the court or returned to the person from whom they were taken, if no prosecution eventuates.

**PETROL TAX.***(a) Use and Allocation, Local Authorities.*

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it possible to use money available to the State from the petrol tax for the purpose of enabling local authorities to purchase road making machinery?

(2) If so, under what circumstances is such use of this money approved?

(3) How many local authorities in Western Australia have utilised these moneys in this manner for the year 1955-56?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Under the provisions of the Commonwealth Aid Roads Act (No. 57 of 1954) provision is made whereby petrol tax funds can be made available by the State to Local Authorities to purchase road-making machinery.

(2) The Main Roads Department does not allocate funds for this purpose.

(3) Nil.

*(b) Application by Local Authorities for Assistance.*

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Further to my question on this matter have any applications for assistance to purchase road-making machinery been received from local authorities?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

**TRAFFIC.***Parking of Commercial Vehicles in Private Stalls.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Did I understand the Minister to say in answer to the member for Claremont, that a commercial vehicle could stand on a vacant private vehicle-parking stall for 30 minutes or whatever is the permitted period but cannot load or unload from this position?

(2) If this is the position, would he have the matter examined with a view to allowing such loading and unloading in the case of commercial vehicles of reasonable size especially in a case of tradesmen delivering essential perishables during the forenoon period and where a spread of deliveries is impracticable?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) This matter, with others in connection with the new parking regulations, will be examined.

**FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST.***Cargo Handling Rates.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What increases other than the 13 per cent. in cargo handling rates, as announced in "The West Australian" of the 20th November, 1956, have been made during the last five years by the Fremantle Harbour Trust?

(2) (a) What differential rates are charged in respect of varying types of cargo?

(b) If differential rates are charged, what is the object of such differential charges?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Percentage increases in cargo handling rates during the last five years are as follows:—

1952—To the 1st November, 1952, the basic rate of 10s. per ton had been increased by a surcharge of 7½ per cent. On the 28th November, 1952, the basic rate of handling was increased to 20s. per ton incorporating the above surcharge, all mechanical plant charges, and other incidental costs.

1953—Nine per cent. surcharge (Fremantle Harbour Trust Regulation No. 147, paragraph 2) on basic rate.

1954—No further increase.

1955—No further increase.

1956—Twenty per cent. surcharge on basic rate.

(2) (a) Basic rates of handling are charged as per attached amendment to regulations (2nd and

3rd columns of Fremantle Harbour Trust regulations Nos. 144, 145 and 153).

- (b) Differential rates are charged according to type of cargo, e.g., its size and weight and method of handling.

#### TRAFFIC LIGHTS.

*Dalkeith-rd. and Stirling Highway.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Transport:

If there is going to be any delay with the installation of the traffic lights at the corner of Dalkeith-rd. and Stirling Highway, could he arrange for the police to explore the possibility of reducing the hazard pending the installation of the lights, especially as the peculiar nature of the intersection at the foot of two hills aggravates the problem?

The MINISTER replied:

Police are constantly giving attention to motorists using Stirling Highway and the intersection at Dalkeith-rd. is given frequent attention by uniformed motor cyclists and plain clothes patrol cars.

It is considered that any hazard at this intersection is caused by inattention or speeding by motorists.

#### TAXIS.

*Meters and Testing of Drivers.*

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What facilities exist for testing taxi meters—

- (a) when initially installed; and
- (b) subsequently?

(2) What are the conditions governing the issue of a licence to drive a taxi in respect of—

- (a) test as a driver;
- (b) test as to health;
- (c) test as to character;
- (d) general conduct and any previous convictions for traffic or other offences?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) and (b) Taxi meters are tested when initially installed in a taxi over a certified measured mile and if found correct are sealed by a police officer. Taxi meters are tested at least once during the licensing period; if they are repaired, they are again tested.

They would be tested if any report was received of any inaccuracy.

(2) (a) An applicant for a driver's licence for a taxi has to complete a special form. He must answer the questions regarding traffic regulations and his knowledge of them must be good. He is also questioned as to his knowledge of the metropolitan area, where various suburbs

are located, institutions, hotels and places of entertainment. He must be able to describe the shortest route between any two points. On this question 50 per cent. fail in the first instance. If the applicant has passed that test correctly and his eye standard is in conformity with the requirements he is then given a severe driving test which the applicant cannot pass unless he is an excellent driver.

(b) On application for a licence the applicant must produce a medical certificate of fitness from the District Medical Officer in the city or a qualified medical practitioner in the country. Thereafter a medical certificate of fitness is required every five years or more frequently if circumstances make it necessary.

(c) Every applicant is required to produce two character references and all available records are checked. If any doubt exists concerning the character of the applicant, the police make special inquiries.

(d) The general conduct of the applicant is considered and any previous convictions for traffic or other offences are checked before a licence is issued. If his general conduct is not good and his previous convictions for traffic or other offences are serious then the applicant is not issued with a licence.

#### CHAMBERLAIN INDUSTRIES PTY. LTD.

*(a) Progress of Inquiry.*

Mr. OWEN asked the Premier:

Will he inform the House what progress has been made re the inquiry into Chamberlain Industries Pty. Ltd., by the parliamentary committee?

The PREMIER replied:

The committee has had several meetings and has taken evidence from a number of important witnesses. At a meeting of the committee held recently, certain recommendations were agreed upon in an endeavour to have the industry placed upon a more solid and permanent basis.

The recommendations are to be placed in the hands of the directors of the industry for their consideration.

*(b) Ownership.*

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Are any members of the Chamberlain family still directly interested in Chamberlain Industries Pty. Ltd.?

(2) If not, who actually owns it at present?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Chamberlain Industries Pty. Ltd. I should amplify by saying that the Government has substantial commitments in the industry.

## BILL—ARCHITECTS ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [2.35] in moving the second reading said: Extending over a number of years, the architects have been endeavouring to secure amendments to the Architects Act of 1921. Representations have been made to successive Governments but for various reasons the requests were not acceded to. It was only recently that a decision was made that some of the requests ought to be granted. The amending Bill now before the House was introduced in response to the requests that have been made; it does not wholly meet those requests, but only some of them.

There is not a great deal in the Bill. It does not make major changes to the Act. In 1921 when the Act was passed, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects had not been formed so it was not possible to include a provision in the Act that membership of that institute was a qualification for registration as an architect. Now that the Royal Australian Institute of Architects is in existence, it is considered desirable that membership of that association ought to be a qualification. The Bill provides that this qualification will be incorporated in the Act. That is the first amendment, and it is a very simple one.

A further amendment proposed in the Bill is to give the Architects' Board more control over the architects registered with it, and to prevent unprofessional conduct. The board has submitted a case to show that some architects who were registered were doing things which were unprofessional and unfair to fellow-architects and other members of the profession, and that therefore the board ought to have stronger powers to deal with such instances.

This Bill somewhat enlarges the definition of "misconduct" and gives the board power to discipline members. As the Act stands, application must be made to the Supreme Court in order to discipline a member, but in the Bill provision is made that the Architects' Board shall be empowered to take this action and the aggrieved person will be given the right to appeal to a magistrate if he disagrees with the decision. That conforms to the provision in the Builders' Registration Act where the Builders' Registration Board has the power to deregister a builder, and the aggrieved person can appeal to a magistrate against the decision. That is considered preferable to the existing method.

The third amendment included in the Bill is to protect the members of the general public from persons who are not architects but masquerade as such. If there are people who want to design buildings, this amendment will not prevent them from doing it, unless they say they are architects. If they hold out they are

architects and endeavour to get business on a mistaken understanding that they are architects, this amendment will give the Architects' Board power to take action. But any person, such as an engineer, who wishes to design a building for someone else can still do so, as long as he does it in his proper capacity and does not hold himself out as an architect.

That is the only additional amendment in the Bill and it is considered desirable by the architects that they and the general public should have protection, because if members of the general public engage a person to design buildings for them believing that the man is a registered architect and he is not, then they have no protection in that regard. However, they are quite at liberty to use the services of anybody, so long as they know the person whose services they are utilising—

Mr. Court: Can he describe himself as a designer?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** He can describe himself as a designer or anything else, but not as an architect. We get the same protection in other professions. We do not permit a man to hold himself out as a doctor if he is not a doctor, or as an accountant if he is not an accountant.

Mr. Court: That is one case where we do.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** But he cannot claim to be a member of an institute.

Mr. Court: That is true.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** So it is intended here that he shall not hold himself out as a registered architect or architect and give the impression that he has all the qualifications of an architect if, in fact, he has not, but he is still permitted to carry on work otherwise than as an architect. The architects who saw me in connection with this matter, desired some further tightening up of the law in order to prevent persons who were not architects from doing work which architects ordinarily do, but the Government would not agree to go that far. However, it did consider that it was a fair and reasonable proposition that a person who was not an architect should not masquerade as such, and the purpose of this amendment is to give power to the board to deal with any cases where that happens.

Section 21 of the principal Act sets out the acts and practices which are prohibited. A new section is proposed to enlarge that definition and it will include the acceptance of reward, direct or indirect, other than professional remuneration; acceptance of architectural work on condition that the architect will receive a discount, gift or commission from the contractor or tradesman; failure to disclose direct or indirect pecuniary interest in material used in connection with the work.

It was pointed out that some architects got the inside running and advocated the use of certain materials on a job because they got some additional return, either directly or indirectly, from the use of those materials.

That is regarded as misconduct or unprofessional conduct and it is desired to prevent it. So, an architect will get his remuneration in accordance with the scale of fees for the work he does and not try to do a job more cheaply and make up the difference by indirect returns from the use of certain materials, or certain other items in the construction. The section also includes advertising, unless with the approval of the board; failure to advise of the cancellation of his qualification on which he was admitted as an architect—in other words, continuing to hold himself out as an architect when no longer entitled to do so.

Mr. Roberts: Who would he have to advise?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Architects' Board, and he could not continue to have a brass plate indicating he was a registered architect when, in fact, he no longer was. It also includes a provision respecting registration by fraud or misrepresentation. Obviously, to deal with a case where a person obtains registration with the Architects' Board by means of fraud or misrepresentation, the section deals with conviction for an offence of a serious nature and negligence in the carrying out of his duties. An architect might be negligent with the result that the owner of a building suffers loss and damage. There is no power to take action against the architect who is responsible for such loss or damage, and the object is to protect members of the general public who engage architects to watch their interests.

The Government considers that none of these provisions is oppressive. They have all been asked for by the architects' organisation and we went carefully into them. It is our considered opinion that none is oppressive to the men who behave professionally in accordance with the work they are trained to undertake. I have covered all the provisions in this comparatively small Bill. They are not amendments of very great moment, but they are of importance to the architects and of importance to members of the general public. The Government believes they are desirable, and for that reason the Bill has been brought to the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

#### **BILL—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT.**

##### *Second Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn) [2.50] in moving the second reading said: This small

Bill merely seeks to amend the Act in a simple direction. The Act provides for the regulation of the manufacture and sale of bread, and the amendment provides the requisite machinery for the enforcement of bread deliveries. Where it has been the custom to deliver bread and the delivery ceases, the people affected complain, and sometimes the local authorities and members of the general public do—they urge for the restoration of deliveries.

At the present time, Kalgoorlie is an area where there are no bread deliveries. For many years it was the custom of the bakers there to bake bread and deliver it to their customers. Some people paid cash, some, I suppose, paid in advance—

Mr. May: Some did not pay at all.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I did not know the member for Collie had been to Kalgoorlie. Some people, of course, booked their orders and paid periodically. For some time past, the people in the Kalgoorlie area have been perturbed over the non-delivery of bread.

The Bill, if it receives the sanction of both Houses of Parliament, will require bakers to deliver bread within a reasonable distance of the bakehouse, and in reasonable quantities. It also provides that the baker is entitled to the tender of payment on delivery of the bread, otherwise he would not be legally obliged to leave the bread—although, I suppose, arrangements would be mutually made between the bread carter, acting on behalf of the baker, and the customer to pay each week, each fortnight, or cash, as the case may be. I know that in a number of towns in the country areas, there are no bread deliveries. It is felt that authority should be included in the Bread Act to ensure that where it is deemed advisable, prescribed areas may be promulgated with a result that the people engaged in the manufacture of bread in those areas will be obliged to deliver the bread.

Mr. Court: Assume that only one person in a district asked for the bread to be delivered.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The hon. member probably wants to know the position if one or two people, in an isolated area, require delivery of bread, and it means that the baker has to travel a mile or two to through sand to get to them. The question is: Would it be reasonable for him to deliver the bread to them? It will be at once seen that "prescribed area" can be decided upon in accordance with the circumstances of the case. If, for example—I suppose that nothing of this sort would happen—the bread manufacturers in the metropolitan area decided not to deliver bread, it would be competent under the Bill to prescribe areas in which they should deliver. It might be reasonable to suggest that the prescribed areas would conform to the respective areas in which deliveries of bread were already taking place.

This is the machinery whereby deliveries in the areas in which bread should be delivered, will be effected. I have received correspondence from Kalgoorlie in connection with this matter. It has been suggested that the legislation is desirable. It is quite likely that some members will make a reasonable remark to the effect that it will increase—I use an apt term often used by the Leader of the Opposition—the cost of production. Well, the price of bread is fixed under the Wheat Product (Prices Fixation) Act of 1938.

I had the question investigated as to which was the most appropriate Act to amend to deal with the subject matter of the Bill. As a result, an examination was made of the Wheat Products (Prices Fixation) Act, the Factories and Shops Act and the Bread Act, and I was advised that the Bread Act was the most appropriate one to amend to effect the Government's desires.

The Bill is not a long one. It merely seeks to insert into the Act a certain provision. The Wheat Products Prices Committee periodically fixes the price of bread for delivery and non-delivery towns. I am advised that even if the Bill means an increase in the price of bread, in accordance with the determinations of the Wheat Products Prices Fixation Committee the consumers will be quite prepared to accept the position as they do elsewhere.

Mr. Court: Will these prescribed areas mean zoning? Is it your intention that there will be a form of zoning?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: No. I understand that at the present time the bakers operate in various zones. I know that three bakers visit the area in which I live so that one has a choice of three, but I doubt if one wanted to call in a fourth baker whether he would get another baker to deliver bread there to only one person. I do not think that could be expected. A certain amount of economy has to be practised. The point raised by the member for Nedlands would naturally be given consideration. If any baker refused to deliver where he was not wont to deliver, then this machinery could be put into operation and a prescribed area appropriately described or defined.

Mr. Court: Are you able to give us any information on the experience of those places that have tried to enforce deliveries?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: On that point, certain difficulties arose when the New South Wales Act was passed a few years ago. I know that some legal difficulties followed. I took the trouble to read some of the judgments of, I think, the New South Wales Industrial Commission. I am advised that the enforcement of the delivery of bread there is working satisfactorily and that no great complaints

have been received. Everyone seems to be working harmoniously now that the Act is in full operation in that State.

I shall be pleased to hear comments from either side of the House. This is not what I might term a party political matter. The question affects consumers in different areas, and we are merely trying to meet the position by a reasonable piece of legislation. There has been a great amount of controversy on the Goldfields about this subject, and I shall be surprised if the members for Kalgoorlie and Boulder, and others from country electorates, do not contribute to the debate.

Mr. Roberts: What are the penalties in the Act for refusing to deliver bread?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: No actual penalty is provided in the Bill, but penalties are provided in the Act for various breaches.

Mr. Roberts: I thought you might know.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I could not quote the penalties off-hand, but I think there is a penalty of £2 for some offences and £10 for others, but there will be no reference in the Act to a penalty for a breach of this provision, if the Bill is passed. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [3.0]: I welcome the opportunity to take part in the debate on this measure and I congratulate the Minister on having brought forward this piece of legislation in an endeavour to ensure that housewives can depend on bread deliveries. I am speaking on this issue with the backing of every adult person in the Eastern Goldfields, with the exception, possibly, of the seven master bakers and their families. I ask the Opposition to consider the Bill and vote for it on its merits, as I think it should be compulsory for bakers to deliver bread to any householder who orders it and is prepared to pay for it, because bread is the staff of life.

For the last 11 months the people of Kalgoorlie and Boulder have been without a door-to-door delivery due to an agreement that was reached between the seven master bakers in the area, and I claim that that arrangement amounts to a conspiracy. When bread deliveries originally ceased on the Goldfields, there was a great deal of talk. There were many letters in the Press and a large number of ideas were expressed, to the effect that someone else should step in and establish an independent bakery and continue the delivery of bread.

At that time there were two bakehouses on the Goldfields that were not being used but within two or three days of the time when the master bakers decided not to deliver bread, those two bakehouses, I am informed, were tied up.



They were leased by the master bakers so that no one else could make use of them and I understand that at the present time the master bakers are paying rent on those places although they are not in use.

A master bricklayer in Kalgoorlie, named Millington, completed a new bakehouse just about that time and there was a little delay in the final arrangements regarding payment. I understand that the master bakers took that establishment over and by paying rent for it tied it up also.

As an alternative to the delivery of bread, the bakers on the Goldfields have instituted the practice of sending a van to an appointed place and notifying the housewives of its presence by ringing bells and blowing whistles, which are often the cause of confusion as to whether it is the postman or the baker blowing the whistle. On hearing that noise, the housewives are expected to rush out and queue up for bread, like beggars in one of Hitler's concentration camps.

It has been established at law that to make such a use of the public street constitutes an unlawful obstruction of the traffic, and I am amazed that the municipal authorities on the Goldfields have so long delayed taking action in the matter. What has happened in Kalgoorlie could easily happen in Perth and Fremantle, and the resulting outcry could easily be imagined.

I am informed that in the metropolitan area the bread carters, who, I understand, belong to the Transport Workers' Union, intend to commence their holidays on Christmas Eve and if that is so it looks as if people in the metropolitan area will be without bread deliveries for a fortnight during the Christmas vacation. As Parliament has established a law to control the prices of wheat products, it is just as logical and indeed essential in the interests of the public for the conditions upon which bread, which is the staff of life, is sold and delivered, to be controlled.

It is my intention to quote from what appeared in "The Kalgoorlie Miner" during the period over which we on the Goldfields have been denied bread deliveries, in order to show that the issue has aroused much public interest and has caused the people great inconvenience and hardship. Before doing so, I wish to say that it is significant that the Bolte Liberal Government in Victoria has this year also considered legislation of this nature to enforce bread deliveries. If this measure becomes law, there will be legislation to enforce bread deliveries in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Has the Victorian Government introduced that legislation?

Mr. EVANS: I do not know, but I do know it was being considered at the time when I made inquiries. However, I have

not followed it up. Yesterday in this House I asked a question in regard to what country towns in Western Australia are serviced with bread deliveries. The large towns mentioned were Geraldton, Northam, Bunbury, Katanning, Narrogin and Collie. The populations of those towns are: Geraldton 8,669, Northam 5,965, Bunbury 10,368, Katanning 2,900, Narrogin 3,915 and Collie 8,657. Those were the figures as at the 30th June, 1955. In Kalgoorlie and Boulder we have a population of over 22,000, yet we are deprived of bread deliveries!

A further consideration is that if a person orders bread he should be prepared to pay for the delivery, and I endorse that principle. I asked a further question as to the delivery price of a 1lb. loaf and a 2lb. loaf in each of the towns I have mentioned. The retail figures given for the delivery price within those towns were 8d. per 1lb. loaf and 1s. 4d. for a 2lb. loaf.

I will now quote from "The Kalgoorlie Miner" in which there appeared an article stating that rumours that local bakeries would discontinue bread deliveries after the 15th January were current in Kalgoorlie and Boulder. It continued—

However, a spokesman for the Master Bakers' Association was non-committal when the matter was referred to him last night.

On the 9th January there appeared in that newspaper a public notice as follows:—

Will any person interested in the establishment of bread depots please contact any Goldfields master baker?

On the same day there appeared a heading, "Abolition of Local Bread Deliveries not Favoured." On the 14th January there appeared an article headed, "Bread Delivery Position. Storekeepers and A.L.P. Confer." Do not let members opposite upset themselves, because I believe that endorsed Liberal candidates on the Goldfields were also sincere in taking an active interest in the bread delivery position. Further headings were as follows:—

Storekeepers unanimously agree not to tolerate depots for bread in shops.

January 10th: Labour women receive protests re non-delivery of bread. Strong opposition to scheme.

A.L.P. Executive confers with bakers.

January 17th: Public notice: Owing to outside pressure, the only depots supplying bread are the seven baker-houses.

That was sponsored by the Master Bakers' Association.

January 16: Public notice: Lamington Fruit Palace will not be a depot for bread.

That was signed by the proprietor.

January 20: Mayor calls a public meeting on bread supply issue.

Bakers hear two A.L.P. suggestions. Zone delivery system refused. Not interested in selling bread to contractors.

Sidelights on the bread issue are that an official of the Wheat Products Prices Fixation Committee (Mr. Kennedy)—I believe he is a friend of the member for Stirling—visited Kalgoorlie to inquire into the price of bread when deliveries ceased. Another news item was that the Premier had said that the Government would consider intervention only if the Goldfields people requested it. There was another cutting from a newspaper which read—

Many mothers are hoping for a solution before school resumes next month. Under the new system hundreds of school children are collecting bread from vans.

I also have a batch of headings from letters to the editor and most of those letters voice strong protest about the position. In fact, the back page of the "Kalgoorlie Miner" for weeks was flooded with such protests. These headings read—

January 16: The bread issue—try zoning.

and it is signed by "Toe the Breadline."

January 17: No bread deliveries. Make your own.

That is signed by "Regular Reader."

January 17: Why not call tenders?

That was signed by a member of another place.

January 18: Bread from Perth may be cheaper.

That is signed by "Ex-Bread Carter."

January 20: Womenfolk have the remedy.

Signed "Mrs. R. Haddow, Collins-st., Kalgoorlie." Now I have a letter which appeared in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" signed by Mr. Carl Newman, who was the endorsed Liberal candidate—and I believe a very sincere man—for the Murchison seat. This is the letter he wrote—

The decision of the Master Bakers' Association to discontinue the delivery of bread will, undoubtedly, cause much inconvenience to the public. During the past week I have approached several members of the association with a view to having the decision rescinded.

I base my argument on the following points—each one in itself sufficient to make the bakers' plan impracticable:—

- (1) The disruption of the household routine which would result from housewives having to trudge up to half a mile for bread.
- (2) The impossible situation which would arise for invalids, pensioners and the infirm.

- (3) The total unsuitability of the association's plan for shopkeepers to retail the bread.

Being an interested party (and an eater of bread) I inquired deeply into the matter and, while campaigning in Lamington, spoke to several shopkeepers who may be affected. I would like to assure your readers that these difficulties are very real. For example, one imagines the small store in, say, Lamington, catering for the needs of 200 people and being besieged between the hours of 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. by customers for bread.

Without a doubt it would mean a falling off in sales in their profit-making lines. Together with storage and other problems, this makes the association's plan quite unworkable from the retailer's point of view.

Members of the association assured me that the plan works quite well in Albany.

Whether that is correct, I do not know.

However that may be, the Kalgoorlie climate and layout are less adaptable to such a scheme than those of Albany and whilst the people of Albany have become accustomed to it, I would like to point out that in time one can become accustomed to most things and I don't believe the Kalgoorlie housewife wants to become used to walking half a mile (and back) for the daily bread.

Mr. Court: Is there anything in the local governing bodies' by-laws up there to stop another baker from starting up and delivering bread?

Mr. EVANS: There is no bakehouse.

Mr. Court: But surely a person could build one! They are not difficult to build.

Mr. EVANS: It would be a great financial expense if another baker wished to go there. He could go there by all means because there would not be any restriction as far as the local governing authorities' by-laws are concerned. I have another heading from the "Kalgoorlie Miner" which reads—

Bread delivery position. Storekeepers and A.L.P. confer. Opposed to depot system.

This article goes on to state that several interested people held a meeting to discuss the position and following the meeting a declaration was issued that they were against making storekeepers' premises available as depots for the distribution of bread.

A deputation waited on the Premier and he informed the deputation that there was no legislation in this State which could be applied to bring about a resumption of bread deliveries on the Goldfields. However, he said there was such legislation in New South Wales and if bread deliveries

in Kalgoorlie and Boulder were not resumed in the reasonably near future, the Government would seriously consider introducing similar legislation in this State.

The local authorities were most concerned at the way the issue had turned and the road board held a meeting and a person applied for a hawker's licence—I wonder if he would have to pay £20 for his licence. The item in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" reads—

The Kalgoorlie Road Board last night voted unanimously in favour of granting a hawker's licence to an applicant who stated that he wished to conduct bread deliveries. Some board members were of the opinion that bakers who are now conducting mobile bread depots should possess hawkers' licences—

—perhaps I voted the wrong way last night and I should have voted for a fee of £100—

—and the board resolved to obtain a legal ruling on the question. Mr. P. A. Wood said: "These persons are itinerant vendors and should have hawkers' licences. I have no wish to stop anybody delivering bread anywhere but I think that they should comply with the regulations." The present system of delivering bread was leading to unhealthy practices said another member.

He said that yesterday morning he watched a baker engaged in carrying between 300 and 400 loaves of bread from a private car to a shop. The bread, which was unwrapped, had been placed in the boot of the car, and on the rear seat and floor. This member said that it would be wise for health inspectors to pay attention to the method of bread delivery.

Mr. Court: Do you know if they deliver meat in Kalgoorlie and Boulder?

Mr. EVANS: No. Another heading reads—

Abolition of local bread deliveries not favoured. Householders consider proposed depots would be inconvenient.

Another heading reads—

Bakers plan special depots to sell bread.

And it goes on to state—

About 20 breadcarters will receive dismissal notices within the next few weeks . . .

It is an interesting point that two Kalgoorlie transport operators said that they were prepared at the time to buy bread from the bakers and organise their own door-to-door deliveries under a zoning system. They said that six other men would join with them in the venture. It was claimed that one of the group had approached a baker with a proposition

along these lines but it had been rejected. He had been told that bread would be made available if he intended to conduct a depot, but that supplies would be discontinued if he began to deliver bread. Then, also in the "Kalgoorlie Miner," there is an item where the health inspector warned certain bakers for their unhygienic methods of carrying bread from their bakehouses to the shops. Another item read—

Public meeting discusses bread delivery issue. Unanimous call for inquiry by Wheat Products Prices Committee.

This meeting was held in the Kalgoorlie Town Hall on the 4th February and the report goes on to state—

A meeting of Kalgoorlie ratepayers last night resolved to call for an immediate investigation by the Wheat Products Prices Fixation Committee into the price and other aspects relating to bread on the goldfields. The meeting was held in the Kalgoorlie Town Hall. It was called by the Mayor of Kalgoorlie, Mr. R. G. Moore, on the petition of five Kalgoorlie councillors, to discuss the cessation of bread deliveries in Kalgoorlie and Boulder.

The vote for an investigation was unanimous.

The instigator of the meeting, Cr. T. A. Hartrey, suggested the investigation as "one of several remedies" to the issue.

Statistics provided for him by a local baker revealed that the abolition of door-to-door deliveries was adding about £50 weekly to the profits of each baker, Cr. Hartrey claimed.

#### Delivery Costs.

It cost 3d. per loaf to deliver bread from door to door, Cr. Hartrey said, whereas the present depot system cost only ½d. per loaf.

That is a fact. When the deliveries of bread ceased, the price of bread to the consumer was decreased by ½d. per loaf and yet the master bakers claimed that it cost them more than 3d. per loaf to deliver bread to consumers' houses. The people are prepared, however, to pay for the bread to be delivered.

Continuing to quote the report of this public meeting, taken from the "Kalgoorlie Miner"—

A deduction of 1d. per loaf—"as an act of charity" by the bakers—still left them with an additional profit of 1½d. per loaf, he asserted.

"This profit is not being paid out of your pockets," he told the meeting, "but you are paying for it in inconvenience. I am suggesting that you demand a public inquiry to see if it is right."

Cr. Hartrey's subsequent motion for an inquiry into the bread industry on the Goldfields met with support from several parts of the hall.

What the bakers were attempting to accomplish could be taken up by other tradesmen, said one speaker.

"Where is it going to end?" he demanded. "It may spread to milkmen, grocers and even postmen."

Cr. Hartrey claimed that the present method of bread distribution was a most unhealthy one which did not enhance the chances of preventing an epidemic of poliomyelitis.

The majority of customers who queued for bread were children, who were not particular about hygiene when taking home bread from the vans—even though it might have been wrapped in clean paper by bakers, he declared. He had seen children drop bread in the gutters after collecting it from vans.

Condemning the action of the bakers in ceasing deliveries, Cr. Hartrey said: "The people of Kalgoorlie are beggars to seven dictators in this town." It was an offence for the bakers to "misuse the roads and streets to hawk bread," he continued. "It is just as much an offence against the Traffic Act as laying a bet in the streets."

Councillor Hartrey's motion that the council prevent bakers from using vans to distribute bread in the streets was seconded by Councillor D. Boyd.

That motion was carried. Another letter which appeared in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" was headed "Call for Civic Action." It had been sent in to the newspaper and signed by one of the Kalgoorlie municipal councillors.

It can be seen that this issue created great hardship and caused much inconvenience on the Goldfields. I therefore congratulate the Minister on bringing forth a piece of legislation such as this and I commend it to all members of the House. I conclude by saying that we, the people on the Goldfields, abide by the principle that if a person orders bread and is prepared to pay to have it delivered, it should be delivered. I support the Bill and conclude by voicing the sentiment contained in those famous words: "Give us this day our daily bread."

**MR. O'BRIEN** (Murchison) [3.24]: I support this Bill to amend the Bread Act. The implementation of the provisions contained in it is required especially on the north side of my electorate. Since the redistribution of seats and on visiting Kalgoorlie on various occasions, I have watched this problem growing for quite a while. I have noticed that a bell is rung

and people come out to a cart from here, there and everywhere to collect their daily bread. Whilst the school holidays are on, the problem is perhaps not so acute because parents have their children available to call at these various depots to collect their bread.

I consider the practice of calling people out to a bread cart by the ringing of a bell so that they may obtain their daily bread is something that is not appreciated by the Goldfields people. Often aged and other people who are not well are obliged to walk a distance of two miles or more to obtain a loaf of bread. This applies mainly in the North Kalgoorlie district.

In other parts of the Murchison district, bread is transported by train from one centre to another and on arriving at its destination, it is delivered to the consumers. For instance, the Meekatharra baker sends his bread to Wiluna. The Mt. Magnet baker forwards his bread to Yalgoo by train and on arrival it is delivered to the consumers at that centre. The Leonora baker has his bread transported by rail to Laverton where it is also delivered to the consumers on arrival. Very few sales of bread take place in the shops. I confirm what the member for Kalgoorlie has said in regard to the true facts of this problem, namely, that people are obliged to follow the ringing of a bell.

Mr. Court: Did you write to the newspaper to protest against the cessation of local deliveries? I notice your opponent did and it did not do him much good in the election.

**MR. O'BRIEN:** The problem exists in many towns, but, as I have previously remarked, it has been solved to a great extent by the transportation of bread by rail to various centres where, upon its arrival, it is delivered to the consumers. I think the member for Kalgoorlie has outlined the case for bread deliveries to be made in the Kalgoorlie district very effectively. I commend the Minister for bringing this Bill forward, which will assist the people on the Goldfields who are pioneers and who have already suffered many adversities without being subject to this hardship. I hope members will give this measure careful consideration and their full support.

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

## **BILL—CITY OF PERTH ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH** (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [3.30] in moving the second reading said: This Bill has been submitted at the request of the Perth City Council for the purpose of rectifying two anomalous provisions in the principal Act. The Act gives the City Council powers in

regard to opening, diverting, altering or increasing the width of streets. Paragraph (b) of Section 4 authorises the council, where a street is being widened, to purchase or resume land in order to provide footways. Paragraph (c) of the same section commences by stating "Such purchase or resumption may be carried out on conditions reserving to the owners of the land resumed any of the following rights . . ."

Members will note that the words "the owners of the land resumed" should read "the owners of the land purchased or resumed." As it is now, owners of land resumed for footways would be entitled to the rights conferred by paragraph (c), but owners of land purchased would not. The Bill seeks to rectify this obviously unintentional omission. The rights referred to include the continued possession, use and occupation of any existing cellars or rooms below the level of the new footways, and of existing buildings above the footways, the rights of erecting, possessing, using and occupying of buildings above the footways and the rights of supports for the buildings.

The other amendment refers to Section 5 of the principal Act which gives the City Council power to prescribe a new building line for any street or part of a street. Paragraph (3) of this section states that where a new building line is prescribed, no owner of any land or building or work affected by the new line shall undertake any building activities upon the land between the new and the old alignments, except for the purpose of completing a building in course of erection at the time the new alignment was prescribed. The council, however, may permit minor alterations needed for the preservation of any existing structure.

The provision places this restriction only on the owner of the land, building or work. The council's solicitors have pointed out that the council would have no control if the work were carried out by the tenant or lessee of the land, building or work, thereby defeating the purpose of the new building line. To overcome this anomaly, the Bill seeks to place the restriction not on the owner but on any person. It will be seen that the Bill is very necessary for the purpose of protecting the Perth City Council. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

### MOTION—RAILWAYS.

#### *Discontinuance of Certain Lines.*

**THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT**  
(Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [3.34]:  
I move—

That in the opinion of this House, having regard particularly to the considerations referred to in Appendix "A" to this motion, the services provided by the railways listed in

Appendix "B" to this motion should, notwithstanding certain other considerations, be discontinued and that such railways should cease to be operated.

#### Appendix "A."

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

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

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

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

(5) The rising costs of operating railways.

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

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

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

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

#### Appendix "B."

##### Railways.

	Length of Railways. Miles.
Meekatharra to Wiluna .....	111
Cue to Big Bell .....	19
Malcolm to Laverton .....	64
Geraldton to Ajana .....	67
Wokarina to Yuna .....	38
Burakin to Bonnie Rock .....	76
Mukinbudin to Lake Brown .....	8
Lake Brown to Bullfinch .....	50
Bullfinch to Southern Cross .....	22
Boddington to Narrogin .....	51
Busselton to Margaret River .....	38
Margaret River to Flinders Bay .....	29
Elleker to Nornalup .....	61
Brookton to Corrigin .....	56
Lake Grace to Hyden .....	58
Katanning to Pingrup .....	59
Gnowangerup to Ongerup .....	35

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To some extent, I am perplexed as to whether I should give a detailed outline of the railway position, and particularly of the affected railways, or whether I should only briefly introduce this motion; the reason being, of course, that the Minister for Railways has already submitted

the proposition to the Legislative Council though the motion did not get very far in debate.

Some weeks ago members of this Chamber discussed a resolution pertaining to this question indirectly, a motion having been submitted by the member for Blackwood. Three comprehensive reports have been on the Table of the House for several weeks, and scores of questions have been asked and answered providing pertinent information to those members seeking it. Notwithstanding some earlier remarks I made some weeks ago, however, I feel that I should give a reasonably comprehensive, but at the same time concise, report covering the number of reasons why the Government has decided that some action is now necessary.

It will be noted first of all that the proposition being submitted to Parliament is to get an expression of opinion from members of both Houses at this stage in connection with the discontinuation of services. Subsequently, of course, it will be necessary for a Bill to be introduced to provide for the closure of certain lines, so that apart from other considerations there could be a certain amount of cannibalisation, if I may use that term—that is to say, the Railways Commission could be permitted to make use of sleepers, rails, buildings and other equipment sited along the existing railway lines which it is sought to close.

From the information that has been made available to members in recent times, apart from what may have been their own general knowledge and observation, I think it must be agreed by all that the time has arrived, if it is not long overdue, for the Government and Parliament to give very serious consideration to all the implications of the railways. This is a time, I suggest, when we should be big enough to forget parish pump politics; that we should survey the situation from a State point of view.

It is quite easy for any member to succumb to pressure from small groups of people who feel disturbed because of the possibilities of some change. I think it has ever been thus; that in all of us there is something which makes us dubious in some cases, raises doubts in others, and, in others again, creates fears as to what may be the position in future if some change were made. In other words, we all have a conservative streak somewhere. But I suggest that the railway position has reached such a stage that we are confronted with a crisis, and that it requires clear thinking and strong action, otherwise the weight imposed upon the State by our railway system will be completely beyond the capacity of the State to bear.

As a matter of fact, that position has already been reached. The full impact has not been felt by the Government of Western Australia because no Government

in recent years has been able to spend money that is essential if the railways are to be kept in full working order. If during this year the Government were to supply to the Railways Commission the funds that are necessary to carry out urgent rehabilitation work, then instead of £4,000,000 of loan moneys being required, £8,000,000 would be essential. To that extent, sacrifices would have had to be made in respect to the provision of water supplies, schools, houses and other public works for which the Government is responsible.

We should remove ourselves from the type of thinking which was based upon the railways as the chief form of transportation, supplemented by the horse and buggy or horse-drawn wagon. It was only a few years back that those were the forms of transport in use. Our railway system was laid down to meet that situation. Generally speaking, it will be found that the railway lines are sited some 25 to 30 miles apart. When the railways were established, the general conception was that 12½ to 15 miles was the maximum distance that any settler could be expected to cart his produce, or, on the return journey, the various items required for domestic and farm use.

With the advent of motor transport, the whole position has changed dramatically. I well remember in my earlier years when as a boy I was associated with farming activities, when the horse-drawn wagon left the farm almost before sunrise in the morning loaded with wheat. It slowly wended its way along a natural sand track to the railway siding, reaching its destination after nightfall. That entailed the farmer sleeping on the wheat stack during the night. The first thing next morning the bags of wheat, not many of them, were unloaded. Then it took all day for that vehicle to return to the farm. In other words, one load was carried in two days, and the load was not a very large one.

Today with modern means of transport, an extra 10 to 30 miles hardly mean anything. Once the goods are loaded on the wagon, then the difference is only perhaps one half-hour of additional travelling in order to deliver the goods to their destination. So it will be seen that the whole complexion has changed because of the speed and ease with which motor transport is able to shift goods, and in considerable quantities. Only this morning I was studying some photographs of road trains such as operate in certain parts of Western Australia, that is to say, quite large trucks with several trailers attached at the rear. The quantity of goods that can be moved at any one time with quite a good spread of the load over many axles has to be seen to be believed.

So far as the subject railway lines are concerned, generally speaking there is such a small volume of goods traffic that it is very doubtful indeed whether this form

of transport would be required, in order to give the settlers and the residents in the affected districts a service sufficient for their needs.

*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.5 p.m.*

**THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT:** Perhaps we can to some extent clear our minds of prejudices if we ask ourselves the question: If there were no railway lines in existence in Western Australia, how many lines would we—if we as individual members were in a position to determine the issue—lay down and just where would we lay them?

I am confident that if we answered that question honestly we would probably settle for no more than three or four main railways. It could be stated, in an endeavour to appease the mind, that the railways are already in existence and that therefore the question does not arise; that the capital cost has already been incurred and it is not a question of laying down new railway lines but merely of keeping in operation for future years, those that are in existence.

But the point is that it is going to cost, in the next ten years, far more to rehabilitate the existing railways than their entire capital cost since the first railway was laid down in this State. Up to the present time—that is to say, the 30th June last—the capital cost of our railways has been £58,000,000 of which, in 1950, approximately £12,000,000 was written off. The Railways Commission estimates that it will require £7,500,000 for each of the next ten years in order to rehabilitate the existing system—in other words £75,000,000.

**Hon. Sir Ross McLarty:** That would have nothing to do with the contemplated broad gauge?

**THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT:** That is so; it is merely to rehabilitate the existing lines. During the last ten years—again up to the 30th June last—no less than £34,700,000 of loan money has been expended on capital works associated with the railways. During this same period of ten years, the losses—the cost to the revenue of the State—have been £32,450,000. In other words, on account of both loan and revenue, the combined burden, if I might put it that way, has been £67,150,000. If we add to that this year's figures, approximately £4,000,000 of loan money and a loss of approximately £5,000,000, we have the staggering cost of £76,000,000 in 11 years.

**Hon. A. F. Watts:** How much of that total rehabilitation money would be spent on the lines you do not wish to retain?

**THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT:** I have not that information at the moment but the figures are contained, in an inverse form, in the reports, because the capital cost of rehabilitation of the lines which are the subject of this motion, is

set out in the two reports that were submitted by the committee of three. I have just stated that the cost over the 11 years ending the 30th June next, on loan and revenue account, will have been £76,000,000.

Over the next 10 years, £75,000,000 of loan money is required and, based on past performances, the losses over the next 10 years will be something in excess of a further £50,000,000. It will, therefore, be seen that we are getting into astronomical figures, which I say none of us can justify. I suggest, also, that in order to meet this situation we will have to impose all sorts of crippling burdens on our people, on the one hand, and deny them essential public works on the other.

I know that it is an easy matter to blame the administration and that has already been done in a few places; but if the administration is faulty, perhaps we could suggest that the position might be improved by an amount of possibly several million pounds if there were a more efficient administration—I am not at this moment admitting that there is cause for any serious complaint in regard to the present administration—but if that several million pounds—which is problematical—were to be gained for the State, the basic problem would still remain and we would still be faced with this cost of tens of millions of pounds of loan and revenue commitments in order to keep in existence railway lines which I think I can presently show—notwithstanding certain protests—the public do not want.

During the postwar years a great deal has been spent on rollingstock and yet it is astounding, if we peruse the departmental reports, to see just how many units of rollingstock are 40, 50 or even more years old, and, of course, they are uneconomical to run and cannot have a great deal of life left in them.

**Hon. Sir Ross McLarty:** But that would not include locomotives, now.

**THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT:** Yes, it includes quite a lot of locomotives, as well. The track is in very bad state and there are only 489 miles out of more than 4,000 miles of our railway system that have not some form of limitation imposed on them. The only tracks on which no limitation of that sort is imposed are those between Perth and Kalgoorlie and Perth and Busselton. Every other line in the State has some limitation imposed on it. The Burakin-Bonnie Rock line has a maximum speed limit of 15 miles an hour and it is only a matter of perhaps a few weeks or months before it will be impossible for any rail service to operate there, because the line will have collapsed.

We are reaching a stage where many hundreds and, indeed, up to 2,000 miles of our railway lines are becoming unusable, but because it is necessary to devote certain funds to those lines in an endeavour to keep them in operation a little longer, the

main lines, for which there is some demand, are to that extent being neglected. As I have already said, only about 10 per cent. of the entire length of our lines is able to make the full use of our improved motive power due to the diesel locomotives.

In other words, we have a capital cost of millions of pounds for locomotives and rollingstock and our railways are incapable of carrying those trucks and locomotives. That position must continue under the present state of affairs. Surely all of us appreciate that not only in other parts of the world but also throughout the Commonwealth, including our own State, people are becoming more and more accustomed to using the roads for the haulage of goods and passengers and for personal travel.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: And progress, of course.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: And progress. There are numerous advantages pertaining to road transport that appeal to the public. It may be all right for us to theorise or say that our railways are consuming local fuel whereas road transport requires imported fuel, but the point is that the public are desirous of using road transport and I very much doubt whether members of Parliament can for ever and a day adopt the role of King Canute, in an endeavour to hold back the waves of progress.

As members know, we have a Transport Board and I have had representations made to me—apart altogether from approaches made to the Transport Board—by practically every member of the Opposition in this House, and I am not criticising them for those approaches. Those members have appealed to me to allow people to cart goods by road instead of by rail and they have done that because the public desire to transport their goods or many of them by road and lots of them are doing it.

Certain of them are being held back by the Transport Board, and that board is having abuse and villification heaped on its head because it feels that, in the terms of its Act, it has a certain responsibility to protect the existing form of transport, which is our railway system. But if the board had been established earlier, would anyone suggest that it should have been vested with the power to have prevented railways being established simply because there were in existence donkey teams, camel teams and so on?

There are changes in processes and they must be recognised by a practical people. I think it would surprise members if they knew just how great was the volume and variety of goods that are transported by road under permits or licences from the Transport Board and if that board were less realistic and refused to grant these licences, we would be doing a grave disservice to the country people, and there will be far more of this form of transport if we take action as is envisaged in the motion.

Apart altogether from the farmers and people in business in the country districts, and, of course, some in the metropolitan area as well, who have made approaches to the Transport Board and to the Minister for Transport, whoever he might have been, local authorities have been pressing the claims of road transport. I have seen a number of letters addressed to the Premier couched in most abusive terms in which people have expressed themselves with regard to the policy of the Minister for Transport because he has not heeded the approaches made to him in connection with road transport.

Organisations representing country interests have similarly waited upon the Minister for Railways and myself asking, in the interests of the people in the outlying parts, to be permitted to use road transport for any one of a dozen good reasons. On occasions I have been compelled to make decisions against my better judgment in an endeavour to do something to preserve the existing railways because, as long as those railways are there, and it is the responsibility of the Government to maintain and operate them, there is at least some responsibility on the Minister for Transport to see that as great a volume of goods as possible passes over those lines.

But the present situation does not make me happy and I mention this to indicate the tremendous surge that has developed and the desire generally of the public to use road transport more and more. Members of Parliament, being representative of the public, surely have to acknowledge that trend. I do not think there is any necessity to go into great detail with regard to the proposals because there is a large volume of subject matter contained in the reports which are on the Table of the House at present, reports which have been prepared by qualified officers after many months of extensive study of the problem from every angle. Their recommendations have been made to the Government based on their knowledge, their inquiries, and the information placed before them.

I propose to give two examples of railways which will give members a clearer picture of the whole situation because the same story applies to a greater or lesser extent in respect to every one of the lines mentioned. First of all, I took as an example one of the railways in the district of the member for Murchison.

Mr. O'Brien: Don't make it too hard.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I am quoting facts in regard to these two lines. First of all, I wish to refer to the line from Malcolm to Laverton. It is 64 miles in length and it is estimated that essential reconditioning work will cost £753,600—for 64 miles of railway! During the last financial year for which figures are available, 1954-55, there were 2,207 tons carted over that line; 800 tons were



despatched from the area covered by the line and 1,400 tons received; or to express it another way the weekly position was that 16 tons left the area and 27 tons arrived in it.

If the line is to be kept open, we are expected to spend more than three-quarters of a million pounds. As somebody suggested, when I mentioned this case some weeks ago, those goods could be carted almost in a wheelbarrow. It would be a matter of only two or three journeys a week to cart the goods required, or only two or three trucks—and not heavy ones—and they would make no impact and have no effect whatever upon the road which runs parallel to, and beside, the existing railway. I should say that no member of Parliament, be he a private member sitting on either side of the House or one who, for the time being, has the responsibility of being a Minister, could, under any circumstances, justify a continuation of operations on a line of that description. I think he would be doing a rank disservice to the people of this State if he allowed such a wicked waste of money to continue.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I suppose the track is further deteriorating all the time.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Yes, it is going on all the time and every penny spent on maintenance work is so much money wasted. The revenue from that line is a matter of almost a few shillings per annum. The Transport Board has estimated that three or four regular trips per week would suffice and, of course, would give the people in that outlying area a more frequent and regular service than they receive at present, although a few special trucks would be necessary to meet seasonal requirements. So in respect to that particular locality, there is no problem and no difficulty whatever.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Is there an all-weather road?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: There is quite a well constructed gravel road covering that short distance; incidentally a gravel road is an all-weather road because if there is 6ft. of water over a road I suppose it is just as difficult to get across it whether it be bitumen, gravel or anything else. There have been occasions when there have been railway washaways and railway mishaps and the line has been disorganised for a period. But so far as essential communications are concerned—that is, for hospitalisation, perishable food and the like—there is today a factor which did not exist previously, and I refer to aerial transport. So there would be very little or no prospect of a community being completely isolated. If the general position were so bad, and road transport could not cope with the demands made upon it, I suggest that the railways would be in the same difficult position.

If the service on the Malcolm-Laverton line is discontinued, it will avoid the necessity of a capital expenditure of three-quarters of a million pounds. It will save £10,000 per annum on operating costs and £10,000 per annum on permanent way work. It is estimated that the cost of providing a subsidy, based on the recommendations of the committee which reported to the Government, would be £800 only in the first year. Of course, if the line were closed there would be an additional advantage accruing, namely, the recovery, following the pulling up of the line, of £45,000 worth of usable goods, materials, buildings, etc.; they could be put to good use on the existing lines of the service.

Mr. Nalder: Is that net? That does not take into consideration the labour cost of pulling the line up.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: That has not been explained, incidentally, in the report, but there would be rails there, for instance, which are still serviceable and which could be used in other parts—that is, placed upon proper foundations—sleepers and the rest of it and, of course, sleepers are exceedingly expensive at present. In the last seven years the major costs to the Railways Commission have increased three times. So whatever the costs were under a number of headings in 1949 when the commission was established, today the costs are three times as great. Therefore, whilst the initial cost of some of the items which could be moved from some of the railways that were closed down would be reasonably small, the cost of new equivalent items would be exceedingly high.

The other line which I intend to use as an example is the Burakin-Bonnie Rock railway. In selecting two examples, I want to assure members that I have not necessarily done so to suit my convenience in submitting this motion, with the exception of this qualification, namely, that the Malcolm-Laverton line was chosen as being an extreme case to illustrate how utterly absurd it would be for such a line to continue in existence or that the Government should be required to continue operations on a line carrying so little, rendering so small a service to the people and yet with the commitment of so many hundreds of thousands of pounds to keep it usable.

Mr. Nalder: You mentioned that only £800 would be required to subsidise the road service. Would that mean that the existing rates would be the same?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Based upon the subsidies that apply at present—for instance, those that apply in the Lakes district—all of those goods that come under the heading of "M" class or

the "miscellaneous" class as classified by the Railways Commission—I might mention that there are about two pages of them—would carry the same rates. Those goods would include cement or concrete blocks for building, bricks, firewood, flour, gravel, manures—organic or artificial—road metal, ropes, ores, pipes, wheat, water and so on. In other words, they would be largely the bulk freights.

I realise that members find it almost difficult to believe that the subsidy could be so small, but the reason is that the volume of goods is so small. Of course, under the recommendations, it is proposed that the subsidies should be paid for a seven-year period only and will diminish by one-seventh per annum until the expiration of the term when the subsidy will disappear entirely; the objective there being to give people an opportunity to adjust themselves to new conditions—conditions which have many advantages, but which, nevertheless, in the initial period at any rate, could possibly cause certain dislocation.

The second line that I will use by way of example—and it is the only other one I intend to use—is, as I have already said, the Burakin-Bonnie Rock line which is 76 miles in length and upon which reconditioning work would cost £310,000. During 1954-55 there were 18,110 tons of goods transported on that line, of which 14,000 tons were despatched and 4,000 tons were received or, on a weekly basis—that is averaged over the year and which perhaps does not give a clear picture because there would be a great volume transported at a certain time of the year and comparatively little at others—270 tons left by train per week and 77 tons arrived at the various points along this line per week during 1954-55.

The service at present is one trip weekly. It is estimated that with a road service operating, there would be two or three trucks travelling weekly, although in this case it is difficult to state what the position would be. If any member cares to study the map—if they are not familiar with the general direction and orientation of the line—he will appreciate that if services no longer are given on this railway, it does not necessarily mean that goods will travel along a route parallel to the railway line, but more likely the tendency will be for the goods to be transported south to another railway line which would have the advantage of the loading point being some 50 miles closer to the port than the point at which goods are loaded at present. So there would be a compensating factor there.

In other words, the farmers in that affected area would probably cart their goods south to places such as Bencubbin and Mukinbudin. The farmers south of

this railway line would probably have to cart their wheat, etc., scarcely any greater distance than they do now. Putting it another way, instead of transporting their goods 10 miles to the north, they would transport them 15 miles to the south and in so doing would save quite a few miles of rail freights. As indicated earlier—and I am sure it will be appreciated—after the goods are placed on the vehicle and it starts to move, there is no great cost or effort required to take the goods a few miles further.

I have already indicated that it is not possible at this stage to state with any degree of certainty the form of the organisation and the transport that would be provided. It could be—and the Transport Board can arrange this in a very short time—that tenders would be called for the transportation of goods from certain points to other points. On the other hand, it may be found—and I am speaking of the farmers particularly—that those people prefer to do their own carting, or, alternatively, will prefer to make their own private arrangements.

For the greater part of the year—and I am overlooking the bulkhandling facilities and the depots for the moment—there would be, no doubt, a regular service operating two or three times a week to the various points of the locality affected by the discontinuance of the railway, and this regular service would operate after tenders had been called. For the transportation of bulk goods, such as wheat and superphosphate, special arrangements would be made.

I should insist here that the Transport Board is attending to matters of this nature week by week in the course of its ordinary business, and is experiencing no difficulty whatever in providing satisfactory services for the people. So, in connection with this Burakin-Bonnie Rock line, we find that if the services were discontinued, the State would avoid the necessity of spending £310,000 of capital for the essential reconditioning of the track. It would save £15,500 on operating costs, and £11,500 on permanent way work, making a total of £27,000 per annum.

But in respect of this railway—and this is only a very rough estimate at the moment, because it will depend on the direction that farmers and hauliers decide to take their goods—the subsidy for the first year could be £29,000. It will be seen here that the impact on the Treasury would be almost nothing, and that the savings would be sufficient to meet the subsidy for the first year; but the subsidy under the proposals would be lessened by approximately £4,000 per annum. If the line were eventually closed, approximately £100,000 of usable material would be available to the Railways Commission in other parts.

Mr. Court: In your submissions, you have made reference to savings. What will be the nature of those savings; because there was a contradictory statement by the Government that there would be no effect on employment? I cannot for the life of me see how you can economise in a genuine sense without having any effect on your overall employment level.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I will give an assurance to members and to all employees of the railway system, that if these lines are discontinued, there will be no retrenchments.

Mr. Court: But how are you going to economise?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Perhaps we can deal with that. These lengths of railway lines have such infrequent services at the moment that the sum total of them does not amount to much. To a very great extent the people operating those infrequent services will be used to carry those same goods to existing lines. Those engaged as fettlers in repair and general maintenance work will still be employed, but instead of being employed on these non-paying lines, they will be working where there is some sense in continuing the line. Thus, we will have more than 400 odd lines capable of taking full weights with railway trains travelling at reasonable speeds.

In a tremendous organisation like the railways, and from a reply to a question this afternoon, it will be seen that the total was approximately 14,000 men—there is a considerable wastage every year on account of normal resignations, change-over from job to job, accident, ill-health, death and that sort of thing. All it means is that where there are a lesser number of men required for a short period, there will not be the same number of replacements as would be the case normally.

But surely it can be seen that in the matter of keeping the tracks in a serviceable condition there would be as much money and as many men employed, but they would be employed where it is helpful to the railway system instead of being engaged on lines which are scarcely used and which are most uneconomic and which, at the same time, are almost on their last legs.

I think, too, that there would be an advantage to the railway employees—or to some of them—that instead of being away outback—and here let me interpolate that I am thinking more from the point of view of the individual rather than that of policy—these railway workers who are completely isolated at the end of a line, where there may be one train a week, would be far better circumstanced as individuals by being established in larger townships, where they and their families can enjoy the amenities and far higher standards of living than is possible at present.

In my opinion, that is all it amounts to; so there need be no fears on the part of railway employees that they will suffer as a consequence of the discontinuation of the services proposed in the motion before us.

I have already mentioned that with the system of railway operations, there could be any one of several alternative forms of transport. If regard is had for the map, it will be seen that there will be no great burden placed upon the farmers, and I am thinking of them particularly, if it is a mere matter of transporting their goods a few miles further. Apart from that, the Transport Board will arrange for carting contracts, and in some cases—as is the position in the North-West—people will make their own arrangements for the transport of the various materials and goods.

Therefore, I would like to emphasise that it is impossible for anyone to say with authority exactly what will operate in a given area, because naturally the Transport Board cannot set about making its arrangements until the will of Parliament and of the Government are made known. This assurance can be given on behalf of the Government, that none of these services will be terminated—that is, if they can stand up on their own legs as long as that—until we are satisfied that ample provision has been made for a transport system to serve the people in the affected districts.

Mr. Court: You would be helping your case if you could give us something more explicit as to the alternative transport you propose. It is not sufficient to say, "road transport." There are passengers, heavy freights, some easily damaged freights, and so on to be dealt with.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Let us consider the question of the more easily damaged freights first. The general practice is that the Transport Board does not hesitate to grant a licence for road transport for that class of goods because of the damage done on the railways. If it is a matter of bricks, tiles, glass and supplies of that nature, they go by road. Accordingly—and I know this because of the appeals made to me—the people would be far happier knowing they would be able to cart all these breakable items the entire distance. In other cases, the journey would be less and then there would be a road journey at the other end. The road journey would be over a greater distance.

Mr. Court: Your predecessor was very critical about alternative forms of transport. I suppose the board would have investigated the matter sufficiently to demonstrate the type of transport it would use.

**THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT:** That depends on a number of factors. Obviously for the lighter class of cartage—that is, the regular service—some light van with passenger accommodation might meet the position. In the case of bulk materials, of course, a heavier type of truck would be needed. One of the recommendations of the committee is that where the Government railway road transport operates, it should be extended as far as possible to meet the position. That service is not keen to do so and neither is the Railways Commission keen that it should undertake this road haulage. As is the case in a number of localities at the moment, road transport will be carried out by private operators, with the Transport Board calling for tenders.

As soon as a final decision has been made, the details in respect of bulkhandling of wheat will be discussed with Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. so as to enable timetabling to be arranged on the cessation of the railway services. That answers in part the question as to when effect will be given to this motion if it is agreed to. The recommendation is that they should be closed immediately, but that does not mean that a week after the motion is passed, the railway services will be discontinued. Their appreciation of the situation is that as soon as a decision is made, steps should be taken immediately to give effect to it. This does not necessarily mean that all the lines involved will cease operation at the same time.

The Government is anxious that there shall be a minimum of interference and dislocation of transport if, indeed, there be any. It is anxious to see that the new procedure and set-up work effectively. I want to say, too, that the Government has been assured by the Commissioner of Main Roads, who has been associated with one or other of the committees for a period of two years, that the burden on the roads is almost insignificant, that very many of the roads which will be used to carry more goods, will bear a load of so few extra tons as to make no difference whatsoever, and that in other cases only minor maintenance work is likely to arise as a result of such haulage.

I indicated on a previous occasion that when, because of circumstances the railways could not be entirely relied upon to transport goods, in addition to the many hundreds and thousands of road journeys that were undertaken in various parts of the State—I am speaking more of the wheatbelt areas—certain things took place. This is a note prepared by the Commissioner of Main Roads. It states—

It will be remembered that this State's roads over long lengths carried large tonnages of wheat when the railway system was unable to do so. During the four years, 1949 to 1953, 1,064,000 tons of wheat went through

Midland Junction by road to port of Fremantle, and 250,000 tons of superphosphate went out to the country; and during the five years, 1947 to 1952, a total of 1,811,000 tons of wheat were hauled to Geraldton, Fremantle and Bunbury.

I reiterate that there were many trucks travelling every day in every direction on practically every road, but the trips referred to were additional journeys. Yet with few exceptions, the roads stood up to the test.

In any event, there are restrictions on maximum axle loads, and other restrictions can be applied either along an entire road throughout the entire year, or only to cover certain periods as in the South-West where, on account of climatic conditions and the wet nature of the soil, the foundation of the roads easily subsides. But even down that part of the State, as was mentioned before and which the member for Blackwood knows, the sawmilling companies haul their logs on roads they construct themselves at very small cost and which they keep in trafficable condition, again at a very small cost. The loads hauled over those roads are of a greater weight and of greater frequency than is likely to be the case on any of the propositions contained in the motion.

We have not as yet a full appreciation of the possibilities of road transport and what the road system in this State is capable of bearing, that is, provided that road hauliers operate within certain safe limits. I have taken far longer to make these remarks than I intended. Perhaps the best approach to this question is to await the response of members, to see what points concern them, and then endeavour in the reply to satisfy them in respect of those particular issues.

**Mr. Perkins:** If you take any area where the railway is discontinued, would that area be freed of the restrictions imposed by the Transport Co-ordination Act, and will the people be free to carry their goods to the railhead or wherever they want?

**THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT:** Not to wherever they want. That depends on the area affected. To give one example of the position, east of Gnowangerup, farmers and others engaged in business south of Borden would be permitted to transport goods direct to Albany instead of having to take them to Gnowangerup and then along the railway system to Albany. That will apply to their produce and major requirements such as superphosphate which would be transported entirely by road. In other cases, such as the farmers in the Hyden locality, they would be required to cart their goods across to the railhead at Kondinin. If they were allowed a blank cheque, we would have to dispense with the entire railway system. We should be realistic about this matter.

In this State there is an insufficient population and insufficient movement of goods and people to warrant two rival services to the same area. We have to make up our minds which form of transport should operate. With science and modern invention, the trend is obvious; the railways have become less and less necessary. They may be desirable for certain classes of goods, but there are advantages in road transport when compared with rail transport.

With road transport goods can be picked up from the factory and delivered to the site and delivery can be arranged within an hour of when the goods are required, without having to wait for a train that will arrive the following Tuesday and perhaps so many hours late through having to wait at an unattended siding, to laboriously unload every item from the rail trucks to the vehicle of the settler or businessman, and then to unload at the other end.

A consignment could leave the factory and be delivered right into the store or the farmer's shed, as the case may be. There are advantages and problems associated with this matter and they will gradually be overcome with stronger roads, wider roads, more economy from a cost angle, the running of road trains, perhaps special highways and so on. I do not think there is any question about this, but we have not reached that stage.

The motion is submitted for the consideration of members and my final comments are: What are the alternatives? That we continue this 4,119 miles of line? That we allow them gradually to run down, and that has been the trend over the last 50 years because some of the original rails are still on the tracks as well as some of the original ballasting? That we endeavour to keep going and allow the whole system to run down progressively or that we have an instruction from Parliament that, come what may, the railways are to continue?

In other words, we completely deny the other requirements of the public because money is being centred on the railways; that we, distasteful as it might be, be compelled to decide on a steep increase of rail freights, perhaps double or more than double; or that the Transport Board, in the interests of the State—because the State cannot be allowed to collapse on account of an ideal of continuing the railways—pulls in its horns and says, "Henceforth no permits will be allowed because everything has got to go by rail."

The position is as serious as that. The anticipated deficit is the best part of £6,000,000 this year. We are devoting £4,000,000 loan money this year, which is approximately half of what the Railways Commission wants.

Mr. Court: On that point, might I ask a question? I think this is a specific motion dealing with certain lines, but no proposition has been put forward regarding improvement in operation. For instance, making some contribution from the metropolitan area passenger transport, which is a heavy losing proposition?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: That is a matter of increasing fares, and does not have to come to Parliament. I think, without going into all the ramifications of the railways, with which I am not familiar—I am not the Minister for Railways—it would be far better for us to concentrate on these lines and the effect they will have if the terms of the motion are agreed to.

Mr. Court: I think you missed my point. If the people directly affected by these lines can appreciate that some contribution is being made elsewhere in the system, including the metropolitan area, surely their attitude will be improved in regard to the submission made!

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I am confident that the public—those who are protesting or prone to be nervous at the present moment—after experience of the new order of things, will be far happier than they are at the moment because they are not getting a decent service from the railways. They cannot get it, having regard to their locality and volume of business. I think the position will be the same as that experienced by the member for Pilbara when the Port Hedland-Marble Bar line was closed. Today, after the passage of only a few years, those same people would be out to cut the throat of anybody who suggested putting the railway back.

Therefore I close on the note on which I opened, that, without any reason or substance, people oppose things purely because they are somehow conservative and averse to change. Irrespective of what fears there may be at the present moment, I am confident that apart from the necessity to close these lines, these people will find they are wrong in their assumptions and that it is possible for them to go about their lawful business and pleasure without interruption or handicaps such as they envisage at the present time.

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

#### **BILL—FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).**

##### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [5.7]: This Bill of one clause sets out to continue the existence of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act for a further period of five years. At one time it was a common occurrence

for the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act to come before us, I think, annually, but it was finally decided that its life should be renewed for periods of five years.

In the circumstances that have existed in very recent years, the use of this legislation has, of course, very considerably diminished, in fact, at one stage, I believe almost to vanishing point, but at any time I would suggest there may be individuals or perhaps groups who could require the benefit of this legislation.

Of course, the value of this has to be taken into consideration with the Rural Relief Fund Act. That Act, as we know, was the measure which determined the method of expenditure by the trustees of the moneys which, approximately 20 years ago, were provided by the Commonwealth Government for the relief of farmers' debts and I believe, at the present time, there is at least the sum of £200,000 or more in the fund by way of a trustee fund which at any time could be used should the circumstances arise.

So while I express the hope that operations under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act and Rural Relief Fund Act will remain in the future as quiet as in recent times—because I have no desire to see persons engaged in the industry obliged to take refuge under such legislation—nevertheless, I am satisfied the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act should remain in operation and I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

#### **BILL—TRADE DESCRIPTIONS AND FALSE ADVERTISEMENTS ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. COURT** (Nedlands) [5.12]: The Bill has my support. It is quite pleasant to be able to stand here and agree wholeheartedly with a Bill introduced by the Minister for Labour because for some reason or other, he usually introduces Bills which I find extremely contentious. This measure does not involve any question of party policy.

I support it because the provision included in Section 4C is an onerous one which, in practice, has proved to be unworkable. The only sensible thing is to

remove it—although I understand there has been no enforcement of it by the authorities. The section provides—

Every manufacturer and every distributor shall when delivering textile products to a wholesaler or a retailer furnish to such wholesaler or retailer a numbered invoice which shall contain details of the constituent fibres comprising such textile products respectively as prescribed.

Provision is then made for penalties. Whilst it might be possible, with extreme difficulty, to enforce such a section in respect of goods which are invoiced in Western Australia, it becomes almost impossible—in fact, I would say actually impossible—to enforce it in respect of goods outside of the State, because Western Australia is the only State that I can find which has such a provision. As I understand the Bill, the other amendments are purely consequential on the deletion of Section 4C.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

#### **BILL—LOCAL GOVERNMENT.**

*In Committee, etc.*

Resumed from the previous day. **Mr. Sewell** in the Chair; the Minister for Health in charge of the Bill.

The **CHAIRMAN**: Progress was reported after Clause 496 had been agreed to.

Clauses 497 to 503—agreed to.

Clause 504—Hostels for school children may be provided:

**MR. COURT**: The clause comes under the general part "Other Powers of Councils." I refer members to the marginal notes of the clause. In view of the provisions of the contentious Clause 496, debated last night, which provides not only for specific undertakings but also "any other undertaking approved by the Minister," I cannot see why this clause is incorporated in the Bill. It is beyond me.

The Minister for Health: It is not beyond me.

**MR. COURT**: It may be just to make doubly sure.

The Minister for Health: The clause is self-explanatory and I think the provision of hostels for children, for instance, is commendable.

Mr. COURT: Is there a legal reason for having it all again here?

The Minister for Health: There must be. We cannot pit our knowledge against that of the legal men.

Mr. COURT: They are not infallible.

The Minister for Health: They are not infallible but they are more infallible than we are, with the exception of the Leader of the Country Party whose profession is law.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Without going into the pros and cons of whether the powers conferred by the clause are desirable or otherwise, I am better pleased to see them here than under the general paragraph in the provision debated last night, because I then expressed the opinion that it was the duty of Parliament to determine what were the powers of local authorities and not just leave it to the discretion of the present or any future Minister.

If the powers are to exist at all, I think it is proper for them to be in the Bill and, of course, some of them have been part of our law for a long time and it would perhaps be undesirable to take them out, particularly the power which enables a local authority to make land available to the Commissioner of Railways for the purposes of the operation of a railway, or a railway siding, and so on. While I might debate the desirability of some of the paragraphs, I would not agree to excising the clause because I think all the powers there are to be should be in the Act.

Mr. COURT: The Minister has advanced no reason why this clause should remain, seeing that the Government insisted on Clause 496.

The Minister for Health: Why do you want this clause taken out?

Mr. COURT: Because it seems silly drafting to have the Bill this way.

The Minister for Health: I will not reflect on my officers.

Mr. COURT: Your chief draftsman would admit he is not always right and in the main he does what his Minister tells him.

The Minister for Health: Quite rightly, he quickly tells me if I am wrong.

Mr. COURT: Last night the Minister insisted on Clause 496.

The Minister for Health: This may contain something which that clause did not.

Mr. COURT: Clause 496 left nothing out, because it contained the wording "any other undertaking approved by the Minister." We take no exception to hostels for children, passenger transport, abattoirs, railway sidings or quarries, electric lighting plant, cooling chambers, etc., but we do object to brickyards. I move an amendment—

That the words "or brickyards" in line 10, page 366, be struck out.

I do not intend to move any other amendments to this clause but wish to record our continued opposition to the extension of trading by local government authorities.

Mr. PERKINS: This provision has not always been in the Act and I think I was responsible for its insertion. The position is not always as the member for Nedlands thinks. Some local authorities do not desire to set up trading concerns but in some instances it is not an economic proposition for a private concern to establish a brickyard, for instance.

The word "brickyard" covers a variety of undertakings such as burnt bricks and other kinds of bricks. A local authority might find it desirable to make some bricks for its own use and in such cases it might be cheaper to make a few extra which a private individual might want to buy. This would provide a service to the district and enable people in the district to buy cheaper bricks and improve the standard of buildings.

When this provision was originally inserted, it was made quite clear that there was no desire to allow local authorities to get mixed up in trading undertakings, and I have no doubt that the ratepayers would object if they did. At that time it was pointed out that if they did engage in trading undertakings, that fact would be commented on by the audit branch and that, in effect, they would be breaking the law. I think it is better to leave the position to the discretion of the local authority under the control of the ratepayers.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: But that will not be so under this Bill.

Mr. Court: That is why we are taking exception to it.

Mr. PERKINS: I hope the member for Nedlands is not justified in thinking that that provision will remain in the Bill by the time it passes this Parliament.

Mr. Court: We have to assume it.

[Mr. Heal took the Chair.]

Mr. PERKINS: Another place still has to deal with it and if the provision for adult franchise is left in the Bill, I think a lot of other amendments will be necessary to safeguard ratepayers. I am inclined to work on the assumption that control will remain in the hands of the ratepayers, and I hope Parliament will still leave the ratepayers responsible for controlling their own local authority. They are the best judges as to whether it should engage in an activity such as this.

Mr. COURT: I think the member for Roe has got to the crux of the situation and frankly I would not have bothered to move any amendment to this clause except that the adult franchise provision still remains and we have to assume the Bill will be passed with that provision in it.

The Minister for Health: That is only a bogie.

Mr. COURT: It is not.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member had better speak to the amendment.

Mr. COURT: I have to follow that line of argument to demonstrate why I object to this provision. According to the Bill, a local authority can trade as a brickyard, with ministerial approval. If by some mischance the adult franchise provision is left in the measure, it will be a disastrous day for local authorities to have this provision to enable them to extend their trading activities.

The Minister for Health: You know perfectly well that adult franchise will not remain in it.

Mr. COURT: I have been told by the Premier that I am not entitled to assume anything.

The Minister for Health: The Leader of the Opposition said so last night.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I wish the member for Roe could have been present when we were discussing this matter last night, and I agree with the member for Nedlands' attempt to restrict trading operations. Adult franchise must have a considerable effect on these proposals.

The Minister for Health: That is only a bogie.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: It is not, because that provision is still in the Bill and ratepayers will not have the same say in the future as they have had in the past.

The Minister for Health: Are the ratepayers sacrosanct?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I think those who have to pay should receive some consideration. If the Bill is passed in its present form, I am sure there will be moves in certain districts to start a number of local trading concerns.

Mr. Lawrence: There are now.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: To a certain extent; but I do not want it to spread. There are people throughout the country who are keen that these undertakings should be carried on by the Government or local authorities—it does not make any difference because they would both be socialistic schemes. As we do not know what will happen as regards the adult franchise provision, I think the amendment should be agreed to.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 505-522—agreed to.

Clause 523—Land is ratable property:

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I think we ought to give consideration to the provisions contained in this clause. It virtually amounts

to what we have had in either the Municipal Corporations Act or the Road Districts Act and mostly in the former. There are particular questions which arise in regard to the property of religious bodies and organisations such as those referred to in Subclause (3).

All the exemptions that are granted there are based on the words "exclusively used for charitable purposes," and whilst it says, in Subclause (4), that land does not cease to be used exclusively for a purpose mentioned in Subclause (3), nevertheless I feel there could be a considerable burden placed upon purely religious institutions whose properties return very little revenue but which are not expressly used by religious bodies.

Therefore, something should be done with a view to assisting these religious organisations. It seems to me that they are liable to a very heavy charge, especially with respect to those premises which will return them very little revenue and especially because the rates will be assessed—particularly when we take into consideration the provisions of the next clause—on all the calculations to be made on the unimproved value. That unimproved value is to be determined by the Commissioner of Taxation, with the local authority having no right to make any other determination.

It is an unfortunate fact, whether we like it or not, that the premises of some of these religious bodies are situated in areas where the unimproved capital values are extremely high and, in fact, much greater than the buildings which are erected on the land. In those circumstances, it would be easy to conceive a position where a church organisation would find itself in a situation where the rates it had to pay would be considerably greater than any revenue that could or would be hoped to be derived from the premises.

Mr. CROMMELIN: I propose to move an amendment as follows:—

That after the word "purposes" in line 10, page 387, the words "exclusively used for such purposes" be inserted.

#### *Point of Order.*

Mr. Court: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. If the hon. member is successful in moving his amendment, will it preclude us from having a general discussion on the clause itself, because I was anxious to hear the Minister in reply to the views expressed by the Leader of the Country Party and I also wish to express some views myself. We cannot go back and move an amendment?

The Chairman: If the hon. member wishes to move an amendment, he will have to move it now before the next one is put.



**Mr. Court:** Would it be in order to hear the remarks of the Minister on the views expressed by the member for Stirling before the member for Claremont moves his amendment?

**The Chairman:** I am afraid we cannot because the member for Claremont has the floor. If that hon. member wishes to make way for the Minister we can have a general discussion on what the Leader of the Country Party has said.

*Debate Resumed.*

**Mr. CROMMELIN:** I am quite agreeable to that, Mr. Chairman. I will let my amendment go for the time being.

**The MINISTER FOR HEALTH:** I did not hear all that the Leader of the Country Party said in regard to religious organisations. However, I feel that some consideration should be given to the clause if there is doubt that these organisations may be penalised any further. I am most sympathetic in this regard and I will certainly discuss the matter with the Minister for Local Government on the lines indicated by the Leader of the Country Party.

**Mr. COURT:** I would like to speak briefly on the comments made by the Leader of the Country Party and the observations of the Minister for Health. The Bill proposes to provide that land is not ratable property if it is land belonging to a religious body and is used or held exclusively as a place of public worship, a Sunday school, a place of residence of a minister of religion, a convent, nunnery or monastery, or is occupied exclusively by a religious brotherhood or sisterhood. I was hoping that the Minister might be able to tell us what Crown law opinion is on that definition.

There are certainly some reservations in Subclause (4) which prevent land being disqualified merely because the building is used as a polling booth on election day or for the purposes of a bazaar on a given day or days. The question of the non-ratability of land is a contentious one with some local authorities. For a variety of reasons which must be traced back for many years, some of them have inherited more than their fair share of non-ratable land.

**Hon. A. F. Watts:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. COURT:** Claremont is a case in point but no doubt the hon. member for that district will deal with that aspect. The fact that they have acted as a magnet for these religious bodies and have established fine schooling areas and school playing fields within their municipalities should not of itself penalise religious bodies. We have reached the stage, due to the cost of local government and the cost of providing services in these local areas, when the

State will have to address itself to the question of whether it should preserve equity between the various local authorities.

This is not the only problem where inequity has crept in, but also in the preservation and maintenance of beaches, where people from the metropolitan area and country congregate within the boundaries of one or more local authorities, and often involve that local authority in considerable expense—expense which is not borne by another local authority. People will say they are lucky to have the beach, schools and playing fields in their own area, and they may be.

But these things are increasingly costly to maintain and I do not seek to add to the burden of church bodies in any way. They are providing an education service in addition to their religious functions, and they should be encouraged to extend that work. They are lifting a considerable burden from the shoulders of the State in providing these educational facilities which are supervised by the State and are maintained in first-class condition. For that reason I was hoping the Minister would be more explicit as to the meaning of the word "exclusively."

**The MINISTER FOR HEALTH:** It seems to me that the religious organisations are protected under Subclause (4).

**Mr. Court:** That is only protection against occasional incidents, such as hiring their hall, etc.

**The MINISTER FOR HEALTH:** What about the convents?

**Mr. Court:** They are all right.

**The MINISTER FOR HEALTH:** If the convents are covered, I think these religious organisations would also be covered but I will have the matter adjusted in another place.

**Mr. COURT:** I would like the Minister to be clear on what I am getting at. If a school owned 50 acres of ground in a municipality and it had each of these types of building on it, places of public worship, Sunday schools, place of residence for the Minister, etc., that would not take up the entire 50 acres. Has the Government any definition of the word "exclusively?"

**The Minister for Works:** There is no intention to depart from present policy with regard to it.

**Mr. COURT:** That is all I wanted to know.

**Hon. A. F. WATTS:** As the Minister on his own admission did not hear the point raised, I propose to tell him again. Under the legislation two things will happen. First, there is going to be a much greater

maximum impost than exists under the present law. Secondly, all the rating is to be done on the unimproved capital value. Therefore the value of buildings on land belonging to some of these institutions could be much less than the value of the land. So the rating on the unimproved value could bear more harshly upon them than rating on the system hitherto adopted; especially in the City of Perth.

There is a church hall in St. George's Terrace. It is certainly not used exclusively for any of the purposes set out here, nor is it used for the purpose of occasional bazaars, or for meetings for charitable or benevolent objects. I venture to say that the total revenue it would derive without deducting any costs for cleaning, maintenance and the like would be less than the rate of 1s. in the £ on the unimproved capital value of the land upon which it stands. So while I do not want to put that hall in the position of having to pay no rates, because I realise it is producing some revenue, I do not want to place the church organisation, as it must be placed under this Bill, in the position of running the risk of being asked to pay more in rates than it can earn in revenue on any basis. That is the problem I want solved.

**Mr. OWEN:** In the outer suburban areas there are lands held by religious organisations which are used partly for religious purposes and schools; partly for primary production; and partly to maintain the students and staff on the property. Would the Minister venture an opinion as to whether that land will be free from rating or partly rated?

**The Minister for Health:** The present policy will be continued. The whole lot will be free from rating.

**Mr. CROMMELIN:** The intention of the amendment standing in my name was to obtain rates from agricultural societies in which land is vested. I do not refer to country municipalities or road boards which own the land in most cases and allow it to be used as a golf course on which the annual show is held, and in other instances to be used as a trotting ground. The land is not vested in trustees.

In Claremont the position is vastly different. Thirty-seven per cent. of the land in that municipality is non-ratable as it is held by religious bodies, schools, the Royal Agricultural Society, etc. This is a large percentage of the land in any municipality on which no rates are paid. The council has endeavoured to secure rates from the Royal Agricultural Society but on each occasion the request has been refused. In my second reading speech, I quoted at length from letters received from South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria,

and in each case we were informed by the local governing authorities over there that agricultural societies with land in their districts, were not free of rates.

I have here the figures showing the financial result of the Royal Agricultural Society for the last year. The results are rather extraordinary. The accumulated funds amount to £86,825, of which one asset is shown, that is the show ground on which a valuation of £14,782 is made. The area of that land is 73 acres. Recently the municipality sold a small portion of the land adjoining the show ground and obtained up to £1,200 for each block. So it is reasonable to assume that on the 73 acres held by the Royal Agricultural Society, on a conservative estimate for each quarter-acre block as being £500, the value would be in the vicinity of £140,000.

In addition to that asset the society also has a surplus in the revenue account. The receipts from the Royal Show amounted to £27,199. It received from ground rental and buildings, general letting, MacFarlane pavilion letting and speedway letting £4,623. The surplus for the year was £4,777. In other words, practically the whole of this revenue from the letting of ground comprised its net profit.

**The Minister for Works:** What does it do with the money?

**Mr. CROMMELIN:** The accumulated funds on the 31st December, 1954, was £74,355, and together with a surplus for 1955 of £4,777, total was £78,132.

*[Mr Sewell resumed the Chair.]*

**The Minister for Works:** What does it propose to do with that money? It is making preparations to spend the money on the ground for the benefit of the people who go there.

**Mr. CROMMELIN:** Yes. They are able to build more and more buildings.

**The Minister for Works:** That is for the benefit of the people.

**Mr. CROMMELIN:** I am not saying it is not.

**The Minister for Works:** Surely it is a different proposition for someone using facilities for private gain.

**Mr. CROMMELIN:** I do not think letting the show grounds for a speedway is to the benefit of the people. It is 6s. to go in.

**The Minister for Works:** They are getting revenue to improve the grounds.

**Mr. CROMMELIN:** Yes.

**The Minister for Works:** Under your proposal, your source of revenue will be cut out and you will not get any rates.

Mr. CROMMELIN: They can put up buildings and run other entertainments if they want to; not only the speedway. The grounds can be used for cricket, hockey, football or anything else. They are used for night tennis now. It does not mean that the money they spend on buildings is for agricultural purposes.

The Minister for Works: It will mean that if they become ratable, and the amount of rates paid exceeds the revenue they are getting, they will not let it and their source of revenue will be cut out and you won't get any rates.

Mr. CROMMELIN: They had a surplus of £4,777 and I doubt very much if the rates they would have to pay would be anything like that amount, and if they increase their rents, they could make more income. Is it an agricultural society in the true sense of the word which is free from rates and vested in trustees for agricultural or horticultural purposes? Do these purposes include the letting of grounds for a speedway? I do not think so. I do not think they should pay rates if the grounds were only used for the Royal Show. At the present moment it is a trading concern, apart from the Royal Show.

Mr. Oldfield: Even the Royal Show is pretty expensive.

Mr. CROMMELIN: It is. They made £27,199 from the Royal Show this year. Although they pay no rates they expect the municipality to do quite a lot for them. Three weeks prior to the Show a health inspector, in his capacity as a building surveyor, inspects the various buildings being erected for different purposes on the ground. In each case, the building supervisor calls and watches.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

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

### ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, State Trading Concerns Act Amendment.
- 2, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act Amendment.
- 3, Fruit Growing Industry (Trust Fund) Act Amendment.
- 4, City of Perth Scheme for Superannuation (Amendments Authorisation).
- 5, Unfair Trading and Profit Control.

### QUESTIONS.

#### ORD RIVER.

##### *Irrigation Scheme.*

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Are the proposals known as the Ord River Irrigation Scheme considered to be practicable as an economic land settlement scheme?