

# Legislative Council

Thursday, 24th September, 1953.

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

## QUESTIONS.

### RAILWAYS.

(a) *As to Increased Freights and Effect on Production.*

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Can he inform the House whether the Government when considering the railway freight increases of 20 to 35 per cent. fully appreciated that farmers pay double freights, firstly on their super, machinery, tools of trade, fuel and other items necessary for production; secondly, on the transport of all their produce from the farm to the various markets with no opportunity to pass on the increases to the public as is the normal practice in commerce?

(2) If the answer is in the affirmative—

(a) What avenues within the Railway Department were explored with a view to effecting economies would could reduce the 20 to 35 per cent. to a considerably lower figure?

(b) Has the Government any plan to offer the producer whereby he can secure higher prices to offset the increased cost of production resulting from higher freights?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Consideration was given to the effect of freight increases on all sections of the community including farmers, before a decision was made.

(2) (a) All avenues.

(b) The producer is not in any different position in paying increased freights than in paying the increased charges which have occurred in relation to everything he purchases.

Producers will have the benefit of the recent tax reductions.

The Government will always endeavour to obtain reasonable prices for primary products, as it is now doing for wheat growers.

(b) *As to Spreading Burden of Freight Increases.*

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is he aware—

(a) That the people living in the country are the only ones who will be called upon to carry the burden of increased rail freights?

(b) That the railways belong to all the people in the State irrespective of whether the lines run in the agricultural areas, goldfields, North-West or metropolitan areas (which latter area contains half the State's population)?

(2) Having a full appreciation of decentralisation, has the Government given any consideration to ways and means whereby the whole of the population will bear its equal amount of financial responsibility of railway losses?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) (a) No; (b) Yes.

(2) With an appreciation of the policy of decentralisation, the Government, has retained the telescopic principle of freight charges to afford as much relief as possible to country residents. The schedule of increases to the freight rates will not meet the entire railway deficit, the balance being ultimately met by taxation, which will impose a measure of the burden on all the people of the State, irrespective of whether they are railway users or not. For the past five years primary and other industries have been subsidised by the entire community in the form of meeting huge deficits incurred by giving services at less than cost.

### FIRE BRIGADES.

*As to Case of Incapacitated Worker.*

Hon. E. M. DAVIES asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is he aware that the Chief Officer of Fire Brigades has declined to accept a medical certificate stating that a recently incapacitated worker is now fit for light duties? (The rejection, it is stated, is because the Fire Brigades Board has declared that no light duties are to be found in the service.)

(2) Will he state on what authority the board and the Chief Officer claim that no medical certificate for light duties is to be accepted?

(3) Can he inform the House the date of the meeting of the Fire Brigades Board when the question was discussed, and the policy in relation to the subject determined?

(4) Will he ascertain the date the decision of the board was conveyed to the Chief Officer?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Inquiries reveal that the Chief Officer would not permit the employee concerned to resume duty as he had no authority to do so.

(2) The nature of active fire fighting precludes provision for light duties as a fireman.

(3) The board, at a meeting held on Tuesday, the 22nd September, 1953, decided to empower the Chief Officer to employ without prejudice a limited number of firemen with light duty medical certificates in a capacity other than a fireman, provided appropriate work can be found and with necessary safeguards.

(4) The 23rd September, 1953.

#### ENTERTAINMENTS TAX BILLS.

##### *As to Suspension of Standing Orders.*

Hon. H. K. WATSON (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary:

In connection with the motion carried in this House yesterday—without any Bills before it but on the personal explanation of the Chief Secretary—to enable the suspension of Standing Orders in order to allow the Entertainments Tax Act amendment measure to be taken forthwith, and so on, I ask the Chief Secretary whether the absence of any reference in that resolution to the co-related Bill—the suspension Bill—was deliberate or inadvertent, and whether he is prepared to move in similar terms, in the case of the suspension Bill, to those in relation to the taxing bill and, if not, why not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Some people are very impatient. If the hon. member had waited for a further five minutes he would have heard me moving the motion that he is now requesting. In fact, I did not intend that the House should sit today. It was only yesterday afternoon I discovered it would be necessary to sit this evening in order to put the Bill through by next Tuesday. Up to within the last few minutes before entering the House I did not intend to move for the suspension of Standing Orders because at the time I had the title of only one Bill and therefore could not include the second one. However, I will remedy that oversight in a few moments if I am permitted to move a similar motion to that which I moved yesterday.

#### BILL—INCOME AND ENTERTAINMENTS TAX (WAR TIME SUSPENSION) ACT AMENDMENT.

##### *Standing Orders Suspension.*

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved:

That Standing Order No. 15 be suspended so as to enable the Income and Entertainments Tax (War Time Suspension) Act Amendment Bill to be taken forthwith and to have precedence each day before the Address-in-reply, and that so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Bill to be taken through all stages at any one sitting.

##### *Second Reading.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [4.44] in moving the second reading said: This is the first of three Bills which are required to give effect to the Government's proposal to re-introduce a State entertainments tax. The parent Act was passed in 1942, during the war, for the purpose of suspending the collection of State taxes under the Income Tax (Rate for Deduction) Act, the Income Tax Act, the Gold Mining Profits Tax Act, the Hospital Fund (Contributions) Act and the Entertainments Tax Act.

The State Parliament had no option but to approve of the principal Act in view of the passing by the Commonwealth Parliament of legislation which gave the Commonwealth power to collect all State and Commonwealth income tax under one Act for the duration of the war. It may be recollected that Western Australia opposed this action by the Commonwealth and was a party to the case before the High Court of Australia to test the validity of the Commonwealth legislation. However, the High Court decided in its favour. The State could have refused to adopt the Commonwealth scheme but this would have meant the forfeiture of the State's right to tax reimbursements from the Commonwealth. I would like members to take notice of that point when discussing the merits or demerits of the Bill.

The principal Act provides for the suspension of State tax collecting legislation for a period up to and including the last day of the first financial year after the date on which His Majesty ceased to be engaged in the war then being waged and no longer. That may seem to be a little complicated, but if members will consider it quietly no doubt they will be able to understand it. As the Commonwealth has proclaimed that for all legal purposes the war ended on the 30th June last, the suspended State tax collecting provisions came into operation again as

from the 1st July, this being the first day of the financial year following the legal ending of the war.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: What was the date of the legal ending of the war?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The 30th June, 1953.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: I think the date of the official ending of the war was earlier than that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The information I have is that the date was the 30th June, 1953. The Solicitor General, who has been in contact with the Government, has advised that this is the correct legal position. In view of the Commonwealth Government's decision to abandon the field of entertainments tax, the State Government proposes to reassert its statutory right to impose such a tax. As some members may not be quite clear on the matter, I propose to explain briefly the history of entertainments tax collections in this State.

In 1925, the Commonwealth Government decided to withdraw entertainments tax on all admission charges up to 2s. 5½d. The State Government thereupon resolved to levy the tax itself, and Parliament gave its approval. This position continued until 1930 when the then Government, of which the Hon. Sir Charles Latham was a member, submitted to Parliament a proposal to double the tax on admission charges up to 2s. 5½d. and to impose a similar tax to that collected by the Commonwealth on admission charges over 2s. 5½d. So, in effect, the then Mitchell-Latham Government in 1930 doubled the tax it was collecting on admission charges up to 2s. 5½d.; the Commonwealth Government collected its tax on admission charges from 2s. 5½d. upwards, and the State reimposed a similar amount of tax in addition to that making, in effect, the tax double what it was prior to that date.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: That was done during the regime of the Collier Government.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know whether it was or not. In 1933 there were both Liberal and Labour Governments in office; the one in the early part of the year and the other in the latter part. However, if it was the Collier Government, it did not impose the double tax that was imposed by its predecessor.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The Liberal Government was not in office in 1933.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, in the session previous to that it would have been a Labour Government. However, the tax imposed by the Labour Government was only half of that imposed by the Mitchell-Latham Government in 1933.

The Commonwealth Government, in 1933, decided to relinquish the collection of entertainments tax in favour of its be-

coming completely a State tax. In his Budget Speech the then Commonwealth Treasurer said—

The Government proposes to evacuate the field of entertainment taxation altogether, and to leave this source of revenue entirely to the States.

Action was then taken by the State to amend the scale of entertainment taxation in order to make it commensurate with that previously collected under State and Commonwealth legislation. This position was not altered until 1942 when all State taxing powers were taken over, as a war measure, by the Commonwealth Government.

The Bill contains two proposals. The first provides that the State will resume its entertainments tax powers as from the 1st October, 1953. This will have the effect of further suspending the State's right in this connection from the 30th June, 1953, when the war legally ended, until the 30th September, 1953, the date on which the Commonwealth's collection of the tax will cease.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Do you think we are greatly interested in what happened in 1933?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is always necessary to have a foundation, and I am telling the hon. member that this is the foundation in this instance. If one took notice only of what has appeared in the Press and the propaganda that has been disseminated, one would think that this proposal was something fresh, and that the Government was intending to propose a new tax. It is nothing of the kind; it is a tax that has been in existence since 1925, but was suspended only because this a patriotic country—though we objected to it at the time!—in order that the Commonwealth could get the money. It was all merged in the uniform tax. All that is happening now is that the Commonwealth has retired from this field of taxation and we are taking it up where we left off.

Hon. L. Craig: And getting reimbursement from the Commonwealth as well.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We may or may not.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You have got it!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We have for this year; but what will happen after this year I do not know. However, from what I do know of Federal Governments and Federal Treasurers, if they can cut down grants they will do so. The other provision in the Bill is to suspend the remainder of the State's taxing powers until such time as Parliament decides otherwise. These refer to income tax, goldmining profits tax and hospital fund contributions. That is essential because they were all included in the uniform taxation.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: If this Bill fails to pass, there will still be the right to tax.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We will deal with that later.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Answer it now!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the hon. member wants the information now, I will give it. I am in the happy position that if this Bill is thrown out, the tax will still go on, and there will be much greater revenue for the State Government.

Hon. H. K. Watson: There is a difference of opinion about that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In conclusion, let me make it clear that by taking over entertainments taxation the Government is not imposing a new tax. State entertainments tax has been in operation without cessation since 1925, except when the Commonwealth temporarily took over the right from the 1st July, 1942, to the 30th September, 1953. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

#### **BILL—MATRIMONIAL CAUSES AND PERSONAL STATUS CODE AMENDMENT.**

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

#### **BILL—ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ACT AMENDMENT.**

##### *Second Reading.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [4.55] in moving the second reading said: This is the second of the Bills in connection with entertainments tax. It deals only with the amount of tax to be charged. Although the method of arriving at these amounts has been amended, the only alteration from the taxes prevailing from 1933 to 1942 is that the tax of 2d. on tickets priced from 9d. to 1s. has been eliminated, as has the tax of 3d. on tickets costing 1s. 0½d. to 1s. 6d. The taxes to come into operation on the 1st October would be 4d. on tickets priced from 1s. 7d. to 2s., with an increase of 1d. tax for every further 6d. or part of 6d. by which the admission charge exceeds 2s.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Would that be collected by the Taxation Department or the Commissioner of Stamps?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know what adjustment has been made on that score; but if the Commonwealth does not collect it, arrangements have been made whereby the State will have all the necessary equipment and staff ready to do so from the 1st October.

Hon. H. K. Watson: At a pretty substantial cost.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It may be more costly than when the Commonwealth did it, but it will be a profit to the State.

Hon. C. H. Henning: And less to the people.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: What is the estimated return to the Treasury?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: For this year I think about £120,000 is anticipated—that is for the remainder of this year. For a full year it would be approximately £200,000. The rates I have given are lower—in some cases considerably lower—than those at present being charged by the Commonwealth. For the benefit of members, I will submit a table comparing the Commonwealth tax with that proposed by this Bill. The figures are as follows:—

Admission charge (excluding tax).	Commonwealth Rates.		State Rates.
	General Rates.	Special Rates.	
9d. to 1½d. ....	s. d. Nil	s. d. Nil	s. d. 2
1s. ....	2	Nil	2
1s. 0½d. to 1s. 6d. ....	4	3	3
1s. 6½d. to 2s. ....	5	4	4
2s. 0½d. to 2s. 6d. ....	7	5	5
2s. 6½d. to 3s. ....	9	6	6
3s. 0½d. to 3s. 6d. ....	10	8	7
3s. 6½d. to 4s. ....	1 0	9	8
4s. 0½d. to 4s. 6d. ....	1 1	10	9
4s. 6½d. to 5s. ....	1 8	11	10
5s. 0½d. to 5s. 6d. ....	1 5	1 1	11
5s. 6½d. to 6s. ....	1 8	1 3	1 0
Over 6s. ....	1 10	1 5	
	Plus 2½d. for each additional 6d. or part thereof.	Plus 1½d. for each additional 6d. or part thereof.	Plus 1d. for each 6d. or part thereof over 6s.

It will be noted that the rates between 1s. 6d. and 3s. in the State will be exactly the same as the special Commonwealth rate but less than the general Commonwealth rate. From then on there is a difference.

The Commonwealth special rates, which it will be noted were lower than its general rates, and, in most cases, are higher than the proposed new State rates, covered live stage shows, ballets, musical performances, recitations, music hall and variety entertainments, circuses and travelling shows. These special rates applied also to games of sport in which human beings were the sole participants, and which were conducted on a non-profit-making basis. The rates proposed in the Bill would mean that entertainments tax will not be paid in many cases on admission charges for children, nor possibly on small entertainments where the charge might be under 1s. 7d.

Owing to the need to introduce this legislation with as little delay as possible, the Government has not yet had time to give consideration to the possibility of charging a lower tax on those forms of live entertainment to which I have referred, and on which the Commonwealth

imposed a special lower tax. In this connection it is the Government's intention to give attention to this matter from the viewpoint of encouragement and practical assistance to such types of entertainment. However, as I have already pointed out, the tax charges proposed in the Bill are in most cases less than the special rates charged by the Commonwealth on live shows.

To give further details, the new State rates are the same as the Commonwealth special rates in connection with tickets from 1s. 7d. to 2s. 6d., and are less than the special rates for all higher-priced tickets. It is anticipated that from the 1st October—that is, next Thursday—until the 30th June next, the charges proposed in the Bill will result in the collection by the Government of about £130,000, and that in a full year approximately £170,000 to £180,000 should be received. There is little need for me to impress on members the value this extra collection would be to the State in these days of increased costs of Government.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Less the cost of administration.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It would be a very small percentage, taken over the whole.

Hon. H. K. Watson: In a budget of £30,000,000.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Another point which will not have escaped members is the advisability of continuing the tax as from the day it is relinquished by the Commonwealth. It would be unwise to allow the taxes to lapse for a short period and then to impose them again.

Hon. H. Hearn: Why?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will not attempt to answer that question. It is the hon. member's job to answer it. It is my duty to put the position clearly before members. What their reaction will be, I do not know, but I soon will. There has been a lot of agitation in connection with this matter, but only from the one quarter—the interested parties. I would consider they would be falling down on their job if they did not take some action. If the tax were wiped out I do not know that the public would get cheaper entertainment. I have seen it happen that when a charge has been removed one way, it has been put on in another. That is what generally occurs. I am pretty safe in saying that if the tax remains, the benefit to the community will be greater than the benefit the individual will gain by the saving of a few pence. I live in an industrial community, and I have not heard one word of protest from any of my constituents.

Hon. H. Hearn: You leave for the office so early in the morning.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: All I have heard is that it is the right thing for the State Government to do. The people realise that if the Government handles the money it will be able to render more assistance in regard to social services. Greater help will be available for the establishment of infant health centres, particularly in the country areas. Country members, if they do propose to vote against the measure, should seriously consider that aspect.

Hon. A. L. Loton: You should not put thoughts into our heads.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am sorry if I am responsible for putting bad thoughts into anyone's head. I like to do the other thing.

Hon. H. K. Watson: If the tax is not such a burden, why is it being reduced?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We do not want to impose a greater tax than previously. We are only implementing a tax that was taken from us by the Commonwealth 11 years ago.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: And reducing it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Only on the lower charges. We consider the money that will be raised by the tax will be of great benefit to the community. I suggest to country members that if the tax goes out—this is not a threat—there will not be much opportunity, because the Government is relying on this revenue, to assist infant health centres, kindergartens and so on in the country.

Hon. H. K. Watson: But you have the betting tax, even though you opposed it last year.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We are like the hon. member and his friends—the more we get the more we want.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Did you not say earlier that you had been paid this money for this year?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If we can get a little extra, we can always do with it. It will be possible, if we get it, to render extra assistance in many different sorts of social services.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Yours is a hungry Government.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No. That term would be applicable if we were imposing a new tax. Actually what we are doing—

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Is to double the first year's tax.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: —is to reduce a tax the people have been used to paying since 1925. A person going to an entertainment will pay less.

Hon. H. Hearn: You are circumventing the relief the Federal authorities have given to the community.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I was nearly going to say that I was optimistic enough to think the Bill would go through without a dissentient voice.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What relief are you giving?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In what way?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You say the amount is much less than what was imposed before.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is much less than has been collected in the last 10 years by the Commonwealth.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I thought you said the State.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: What is less, from the State point of view, is this, that previously there was a tax on charges up to 1s. 6d.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Do you know of any entertainments costing less than 1s. 6d.?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Quite a lot in the metropolitan area.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: They are not worth collecting.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Do not worry about that! I am leaving the children out altogether. I am connected with many organisations that run 1s. and 1s. 6d. shows.

Hon. H. Hearn: Punch and Judy shows.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Not at all. That would be the type of show the hon. member would go to. I am speaking of small dances and concerts that are run with the idea of assisting charitable organisations. There will be fairly considerable relief granted on that score.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I thought there was no tax on charitable entertainments.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is hard to run an entertainment without music of some description, and for a ball today we find an orchestra costs from £40 to £60. The conditions laid down for exemption, in connection with a charitable organisation, provide that the expenses shall not exceed 50 per cent. of the takings.

Hon. H. Hearn: A ball is not a 1s. 6d. entertainment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: With large entertainments, although run for charity, it is hard to keep the expenses below 50 per cent. of the takings, and so a number of them do not get relief. Later in the session we will introduce an amending Bill to provide relief in respect of the rates we are now imposing, so the hon. member need not be afraid that the Government lacks consideration for charitable organisations.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: If the State collects this tax, what will be the attitude of the Loan Council at its next meeting?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think it will have any effect on the Loan Council at all, because this tax will be taken up by all States.

Hon. H. Hearn: New South Wales is not taking it up.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will be surprised if it does not.

Hon. H. Hearn: It has made the statement.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In the political arena one statement is made one day and another the next.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Queensland has never had the tax.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know about that. I will amend my statement and say that a number of the States will impose the tax. We have the job to do in Western Australia.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: That means that Western Australia will be treated no differently from Queensland, which does not impose this tax.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think the hon. member can anticipate what will be done at the Loan Council. I believe that everything will be to the good and nothing to the bad if the tax is agreed to. I can visualise a lot of extra assistance being given to the charitable organisations in the State which are doing a wonderful job. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

##### *Twelfth Day—Amendment.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South) [5.13]: I congratulate Mr. Fraser on his elevation to the position of Chief Secretary. He has been a member of this Chamber for a considerable number of years, and he follows in the footsteps of very able Chief Secretaries from the party to which he belongs—men such as Hon. J. M. Drew and Hon. W. H. Kitson—so he has a high standard to maintain. Knowing Mr. Fraser, as I do, through my long association with him in the House, I have no fear that he will not carry out the job with satisfaction to himself and the party he represents, and to the credit of the Chamber. I also extend my congratulations to Mr. Strickland. During the short time he has been here, he has shown that he is most able in dealing with matters connected with the North-West, and he has endeavoured to further the interests of that section of the State which he was elected to represent. From the temperament that the hon. member has exhibited

since he has been here, I should say that politics will not worry him very much. He will introduce his Bills, and, if the House decides that they are not acceptable, I am sure Mr. Strickland will not be greatly worried. That is the proper way to take the political arena.

To Mr. Hall, the newly-elected Chairman of Committees, I also offer my congratulations. He has had considerable experience as a member of a road board, and although he has not occupied the Chair very often as Deputy Chairman of Committees, I am sure he will perform his duties in a satisfactory manner. I also wish to extend a hearty welcome to Mr. Griffith. He is fortunate, because he has had experience in another place, and, after a short holiday from Parliament, he has been elected as a member of this Chamber. Portion of the area that he represented in another place is included in his present province. It must be a tremendous advantage to be elected to this Chamber after having had experience in another place. When one comes here as a raw recruit, one is forced to learn the hard way. So in that regard Mr. Griffith is fortunate, and I trust his sojourn here will be pleasant and will last many years.

I have read with interest the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor, but I was a little disappointed that the Government had more or less ignored the efforts of primary producers by skating over the subject of primary production and the results that had been achieved for the people of this State, and Australia as a whole, by our two main industries. We note, from His Excellency's Speech, that the value of whales caught for the season was £1,200,000, and the value of crayfish tails exported was 2,000,000 dollars. Those tails, of course, were exported to America. But no mention at all was made of the value of the wool clip. That is the most important producer of wealth in Australia, and has been for the last few years. If the wool industry should collapse, I imagine the economy of Australia would collapse with it; no one wants that to happen.

This morning I obtained from the Statistician certain figures which are available to members. The latest Year Book is in the hands of the printer, and as members can obtain the information I have, there is nothing to stop me using it here. The value of wool produced for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1953, was £39,560,894, and for the previous financial year it was £33,839,794. That indicates an increase of approximately £6,000,000 for the last financial year. For the same period, the value of greasy wool exported to the United States was £3,099,056, and for scoured wool £126,817—that is, in Australian currency and not in dollars. Members can see that, in round figures, the value of wool

exported to the United States was £3,250,000. The value of wool exported to Canada, which is in the dollar area, was £41,667 for greasy wool, and £22,178 for scoured wool. On top of that, a small quantity of wool went from this State to the Eastern States and was exported from there, but that would not be shown on the returns of this State. This was top spinning wool, which was shipped to Canada and America. So members can see that the wool industry alone returned to the people of this State approximately £3,500,000 from dollar areas.

We hear a lot about the export of crayfish tails and how that industry is earning dollars for Australia. The crayfishing industry is doing a good job, but let us give credit where credit is due, and give a little more praise to the wool-producers for the wealth they have produced for Australia as a whole. For the nine months ended the 30th March, 1953, approximately £20,000,000 was received from the export of wheat and flour. Yet, other than a small note that the season had opened favourably in certain districts, no mention was made in His Excellency's Speech of the value of this industry to the community of this State. I should say that 95 per cent. of the community, or more, is living on the net result of the wheat and wool industry.

While on the subject of agriculture, I would like to support the remarks made by Mr. Henning regarding the artificial insemination of cattle. During the last few days, I read an article—and I have passed the information on to Mr. Henning—describing conditions in Denmark. Last year 60 per cent. of the dairy cows of that country were artificially inseminated. I do not intend to read the whole extract but, for the information of members, I would like to quote small portions of it which deal with Danish farming, in an endeavour to show that England is not so dependent on Australia for her foodstuffs; and if Australia wants to retain the English market, we must realise that we have a strong competitor in Denmark. The article, which has been written by a special correspondent in Copenhagen, reads—

Denmark's agricultural production has shown a marked increase since the end of the World War II. This is in spite of a reduction of 4 per cent. in its area owing to building and increased use of land for defence purposes. Danish farming, in fact, is undergoing a revolution, produced by shortage of imported foodstuffs.

Before 1939 Denmark imported 1,500,000 tons of grain and feeding stuffs a year, or roughly one-eighth of the animal fodder required.

During the last three years imports of grain and fodder have averaged only about 800,000 tons. Last year they were 550,000 tons.

In 12 years the number of persons employed on the land had decreased from 497,000 to 375,000. Still Denmark's agriculture production is much higher today than before the war.

Danish farmers, too, are using more fertilisers than before the war, 1,177,000 tons being imported in 1951, compared with only 710,000 tons before 1939.

That article proves that the Danish farmer is alive to the possibilities and the results that can be obtained by the proper use of fertilisers and home-grown foodstuffs. In most cases, it is cheaper for a farmer to produce his own foodstuffs than it is to buy them so long as his method of production is sound. The article continues—

Last year 60 per cent. of the cows were artificially inseminated, enabling farmers to improve strains to save fodder previously consumed by bulls.

That shows that the Danish people are fully aware of the possibilities of artificial insemination. The New South Wales Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Graham, congratulated the board of directors of the Hunter Valley Co-operative Dairy Company Limited at Aberdeen on their attitude towards this question. A newspaper extract states—

Three dairy bulls—Jersey, A.I.S. and Friesian—are to be kept at the artificial cattle breeding centre established by the Hunter Valley Co-operative Company Limited at Aberdeen. Opening the institution officially, the New South Wales Minister for Agriculture and Food Production, Mr. Graham, congratulated the board of directors on this progressive move and said this was an ideal district for such a station. The station will be in charge of Mr. John Heyting, who gained his diploma and experience in artificial stock-breeding in Holland. It will operate on a 15-mile radius, and 2,000 cows have already been offered for insemination while many other dairymen are waiting for the centre to get under way.

Mr. Graham said in England the number of cows artificially inseminated had increased from 6,000 in 1946 to over 800,000 in 1951.

So I hope that the Department of Agriculture will be able to get a similar scheme working in this State because I can see that artificial insemination is one of the most progressive moves that has been made towards increasing the production of dairy cattle. If such a scheme were put into operation in this State it would be of considerable benefit to settlers in the South-West, the greatest percentage of whom are struggling to maintain their herds on an economic foundation. Arti-

ficial insemination does away with the necessity of a farmer having to buy a bull, build a bull paddock, and pay for the cost of feed to keep it in the necessary condition. The settlers in those districts are fairly close together, and I cannot see any reason why this method could not be successfully used in our South-West.

There is one other matter in connection with agriculture with which I wish to deal, and that concerns legume inoculation. For many years past it has been necessary in this State to use what is known as the bottle inoculation method. A farmer applies to the department and is given a mixture in a bottle and he has to mix it with separated milk, work in the inoculant and, after treating the seed, spread it out to dry. But the farmer has to be careful that he does not allow the inoculated seed to come into contact with superphosphate otherwise the bacteria will be killed. In Victoria and New South Wales, over the last few years, they have been working on an inoculant known as the peat dust system. This appears to be a mixture of soil that is treated chemically and used in the form of a dry powder for the inoculation of legumes.

Perhaps some members do not know why it is necessary to inoculate legumes. In many cases there is no bacteria in new ground and, despite a heavy dressing of superphosphate, the plants do not respond. On the wheatbelt in the early days many farmers could not understand why, although they obtained certified seed and used the correct methods of cultivation, the plants, after growing two or three inches, failed to make any progress. It was proved afterwards that it was simply because the ground was lacking in nitrogen.

When the departmental officers discovered this bottle inoculant method it was proved in many areas that it was easy to get a good stand of subterranean clover. It has been a most interesting procedure. For 25 years some of us tried to grow clover and abandoned any thought of doing so because we did not know what was wrong. It was only after the department proved that the seed would be given a start if it were inoculated that things began to improve and the country was able to carry the clover.

I suppose the whole of the South-West district is an indication of what can be grown, and that has happened only since we have started with the inoculation of seed. The Department of Agriculture in New South Wales thinks so much of the peat dust inoculant that it has handed over its manufacture and distribution to private enterprise. To make sure that I have the facts assembled I propose to read from a newspaper article in order that the Minister may take the



matter up with the Department of Agriculture. The article reads as follows:—

New South Wales Department hands legume inoculations to private interests.

Satisfied that it has discovered in its "peat dust" legume inoculation a reliable product whose manufacture can now safely be left in private hands, the New South Wales Department of Agriculture has decided to cease supplying inoculum directly to farmers.

Instead, N.S.W. farmers will now secure their legume inoculums—in peat dust form—from two private companies in that State. These companies will shortly make this handy dry powder inoculant available to farmers in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania.

As well as New South Wales, of course. But there appears to be no mention of Western Australia and I do not know whether anything has been mentioned to the department here. So I hope the Minister will take the matter up with the authorities concerned. To continue—

The development by the N.S.W. Department of Agriculture on the "peat-dust" inoculum, however, marks a considerable practical advance over the traditional bottle culture.

Peat is simply neutralised ground finely, then sprayed with a suspension of the pedigreed bacteria of proven effectiveness for the various types of legumes seed.

When the peat dust is dried out and packaged for despatch to farmers, the bacteria remain alive ready to spring into nodule forming action as soon as the seed with which it is in contact begins to germinate and send down its roots.

It is the process which the private firms have now taken over. They grow their bacteria from "mother" cultures constantly freshly supplied by the department, and follow the department's experience carefully in preparation and packaging of their dust-inoculums.

On the farm, the process of inoculations becomes merely a matter of heaping the seed, dusting the appropriate quantity of peat-dust inoculant over it, and mixing it in with the shovel. Any dust left in the packet can be safely re-used up to several weeks later.

That is another strong point in favour of the use of the peat dust inoculant over the bottle method. Once air gets into the latter it is inclined to lose its strength. As a matter of fact, one does not want the seed to dry out too well. I hope that some benefit will be gained by my having brought this matter forward.

There are several other items with which I wish to deal. One in particular is

super, which has been mentioned by Mr. Diver and several other members. I think the necessity for something to be done urgently is exercising the minds of the farmers a good deal. Members may think I have been dragging the matter of super a little, but it has been done with one particular object in view. We have a Fertilisers Act under which certain requirements of the department are set out. I feel that the Ministers and the department have not been doing their job to the best advantage of all concerned. Over the last four years only two or three samples were taken, and although they had the necessary p.t.o. content the moisture content varied a great deal. So much so that one would have expected the departmental officers to try to do something to fix the maximum moisture content. But nothing really was done. The C.S.I.R.O. in South Australia did conduct some experiments to try to arrive at an average, and they found last year that the variation was approximately 8 per cent.

Hon. L. Craig: That is what it is here.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Yes, but this is a big variation. From the answers the Minister gave me the other day in reply to a question I asked concerning the maximum and minimum moisture content over the last few years, we find that in 1951-52 three samples were taken, in which the maximum moisture content was 4.2 per cent and the minimum 2.4 per cent. Again in 1951-52 the maximum moisture content was 11.4 per cent. We are getting a lot of moisture when we find it to be 11.4 per cent. The worst feature, however, was that the minimum moisture content was 9.2 per cent. I admit only two samples were taken, but that is why I say the departmental officers and the Ministers were lacking in their duty in not calling for further samples in order to try to maintain a higher standard. In 1952-53, ten samples were taken. The maximum moisture content was 8.4 and the minimum was 1.5 per cent.

It is not only the variation of the amount of moisture content that has been so alarming, but also the high price one has had to pay for super. Last year the price was approximately £20 a ton delivered, and in some cases it was more than that. Many farmers found that in 50 tons of super there was 8 per cent. moisture content and that they were paying approximately £8 for moisture. Excess moisture causes breakdowns in machinery; necessitates additional labour to break the super to enable it to be spread; causes a wastage of bags; and, above all, means waste of most valuable time, particularly at a period when the days are short and the rains come. One does not feel very inclined at a time like that to walk about with a hurricane lantern, breaking up super.

Apart from that, consumers have been asked over the last few years to take early

deliveries of super. The manufacturers assured them that these early deliveries were properly matured and that there would be no caking. The Railway Department also gave the farmers what almost amounted to an ultimatum. The department said that if they did not take 25 per cent. of their requirements in the pre-Christmas session they would have to wait for their deliveries until May or June. Accordingly, the users of super throughout the State, whether they were situated far away or near the works, took early deliveries and stacked the bags. Usually they stack them two bags on end in the hope that there will be no caking and that everything will be all right. They found, however, that it just did not work out. The average moisture content carted by the railways was 5 per cent. on 430,000 tons.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Would not the average moisture content be above 5 per cent?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Many of the samples were higher but I am taking a mean average over a period and am stating it as a 5 per cent. moisture content. From an analysis it appears that, in 1952-53, 18 samples were taken and a maximum moisture content of 8.4 per cent was found with a minimum of 1.5 per cent.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Was that Christmas Island rock?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I believe so. That is a big variation. If they can make the moisture content so low in some cases why cannot it be brought to a fair average? The reason they will not do this is that there has been such a tremendous demand for super and the manufacturers are not concerned about the quality of the product.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Do you think that the moisture content will be lower when the super is manufactured by the new Albany works by their suction method?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I do not know. I am afraid I am not a chemist. But there must be some method by which it can be done. The users have had just any kind of super foisted on to them, and it is a burden which they should not be expected to carry. An additional burden was placed on the railways which consisted in the cartage of 21,500 tons owing to high moisture content; there is more than one train-load made up in that. More labour has had to be employed to break up the super and make it fit to use. In many cases there were foreign bodies in it. I am sorry Mr. Diver is not here, because he has a bottle of antiques which he got out of super.

The question of the inadequacy of water supplies in the country areas is a burning one. I understand that the Minister for Water Supplies, at this early stage, when winter has only just ended, has had to make an investigation in one town because

the residents are already faced with a serious shortage.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Given the comprehensive scheme, that sort of thing would not happen.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: It is not too much to say that the whole of the southern part of the State is dependent upon the provision of adequate supplies of potable water. Without provision of this sort, nothing can be accomplished and the State cannot hope to make progress.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: The comprehensive scheme is the only way out.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: For certain areas; but there has not been any drilling beyond the ranges to ascertain where water might be found. Steps should be taken to explore what possibilities exist of finding underground water supplies. Certain areas of the State have this year received a wonderful rainfall, far better than for many years, and catchments there are full, but in the heavier rainfall areas of the State south of Katanning, most of the dams are not half full because the downpours have not been sufficiently heavy to make the water run. Consequently, that section of the State is faced with a most serious position.

We have storages such as Mundaring, Canning, Churchman's Brook, Stirling and Wellington Dam, but if this State is to carry the millions of population envisaged by some people, greater supplies of water must be made available in the very near future. The installation of the septic tank system necessitates a good supply of water, but in towns like Narrogin and Katanning, it is impossible to maintain a sewerage system because of the lack of water. People there cannot get enough water to drink.

This raises another point. In those towns where, during the last few years, the water shortage has been acute, residents have been paying their rates and not getting the quantity of water to which they are entitled. Now, however, in those towns where water is available, people find themselves on the excess rate, and that is higher than the excess rate charged in the metropolitan area.

The matter of providing better water supplies is an urgent one. In many areas a big conservation scheme should be installed to impound the water that now runs to waste. If some millions of gallons were thus conserved, the people could at least enter upon the summer with a good supply. There are few places in the State where some such provision could not be made, and earth dams could be provided at a cheap rate by using bulldozers.

I have been wondering whether it would be possible to institute a State water board, invested with borrowing powers, so that it could undertake operations in a certain area. There are some areas where,

if the people were promised an adequate water scheme, the money to finance it would be forthcoming locally almost at once. I feel sure that action taken along the line of allowing the people to raise their own finance to provide this urgent need would show that there was plenty of money available at the present juncture, and this would have the effect of silencing the oft-repeated bogey that no funds are available. The success of the loans raised by the State Electricity Commission proved that our people were prepared and even keen to invest their money for the furtherance of local development. Investors in loans for local water conservation schemes should be paid the same rate of interest as that obtainable on Commonwealth bonds. I should like the Chief Secretary, in his reply, to say whether a State water board could be set up and whether the Government would consider the idea.

Another matter with which I wish to deal is that of the increase in railway freights, which so seriously affects the producers. The increase is to be put into operation from the 1st October and the announcement to this effect came as a complete surprise to the people in the country. The increase will be in the vicinity of 25 per cent., and I point out that this action on the part of the Government is not consistent with statements on the subject made earlier in certain quarters. Here are some remarks made by the present Premier, when speaking in support of a candidate at a by-election for another place. I wish members to pay particular attention to this because of the reference by the Chief Secretary to certain statements made by members here. The pamphlet states—

A message from the Leader of the State Parliamentary Labour Party, Mr. A. R. G. Hawke.

Mr. Hawke was speaking in support of the candidature of Mr. E. M. O'Brien—

May I indicate very briefly a few lines of policy which would be attempted by the next Labour Government in this State, which might easily come into existence early next year.

Hon. H. Hearn: He proved to be a good prophet.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Yes, but though right in his prophecy, he did not, when he made these remarks, bargain for being on the Treasury bench so soon. These were the lines of policy he mentioned—

Greater financial assistance to increase gold production.

Increased assistance to bona-fide prospectors and leaseholders.

Financial assistance to producers in outback areas who proved that rail freights are hampering their efforts.

Members should note that particularly.

Better railway services.

No railway lines to cease operation or be pulled up without adequate on-the-spot discussions by Ministers with local governing authorities and other people concerned, and not even then unless Cabinet and Parliament first approved.

Railway freights and fares generally to be kept down.

There again, the Premier's statement has caught up with him. When he made those rash statements, he did not think that in a short space of time he would be in the whirligig of Treasury difficulties. I can quite appreciate the difficult position in which Mr. Hall and Mr. Bennetts find themselves on being reminded of the Premier's statement about railway freights and fares generally being kept down. That is a little too hot for me.

Hon. W. R. Hall: It proves what politics are coming to.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: That is so. I intend to show the manner in which railway freights have been kept down. Under the heading "Miscellaneous, wheat and super" the previous Government introduced telescopic rates in order to benefit producers in the areas farthest removed from a port. As the Minister in another place pointed out last night, the rates are still telescopic, but it appears to me that the telescope is out of focus. A comparison of those rates and the increased rates is as follows:—

Miles.	Wheat and Super.		
	Old Rate.	New Rate.	Increase.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
100	24 9	33 5	8 8
150	28 11	39 0	10 1
200	33 1	44 8	11 7
250	37 3	50 3	13 0
300	38 0	54 7	16 7
350	38 8	57 5	18 9
400	39 4	60 2	20 10

For the last few years the whole of the State has been riding on the sheep's back and if we are not careful we will ride him to death.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: The electors had the wool pulled over their eyes recently.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: The figures relating to wool are as follows:—

Miles.			
	Old Rate.	New Rate.	Increase.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
100	68 10	89 6	20 8
150	85 2	110 9	25 7
200	97 8	127 0	29 4
250	106 0	137 10	31 10
300	114 4	148 8	34 4
350	122 8	159 6	37 8
400	131 0	170 4	39 4

Hon. W. R. Hall: It would be cheaper to cart your own wool.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: The State Transport Board will not allow that. The present Premier, who before the election made the statement that railway freights and fares generally would be kept down, must now be wondering how to avoid being struck by lightning. No wonder Mr. Hall was a little fearful the other evening, and I have not seen Mr. Bennetts smile all this week!

Hon. W. R. Hall: You cannot blame us for that.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I am not blaming the hon. member, but he must take his share of the responsibility. He often blamed us when our party was in office, and now that his colleagues form the Administration, he must take his share of the blame. In the Press the other day I noted an article which stated that the Transport Board was inviting road service tenders. That article reads as follows:—

#### Board Invites Road Service Tenders.

Tenders were now being called for a road transport service between Meekatharra and Wiluna in place of the existing rail service, the Minister for Railways (Mr. Styants) said yesterday.

When these tenders were received the Cabinet would consider the question of ceasing operations on the line.

Mr. Styants said that the Meekatharra-Wiluna line had been earning less than half of its operating costs for some years and the Cabinet sub-committee on railways was considering the question of this and two other lines—Burakin-Bonnie Rock and Belvue-Mundaring-Mt. Helena.

Tenders under the State Transport Co-ordination Act, 1933-48, for a licence to operate a road transport service between Meekatharra and Wiluna would close with the W.A. Transport Board on October 12.

It is obvious that a Bill is not to be introduced to Parliament to pull that line up as yet, but the Transport Board intends to grant a permit to road hauliers to conduct a road service and allow the railway line to remain idle for a period of, say, 12 months, and then it will probably say, "The line is in such bad condition, what can we do about it?" Such an eventuality is just around the corner and this move is only a start. I am sure there will be other lines that will suffer the same fate at the hands of the Transport Board.

These railway lines were put down in order that produce might be carted to people in outback areas and to enable them to back-load their products to the metropolitan area. Apparently, according to the accounting methods adopted by those in the Railway Department, if a line is proved to be uneconomical, they

consider that it should be pulled up. Is it not easier to maintain the existing lines in order that heavy produce may be hauled over them, than to allow road hauliers to give the same service?

The blame for the difficult position in which the Railway Department finds itself today must be laid at the door of the Transport Board. It is not co-ordinating road and rail services as it should do. Mr. Hall suggested that the farmers should cart the wool themselves, but Mr. Strickland knows only too well that we cannot do that. We will find soon that we will be subject to conditions similar to those prevailing in Victoria, namely, that no road transport can operate at a greater distance than 50 miles. Just imagine what that could mean to farmers in this State when, for the last few years, there has been a shortage of locomotives, a metal trades strike and many break-downs!

During the time the railways were not operating, the road hauliers came to the assistance of the Government, and there is no doubt that this State has much to thank them for. Unfortunately, the road hauliers were not given any indication as to when their services were to be terminated. Over the years they have been encouraged to purchase larger, better and more expensive vehicles. The cost of a big diesel truck, which is capable of hauling from 20 to 25 tons with a trailer attached, must be enormous.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: One such unit would cost up to £5,000 or £6,000, and some even cost £7,000.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I thank the hon. member for his information. The Transport Board has encouraged the road hauliers to keep on investing their money in vehicles, and then overnight it tells them, "We do not require your services any longer because the railways will now handle all your traffic." The other day I was told by a man who has a large 20-ton trailer truck that his field of activity is so limited now that he has removed the body of the truck and is using the chassis as a breakdown vehicle. Just imagine a vehicle of that kind being used for that sort of work!

Such a state of affairs has been brought about mainly because of the policy of the Transport Board. If it had said to the road hauliers, "There is to be an easing off in the traffic that you will be permitted to haul, so do not buy any more large vehicles," the position would have sorted itself out. Instead, these men are now out of employment, their vehicles are lying idle, and if something unexpected should happen again and the railways cannot handle the superphosphate supplies or haul the wheat, there will be chaos because no transport whatsoever will be available.

The other point I wish to make, regarding which my opinion has not changed, is that if a man purchases a vehicle; pays his license, insurance and other fees connected with it; and complies with the requirements of the law, he should be entitled to cart anything in that vehicle, whether it be fuel, building material, or anything else. But no, he is not permitted to do that. The board says to a vehicle-owner, "You can bring a machine down for urgent repairs, but you cannot bring a tractor down to have a bulldozer blade fitted to it."

At present, one has to line up at an office in the Public Works Department and wait the convenience of some officer before he says, "Here is a piece of paper. Pay the necessary fees and you will be granted a permit." Also, apparently it is a crime for a farmer to be carting by road the wool that he has produced himself after he has paid all the costs associated with its production. He is not permitted to take his wool clip to Perth by road and back-load his vehicle with some other produce.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Before tea I was dealing with the action of the Transport Board, and with the railways of this State. There are a couple of other points I wish to mention concerning the railways. I would like again to refer to a message which I read previously and which was published by the Leader of the Labour Party in this State. This is what he said—

Now you have experienced the results of Federal and State Liberal Party policy during recent years. Broadly, it has given you higher taxation, increased railway freights, sky high prices, a neglect of the goldmining industry, a threat to your railway communications, poorer services generally and other disabilities.

The Minister for the North-West: Is that not correct?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I would leave that to the members of this Chamber to decide. In connection with the latter part of the statement members will recall that in this Chamber last session the following resolution was moved by Mr. Heenan on the 15th October, 1952:—

This House urges the Government to give the matter the gravest consideration before agreeing to any proposal to pull up the existing railway lines between Meekatharra and Wiluna and between Leonora and Laverton.

After some discussion in this House, and without a division, the legislation was passed on the 12th November, 1952. Yet we find that the Leader of the Opposition said—

A threat to your railway communications has been made.

But who moved that motion in this House? It was a member of the Party now in power, and it had support from both sides of this House. Some of my friends on this side, and I think most of Mr. Heenan's supporters, voted for the motion, and now we find the Minister for Railways by his actions in connection with the Transport Board doing exactly the same thing, namely discontinuing the services to those people. It is not going to stop at this one area. What it is proposed to do with the Bonnie Rock and Burakin line is only the first move. The reaction of the people in that area and the reaction of the people generally will decide the policy of the Minister and that of the Transport Board.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I understand it was Sir Charles Latham who saved the Bonnie Rock line last year.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: The necessity for the Government to increase railway freights has surely, in part, been brought about by the increased number of people employed and the increased wages paid to the 1st March, 1953. On the 22nd September a Minister in another place, in reply to a question, said that on the 1st March, 1953 there were 12,725 persons employed in all sections of the Railway Department, and on the 1st September, 1953 there were 13,291 people employed. That was approximately six months after a change of Government.

Hon. L. Cragg: A difference of 566.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: That is so.

Hon. H. Hearn: In which department?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I will tell the hon. member very shortly. I have been accused of not giving people a chance to hear what I am saying, so if the hon. member would be patient he would hear all I have to say. The next question that was asked of the Minister was—

What numbers of engine-drivers, firemen and cleaners were included at each of those dates?

The answer was—

Engine-drivers, 625; firemen, 557; cleaners, 376.

And the number employed on the 1st September, 1953, were—

Engine-drivers, 653; firemen, 559; cleaners, 408.

A further question was asked as follows:—

What numbers of carriage cleaners in respect to the metropolitan-suburban railway service were included at each of those dates?

The answer was—

18 on the 1st March.

In six months' time that 18 had—I will not say reproduced themselves—increased to 22. The next question was as follows:—

What was the total number of persons, other than engine-drivers, firemen and cleaners, employed in or about the metropolitan-suburban railway services at each of those dates?

We find the answer to be that on the 1st March there were 6,242, and six months later the number had grown to 6,518. So everywhere we see an increase. This is the service that is struggling, and yet the Ministers in the various departments in reply to requests for pressing needs for the State to be provided, are continually saying, "We have no money".

Hon. H. K. Watson: Did they breed themselves extra drivers?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I do not know, but if they could have done so in six months, I am sure they would have. The next question we find asks—

Have the amounts of wages paid to any railway employee been increased since the 1st March, 1953, other than by adjustments of the basic wage?

And the answer was, "Yes". It was not the basic wage; it was decided by the Arbitration Court. Those are other awards made outside the basic wage adjustments.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: But by the court.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I will read the question again—

Have the amounts of wages paid to any railway employee been increased since the 1st March, 1953, other than by adjustments of the basic wage?

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Yes, by the Arbitration Court.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: The next question is—

If so, what are the increases and under what agreement or award were they granted, and to what types of personnel were they paid; and what will be the additional cost incurred over a period of one year?

That all shows why it is being found necessary to increase railway freights on the 1st October, to the figures I have mentioned. The answer given to the above question was as follows:—

- (6) (a) Railway Employees Award, 1950, (No. 31 of 1948); Wood-working tradesmen, painters, plumbers, panel beaters, bricklayers, storemen, etc.,—amended margins.

Estimated additional cost incurred over a period of one year, £8,595.

- (b) Government Railways Locomotive Engine-drivers', Firemen and Cleaners' Award (No. 39 of 1951).

- (i) Adult cleaners—amended margins. Estimated additional annual cost—£352.

- (ii) Amended penalty rates to engine-drivers, firemen, cleaners, washout men's assistants, engine packers and trimmers. Estimated additional cost incurred over a period of one year—

	£
Working 65 miles or over in one direction	838
Barracks detention	14,705
Away-from-home expenses	16,397
When a sixth shift is worked	18,762
Night shift work	1,933
	<hr/> 52,635 <hr/>

- (c) Railways Classification Board Award (No. 2 of 1951). Re-classification of certain positions of station-masters, clerks, inspectors, foremen, Estimated additional cost incurred over a period of one year, £3,225.

Is it any wonder that, to bear the additional burden of wages for that number of men, the Railway Department recommended Cabinet to increase railway freights on the commodities I have enumerated and to the extent I have mentioned? There again, the statement made by the present Premier at the Murchison by-election has caught up with him. For the reasons I have outlined, I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the motion:—

But this House expresses its profound concern that Your Excellency's advisers have seen fit to drastically increase railway freights in a manner calculated to increase greatly the cost of living in country districts, particularly in those more remote from the capital, to impose a heavy additional burden on primary industry and to discourage decentralisation, without at the same time taking radical steps to reduce railway costs and to improve efficiency; and further expresses its disapproval of the re-

cently published policy by your Minister for Railways with reference to certain railway lines classed by him as unpayable.

On motion by the Minister for the North-West, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.45 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 24th September, 1953.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Freight Comparison with Non-claimant States.

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What financial result would be achieved by the W.A.G.R. if the same freight rates as operate in the non-claimant States were applied in Western Australia?

(2) What are the freights operating in those States for distances of 100, 200 and 350 miles for the following classes of goods:—

- (a) Wheat;
- (b) other grains;
- (c) wool;
- (d) farm machinery;
- (e) goods, Class 1?

(3) What are the rates for the same distances and classes of goods in Western Australia, including the proposed increases?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) On the rates to apply from the 1st October, 1953, an increase in revenue of approximately 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. should result.

(2)—

	100 miles.	200 miles.	350 miles.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
<b>Queensland—</b>			
Wheat	38 8	48 9	54 6
Other grains	38 8	59 11	77 8
Wool			
Farm Machinery	110 11	177 8	261 5
Goods, Class 1	110 11	177 8	261 5
<b>New South Wales—</b>			
Wheat	37 0	59 0	74 0
Other Grains	68 0	79 0	93 0
Wool	18 0†	33 0†	44 0†
Farm Machinery	120 0‡	214 0‡	280 0‡
Goods, Class 1	120 0	214 0	280 0
<b>Victoria—</b>			
Wheat	39 7	52 4	64 10
Other grains	38 0	50 2	62 2
Wool	15 0†	22 11†	28 7†
Farm Machinery	101 1	188 0	276 1
Goods, Class 1	101 1	188 0	276 0

\* Special rates point to point only.

† Bale rates approximately 7 bales to the ton.

‡ Lesser rates available for 5 ton consignments per 4-wheeled wagon.