

of the people of our country to be prepared to take up that fight and to see that before someone gets trigger-happy, sane reasoning, at least, can be reached in the councils of the world.

I believe that whilst there is a fear that the public themselves may become panic-stricken, we have to know the full possibilities and impact of this type of warfare, and at least some portion of it should be told to the public. If they were brought to a fuller realisation of the matter, they might be able to bring pressure to bear upon their Governments to see that this scourge which has come upon humanity is never permitted to be let loose. I am particularly happy to have had the opportunity of saying these few words. I believe that if we, as a people, are prepared to give away our politics and settle down to a little bit of government, then the things I have said are not beyond our reach.

On motion by Mr. Johnson, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.24 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Thursday, 18th July, 1957.

### CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Transport Board, inspectors and vehicles .....	298
Railways, (a) Closure of Kalgoorlie-Leonora line .....	298
(b) details of Collie turntable .....	298
(c) tonnage and freight, Wiluna district .....	299
(d) fares, Perth-Fremantle and Perth-Kalgoorlie .....	299
Cape tulip, area infested and spraying policy .....	299
Motion : Rail closures, rescission of 1956 resolution .....	299

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### TRANSPORT BOARD.

##### *Inspectors and Vehicles.*

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

(1) How many inspectors are employed by the Transport Board?

(2) How many motor-vehicles are used by the board?

(3) What is the total cost per annum of:—

(a) Salaries paid to inspectors;

(b) the operation and maintenance of motor-vehicles used in connection with their work?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Seven. In addition, the services of three temporary inspectors and four part-time inspectors are available to the board.

(2) Each inspector operates his own motor-vehicle.

(3) (a) For the seven inspectors listed in No. (1) £7,442 for 1956-57. For the three temporary inspectors, £710 for the period the 8th April to the 30th June, 1957. For the four part-time inspectors, £180 for 1956-57.

(b) For the seven inspectors, £2,373 for 1956-57. For the three temporary inspectors, £415 for the period the 8th April to the 30th June, 1957.

The sum of £180 mentioned in (a) covers both remuneration and car expenses.

### RAILWAYS.

#### *(a) Closure of Kalgoorlie-Leonora Line.*

Hon. W. R. HALL (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

Will he declare whether or not the Government has the Kalgoorlie-Leonora railway line listed for closure?

The MINISTER replied:

The Kalgoorlie-Leonora line is not listed for closure. It is not included among the railway lines that the Government proposes to close. In the report of the departmental committee it was recommended that this line should be closed, but the Government decided to delete it from the recommendations.

#### *(b) Details of Collie Turntable.*

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What major errors in planning or construction have been made in the new W.A.G.R. turntable at Collie?

(2) Have these troubles now been overcome or rectified?

(3) If approaches were completed now and the turntable put into operation, would it be suitable for all types of locomotives used on the Collie line?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) There were no major errors in either planning or construction. A minor alteration to the level of the concrete apron in the pit was necessary.

(2) Yes.

(3) Yes.

*(c) Tonnage and Freight, Wiluna District.*

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH (for Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham) asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What was the tonnage of paying goods and livestock carried from and to the Wiluna district by the railways for the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1957?

(2) What was the value of freight receipts credited to the Wiluna station for this period?

(3) What was the actual income earned by this freight, irrespective of whether it was paid at Wiluna or elsewhere?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The tonnage from and to the section Meekatharra (excluded) to Wiluna for the year ended the 30th June, 1957, was 5,711.

(2) The amount of freight receipts credited to Wiluna—i.e., the amount the station master there would be responsible for collecting—was £8,869. However, allocation of the earnings to the Meekatharra-Wiluna section will not be completed for some weeks.

(3) The income earned from the tonnage mentioned in No. (1) was £45,121.

*(d) Fares, Perth-Fremantle and Perth-Kalgoorlie.*

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH (for Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham) asked the Minister for Railways:

Will he give the House the undermentioned adult railway fares as at the 30th June in the years shown—

(1) Perth to Fremantle—1934, 1954, 1957:—

- (a) second-class single;
- (b) first-class single;
- (c) second-class return;
- (d) first-class return?

(2) Perth to Kalgoorlie—1934, 1954, 1957:—

- (a) second-class single;
- (b) first-class single;
- (c) second-class return;
- (d) first-class return?

The MINISTER replied:

The figures are as follows:—

*(i) Perth to Fremantle.*

	(a) 2nd single.	(b) 1st single.	(c) 2nd return.	(d) 1st return.
1934	8d.	1s. 0d.	1s. 0d.	1s. 6d.
1954 (One class only)	Single	1s. 5d.	Return	2s. 10d.
1957 (One class only)	Single	1s. 5d.	Return	2s. 10d.

*(ii) Perth to Kalgoorlie.*

	(a) 2nd single.	(b) 1st single.	(c) 2nd return.	(d) 1st return.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1934	1 18 6	3 1 6	3 18 8	6 2 6
1954	3 2 9	4 13 5	6 5 6	9 6 10
1957	3 2 9	4 13 5	6 5 6	9 6 10

**CAPE TULIP.***Area Infested and Spraying Policy.*

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

(1) Is there any departmental estimate of the area of the State infested by cape tulip?

(2) If the answer to No. (1) is in the affirmative, what is the estimated acreage?

(3) What is the estimated acreage of cape tulip ordered by the Agriculture Protection Board to be sprayed during the period the 1st May to the 30th September, 1957, or any particular period during this calendar year?

(4) Has the Agriculture Protection Board issued any orders for spraying cape tulip whereby only a certain area on particular properties shall be sprayed annually?

(5) If any orders referred to in No. (4) above have been made, has the board insisted on spraying being done on the boundaries of particular properties?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) No. Sufficient chemical for spraying 10,000 acres has been distributed by the Agriculture Protection Board so far this season.

(3) Authority has been given to issue a direction notice for approximately 80 acres. With organised control programmes most of the work is undertaken without the necessity for direction notices.

(4) Yes.

(5) Yes.

**MOTION—RAIL CLOSURES.***Rescission of 1956 Resolution.*

Debate resumed from the 16th July, on the following motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham:—

That the resolution passed by this House on the 18th December, 1956, reading as follows—

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, subject to the Government—

(a) ensuring that through increased efficiency and economies throughout the W.A.G.R., including workshops and administration, a substantial reduction in the railway deficit will be achieved as a result of the cessation of the railways in Appendix "B"; and

- (b) ensuring an adequate replacement system of passenger and freight transport before cessation of operation of the railways in Appendix "B"; and
- (c) overhauling and reorganising the metropolitan Government passenger transport services with a view to reducing substantially the deficits in such services.

#### 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 railways 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 Aiana	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
	<hr/> 842

be, and is hereby rescinded.

**HON. F. D. WILLMOTT** (South-West) [4.42]: As I feel that both I and other members of my party have said all there is to be said in regard to this matter when we were speaking to the motion which this House passed last night, we have nothing further to say on the subject.

**MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [4.43]: As has been stated, every angle in connection with the discontinuance of railway lines has been very well covered indeed by members who have already spoken on the subject, and there is very little left to be said. All I wish to say on the motion now before us is that Parliament would have to turn a complete somersault if it supported the motion. It could certainly be accused of not having sufficient intestinal fortitude which the Government was said to lack, should it completely reverse its opinion, when the discontinuance of not one of the railway services has yet had a fair trial.

Nothing has been submitted at all to show that the opinion of Parliament in connection with this matter was wrong, or is likely to be wrong, or that its opinion should be reversed at this stage, when no fair trial has been afforded the Government or the Railway Department to test the proposals.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: You were so sure that they did not require to be tested.

The **MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS**: I do not intend to be led into making a long speech by this interjection. I can only repeat, in answer, that the reason we did not ask for the closure of railway lines, and the reason we asked for discontinuance of them instead, was to try, not an experiment as Mr. Baxter suggested last night, but a measure to see if the financial position of the railways could be improved. I think that all aspects have been well and truly covered in this House during the last two days.

The closure of railway lines, or the need for the railway system to contract its routes is not peculiar to Western Australia. It is common to most countries with railways. As a matter of fact it has been mentioned that some independent person—somebody from the Eastern States or someone from America—should investigate these proposals. I am

afraid such a person could only arrive at conclusions which the committee investigating the proposals has already come to.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Can you quote any country which has closed one-fifth of the length of its lines?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The report of the U.S. Ebasco experts on the railways in New South Wales was referred to by the "Sydney Morning Herald" of the 27th February, 1957. It says—

Some of the economies recommended in the report have already begun and others will be put into operation soon. The report is expected to recommend:

The elimination of some uneconomical country lines.

An increase in the number of diesel-electric locomotives.

Reduction in the number of steam locomotives.

Changes in the planned purchase of capital equipment.

Streamlining of some sections of departmental work.

Re-organising of some train services.

Means of attracting more passengers to the railways.

That is basically and exactly the same as the proposal which this Government is attempting to carry out.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Is that an extract from the report?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I quoted a report appearing in the "Sydney Morning Herald."

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That is imagination on the part of that newspaper.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is so; but there it is. Some of the recommendations were implemented quite early and passenger fares were increased in August last year. But let us examine what happened. Up to the end of June last 12,000,000 fewer passengers used the railways in New South Wales. That number of passenger-journeys is as much as the railway system in this State carries.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Was that for the metropolitan system only?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Instead of showing a profit that railway system showed a loss of £2,000,000.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is what you will do by closing the lines here.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They showed a loss because they drove everybody away from the railways. Sir Charles Latham said we should give the metropolitan passenger services away.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I didn't. I said the railway closures.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Railway passenger services in the metropolitan area. They were given away during the metal strike. They were given away for months. What happened? They became so popular that 12,000,000 passenger journeys are made. The people did not stay away; and to do away with metropolitan passenger services and thrust all those passengers on to the roads, in view of the condition of traffic today, would lead to considerable congestion, as members can well imagine.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You will not apply that to country roads, but only to the city.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am only saying just what happened. I can only repeat that to rescind a motion which was carried by big majorities in both Houses of Parliament, without giving it a reasonable opportunity to be tried, would be to hold Parliament up to ridicule. Assurances have been given that if the traffic in any of these areas cannot be handled without the railways, the services will be restored. No more assurance than that can be given.

I know that there are still those who will not accept an assurance from a Minister of the Crown, but I cannot help that. I can only express the assurance and leave the rest to a man's own judgment as to whether he is prepared to accept it or not. I sincerely hope that the members of this Chamber will give consideration to these angles, because it would be wrong to reverse the decision of Parliament without even trying to implement the motion carried, simply because there has been a whipped-up opposition.

Last night I said that I had not received any direct complaints except from a gentleman in the Dartmoor district, but there was one on my desk today. It is from Wialki and it is addressed to the Minister for Transport. It reads—

Alternative transport unsatisfactory.  
Want rail services restored. P. Sprigg,  
Bonnie Rock.

I understand that Mr. Sprigg would represent 25 per cent. of the settlers at Bonnie Rock. I could be wrong but I understand there are four or five settlers there.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: They would all be behind him.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The alternative road service does not run to Bonnie Rock but to Wialki, because there are four settlers there.

Hon. L. C. Diver: There are more.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Then I am wrongly informed. Could there be seven? That would be the maximum, I think. I understand that there were seven, but that there are now four.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: There will be none very shortly.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: A verbal expression of opinion has been given by the storekeeper at Wialki to the Chief Traffic Manager to the effect that he is very appreciative of the alternative road transport which commenced yesterday. I oppose the motion.

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [4.56]: I will not delay the House very long, but there are a couple of points to which I wish to address myself. They arise principally out of a query raised by Mr. Thomson yesterday regarding some remarks which I made earlier in the day in connection with the Ongerup spur and the effect of its closure upon the settlers in the Jerramungup area.

As the result of inquiries I have made in the last 24 hours, my advice still is that the settlers in that area, far from protesting against the closure of the line, are in favour of the disposal of railways; and for Mr. Thomson's information, and for the information of members generally, I may mention that the general position regarding the substitution of road transport for rail transport in and about that area may be summarised in this way:

The Transport Board has decided to call tenders for direct cartage from the town of Albany for all goods—including super, fuel and oils—into the area now being served by the railway. In addition, the Transport Board is calling for tenders for the road cartage of wheat from Jerramungup to the C.B.H. bin at Ongerup and, for all other forms of produce—such as wool, coarse grains and livestock—direct from the area to the port.

Furthermore, the Transport Board is arranging for exemptions to be given to all farmers in the area, including Borden, to cart with their own transport all goods and produce to and from their farms if they so desire.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Is that official?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Has anyone any complaints against that?

Hon. H. L. Roche: Is it official?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Yes.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: How did you get it?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I am telling members that it is official, and any settler at Jerramungup will tell them that also. Has any member any complaint against that? Coincidental with all this, I see no good reason why the appropriate authority should not install a bin at Jerramungup, because that is the only sensible thing to do. There would not be much sense in making the farmers cart their wheat to the bin at Ongerup with no railhead there. But even if that were still necessary, I am

informed that the existing charge of 1s. per ton per mile over 30 miles from Jerramungup to Ongerup would be substantially reduced by reason of the enlarged road transport facilities which are about to be permitted and provided in the area. Anyhow, the road transport charge from Jerramungup to Ongerup is at the moment subsidised; and I suggest that the erection of a bin at Jerramungup could well be looked after by the saving which would be made by the existing subsidy on freight from Ongerup to Jerramungup becoming unnecessary.

For years the farmers have been fighting for the right of road transport; and with the authorities beginning to see the light and to appreciate the advantages of road transport, it seems to me that the time has arrived when we could well review the provisions of the Bulk Handling Act, because at the moment Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. is obliged to install bins only at railway sidings. I suggest that with the new vision that is reaching the authorities the time has probably come when the obligation to install bins could well be enlarged to apply in any gazetted townsites where the demand was sufficient to warrant the installation of a bin, without regard to whether that bin was or was not served by a railway.

What I have said I have said for the benefit of Mr. Thomson, and I invite him to check the information I have given either with the settlers in the Jerramungup area, or with the Transport Board itself.

For reasons best known to himself, Mr. Watts has, during the past few weeks, been travelling in various parts of the country, and has seemed to me to have been deriving considerable pleasure from emphasising the fact that the resolution carried in December last was carried only because some members of the Liberal Party supported it. I am quite prepared to be counted as one who supported that resolution and who feels that if it were implemented in its entirety and sensibly I emphasise "in its entirety," which of course includes the provisions and provisions contained in it—the resolution is basically sound. I voted for it and I am not prepared to vote for its rescission.

I feel that on a national issue such as this, it behoves the leaders of the political parties in this State to act and comport themselves not as political cheapjacks, but as men who can display the measure of statesmanship necessary and suitable to the occasion—

Hon. H. L. Roche: And of which you would be the judge.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I am going to vote against the motion.

**HON. H. L. ROCHE** (South) [5.2]: I submit that this House would be fully justified in agreeing to this motion for a rescission of the resolution carried last year, and I believe the debate so far in this Chamber amply justifies the view that Sir Charles Latham took when he presented the motion asking for a rescission. The great majority of those who have so far taken part in the debate—although some of them seem to think that the hope or wish expressed in the original resolution should have been enough—expressed themselves as most concerned at the action of the Government in ignoring the implications of that request.

It seems to me that Parliament, the Press, the public—and possibly also a considerable section, if not all, of the members of the State Government—were stampeded and misled into the action which has given rise to this resolution, by the presentation of a set of figures and half-truths which in any other walk of life would have run the risk of being described as fraudulent. I suggest, in all seriousness, that if any board of directors or board of management in this city put up figures to mislead the shareholders to the extent that these figures are misleading, they would finish up in gaol.

Hon. J. Murray: Are you suggesting that the railways are not losing money?

**Hon. H. L. ROCHE**: No. I will deal with some of the figures without going too deeply into them. We had figures presented here which show that certain lines are going to require an outlay of tens of thousands of pounds for essential reconditioning. In respect of the Elleker-Nornalup line the figure for essential reconditioning is given in one or other of these reports as approximately £9,500 per mile. In the records of the Railway Department—in the reports of its officers or officer—it is shown without any "ifs" or "ands" that about half of that line will need nothing more than ordinary maintenance for the next 2½ years, and that for the next seven years the balance of it will need nothing more than ordinary maintenance. Yet in order to justify the discontinuance of that service we are asked to believe that the State will have to find £9,500 per mile for essential reconditioning, and normal maintenance I understand—I am going on a report by the chief engineer to an engineers' conference—in our railway service costs £320 per mile.

The figure presented in relation to the Katanning-Pingrup line, and on which I think the Government has possibly acted in quite good faith, is approximately £13,000 per mile. In reply to an inquiry in another place the Minister representing the Minister for Railways informed the member asking the question that an average line with 60 lb. rails can be constructed new today for £15,000 per mile. It is stretching credulity a little too far if we

are asked to believe that essential reconditioning on a line which has just had thousands of pounds spent on it in resleepering and so on now requires £13,000 per mile for essential reconditioning.

I am not going to say that over the years these figures could not be proved correct; but they have been presented to this House as they were presented to the Government, without those qualifications, in order to lead people to believe that that money has to be provided from loan funds. It has been stated that over the next 10 years we will have to spend £7,500,000 per year on our railways for reconditioning in order to keep them in operation; and over the period, that amounts to £75,000,000. On the figures we have been given for new construction, we could put down 4,000 miles of new line for that sum and still show a profit; but we would not have to put down that much line, as 400 or 500 miles of the present line is under no restriction at all, and there is a considerable section in addition to that which is not under very onerous restrictions.

Under the system of accounting which has been accepted—this is not the fault of the present Government any more than of any previous Government; this Government has enough faults of its own—there is no country or branch line that has a possible chance of ever showing a profit. A line where traffic originates, and which receives traffic from the metropolitan area, gets only a percentage of the credit, and that is all; so that, as was pointed out by a previous speaker, a line such as that from Spencer's Brook to Midland Junction, which is probably under this system, the most profitable in Western Australia because most of the traffic that goes over it, produces virtually nothing, as even the charcoal iron is brought down by road from a State enterprise at Wundowie.

I wish now to refer to another instance of the difficulty of getting figures upon which we can rely. I have not been able—that could of course have been my own fault—to check these figures from any of the reports, but I am using them as an illustration of how ill-advised the action of the Government is in respect of the Gnowangerup-Ongerup line. From May, 1955, to April, 1956, the goods inwards revenue was £49,000 and the goods outward revenue was £53,000; and in the year May, 1956, to April, 1957, the goods inwards revenue was £63,000, and the goods outward revenue, £92,000. There is a 50 per cent. increase—roughly—in one year, and this is a line that we were told it would not pay the Government to continue.

It might, I suggest, be very difficult to get those figures through ordinary railway channels, because it seems to me that our railways can at any given moment, and in respect of any given question, provide any given figures that might happen

to suit them. The Minister for Railways, in all good faith—and no one is likely to question that, although we may question his judgment—a little while ago made a statement to the effect that the railways carried as much in 1928 as they have in any one year since until 1956. Superficially, that is true; but the fact is that the reduction in freights has been brought about by a falling-off in traffic on the railways other than traffic from the agricultural lines.

While the figure for 1928 was 3,697,000 tons, I have taken the figure for 1954-55, which was not an exceptionally good year. The Minister mentioned 1956 and qualified it by saying that there was an extra amount of wheat hauled; but I do not think there was that much extra, although there certainly would be some. In 1954-55 the quantity hauled was 3,400,000 tons, and that is a difference of about 291,000 tons. But the major reductions were in chaff, straw and hay, from 80,000 tons to 12,000 tons; and there is nothing we can do about that, unless the Minister or someone else will buy a few racehorses in order to stimulate the demand for chaff. They are 340,000 tons down on firewood which, apparently, is allowed to come in by road. I presume the same amount of firewood is being used in the metropolitan area today.

The Minister for Railways: There is an increase in gas and electricity.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: And also an increase in the population.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: We find that timber is down by 248,000 tons, and that miscellaneous ores and minerals are down by 522,000 tons. Accordingly, on those figures alone, excluding chaff and hay, we are down 1,110,000 tons. The implication of the Minister was that the farmers have not been supporting the railways; indeed I think the Minister said as much.

The Minister for Railways: Have you had a look at the figures for wool and livestock?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Yes, I have.

The Minister for Railways: What are they?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Wool went from £25,000 to £48,000 in 1954-55, and to £61,000 in 1955-56.

The Minister for Railways: What about the number of sheep on the agricultural line?

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: They send the most payable stuff by road.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: If the Minister could do something about the system of accounting and recording in the railways, and give us figures that could be relied on, we could possibly answer his question.

The Minister for Railways: The figures are correct even though the system of accounting may not correspond with yours.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Much is made of the fact that so much traffic is going by road. I question very much whether there is so much going by road that it would vitally affect the revenue of the railways. The railway tonnage for the last 12 months was, I think, approximately 4,000,000 tons. I travel the country roads a fair bit over one section of the State, and I am asked to believe that a proportion of that traffic by road is sufficient to vitally affect the railway revenue. If the percentage were 10 per cent. this would amount to 400,000 tons, which would mean 100,000 four-ton trucks a year, resulting in a figure of 330 a day in a 300-working-day year. From personal observations I think that is quite ridiculous. I think that outside the 100-mile limit from Perth there would not be more than 5 per cent. going by road.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: You'd be lucky if it was 2 per cent.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: If we exclude stock which the State Transport Board now permits to be carried without exemption permit, and also cream, etc., and consider the amount of traffic on the roads—

The Minister for Railways: And bulk milk.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE:—the contention that the railways are losing so much to road traffic which is not permitted to people who have not got permits from the Transport Board, or that it is being done by farmers under their statutory exemption is, I think, ridiculous.

The Minister for Railways: How much super would go by road from Geraldton, Albany and Bunbury?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Within 40 miles of each of those ports there is an open exemption to which the Transport Board has agreed. Outside that area I would not know what happens; but I believe, without being positive on this, that if the Minister were really interested the State Transport Board might be able to give him some idea.

It is a most arresting thought that whenever we talk about the railways and losses we are asked to believe that the railways are carting certain goods too cheaply. In this connection one particular item always referred to is super. But we find that they are very jealous of anyone who attempts to cart super by road; though one would imagine that if the carting of super showed so little profit or, indeed, an actual loss, as we are led to believe, the more that was carted by road the better it would be for our railway people.

I would now like to take out the figures from Appendix 6 of the official report of this committee. The net saving in operating on the lines to be closed—or shall I say recommended to be closed, because I am leaving the Kalgoorlie and Leonora lines in—is £270,000. That is the saving, on what appears to be a total estimated loss in the railways this year of £7,000,000.

We are asked to believe that the saving of £270,000 on the operating costs for the closing of 842 miles of railway line, which is less than 4 per cent. of the total loss, is to be the salvation of the railway system.

No other proposition has been put before us up to date, although the Government has had nearly 12 months since this motion was before Parliament, and well over six months since it was approved. As yet, all we know is that certain lines are to be closed and the saving of 4 per cent. of the operating costs will be the salvation. Furthermore there is nothing to say that more than 842 miles of line will not be closed. Both the commissioner of railways and the committee emphasised the fact that unless, in the case of the commissioner 1,500 miles, and in the case of the committee more than that amount, is closed there will not be a worth-while economy in the administration of the railways.

The Minister for Railways: They are entitled to their opinion.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Those are their opinions. The Government is acting on the report of the committee. There is a loss on the services in the metropolitan area of £1,500,000. Again there is talk that something might be done about that, and again the Government has had at least six months in which to do something.

The Minister for Railways: I thought you said we had been too hasty.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Nothing has been done about that. There may be another side to that point. It may be that an increase in fares for the metropolitan area is necessary. It may be that such increase in fares at the moment is not desired until such time as more private bus companies get nearer bankruptcy, because we have heard that the Government has the idea of expanding its activities in relation to metropolitan transport. It does seem to me that all we have received from the Government's proposal up to date is the proposition to lop the limbs of the tree in order to preserve the worm-eaten trunk that will never live on its own. I cannot see anything else to the proposition but that.

Up to date there has been no suggestion of any action to be taken to cut the cost of running the trains or to cut the cost of administration. There is a suggestion only to reduce the costs, which will save operating costs by less than 4 per cent. While the ton mileages have gone up by 55 per cent. since 1949, on the committee's figures the wages and salaries have gone up by 149 per cent. Certain other costs have shown, if not as marked an increase, a very considerable one. But the Government tells us that in this move for salvation, which looks to me to be something else, no one is to be put off, and that there can be no economies in that direction. It is going to get ever so much more revenue from ever so much more freight, to be carried by the railways, freight which I suggest in all

seriousness does not exist. There is not that amount of extra freight to compensate the loss.

If the Government is not going to put anyone off; if it is going to retain the men in the various jobs, what will it do with the train crews that are standing by at places like Narrogin and Northam without any trains to drive? If shortage of fitters creates a problem, and there is an excess of engine drivers, are they to be put on fettling jobs only? Is the Government later on going to transfer some of the white collar workers to pick-and-shovel work?

The whole thing seems to me to be ill-considered and rushed. At the start of my remarks I said that a section of the Government had been stampeded by the admittedly deplorable condition of railway finances, on the strength of many figures which could not stand up to close analysis. While no one wants to see economies carried to the extreme, everyone should recognise that the railways have reached the position where someone has to take control.

I believe that the whole set-up of the railways from the administration downwards is out of control. To this State it has become something of a Frankenstein monster which no Labour Government can control because it cannot control the unions, and no non-Labour Government has yet had the courage to try. But someone has got to make the attempt. To some extent the present Government has precipitated the issue. It might not be resolved, it might not be adequate at the moment, but it cannot be delayed for many years longer.

We have the illustration of a few months ago, when some of the railway unions approached the Conciliation Commissioner for improvements in their conditions, with claims that would cost £3,000,000. These unions, or their leaders, were as well informed, or better informed, than we are of the financial position of the railways.

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Why should they object?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: The Government representative or the railway representative, in speaking to these claims, said—

In some cases the claims indicated an apparent lack of appreciation of the fact that the railways had to operate in many parts of the State and at all hours each day of the year.

He said that heavy penalties were being sought for all work outside the ordinary hours of day labour and a number of claims would make administration difficult.

He said there were fantastic claims for a 35-hour working week with overtime after seven hours work in a day; four weeks' annual leave for all employees and six weeks' annual leave in a number of cases.



In addition, there were certain other things.

Whilst I would not deny reasonable working conditions—as much as an industry will stand—anyone in his senses knows that our railway services are in such a condition that they could not stand up to claims like that. The unions should know that. I am prepared to concede that not all unions act in this manner.

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: You do not say that about the farmers.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Mr. President, is it difficult to amend the Poisons Act?

Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Why do you say the wages men should always be the ones to suffer? Tell me that!

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I do not say that.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I have never said it. However, I do think they have to be prepared to face up to these things just the same as everyone else; and, until something is done to reorganise the railways on the score of expenditure, we are not going to get anywhere. We will certainly not get anywhere with the proposals with which this Government has started and with which we are now dealing. Mr. Watson last night said that he thought the Government's proposal was basically sound and he was going to vote for the resolution we were then considering. However, I think it was just a hope, like the original motion. The Government treated it as a pious hope.

The query naturally arises in my mind as to why this proposal of the Government's is basically sound. It saves £270,000 on operating costs, but is evading its responsibility for a reorganisation. It is all right to talk about what is coming tomorrow, the next day or next year; but up to date the Government has been very slow. I have not much faith in regard to the saving up to date in connection with the 842 miles of railway. We are told that no more lines are going to be closed, so I cannot see how a saving of less than four per cent. of the loss is so basically sound, particularly when it is taking revenue and destroying any prospect of further revenue from these lines in districts which are developing. I cannot see it.

I cannot see that there is any greater obligation on the Government to recognise the expression of opinion in the previous resolution we carried than there was to recognise it in the original resolution. However, the proposal of Sir Charles Latham has definitely put some power in that resolution; that is, that it will rescind the decision of this House which was taken nearly 12 months ago.

Whilst we all appreciate the difficulties of unscrambling the egg, at least it removes from the Government that justification which it claims with smug satisfaction—not necessarily through its representatives in this House—that Parliament had approved of what the Government is doing. For that reason there is something to this resolution; something more than in the one we have already carried. Like all other members here, Mr. Watson is entitled to represent the views of his constituents—and I feel the people in the city are not very concerned—but this is a vital matter for the country people, and I hope the House will agree to this motion.

HON. R. C. MATTISKE (Metropolitan) [5.46]: Last year, when I supported the motion to close these various lines, I based my decision on information I had obtained from inquiries made in various quarters, and from information given to this House by the Minister. Another important reason which influenced me was the fact that, as I said at that time, there was no need for that motion to come before this House. The Government had all the power it required to close those lines without presenting it to Parliament at all.

I embraced the chance of supporting the motion because it gave us an opportunity to attach to it the three very important conditions we considered necessary. I felt then, and still feel, that we must move with the times. It is no good supporting an obsolete transport system. We must bring our transport up to date, just as we do other things. I realise that the railway system is a public utility and, consequently, not expected to run at a profit. Furthermore, I realise that there comes a stage when the replacement of rollingstock and the re-laying of tracks is such that it is uneconomic to have anything further to do with certain sections. Therefore, I feel that the Government was justly entitled to take action in connection with certain portions of our railway system.

However, I do feel that much of the information which was placed before the House in December last, in view of what has transpired since then, and what has been given to us by various speakers during the last two or three days, was misleading. I am not suggesting for a moment that the Minister deliberately intended to mislead, but I think he was misinformed, and he passed on that information which we accepted in good faith, and which had an important bearing on the whole question.

In December I stated that there was no need for the motion to have come before the House, and I likewise feel that the present one is redundant. What will the Government do if this motion is carried?

It will say, "Cabinet has the power to confirm the discontinuance of these lines and closure of other lines," and on that score it can carry on.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Why did you support the original motion?

Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: Because it enabled me to join with the Government in attaching these three all-important conditions. As I said a moment ago, I feel that the motion is redundant; but if it will serve as a further censure on the Government for the manner in which it has mishandled the whole proposition since December last, I have pleasure in supporting it.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (North) [5.51]: Although during the last two days much has been said about the railways, and much criticism has been levelled at the Government about the condition of the railways, there is still, I submit, much that should be said. Although the prelude to the launching of these motions gave an indication through public channels that they were to be regarded as censure motions, it is a rather startling observation to make that the galleries during most of the time occupied in the discussion of these censure motions have been empty. Where are the large gatherings of the protesting people who could attend through their representatives if they could not attend in person, and who normally, through history, have been seen when censure motions have been dealt with?

Hon. N. E. Baxter: They are 60 to 100 miles out in the country on their farms.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: No excuses are necessary on that point. Another startling fact evident to any observer of or listener to the debate is that the gap between the two Opposition parties is, on fundamentals, more than a gap—it is a gaping chasm.

One could not imagine the situation, judging from the things we have seen and heard in this Chamber, of the two motions, or either of them, emerging from a joint party meeting of the L.C.L. and the Country Party. I wonder whether it is a practical proposition to expect anyone to believe that that is possible. So we find that although these motions are quite properly before the Chamber—these motions moved in good faith according to the political beliefs of two sets of people—they could not be worded to suit both parties.

Hon. L. C. Diver: How do you think a secret ballot would have fared?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I think it would have meant that neither motion would be before the Chamber; and especially so if we attach significance to what was said at a country centre recently, that this would be the issue to terminate the term of the present Government. Of course,

that is too ludicrous because, again, the fundamentals upon which the parties are at variance in this matter are such that there could not be a common policy in regard to it as an issue on which to go to the country. Those are two points which cannot be overlooked in thinking of what has been said during the last day or two.

Hon. A. R. Jones: There has been no reference to that in what has been said in the last two or three days.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Much of that has been said; but members have studiously avoided the uncomfortable things that affect them, and they have been pleased to pillory the Minister—never mind this soft-soap solace that they expressed in connection with what he has to put up with; the Minister has been attacked as a liar—and say that he has told lies in this matter. So why be finicky about things that are relevant but that have not been raised!

Hon. L. A. Logan: Who said he had lied?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: An hon. member sitting very close to the hon. member who has just interjected.

Hon. L. A. Logan: If you are going to make such an accusation, you should name him.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Does the hon. member suggest that I am not on the spot and expressing a fact in what I have said? If so, let him say so.

Hon. L. A. Logan: If you are going to name anyone as a liar, I think you should name him.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I did not say that; I said a member opposite accused the Minister of telling lies. Will the hon. member deny that?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It is obvious that Mr. Logan was not present at the time, or he would not doubt my word.

Hon. L. A. Logan: I heard every word of the debate.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Then I suggest that the Hansard proofs be called for to show that the words are recorded that I have just referred to, because they are there. I had mentioned, when I was interrupted, that these matters are properly before the Chamber as matters of great importance politically. There is no begging that question. These are vital political matters, as are most matters dealt with by pious resolution or legislation. They all have political significance.

In this case it is suggested that the political association and relationship of the railways with the Government has had a great bearing on the Government policy for decades. Even in the day when railways were meeting working expenses and interest, the position of the railways had a serious and marked effect on the budgetary position.

If one goes through the schedule, in the last report available, showing the complete figures for almost a generation, one finds that the shrinkage in railway income has progressively shown an almost comparable relationship with the shrinkage in State revenues. The last year upon which a profit over working expenses was shown was 1946.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: There was a change of Government then.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes. I am glad of that interjection, because I shall show what happened at the time of the Government of which Sir Charles was a member in regard to the culminating point of all in the serious situation of railway finance. I will reach that point in a moment.

It is important, when considering matters of this kind that the cause and the effect should not be severed. I think it was Emerson who said that cause and effect are merely two sides of the one question. Every member who has spoken in criticism of the Government in this matter has studiously avoided analysing the cause; although I admit, in all fairness, that some suggestions have been made as curatives. I would mention Mr. Roche, and Sir Charles Latham, who made a suggestion—I do not know whether he proposes to act upon it—and said that the lines may only be continued at extra cost, and that he would go out among them—referring to the farmers—and tell them if necessary that they would have to pay a little more in freight.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I made that statement and I am willing to do it.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It is pleasing to have that assurance. There were other suggestions with regard to savings that might accrue from unscrewing bolts instead of cutting them, and so on; indeed, many suggestions were made as to how minor savings that might amount to considerable sums could be effected. But unless we are prepared to analyse the causes, we will not be in the position in which the Government is to decide what should be done or applied as a curative.

Members opposite, and especially Country Party members, will surely realise that it must be to the credit of Labour Governments that many things have been done for the farmers of this State! Perhaps no Governments of opposing politics have done anything like as much for the farmers as have Labour Governments.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Pro rata, over the years, perhaps.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Or by any other measure—

Hon. H. L. Roche: Opportunity is a fine thing.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I may say, without ego, that I had the privilege, over many years, of being a Minister for Agriculture—longer than any other person ever in politics in this State—and I know what travail and trouble the farmers had in the late 1930's. It was my responsibility to handle those matters which gave them amelioration of their troubles on many occasions. Not that we look for appreciation from the embittered partisan; all we expect and ask for is a fair analysis and summary. So I get back to my point, that although Labour Governments have that record—I will run through a list if members wish to be provocative in this regard—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Please do not. It is too close to 6 o'clock.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: That would not deter me from saying what is in my mind, if necessary, in answer to any interjection on that point. Although it is to the credit of Labour Governments, no one would say—unless one were feeling that this matter has been entered into lightly or that this decision had been reached without all the facts then available being considered by the Government—that that was not so. It is unfortunately true that individuals will be deprived of certain privileges and of certain services and will be materially affected by the decision of the Government; but Governments cannot consider the effect on a few individuals, however worthy they may be, or however important they are in the life of the community as a whole.

In retrospect there have been many attempts in the last 20 years to rectify the obvious drift into which the railways were entering. The Transport Co-ordination Act of 1933—although perhaps it may have been disguised at the time—was certainly the first step made in an attempt to retrieve a difficult railway position.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Has it done that?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Of course not! For the simple reason that one cannot, under any circumstances, by a whim or wish stop the flow of Niagara Falls or prevent progress. Wishful thinking does not help at all; and therefore we must accept the situation that the challenge of transport other than the iron horse of the railways, is very real, in the shape of road transport. Some of the lines affected, and of which much has been said by members earnestly and sincerely speaking on behalf of their constituents, were built at a time when the farmers were a day's journey by wagon from the railway line—and many of them much more than a day's journey. But the same distance can be covered by motor-vehicle today in 20 minutes with at least the same load.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: I think you are speeding it up a bit.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I happen to know the circumstances of the subsidised transport of wheat because it was initiated in my time. I know the capacity of the trucks used in that connection, even 20 years ago. Do I take it from the hon. member's facetious interjection that Mr. Baxter does not think it possible for the modernised transport of today to haul as much as a horse team did in those days? Will he say that?

Hon. N. E. Baxter: I said you were speeding it up a bit when you said the truck would go as far in 20 minutes as the horse-drawn vehicle would in a day.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I said a truck will go in 20 minutes nearly as far as a horse-drawn wagon would—there and return—in a day.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: You said "in 20 minutes."

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes. But supposing it takes an hour, are we to endeavour to prevent the march of progress over the years as represented by the altered system of transport? Whether this method is right or not, the action of the Government is the first attempt by a Government—as Mr. Roche said and even though its approach in his view may be wrong—to rectify a serious situation in public finance.

I wish to refer now to a comparison of figures some of which have been used in the course of this debate; and as a starting point, I select the year 1947, as I think that was an appropriate period and an appropriate time—I suppose more appropriate in the minds of many people, because that was the year in which I ceased to be Premier of the State, and perhaps that fact was not dissociated from railways. If we take the next half-dozen years, during which Mr. Simpson and Mr. Seward were respectively Minister for Railways—

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It was the other way round.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: That is so. Mr. Seward was the most vocal of all members at any time in the Legislative Assembly in his criticism of railways, but he had a difficult task, on being appointed Minister for Railways, to vindicate much of what he had said, and to put into effect much of what he had advocated. His was a most difficult role; and—perhaps unfortunately for him—certain political matters affecting seats gave him only a few years in which to put some of his ideas into effect. But the significance of the changes from that time onwards shows that that was the starting point of the drift in railway finance.

In 1947 the operating expenses of our railways were 157.81d. per ton mile. In 1953, the year that Mr. Simpson ceased to be Minister, the figure was 529.77d., an all-time high.

Hon. R. C. Mattiske: The basic wage had gone up in the meantime.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes; all those things have been taken into account.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Wasn't it due to Arbitration Court awards and the strike?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: They had a big effect.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I want the hon. member to be fair about this. He used figures, conceding nothing, when he made comparisons last evening in relation to costs and the appointment of personnel. Let me quote that situation to him. In 1947 there were 9,455 salaried and wages men in the railways; but in 1953, at the cessation of his period of office, there were 12,491.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: That was four months after—

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: No; the figure was 13,000 four months afterwards. I gave the figure at the time the hon. member vacated his office. The figure was 12,491, an increase of 33 per cent.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: What about the 40-hour week?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I am not quoting that figure in a nasty way. I am saying that the comparison made by the hon. member last evening was a fair comparison only if he used the earlier figures as well.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: In that time the 40-hour week had come into being and Arbitration Court awards had to be taken into account.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: All sorts of things happened—that occurs progressively—but why blame the other fellow when the hon. member himself was at least as culpable? The deficit of the railways in 1947 represented 50.33d. per train mile; but in 1953 it had grown to 258.49d. per train mile—in six years. That is fair criticism by a Government which at least has attempted to do something to stem the tide; and I think we should be permitted to look in retrospect at the figures, upon which one could talk for a long time.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Tell us what Governments did for the railways between 1933 and 1947.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes. Very much was done even though that period included the depression years. I notice that the hon. member's leader is frowning at him. Whether he wishes me to reply to the interjection or not I do not know, but I will be pleased to do so. I would ask the hon. member a question in parallel.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Answer that one first.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes. Dozens of locomotives were introduced, in spite of the fact that there was a period of war. Twenty-four locomotives were given to the Commonwealth to serve in other war

spheres on 3ft. 6in. gauge lines. The Government of that day also carried out construction as well as rehabilitation work using unemployed men. Much was done for the railway system as the tables and figures available clearly show.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It was not so badly run down as in 1927.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: There was a war on at the time and a tremendous strain had been placed on the railway systems of all countries.

Hon. L. A. Logan: And for which you got compensation.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: We got very little compensation. But do not let us, either in moments of despair, or because of partisanship, take away from those who were carrying the heat of the burden at that time some little credit for handling the very difficult situation that existed.

I would like to speak at greater length, but I will conclude on the thought that I had hoped to expand considerably. What alternatives are open to us to stop the cost involved in every £1,000,000 that we lose or borrow to meet our losses? We pay £60,000 for interest and sinking fund for 53 years on every £1,000,000 borrowed. But how are we to service a debt already in excess of £58,000,000 unless we face up to realities, or unless we are prepared to take the burden on to more shoulders?

There is no easy way out; there is no pleasant way out. The Grants Commission may be an opportunity, but there is no way out by writing off capital. That does not destroy it. But perhaps if we could get some guarantee of meeting working expenses, the interest requirements could be overlooked. Rather than delay the House I will simply say that I oppose the motion.

#### *Point of Order.*

Hon. A. R. Jones: Mr. President, I rise on a point of order. During his speech, Mr. Wise referred to the fact that the Minister for Railways had been accused by somebody, in the near vicinity apparently, of telling lies. He did suggest that Hansard records be called for. Am I to assume that you, Sir, are going to call for those records so that the hon. member can point to the person who made that accusation against the Minister? Because I do not believe that any one of us did. I felt that anything that might have been said in regard to the lengthy statement that might have been made by the Minister was not to the effect that we are blaming him, but it was more in regard to the information that has been supplied by departmental officers.

I know that I wish to maintain a friendly atmosphere throughout my political life, at any rate, and I am sure that other members feel the same. So I ask that you,

Sir, call for the Hansard records so that the hon. member can point to the person who made that accusation.

The President: I do not know whether Mr. Jones thinks that the accusation was made against him. Mr. Wise made no reference to any hon. member. If any member is of the opinion that he was being maligned, he should have risen and taken objection to the remarks at that time. However, I hope to peruse the Hansard records during the week-end, and if I find that any hon. member raised any objection to remarks made at the time I will bring it to the notice of the House.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I say, quite unservedly, that if I misinterpreted or misheard any remarks, I will speak to the members who are concerned in the matter and will withdraw my remarks without reserve.

#### *Debate Resumed.*

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central—in reply) [6.10]: I wish to say only a few words in reply. I think the speeches that have been made during the last couple of nights have covered all the points. If they have not, at least members have expressed themselves in their own language. I believe that Mr. Watson has felt extremely aggrieved, and that the reason he is not supporting this motion is that I was one of those who voted in favour of the land tax. I wish to explain that I did so because I did not want an increase in railway freights. I felt that that would be some means by which the Government could raise additional revenue to help it alleviate the loss on the railways that has taken place.

In any case, I will not allow Mr. Watson to voice his opinion in this House as it means to justify the action he has taken when there are many more members who are more qualified to express an opinion on how much farmers can get from the land to justify the great burden we are placing on some of them by the action we are taking.

There are a few other points I wish to raise. I am sure that members have not taken into account the intention of the Government—namely, that in the first year there will be a reduction of one seventh in the subsidy that has been paid. After seven years those farmers—it does not matter whether they are 50 miles east of Hyden, and some of them are—will receive no financial assistance whatsoever, and there is no alternative to the payment of that subsidy and therefore the prospects of growing wheat in that area at a profit on the ruling price are very remote.

The rail subsidy granted to those farmers over the years has assisted them materially. But evidently that is not going

to continue, because the Government has told us so. That is one of the reasons I objected to its discontinuance, because the very people who are on the lowest rung of the financial ladder in the farming community are those who cannot afford to lose it. That is one of the reasons why I am in favour of additional freights being borne by those people who can afford to pay. After all is said and done, they are in competition with those people who are out east and in the north-eastern areas.

I have already told the House that it will take many millions of pounds to put the roads in a fit state of repair to enable them to carry the additional road traffic they will have to carry following a rail closure. I am sure many members consider that the members of the farming community are very wealthy. I quoted to the House some information that has been published on the rural research section of the C.S.I.R.O. and I now wish to quote a little more. It is as follows:—

The most satisfactory single measure for comparing the financial results of the five States is the rate of return shown on the capital investment. New South Wales (8.5 per cent.) and South Australia (8.1 per cent.) had the highest rates of return, with Western Australia in third place with 6.9 per cent.

Both Victoria and Tasmania show returns very much below that. It is said that the earning capacity of a sheep in New South Wales is the highest in the Commonwealth; whilst the earning capacity of sheep in this State is the lowest, at 20d. per lb. Therefore, I want members to appreciate that Western Australia is not in such a lucrative position as other States are. In the respective States the average earning capacity of farmers is as follows:—

	£
New South Wales	2,074
South Australia	1,644
Western Australia	1,041

So it can be seen that farmers in this State have not a great margin of income to enable them to carry this additional burden that is being placed upon them. Even now, irrespective of whether this motion is carried, I ask the Government to investigate the position as it should be investigated. It should not punish those people who are out on the extreme edge of the agricultural areas. For those farmers do not work a 40-hour week. They work, in all probability, a 60-hour week; and, furthermore, their wives and children have to help them. It is only in the last few years that they have obtained some financial benefit from their work.

I hope I shall get sufficient support for this motion to enable it to be passed, even if it is only to give those people on the outskirts of the wheatbelt a little heart to carry on. The man in the city does not

understand the true position; he cannot understand it and, what is more, he will not understand it.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	14
Noes	12
Majority for	2

#### Ayes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. G. MacKinnon
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. R. C. Mattiske
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. J. Murray

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. F. J. S. Wise
Hon. G. E. Jeffery	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery

(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 18th July, 1957.

### CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Pensioners, concessions on Government transport	312
Company law, Government's plans and views	312
Main Roads Department, number of employees	313
Cattle, Kimberley turnoff, disease, etc.	313
Local Government Bill, hawker provisions	314
Road closure, alignment of Forrest Avenue, Bunbury	314
Weights and measures, checking procedure	314
Harbours, plans for Bunbury	314
Water supplies, (a) Narrogin-Katanning pipeline	314
(b) Great Southern services	314
(c) Profit or loss on metropolitan and country services	315
Fisheries, Great Australian Bight potential	315
Lord Campbell's Act, proposed amendments	315
Mental health, legislation, report, etc.	315
Traffic, (a) parking stands and blinking lights	315
(b) driving in highway lanes	315
(c) Stirling Highway lights	315
Education, (a) expenditure on high schools	316
(b) university matriculation and selective subjects	316