

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 27th August, 1957.

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QUESTIONS.

ROAD AND RAIL PASSENGER SERVICES.

(a) Average Overall Weekly Operating Cost.

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

(1) What was the average overall weekly cost of operating the—

(a) seven railway road bus services weekly, Perth to Bunbury;

(b) five railway road bus services weekly, Bunbury to Perth;

(c) sixteen railway passenger services weekly, Perth to Bunbury;

(d) sixteen railway passenger services weekly, Bunbury to Perth,

over the period from the 24th June, 1957, to the 21st July, 1957?

(2) What was the average overall weekly cost of operating the present—

(a) two railway road bus services weekly, Perth to Bunbury;

(b) one (plus one from Brunswick Junction) railway road bus service weekly, Bunbury to Perth;

(c) fourteen railway passenger services weekly, Perth to Bunbury;

(d) fourteen railway passenger services weekly, Bunbury to Perth;

over the period from the 22nd July, 1957, to the 18th August, 1957?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) (a) £102.

(b) £102 (including two trips weekly running empty to balance the service).

(c) £1,691.

(d) £1,691.

(2) (a) £29.

(b) £28.

(c) £1,735.

(d) £1,735.

(b) Cost per Mile of Operation.

Mr. I. W. MANNING asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

What is the cost per mile of operation of the following services on the Perth-Bunbury run—

(a) passenger train;

(b) diesel rail car;

(c) railway road bus?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(a) 27s. 6d.

(b) 6s. 8d.

(c) 2s. 6d.

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

(c) Numbers of Passengers Carried.

Mr. I. W. MANNING asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What is the maximum and minimum number of passengers carried on any one trip of the Perth-Bunbury run of the following three services—

- (a) passenger train;
- (b) diesel rail car;
- (c) railway road bus?

(2) What is the average number of passengers carried by the following three services for the period of the last financial year—

- (a) passenger train;
- (b) diesel rail car;
- (c) railway road bus?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

- (1) (a) 504 and 12.
- (b) 128 and 4.
- (c) 56 and 10.

(2) (a) and (b) This information is not readily available and an appreciable amount of time and expense would be entailed in its preparation.

- (c) Fifteen.

WUNDOWIE PIG IRON*Tonnages Transported by Road.*

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

How many tons of the total tonnages given in answer to my question on Wednesday last, were transported by road from the Wundowie works to their destinations in this State?

The MINISTER replied:

Annual tonnages ex Wundowie for destinations in this State were—

1953-54	....	....	13,683
1954-55	....	....	15,044
1955-56	....	....	17,183
1956-57	....	....	14,371

EDUCATION.*High Schools in Large Centres.*

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What towns, outside the metropolitan area, have three-year high schools?

(2) When were they erected?

(3) What was the cost?

(4) What was the enrolment when they were opened?

(5) What is the enrolment now?

(6) What towns outside the metropolitan area have five-year high schools?

(7) When were they erected?

(8) What was the cost?

(9) What was the enrolment when they opened?

(10) What is the present enrolment?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Boulder. There are 28 junior high schools in the country but these are basically primary schools with a post-primary top.

(2) Boulder was erected in 1906, not as a high school but has since been converted to fulfil this function.

(3) Original cost £4,926.

(4) 316.

(5) 334.

(6) to (10).

	Erected	Original cost £	Enrolment at opening	Present enrolment
Albany	1924	18,999	114	572
Bunbury	1922	15,750	147	622
Collie	originally erected as a primary school and now converted to act as a high school		261	401
Geraldton	1939	21,972	197	452
Merredin	1956-57	63,670	213	213
Eastern Gold-fields High School	1913-15	6,837	191	608
Narrogin	1950-54	185,000	310	368
Manjimup	1956-57	58,900	167	218
Northam	1921	16,433	172	648

MINING EXPLOSIVES.*Statutory Precaution re Sales.*

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Is there any statutory precaution taken to prevent mining explosives being sold for purposes other than bona fide mining ones?

(2) If so, in what Act?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

S.P. BETTING.*Turnover, Metropolitan and Country Shops.*

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Police:

(1) In view of the abundance of information required from bookmakers by Forms T1 and T7 of the betting control regulations of the 6th May, 1955, does he not consider the information required in Question No. (12) on the 20th August, 1957, could be supplied?

(2) If so, will he now supply the required information?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The information required has not been tabulated because it is considered its use would be very limited. Some time would be required to extract the information from individual returns and this expenditure is not considered justified.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.*Acceptance of Tender for Overalls.*

Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Works:

Further to my question on the notice paper of the 21st August, will he inform me of the reason why the State Electricity Commission accepted the third highest of four quotations for the supply of overalls, at a cost to the commission of an extra £132 above the lowest quote?

The MINISTER replied:

Having regard to quality as well as price, the tender which represented the best value was accepted.

One tenderer who submitted a price lower than that of the successful tenderer did not comply with the conditions because of his failure to submit the sample specified.

CHARCOAL IRON INDUSTRY.*Files re Establishment in Bunbury.*

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Premier:

In view of the answer to my question on the 20th August, 1957, when does he consider the stage will be reached when he will lay on the Table of the House, all departmental files dealing with the establishment of a charcoal iron industry in Bunbury?

The PREMIER replied:

This will depend on developments. No final decision has been made as to the site in connection with the proposed industry.

I will be pleased to try to answer any specific question which the hon. member might care to put forward on the proposal. In the meantime, it is suggested he makes strong representations to the Federal Government in support of the proposals and makes public a copy of any letter sent along those lines; that is, unless he supports the attitude of his own State Leader and other Liberal members in strongly opposing the proposals.

RAILWAYS.*Bunbury Goods Sheds, Remodelling.*

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

(1) As the Commonwealth authorities will in the near future be vacating their present Customs bond store and office at the north end of the Bunbury goods shed, is not the time now opportune to commence the remodelling and rebuilding of the present inadequate goods shed at Bunbury?

(2) If not, what is envisaged in relation to immediate alterations as far as extensions, office accommodation, staff amenities, loading and unloading facilities and modernisation of handling equipment are concerned?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) The Customs Department vacated its office and bond store at the request of the Railway Department to permit of the enlargement of the shed, which will proceed as finances are available.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

NATIVE WELFARE.*Official's Trip to Well 40.*

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) Did the native welfare officer stationed in Derby seek permission from the Native Welfare Department to go by vehicle to Well 40 on the Canning stock route for the purpose of investigating the plight of natives in the area?

(2) Was permission refused by the Native Welfare Department?

(3) If the answer to No. (2) is "Yes," what was the reason for refusing permission?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) and (3) See answer to No. (1).

CANNING STOCK ROUTE.*(a) Survey by Bureau of Mineral Resources.*

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

Did anyone from the Bureau of Mineral Resources party currently carrying out a mineral survey on the Canning stock route visit Well 40 or the country in the vicinity of that well before the party obtained the services of the helicopter at present in use?

The MINISTER replied:

This is not known at the Department of Native Welfare's Perth office. The Bureau of Mineral Resources party is under the jurisdiction of a Commonwealth department and has no direct connection with the Native Welfare Department.

(b) Distances of Centres from Well 40.

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

How far from Well 40 on the Canning stock route are the following:—

(a) Fitzroy Crossing;

(b) La Grange;

(c) Cosmo Newbery;

(d) the "privately owned cattle stations" referred to in Question No. (12) in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday, the 21st August, 1957?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) Approximately 270 miles.

(b) Approximately 300 miles.

(c) Approximately 420 miles.

(d) Various, according to location of the stations. The general locations are from Billiluna station in the east, and stations situated generally south of the main Derby-Hall's Creek-rd., along the coast from La Grange to Port Hedland, the marginal area from Nullagine to Wiluna and thence south-east to the Laverton-Leonora district. Particulars of stations which are at various times in contact with desert natives, and assist them, may be obtained in detail from the Native Welfare Department.

TRANSPORT.

Use of Rail and Road by Soap Firms.

Mr. HALL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Supply and Shipping:

(1) In view of the fact that large soap firms are to use rail and road transport to haul their interstate cargoes, thus avoiding the use of the natural ports for the shipping of interstate cargoes—such as Albany, Bunbury and Esperance—will he ascertain from the firms concerned if such contemplated action will increase the price of the commodity concerned?

(2) If the price of the commodities concerned will be increased by that action, will he give earnest consideration to negotiations being entered into to get the firms to use the outports, and thus reduce the price of the article and give the regions served by the outports a more efficient service?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied:

The required information is not available from Government sources. However, inquiries are being made and the hon. member will be further advised.

FISHING INDUSTRY.

Potential of Local Tuna.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Fisheries:

As tuna is a much sought after fish in America, will he advise the House—

(1) If the northern bluefin tuna and the mackerel tuna are types which would sell readily on the American market?

(2) If the catching, processing, and exporting of these fish to America could be developed into a worth-while industry in the North-West?

(3) Are these fish to be found on the continental shelf or in the waters just off it?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is almost certain that a demand could not be created for mackerel tuna in the United States, where it is held to be of very inferior quality. It is doubtful, too, whether northern bluefin would

find a ready market there. It would certainly have to face fierce competition from old-established canned tuna lines like albacore, yellow-fin and southern bluefin. All these are considered to be of much superior quality.

(2) To establish the tuna industry in the North-West would involve large capital expenditure, for the provision of refrigerated clippers and suitable equipment. It is not anticipated that a worthwhile industry will develop within the next two or three decades.

(3) Principally in shelf waters.

GASCOYNE RESEARCH STATION.

Office Accommodation and Laboratory.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Has his department given any consideration to the building of suitable offices on the Gascoyne research station for the use of the regional adviser and the two agricultural advisers stationed there?

(2) Has any consideration been given to the building and equipping of the much needed laboratory to assist the above-mentioned officers in their research work?

(3) If the answers to the above questions are "Yes," when will the work begin?

(4) If no consideration has been given to Nos. (1) and (2), will he have investigations made to ascertain just how the officers are carrying out their clerical duties and also where they hold interviews when primary producers seek information?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The main duties of the officers quoted are advisory work and field investigations. No extensive laboratory accommodation is contemplated for any research station, as this type of work can generally be more successfully undertaken in comprehensive central laboratories.

(3) Such additional facilities appropriate to Gascoyne research station will be considered in relation to other works.

Loan funds are not available this year.

(4) Answered by No. (3).

HOSPITALS.

Theatre Fees.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Have theatre fees been recently increased at Government and committee-controlled hospitals?

(2) When were increased fees imposed?

(3) What amounts were charged before the increase?

(4) What are the present charges?

(5) Are theatre fees recoverable under the hospital benefits scheme, and if so, what proportion?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The 1st August, 1957.
- (3) Major—£3 3s.
Minor—£1 11s. 6d.
Labour ward fees—£2 12s. 6d.
- (4) Major—£5 5s.
Minor—£2 2s.
Labour ward fees—£3 13s. 6d.

(5) No Commonwealth benefit is payable, but registered organisations pay varying benefits. At least one registered organisation pays the following:—

Major operation—£2 2s.
Minor operation—£1.

CRIME.

Government's Attitude re Death Sentences.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Justice:

With reference to his answer to part (6) of my 15th August, 1957, question, regarding capital charges and death sentences, does this mean that there are circumstances under which the Government would not commute the death sentence?

The MINISTER replied:

The Government does not know in advance what the circumstances of some future crime might be. Therefore, without knowledge of those circumstances, the Government is unable to anticipate what its decision would be.

BUNBURY POWER HOUSE.

(a) Road Transport of Materials and Equipment.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) In connection with the construction of the Bunbury power house, what tonnage of material and equipment was transported by road over a distance of more than 35 miles?

(2) To what extent have economies been effected by the use of road transport on this job, as compared with the use of rail transport?

(3) What tonnage of equipment, if any, was transported by road because the equipment was too heavy or bulky to transport by rail?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) 813 tons owing to inability of railways to handle; 82 tons for reasons of urgency.

(2) Not known.

(b) Connection of Farms to Electricity Supply.

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

Is he aware that during the course of his remarks last Friday, when opening the Bunbury power house, some people understood him to say that advances in the distribution of current to farms had been made to the point where one farm could be connected to a transformer?

Did the Minister mean to create that impression?

The MINISTER replied:

I did not attempt to give any impression; I stated a fact, which is that a system of reticulation of electricity supply has been developed by the State Electricity Commission which enables it economically to supply a number of consumers who would not otherwise be supplied. The basis of that system is to use a somewhat cheaper wire and to use also small transformers to supply individual consumers; not all consumers, but in some instances to supply those consumers who are only a short distance from the local source of supply. That method has been developed by the present general manager, who was then the engineer in charge of the South-West power scheme. I would like to say here that I consider it is a very great tribute to his ingenuity.

NARROWS BRIDGE.

Suggestion as to Toll.

Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

In view of the plans members saw during the official inspection of the Narrows bridge project, on the 16th August, 1957, can it be accepted that any proposal of a toll on the bridge has been abandoned?

The PREMIER replied:

There was never any proposal to apply a toll charge to vehicles using the bridge, although a suggestion to that effect was made at one stage.

CHAMBERLAIN INDUSTRIES.

Committee's Report.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) What progress has been made by the parliamentary committee inquiring into the affairs of Chamberlain Industries?

(2) When can the House expect a report?

The PREMIER replied:

It is not easy to measure the progress which the committee has made. I suppose that when a report is presented by the committee, there will be various and conflicting views regarding the progress made. The committee is to have a meeting on Thursday morning of this week for the purpose of considering proposals of a

financial nature which have been put forward in connection with the industry. I should think that the committee might be in a position to make some report to Parliament not later than, possibly, the middle of September.

CHASE SYNDICATE.

Duplication of Project.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

With reference to the answer he gave on the 22nd August, 1957, to my question on land development to duplicate the Chase project, can he indicate the areas under consideration?

The MINISTER replied:

I cannot indicate the areas precisely, but there is a considerable tract of land north of Perth and west of the Midland line which would come under the category of light land capable of being successfully developed. There are one or two other similar but smaller areas than that one and then again, in the Denmark district, in the heavier rainfall area, there are 30,000 acres which are quite capable of being developed, provided drainage difficulties can be overcome.

At the moment the department is working in an endeavour to survey all of these areas so that they may be classified for land settlement projects. The report in question is only an interim one. It is too early to say anything definite regarding any of the light land areas, excepting to state that if we find sufficient large areas of land that are attractive to people in other countries, the Government will be extremely happy to join with them in endeavouring to come to some agreement on the matter.

TURNOVER TAX.

Report as to Government's Intention.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Treasurer:

(1) Is there any substance in the report that the Government is considering a purchase or turnover tax, or a similar type of tax related to purchase or sales volume?

(2) If so, is this aimed at special cases, or is it to be a general tax?

(3) Will it be on a graduated scale?

The TREASURER replied:

I have never seen any proposal of this kind.

AGENT GENERAL.

Decision on Appointment.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Has a decision been made regarding the appointment of an Agent General?

(2) If not, when will this urgent matter be decided?

The PREMIER replied:

No decision has been made as yet. The matter has been reviewed on two occasions by Cabinet and will be further considered in the near future.

TRAFFIC.

(a) Road Markings.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Minister for Transport:

Can he inform the House of the significance of the large number of coffin-shaped markings on the centre of the road at the intersection of St. George's Terrace, Milligan and Mount-sts.?

The MINISTER replied:

As I understand the position, the Main Roads Department, Traffic Engineering Branch, is giving some consideration to that junction of roads. It should be obvious to just about all of us, that vehicles at that intersection—and, incidentally, it is not the only one—when making turns, pass through different arcs; in other words, there is no regular movement of the traffic. At the moment, the proposal is for the construction of an island in the centre of St. George's Terrace both for the purpose of regulating the flow of traffic on a better basis than it is at present, and to provide some refuge for pedestrians who are crossing the street. No doubt, following further studies, the Traffic Engineering Branch, if it is satisfied with the preliminary observations, will make some temporary form of kerb, such as was done with sandbags on the Fremantle side of the Fremantle traffic bridge. These sandbags can be moved from time to time. That is all the information I have; but whether my colleague, the Minister for Works, who is directly in control of the Main Roads Department, can supply further data, I do not know. As Minister in charge of traffic, that is all the information I have.

(b) Amplification of Reply.

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

(1) Does he desire to add anything to the comments of the Minister for Transport regarding the road markings at the intersection of St. George's Terrace, Milligan and Mount-sts?

(2) Has the proposal anything to do with the ultimate completion of the Narrows bridge project?

The MINISTER replied:

No, I do not wish to add anything, other than to say that the Minister for Transport gave the member for Nedlands more information than I would have done.

MEMBERS' SPEECHES.

Release of Transcript After 24 Hours.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Speaker:

Will he give consideration to amending the instructions to the Chief Hansard Reporter regarding the withholding of transcripts until corrected copies are returned by the hon. member making the speech, so that transcripts may be released not later than 24 hours after a speech is made?

The SPEAKER replied:

Yes, I will give consideration to that request. I understand that the reason why transcripts are not released by Hansard until they are corrected is to protect members themselves from misrepresentation. I know that the Press, from time to time, seeks to obtain an hon. member's transcript between the time he makes the speech on the floor of the House and before he returns his corrected duplicate.

The request of the member for Nedlands, however, is that transcripts should be made available 24 hours after a speech is made. I will discuss that request with the Chief Hansard Reporter, but the obligation would be on members themselves in that if they desire to ensure that they are not misrepresented, they should take steps to return their corrected duplicates to the Chief Hansard Reporter for checking as soon as possible, so that their corrected speeches may be made available to members after the period of 24 hours has expired.

In connection with that matter I understand some difficulties are experienced by those who secure the adjournment of a debate in endeavouring to ascertain the full text of a Minister's speech, especially in relation to Bills that are controversial and technical. I assure the member for Nedlands that I will give consideration to his request.

IRON ORE.

(a) Correspondence re Federal Government and Export Licence.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

Will he lay on the Table of the House a copy of Sir Arthur Fadden's letter regarding the sale of iron ore reserves to Japan, and a copy of his reply to the Prime Minister on this subject?

The PREMIER replied:

I shall be delighted to do so to allow members to judge for themselves as between the two letters.

(b) Export Supplies from Talling.

Mr. SEWELL (without notice) asked the Premier:

Has he anything further to report on the export of iron ore from the Talling deposit near Mullewa?

The PREMIER replied:

Although the Government considers that it has an unanswerable case in making an application for an export licence for 1,000,000 tons of Koolyanobbing iron ore, it thinks that, in all the circumstances, particularly in view of the contents of Sir Arthur Fadden's letter to the State Government, it would be advisable to withdraw the application for an export licence for 1,000,000 tons of Koolyanobbing iron ore and to submit an application for an export licence for 1,000,000 tons of iron ore from the Talling deposit. Cabinet made a decision to that effect yesterday and a letter will be sent to the Prime Minister along those lines almost immediately.

(c) Survey of all Deposits.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

Further to his reply to the member for Geraldton, would he arrange to have a survey made of all the small iron ore deposits, together with an analysis of samples taken, in order that a claim for each of the district deposits may be considered?

The PREMIER replied:

The Mines Department is well informed in regard to the considerable number of iron ore deposits in Western Australia. The one at Talling would have some substantial advantages from the point of view of export, because the ore there is of good quality. The deposit is small, and in the event of the Commonwealth Government issuing an export licence, the iron ore could be shipped from the port of Geraldton.

(d) Analysis of Collie Ore.

Mr. MAY (without notice) asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Is he aware that six weeks ago a large sample of iron ore was forwarded to the Government Geologist for analysis from a deposit which is within 13 miles of Collie?

(2) If so, can he tell me whether that analysis has been made and the result, if any?

The MINISTER replied:

Such a sample would have been sent direct to the Government Chemical Laboratories if an analysis was required, but I have no knowledge of the result so far obtained. I will make the necessary inquiries, however, and advise the hon. member in due course.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS.

Minister for Works and Inaccuracy of Replies.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has been brought to my notice that some errors crept into two replies to questions asked in this House on two sitting days.

I would explain that both these occurrences took place on a Thursday when there is always a rush to get questions answered because Parliament meets earlier on that day, and in the cases I have mentioned the answers were not checked as they usually are. Some of the figures supplied were incorrect; I apologise to the House for it and hasten to make the corrections.

I refer to question No. 11 on the notice paper, asked by the member for Stirling on the 15th August, and I ask permission to withdraw the answer that was submitted on that day and to substitute the correct answer which I now have. Similarly, on the 22nd August, question No. 21 on the notice paper, asked by the Leader of the Opposition, had some incorrect figures in the reply. These figures have now been corrected.

I think the simplest way to rectify the errors is to withdraw the answers previously given and to substitute these other answers in lieu. I ask for permission to do this?

The **SPEAKER**: It can only be done in Hansard; it cannot be altered in the Votes and Proceedings.

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: Very well. I submit the corrected answers. With regard to the questions on Government purchases of bitumen, asked by Hon. D. Brand, the questions and answers are as follows:—

Question No. (1): What is the price per ton of—

(a) Bulk bitumen;

(b) drum;

paid by the Main Roads Board?

Answer: (a) Bulk bitumen—For free delivery in metropolitan area, £22 12s. 6d. ton; country areas £21 2s. 6d. ton.

(b) Drum—Metropolitan and country areas, £30 16s. ton.

Question No. (2): What is the total tonnage purchased from the local refinery?

Answer: Total tonnage purchased by Main Roads Department—

1955-56—			
Bulk	.....	Tons.	Tons.
		4,984	
Drum	.....	1,854	
		6,838	6,838
1956-57—			
Bulk	.....	4,101	
Drum	.....	1,187	
		5,288	5,288

1957-58 to the 31st July—

Bulk	.....	68	
Drum	.....	330	
		398	398
Total			12,524

Question No. (3): What is the estimated total financial saving for the Main Roads Department as a result of local production of bitumen?

Answer:

		£
1955-56	.....	62,965
1956-57	.....	51,056
1957-58 to the 31st July		1,115
		115,135

These figures are based upon the price paid for imported bitumen by the department in 1953-54.

With reference to the question on water supplies and expenditure from loan funds, asked by Hon. A. F. Watts, the question and answers are as follows:—

Question: Excluding any work paid for by the Commonwealth contribution to the comprehensive water scheme, what has been the expenditure from loan funds during each of the financial years 1955-56 and 1956-57, on—

(a) water supplies for country districts, and

(b) provision of, or additions or improvements to, water supplies to serve the metropolitan area?

Answer:

(a) Excluding irrigation:

1955-56	.....	£1,239,702
1956-57	.....	£1,570,428
(b) 1955-56	.....	£1,011,810
1956-57	.....	£1,405,301

BILL—TRUSTEES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd August.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [4.58]: Section 54 of the Trustees Act gives power to trustees to delegate authority to operate on general banking current accounts, but it does not extend this facility to trustee accounts in the savings banks. Therefore the object of this Bill is to permit savings banks to be placed in the same position as a trading bank handling current accounts. In supporting the second reading of the Bill, I commend it to members.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—AUDIT ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 20th August.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [5.31]: I find myself in complete agreement with this Bill, and it is quite pleasant to be able to speak in that tone.

The Treasurer: Hear, hear! There should be more of it.

Hon. D. Brand: There would be, if there were more Bills like it.

Mr. COURT: Any Bill to amend the Audit Act should be subject to the closest scrutiny by members of this House, because the Auditor General is, in fact, an officer of Parliament. The position of the Auditor General is not unlike that of the auditor of a corporate body. The auditor of a limited company, for instance, is appointed by the shareholders, and not by the directors; and there is a very good reason for that. Likewise, the remuneration of an auditor is fixed by the shareholders of a limited company, because he is a servant of that body rather than of the directorate or management.

We have a situation created by statute where the Auditor General is an officer of Parliament, and not an ordinary civil servant subject to the legislation dealing with public servants in this State. The Bill, in the main, seeks to modernise the procedures that can be adopted by the Auditor General in the carrying out of his statutory duties. One can well imagine that the Act as at present on the statute book is in need of some overhaul. It is interesting to note that what the Government seeks to do in this legislation is merely to acknowledge in statutory form what private practitioners have acknowledged over the last generation.

It has become increasingly apparent, with the size and tempo of affairs, that detailed checking for audit purposes is impracticable, and a science has grown up within the profession for the test checking of transactions. It is not a haphazard process. It is a highly skilled process, and is subject to some clearly defined rules; although, in the main, it does come back to a matter of judgment on the part of the person who is instituting the test checking instead of the detailed checking. By test checking, I mean the selection of certain items for a thorough and exhaustive examination rather than an exhaustive examination of each and every item.

In the case of the private practitioner, the responsibility for the selection is in the hands of that practitioner; and it is

part of his skill in the practise of his profession to be able to select the items that should be test checked, and what the nature of the test check should be. So it will mean under this amending legislation, if it becomes law—as I have no doubt it will—that the Auditor General and his officers, but primarily the Auditor General, will be responsible for determining the degree and method of test checking that is involved.

It is rather quaint to notice that in the old statute, as it now exists, provision is made for certain detailed daily checks. I agree with the Treasurer that these are rather impracticable; and no doubt they have been abandoned in actual practice for some years, because it is impossible to undertake the actual checking in the exact form provided by the existing statute.

There is a matter of interest to private audit practitioners. For some years there has been a shadow of doubt as to what would be the position of a private practitioner who had employed test-checking methods—no matter how scientific—if there was a defalcation, and his work was subsequently challenged in the courts. I feel the action being taken by the Government to make it possible by statute for the Auditor General to adopt test-checking methods will lend strength to the arguments which will be advanced, no doubt, in subsequent court cases by private practitioners to establish the merit of their submissions, that as long as their test checking has been on a scientific basis, it is the right and proper method to be employed. I support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 15th August.

HON. L. THORN (Toodyay) [5.9]: I intend to oppose this Bill. It is a one-clause measure, but the purpose of that clause is to restrict pastrycooks in their baking hours. As I said previously regarding the amendment proposed by the Minister to the Factories and Shops Act and the Bread Act, he is restricting the activities of the small operator. Last session he wanted to close the small shops at 5 p.m., at the same time as the bigger businesses. In this case he wants to prevent the small pastrycook from baking after hours.

It all boils down to this: Many of the small operators are endeavouring to establish businesses of their own. Their oven space is restricted. They are not in a

financial position to build ovens to cope with the extra trade at week-ends and holidays, so in the past they have applied for extra hours of baking. Up to the present such requests have been granted, and they have been able to meet their obligations.

There is no doubt that in order to supply the trade offering from beach resorts, at week-ends, at weddings, and at similar functions, such small operators have to make an extra effort to be able to meet the orders they receive. Seeing that they are prepared to pay penalty rates to the operators for after-hours baking, they should be allowed to carry on. I ask members to give this matter serious consideration, because those are the people the Bill will affect. The Minister was quite frank and fair in his statement to this House.

The Minister for Labour: As usual.

Hon. L. THORN: Not as usual. Sometimes he covers up a little. He did say that this matter had been referred to the Arbitration Court, and he informed this House of the opinion of that court. That was very fair of him, because that is the type of information we require. This is what the Arbitration Court had to say on this question. "The Arbitration Court," said the Minister, "has been approached on the matter. It has indicated that, provided penalty rates are paid, it does not agree that any restrictions should be placed on an employer in respect of starting times." That is fair enough. There is the advice of the Arbitration Court. So why proceed with a Bill of this nature which seeks to impose restrictions?

Nothing more need be said on this question. The people who will be affected will be the small operators who are starting up in business and endeavouring to meet a demand with their existing ovens. They have not the finance to build extra ovens, and they have limited hours in which to bake. They wish to bake after hours and are prepared to pay the penalty rates. Why bring in legislation to restrict them to baking in the hours that have been laid down? If this restriction is applied, the inspectors of the Factories and Shops Department will sit in their cars to ensure that this or that baker does not bake after hours, which is being done at beach resorts in the case of small mixed businesses. Those inspectors are drawing double time payment, are provided with a nice dinner at the hotels, and sit in their cars to catch the bakers who are baking a bit of bread or pastry to satisfy their clientele. This legislation is quite unnecessary, and I hope this House will oppose it.

MR. WILD (Dale) [5.13]: I also oppose this legislation. I am always opposed to legislation which restricts the right of the individual who tries to do something for himself. Continually in the years that

I have been in this House, the Minister for Labour has been trying to bring about more control and shorter working hours. This seems to be peculiar, because he has always said that he represents the underdog or the small man, yet that is the only type of person to be affected by this Bill.

The member for Toodyay has said that this legislation will mostly affect the small operator, who has restricted oven space but who is prepared to work longer hours in order to satisfy his customers. He has not the finance to install bigger ovens, and he is to be kicked in the pants because he is prepared to show some initiative and to work extra hours; or, alternatively, if he employs labour, to pay penalty rates.

The Arbitration Court is quite clear on this matter. It has said that provided the operators are paid penalty rates there can be no objection. Surely the Minister must realise there are many such small businessmen who are providing the community with a great service! If we continually restrict such people, they will not be able to operate, and many of them will be deprived of the opportunity of being able to make a living. Furthermore, the people who want to employ the small operators do so because they cannot afford to employ the large operators. If the small operators are to be restricted, then those people will not be able to get a service at all.

We rarely have the city caterers going out to the district I represent. All the catering is done by the one-man or two-men shows in the district. It is those people who are to be penalised. If the people in my district cannot get the caterers from the city to give a service at weddings and functions, where a little extra effort is required, how will they get on? I am opposed to this Bill in principle. It seems to me to be wrong. Surely as a Parliament of this State, which has been built up by enterprise and initiative, we should stand behind the person who is endeavouring to build up his business and to do something for himself.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [5.17]: It seems to me that the Minister did not make a particularly good case in favour of this Bill. The two previous speakers dealt with the technical aspects from the baker's point of view. I can very well appreciate the difficulties that will face some of the small operators if the Bill were to become law. I hope even at this late stage the Minister will be prepared to reconsider the matter. When small businessmen are trying to build up a useful connection in a district where they operate, and are doing a reasonably good job, we in Parliament should not place more difficulties in their way.

Another aspect is that much publicity has been given to the need for producing stronger wheat and raising the quality of the flour. From what general knowledge I possess, I understand that by using weaker flour, if the dough is given a longer period to rise, it is possible to produce a good quality loaf. We all hope that the quality of the wheat produced in this State and the baking strength of the flour will be improved.

On the other hand, those of us who have close connection with the wheat industry know that in many of the areas that have been brought into production in recent years, the ground is not as fertile as that which was developed in the early days in the wheatbelt. It is much more difficult to produce strong wheat on second-class land than on the more fertile soil. The Minister should not lose sight of that aspect when he considers a measure such as this. Obviously if the time at which bakers can commence work is to be restricted—

The Minister for Labour: We are not talking about the bakers.

Mr. PERKINS: Although this Bill deals with pastry in the first instance, the whole question of the organisation of the bakehouses comes into it. A weaker flour is used for the production of pastry; but the point is that we should not be putting difficulties in the way of these small bakers. If it is possible for them to organise their businesses in such a manner that they can make the maximum use of limited facilities which they have available, then the Minister should not put further difficulties in their way. I do not think that the Minister has made out a sufficient case for accepting the Bill at this stage.

Hon. L. Thorn: Hear, hear!

MR. ROBERTS (Bunbury) [5.21]: Although this measure is a small one, I believe its restrictions can be widespread; because it seems to me—and I feel it is the opinion of many Western Australians—that where a man is prepared to work and produce, he should be entitled to go ahead. If he is prepared to employ labour even at overtime rates, let him do so. Why restrict the individual who is prepared to produce some of the wealth of this country?

The member for Toodyay has pointed out that there are centres such as beach resorts and so forth, where these small producers of pastry and cakes are bakers. If a big influx of visitors occurs quite unexpectedly, these people have the facilities to produce a certain commodity, and surely they are entitled to work what hours they like if they are prepared to stand by the award rates of pay. Let the individual baker or pastrycook, if he so desires, work outside the normal trading hours and

produce some of this wealth. I am opposed to the Bill on principle because it represents a restriction of trading hours which I do not like to see at all. I intend to oppose the measure.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn—in reply) [5.23]: I do not want to take up much time, Mr. Speaker, in replying to this debate; but I feel sure the member for Roe did not read the Bill. He said I did not make out a strong case for the support of the measure, but I think all would agree that my case was as strong as the one he presented in opposition to the Bill. Perhaps I might be permitted to read Clause 4 of the Bill, which is as follows:—

14A. Where an award or industrial agreement in force under the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912, relates to pastrycooks . . .

—not bakers. There is nothing in the Bill about bakers as the member for Roe tried to convey. The clause continues—

. . . and prescribes any starting time for any day for work in a bakehouse, or as the case may be, in a shop, to which the award . . .

Mr. Roberts: Who said baking was not mentioned?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: This Bill deals with pastrycooks, and pastry can be produced in a bakehouse. The clause continues—

or agreement applies, a person, whether he is or is not bound by the award or agreement, shall not on any day commence, or permit any worker employed by him to commence, in any shop or bakehouse whether it is or is not one to which the award or agreement applies, work of baking, or of ornamenting, for sale, cakes, pastry, sponge goods, or yeast goods, before the appropriate starting time prescribed by the award or agreement in respect of that day.

The member for Dale said that I had been, for some years, introducing restrictive legislation.

Mr. Wild: Do not say you haven't.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I will give one example in passing. Take the Egg Board, of which the member for Dale is a strong supporter; his consistency falls to the ground. It is obvious from the remarks of the member for Toodyay—

Mr. Wild: The Egg Board does not strike at the individual.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I think it is obvious from their remarks that it can be reasonably assumed they would like all controls, so far as industrial legislation is concerned, removed from the statute book.

Mr. Wild: Who said that?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: That is the implication left in my mind in regard to the remarks of the member for Toodyay.

Hon. L. Thorn: You have a one-track mind.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The member for Toodyay has not even got that. The member for Bunbury said that the small man should be allowed to go on unhampered. All this Bill seeks to do is put everybody on an even basis; that is all it does. Let me explain the position of the person engaged in business—I would call him self-made—who employs no workers within the jurisdiction of the award. He is not bound by an award and is not restricted.

Mr. Roberts: Fair enough.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: There are other people in the business who employ labour and are bound by the provisions of the award. If they are placed on the one plane, there will be fairer competition. I know of instances; and, although I am not going to quote any firms, I could give their names privately. There are five firms, which immediately come to my mind, in the City of Perth. They are rather big firms and are all observing the award, with the result that none of them start their men before 5 a.m. However, there are two in the immediate suburbs which bring men in on a Sunday afternoon. One man who would not work on a Sunday in the Scarborough district was dismissed.

Mr. Court: He could be paid accordingly.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: It does not matter about that. The spirit of the award provision should be observed, which is a starting time of 5 a.m. The member for Toodyay knows there is that provision. I do not make any secret of the fact that there is a provision for penalty rates, but the spirit is a 5 a.m. start. All this Bill seeks to do is to have a start at 5 a.m. A small businessman in Maylands—I will not mention names—was forced out of business. He wanted to stand up to the provisions of the award; but competitors, working around the clock, ran him out of business altogether.

There is only one clause in this Bill that is of consequence. Surely men are entitled to start at the reasonable hour of 5 a.m. on Monday. As I said in my second reading speech, those who start at midnight on Sunday or very early on Monday morning have a distinct advantage over the people who are not prepared to start until 5 a.m.

Mr. Roberts: What is wrong with that?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: That is all I have to say in reply to the opposition expressed to the Bill.

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

Ayes	.....	26
Noes	.....	19

Majority for 7

Ayes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Brady	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Evans	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Moir
Mr. Graham	Mr. Norton
Mr. Hall	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Potter
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Toms
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Kelly	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. Ross McLarty
Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Owen
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Court	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Crommelln	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. I. Manning
Mr. W. Manning	

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. O'Brien	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Rhatigan	Mr. Mann

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Moir in the Chair; the Minister for Labour in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Section 14A, added:

Hon. L. THORN: In his reply to the debate, the Minister clearly indicated that he and his party are interested in the big employers of labour. He stated that a pastrycook—and I take it he was a baker, too—was put out of business because of out-of-hours baking. The main purpose of this type of legislation is to make such enterprises close preserves for different people. The idea is to look after the big man and keep him in business and not to allow any mushroom activities to spring up.

The Minister also mentioned—and I had it in mind all the time, though I did not mention it—that he is after families who come to this State and are trained bakers and pastrycooks and who bake at any hour to supply their clients. He said that one baker wanted to bake on Sunday afternoon. Of course he did! He wanted to do so in order to have fresh cakes in Perth the first thing on Monday mornings. The complaints are coming from those whom the Minister is so anxious to protect—the big employers of labour. It does not pay them to bake on Sunday afternoon or after hours; it pays them to stick to the defined hours. The people

the Minister is after are those who want to bake at times to suit the trade they have.

Such people are often suppliers for weddings, 21st birthday parties and similar functions, and they are prepared to bake fresh cakes for people attending those gatherings. I mentioned earlier their restricted oven space. If they were in a position to bake within the hours, I dare say they would do so; but they have not got the ovens, and it is necessary for them to bake at other times and pay penalty rates.

The Minister spoke about the weak cases put up by members on this side. He himself puts up very weak cases; and, like the blackbird and the thrush, he flies from bush to bush when he is questioned, and it is hard to pin him down.

Mr. BOVELL: I think that when he introduced the Bill, the Minister had in mind conditions in the metropolitan area with which he is conversant. In the country areas, however, pastrycooks are generally men with families who assist in the conducting of the business. I cannot think of any great business organisation engaged in the trade in the country districts.

The need for the services of such people is spasmodic. They have their ordinary sales, and then there is a wedding, or a birthday party, or a football dinner, or some such function for which they are required to make provision. If the clause is passed, a man employing a limited staff, or who is assisted by his family, would not be able to provide for special occasions. The Minister should report progress in order to have a further look at this as far as the country districts are concerned, anyhow.

Mr. POTTER: I feel the Opposition is a little off the beam.

Mr. Bovell: We think the Bill is only half cooked.

Mr. POTTER: It is a rather good Bill, and it is pretty well baked. I would say this provision is not applicable to the family pastrycook.

Mr. Wild: Yes, it is.

Mr. POTTER: Furthermore, I feel that it deals with the unscrupulous people who are not necessarily one-man shows. I feel that is what the Minister intended. He pointed out that a small pastrycook, who had been observing the conditions of the award, went out of business.

Mr. Court: The Bill is not to get at people who are failing to observe the award. It is to stop them from baking altogether. The Minister did not say they had not paid the wages under the award. He wanted to stop them from baking before certain hours, regardless of what they paid.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. POTTER: I feel the Bill is to stop not only the small man, but the larger man who is unscrupulous enough to work outside the prescribed hours.

Mr. PERKINS: It is clear that the Minister and the member for Subiaco cannot both be right, because what the member for Subiaco has been telling us is definitely out of line with the Minister's speech when introducing the Bill and also with the limited reply he made to the second reading debate. I hope the Minister will be more explicit in telling us what the Bill does mean.

As I understand the position, in many of the smaller bakehouses, the baker produces both bread and pastry. I can imagine that a baker developing his business in a small way—he might be in a suburb of Perth or in a country town, and relying largely on his own labour or that of his family, or he might have some employees working at award rates as well—would be interested in meeting a particular demand and starting work at some time outside the hour specified in the award or regulations, as outlined by the Minister.

Is there any great need for Parliament to take action to restrict the operations of that individual? From what the Minister has told us, the production by that type of baker and pastrycook is on a rather limited scale. Is the production from those bakehouses going to have a dangerously detrimental effect on the industry as a whole? Frankly, I do not think the Minister could make out a case to support such an argument and unless he can give us more detail than he has so far, we are not justified in passing the measure, which will be very restrictive.

One can imagine the baker, in a small country town, acting as baker and pastrycook and being forced to observe, under a measure such as this, what must look to him to be entirely absurd conditions. He could not have a detrimental effect on any competitors. All he can do is to provide a better service for his customers, which he will not be able to do if the Bill becomes an Act and is strictly policed.

Some members on the other side of the Chamber, representing country areas, will quickly realise that the enforcement of a provision such as this would be stupid, and the final result would probably be that once again we would have on the statute book an Act which was not being observed in a considerable area of the State.

If some small businessman is sufficiently enterprising to provide an improved service for his customers, we in this Chamber should not put further difficulties in his way; and that, I feel, is what the Minister is doing by this measure. If the Minister could show that a great deal of production was coming from the small bakehouses, where the bakers or pastrycooks are self-employed or are helped by members of their families, we might be justified in

having a closer look at the measure. The Minister would have us believe there is not much production involved in those circumstances. I do not think we should agree to the measure.

Mr. WILD: It seems to me that the Bill will legislate for very few people. From Cannington to Byford and as far east as Karragullen, nearly all the functions held are supplied by three families residing in the district. In one instance it is an elderly lady supported by one of her sons and her daughter-in-law, and these people spend long hours providing the necessary service. The measure would make their work impossible as they would not have the necessary facilities.

It would also hit at many new Australians who have been pastrycooks in their own countries and who, although they came here with limited capital, have established themselves in business in this State. I know several working close to the city—two of them in Victoria Park—who provide a good service. They would come within the ambit of the words "whether he is or is not bound." Newcomers, such as I have mentioned, will think this is a strange country if they are denied the right to help themselves. We are here to do what is best in the interests of the masses and not to legislate for only a few people. I oppose the measure and hope the Minister will give the matter further consideration.

Mr. ROBERTS: I was amazed at the member for Subiaco saying that those affected by the Bill would be the unscrupulous type. Anyone prepared to better his way of living by working long hours is worthy of our admiration.

Mr. Potter: Yes, if he does it himself.

Mr. ROBERTS: The Bill would preclude him from doing it himself. Most of the big pastrycooks and bakers started off in a small way and built up their businesses over the years by enterprise and long hours of work. Many pastrycooks engage in that industry only to supplement their incomes. I know one family that does this after completing a full day's work in another vocation.

The Minister for Labour: Where is that?

Mr. ROBERTS: If I told the Minister, the factories and shops inspectors would be out there to see what was going on. Early last year when employment was scarce in this State, one breadwinner lost his job, but as he and his wife had had experience as pastrycooks many years before, they re-engaged in the business and by working long hours have made a success of it and have supported their family. I do not believe in placing restraint on anyone who is willing to work hard. I would let them produce, no matter what hours they work in order to do so, and I shall vote against the clause.

Mr. BOVELL: Would the Minister tell us how many pastrycook establishments there are in Western Australia, how many of them are conducted by families, how many employ labour and how many people, apart from the proprietors of the businesses, are employed in the industry? That information would indicate to some extent why the measure was introduced. I know two men in the business in Busseton and at Easter, for instance, with the demand for hot cross buns in addition to their usual trade, and especially in view of the big influx of visitors to the town, they have to work practically all the Thursday night preceding the Easter holidays in order to meet the demand.

I expect the same situation exists in many other centres also. I am convinced that most of those engaged in this business are working for themselves and that the amount of outside labour employed is only nominal, at all events in the country districts. Again I ask the Minister to report progress so that the Committee may be better informed.

Mr. COURT: I thought the Minister might deign to reply to the questions of the member for Vasse as they are pertinent to the debate. In considering this clause, we must take into account the Government's attitude towards conditions generally under the Factories and Shops Act. We must oppose this clause to be consistent with our attitude when the Minister last session brought forward amendments to the Factories and Shops Act. The Government's policy is obviously designed to restrict and contract hours of trading and while the measure does not deal with retailing of goods, it has a direct bearing on that question. The Minister raises his eyebrows—

The Minister for Labour: I did not.

Mr. COURT: It looked like it to me.

The Minister for Labour: I cannot help that.

Mr. COURT: It is impossible to divorce consideration of this clause from the Government's attitude towards trading hours generally. It is part of the technique of the bigger unions to foster the bigger employers of labour. The Minister, from his experience as a union organiser and secretary, is well informed on that point. It is much easier for an industrial union to police the provisions of an award and to negotiate an amendment with a big employer of labour than with a lot of small firms. That is the trend everywhere there is freedom of negotiation between employer and employee organisations.

If this clause is agreed to, Parliament will have surrendered the right to have a say in what will be the hours of operation of industries such as are mentioned in the clause, and in the future they will

be entirely at the discretion of the Arbitration Court. So far, under the Factories and Shops Act, we have not surrendered completely the power of Parliament to say what the hours of trading shall be. We want the court to fix reasonable conditions of work and pay, but we should reserve to Parliament the right to say what shall be the hours of trading in industries of this type. I support the opposition to the clause.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I would like to allay the fears of the members for Vasse and Bunbury. The clause refers only to any place where an industrial award or agreement applies, and the pastrycooks award does not apply to Busselton.

Mr. Court: It may in the future. We are legislating for the future and not for the past.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I am legislating for the present and for the future, and there is a set of conditions in operation today that I think should be tidied up; and this is the way to do it. As far as the future is concerned, if the people in a district request that they be made parties to an award or agreement—and there must be at least two parties to an agreement—this provision would apply.

Mr. Bovell: It is all right if agreements are honoured.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The award operates in an area 15 miles from Perth and, in my opinion, there would be 35 to 40 people affected in that area. The member for Toodyay said that the Government is favouring the big employers. That is rather amusing and amazing because every second day the Liberal section of the Opposition accuses us of trying to cripple big business. Members opposite cannot have it both ways. This Bill is designed to ensure that employers and people engaged in the pastrycook trade shall be placed on the one basis; in this way, competition will be fair. I have nothing further to say.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am somewhat surprised at the Minister.

Hon. L. Thorn: We all are.

Mr. ACKLAND: The clause says, "whether he is or is not bound by the award or agreement." If that is not a complete coverage of all the bakehouses of Western Australia, I would like the Minister to advise us. He says that there is a prescribed area; if there is, I am not aware of it. In the bakehouses in my electorate, and in electorates similar to mine, the people concerned have not the facilities to enable them to bake the pastry at the same time as they bake the bread.

Bread-baking is usually done during the normal hours of working, but on special occasions, bakers—especially in outback

centres—work any hours that are necessary. I am certain that at some time or another members or their wives have complained about bread which has not been baked properly. There is no reason for bad bread because our wheat today is of the highest quality. The fault is that bakers are baking by the clock instead of baking according to the constituents they are using. Regardless of whether the bread has risen sufficiently, it is still placed into the baking tins and put in the oven at the set time.

I hope the member for Subiaco realises that he was completely off the beam. I can assure members that this amendment will give people more indigestion than they get now from badly baked bread, because the loaf they will get in the future will be less palatable than ever before.

Mr. BOVELL: I do not want to accuse the Minister of intentionally creating a false impression. I spoke about the effect this amendment will have on bakers in country areas, and the member for Moore has substantiated my remarks. Therefore, I hope the Minister will clear the atmosphere. It will be recalled that some misleading statements were made in regard to the legislation governing service stations during the last session of Parliament. I do not want to be under a false impression regarding this clause.

In reply to requests made by me for information, the Minister has said that if the Bill becomes an Act it will not apply to the places I have mentioned, where industrial awards are now in existence. I stated that this Bill would affect those people, and I would like to hear further from the Minister.

Mr. PERKINS: This is an extremely important point and I do not think the Minister should leave it in the air.

The Minister for Labour: If you sit down, I'll get up!

Mr. PERKINS: I assumed the clause would apply throughout the State; that is the only interpretation I could place on the wording. I have no doubt that the Act is policed within 15 miles of the General Post Office, but when powers such as those contained in this clause are given to a factories and shops inspector, he can exercise them unduly in places such as Busselton and other parts. The Factories and Shops Department has been trying to force lessees of floor space in the Metropolitan Markets to register the floor areas as shops. When the matter was taken to court, the parties concerned were able to prove that the spaces which they leased in the markets did not constitute shops, but were more in the nature of factories. The department then tried to make those lessees register floor space as a factory. There seemed to be very great doubt even about it being a factory.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Don't you think they should be registered?

Mr. PERKINS: Where a statutory body is in existence, surely it is sufficient for that body to exercise the necessary control. I quote that instance only to show that if an Act contains certain powers which can be used to a greater degree than contemplated, in certain circumstances there is danger that those powers could be used by officials in a way that we do not think they should be used. The member for Subiaco holds an entirely different viewpoint on the Bill, from that of the Minister but the Minister did not clear that point up.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I was about to refer to some of the remarks of the member for Roe when the hon. member got to his feet. If Clause 4 is read carefully, it will be seen that it will apply only to an award or an industrial agreement in which a starting time is prescribed. So there is a determination so far as the South-West Land Division is concerned. Before tea I said it would not apply to the South-West centres, namely, Busselton or Bunbury, because although there is an award in that area which, though in the South-West Land Division, is outside the radius of 15 miles of Perth, it contains no prescribed starting time.

Mr. Court: But the court could do that at a later date.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The court can alter the award only on an application by either party. This will apply to an area within 15 miles of the G.P.O.

Mr. Roberts: Are you trying to imply that there is an open slather in country areas?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: No. These provisions will apply only where a starting time is prescribed within a radius of 15 miles of Perth. Although there is an award for the South-West Land Division, there is no prescribed starting time in the South-West award.

Mr. Court: For the time being.

Mr. Roberts: They can start any time.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I do not mind being led up the garden path.

Mr. Ackland: We are afraid you are leading us up the garden path.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: We are dealing with the position that obtains at present. Before any amendment can be made to the South-West Land Division award, there must be an application by the employers or the industrial union of workers covering the particular calling. It has been said that this can apply anywhere when the prescribed starting time is included; that it shall apply to shops or places which otherwise may not be bound by the award.

This is to cover people who are self-employed and who are in business for the purpose of commerce and the sale of their goods, but who do not employ labour and, consequently, are not able to breach the award in regard to employment. They should not be put at an advantage as compared with those who are obliged to employ labour by virtue of the magnitude of their concern. The clause is very distinct, though I admit it must be read carefully.

Mr. ACKLAND: I agree that the clause is distinct, but the Minister did not explain the provision contained in the Bill to my satisfaction anyway. There is nothing in the provisions of Clause 4 concerning an area within a 15-mile limit. I would say that the limit could extend throughout Western Australia. The Minister will have to advance some other argument before he convinces me that people outside the 15 miles would not be brought under the provisions of this Act.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: First of all, there must be an industrial award or agreement operating in which there must be distinctly prescribed a starting time. In any award or agreement there must also be a prescribed area. For the award under consideration, there is an area covering a radius of 15 miles from the G.P.O. So, if there is no industrial award or agreement outside the 15-mile radius, this will not apply. I indicated that so far as the South-West Land Division is concerned, there is an award but there is no prescribed starting time.

Mr. Roberts: There could be.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: We will meet circumstances as they arise. The court will decide after hearing evidence as to whether there shall be a prescribed starting time for the South-West Land Division.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Unless this Act is amended.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Exactly. That is the most logical interjection I have heard this evening. Before it applies, the court will have to satisfy itself that there shall be a prescribed starting time. In the metropolitan pastry-cooks' award, the prescribed starting time is 5 a.m., but the court has said that there is provision for penalty rates prior to the prescribed starting time. Parliament has been asked to make 5 a.m. the limit for everybody.

Mr. BOVELL: The Minister has not convinced me.

The Minister for Labour: I did not expect to.

Mr. BOVELL: He has not explained why the words in this clause have been inserted. He has not explained to my satisfaction the reason for the inclusion

of this provision. In regard to his statement about the application of these provisions to the South-West Land Division, I might point out that by proclamation the Minister could prescribe the hours for commencing of work. Such prescription will not come before Parliament for ratification. Parliament could pass this Bill, and the Minister by proclamation could say that the hour of commencement shall be 5, 6, 7 or even 8 a.m. in the South-West Land Division.

This action by the Government might put out of business a number of small businessmen because in the time prescribed for baking they could not make the pastry and other commodities for the people requiring those commodities for special functions, for weddings, for twenty-first anniversaries and during holiday times, when there is a big influx of visitors to certain districts, such as the one I represent.

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

Ayes	....	....	21
Noes	....	....	16

Majority for 5

Ayes.

Mr. Andrew
Mr. Brady
Mr. Evans
Mr. Gaffy
Mr. Hall
Mr. Hawke
Mr. Heal
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Hoar
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Kelly

Mr. Lapham
Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Norton
Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Potter
Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Sewell
Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Toms
Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Ackland
Mr. Bovell
Mr. Brand
Mr. Court
Mr. Crommellin
Mr. Grayden
Mr. Mann
Mr. W. Manning

Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Owen
Mr. Perkins
Mr. Roberts
Mr. Thorn
Mr. Watts
Mr. Wild
Mr. I. Manning

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.

Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Graham
Mr. Marshall

Noes.

Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Nalder
Mr. Cornell
Mr. Hearman
Mr. Hutchinson

Clause thus passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—KING'S PARK AQUATIC CENTRE.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [7.46] in moving the second reading said: With the heated controversy which has been very much in evidence over recent weeks on the proposal contained in this Bill to place an aquatic centre in King's Park; and with

the various meetings which have been held by different organisations, the resolutions that have been carried, the attention being given especially to members of Parliament, leaflets being distributed, the Press coming into prominence on the subject and so on, one could almost believe that all that could have been said on the subject has indeed been said, and all that we need now do is to take a vote.

But there is a great deal more to it than that. Never have I, since I have been in Parliament, known so many people to spend so much of their time trying to condition other people's minds for a certain purpose. I feel that this state of affairs has been brought about largely as a result of the Act of Parliament which was passed in this House in 1954. I well remember warning members on that occasion that should such legislation become law, and should we, in our wisdom or otherwise, take away from competent and honest men, occupying their respected positions on the King's Park Board, their power and place it in the hands of two Houses of Parliament, totalling 80 members in all, we could not expect very much progress in future so far as King's Park was concerned because all members were subject, from time to time, to all kinds of pressure groups.

Certain sections of people and certain prominent organisations and various groups are opposed most forcibly to the principles concerned. I felt in 1954 as I do now, that it was a retrograde step to pass this legislation taking away power from those people who have, over the years, jealously guarded King's Park in every sense and placing it in the hands of those with whom it now rests.

I doubt very much if any member of Parliament will disagree with the principle or desire to build, somewhere in the city or the metropolitan area, an aquatic centre, or rather an olympic pool because after all, we are a sport-loving people and have played host, as a State, in world cricket affairs and, in the foreseeable future, we may even have test matches here. The tennis courts at King's Park are equal, if not superior, to any other courts of their kind in the Southern Hemisphere.

There is not, I feel, so much an objection to the development of an olympic swimming pool as there is to where it shall be placed. The main objections, of course come from quite a variety of people, a of whom are entitled to their opinions and quite a number of them do not in circumstances choose King's Park as the best site, so far as the development of this aquatic centre is concerned. Therefore, I want to point out at this stage that we are not discussing an olympic swimming pool at all; we are talking about something far more than that. This Bill provides something far more than that.

It provides for what would be known as an aquatic centre, which is an entirely different thing. It is a different set-up altogether to the bare requirements of an olympic swimming pool.

If we wanted to build a pool to olympic standards, we could do that anywhere there is a suitable block of land available, the same as has been done in Melbourne. The pool there, which I saw at the Olympic Games, is built right in the centre of a built-up area, facing a road, with buildings around it. Anyone can build a pool of that description and, if the Perth City Council wanted to undertake a structure of that kind, there might be some reasonable grounds for members and others to object to King's Park as its site. However, as I have said, this Bill does something entirely different from that.

I have always felt that we have never in past years, and not since the days of John Forrest—who did, indeed, know what he wanted to do—developed the park in keeping with the progress which has been made in this fair State of ours. As a consequence, the park is largely wasted from quite a number of points of view. I consider that any steps at all, which are taken either by the King's Park Board or by Parliament, in whose hands the power now rests, to increase the opportunities for recreation and leisure, and to encourage the greater use of King's Park by all people for their pleasure and enjoyment, must be made to conform in every possible way to the highest possible standards of artistic achievement so that we may, all of us, never mind where we dwell in the State, feel proud that what we do there really belongs to us and that we have taken some hand in it. We should also be proud to know that, from an aesthetic point of view, we would not be, in any way, detracting from the beauty of the park and its future development, but rather would be adding to it something of great value for all time.

When I think of King's Park, I look at it and its development from that point of view. We do not want to do anything there that will cheapen the park in any way. We are fortunate to have a heritage of that description and we do not want to despoil it in any way whatsoever, but if we are able to give practical application to some of the principles I have just enunciated, for the development of King's Park and base our activities on such thoughts, we need have no fear that any future generation might condemn us for our actions.

The Bill proposes to set aside as a lease for 99 years, at a peppercorn rental, some 20 acres of land. That is all the land asked for within the whole of this huge park and, this area of 20 acres will not only include the olympic swimming pool, and diving pool; children's training pool with sunbathing lands; spectators' stands to seat initially some 3,000 people and capable of expansion to 7,000 as the needs

grow, but this Bill will also provide for the expenditure of £200,000, which the Perth City Council is willing to raise for this purpose, to further develop some 15 acres which will be landscaped with lawns, trees, shrubs, gardens and so on. Therefore, in this secluded small corner of the great park, there would be development, in addition to the olympic swimming pool, of very much the type of landscaping which one witnesses, with a certain amount of pride, when one enters King's Park and looks towards the war memorial.

Mr. Nalder: What facilities will there be for parking?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Provision will be made very close to the centre itself for some 500 vehicles. That is considered to be sufficient for the time being, and if other parking areas are required, according to a recommendation which I have and will quote from later on, from the Commissioner of Main Roads, there will be no difficulty whatsoever in providing additional parking accommodation for 200 or 300 additional vehicles in the section of land adjoining Thomas-st.

When this matter was first brought to my notice, I asked myself if this proposal in any way conflicted with the original dedication of this land and whether it was an offence to the thoughts of the creators of the reserve. I feel many other people beside myself should have asked themselves these questions before they rushed into print the way they have on a subject which very few of them know anything about.

When I had a look at it, I found that there was no danger whatsoever, so far as this proposal is concerned, of its entering into conflict with the original conception of setting aside that part as a reserve. It is surprising to me the number of people who have expressed themselves in opposition to the project who have based their reasons, or so-called reasons, on the fictitious belief that such a development is a betrayal of some trust. One writer put it, "It is foreign to all accepted concepts of the purpose for which Lord Forrest caused the park to be created." Others say, "The park was permanently dedicated for the preservation of its indigenous flora."

Nothing could be further from the truth. The history of the park is there for all to read. Sir Frederick Weld, as Governor of this State in 1871, set aside 432 acres for a public park and recreation ground. It is just as simple as that. In 1890, John Forrest, as Commissioner of Crown Lands, increased that area to something like 980 acres; and since then, due to various minor alterations to the boundaries, it has been increased to its present size of 995 acres 10 perches. So I feel that there can be no objection to this Bill on the ground that it conflicts in any way at

all with the intentions of the creators of this reserve. Its object is clear; it is clearly stated.

I would like to point out, also, that there is nothing that the present board or any of its predecessors have done all through the years that has encouraged any form of Cheap-Jack entertainment. They have jealously guarded this particular section of land which we call King's Park; and, on a number of occasions, have refused applications for the setting aside of portions of it for polo fields, hospitals, golf courses and so on, so certain were they that those activities were not in keeping with the general character of the reserve or the desires of those who created it.

But, as I said earlier, those people who have never up to now—so far as I have been able to discover—put a foot wrong anywhere, have now had their power taken away from them; and it rests with this Parliament to decide what should be done in regard to this proposal.

For a moment, let us look at John Forrest. Many people have used his name quite wrongly over the last few months in connection with this subject. There is no foundation at all, in fact, for the idea that John Forrest created this particular reserve for the overall and permanent preservation of its flora. One of the first things that he and his board did when assuming office was to cut out about 30 acres of the indigenous flora and to convert the area into lawns and gardens. They then made roads and paths.

John Forrest took away from Hale School a playing area for governmental purposes and, in exchange, gave the school 12 acres of playing area inside King's Park. He created the opportunity for the King's Park Bowling Club to come into existence, as well as the King's Park tennis courts and the area now occupied by the reservoir. So there is no doubt at all in my mind that John Forrest, when he had authority and power in respect of this park, did not limit his activities by the desire to create a permanent park for all time so far as the flora was concerned.

He was a man with ideas, and had the courage to go out and do some of those things which have proved of such great value to us as we go to the park and enjoy them from time to time; and it is quite obvious to me that John Forrest knew that the park could not remain static. I can well imagine how a man of his kind in those days would have reacted had he had a Perth City Council with £200,000 to spend. There is no doubt what he would have done in connection with the matter. He would have been well and truly behind such a proposal as that contained in this legislation. Any thought that this Bill or the Perth City Council—which has reached an agreement with the King's Park Board—intends to cut across in any way whatsoever the original dedication of this land, is just so much utter nonsense.

I would like to point out at this stage that the Perth City Council, when it chose this site—which is, to it, the best site in the metropolitan area—did not do so lightly. It went into the matter very thoroughly and examined many other sites in addition to this one. So it was not a question of saying, "Let's have a pool in King's Park." It went into the matter very closely, and at great expense to itself.

Just in case, by some mischance, this Bill happens to be defeated—and I hope it will not be—I propose to quote from the Perth City Council's leaflet on the proposed King's Park aquatic centre in order to place on record in Hansard—as I will do in connection with a number of other documents—something that may give future generations and other people who will be sitting in our places from time to time the courage to attempt what we might on this occasion fail to do. The relevant section which I propose to read is as follows:—

Why King's Park is Chosen by the Perth City Council.

Being conscious of their responsibility in keeping abreast of the obligations placed upon them by the demands of a rapidly growing population in the metropolitan area, the Perth City Council many years ago considered the need for an olympic pool. It was not until June, 1953, that a committee was appointed whose duty it was to exhaustively examine the possibilities, guided by these considerations:—

- (1) The suitability of location.
- (2) The approximate cost.

The choice of location involved future city development in regard to housing density, road construction, traffic flow and congestion, distances from outlying suburbs, etc. Many sites were investigated and tests of subsoil water levels recorded.

The sites included Weld Square, Haig Park, East Perth Cemetery, Heirisson Island, Goodwood Race Course (Burswood Island), Langley Park, King's Park, Endowment Lands, Smith's Lake and Lake Monger areas.

Some were discarded because of future building requirements, inaccessibility and excessive cost.

The most formidable obstacles proved to be fluctuating levels of subsoil water and cost of site reclamations. These factors alone eliminated the consideration of sites such as Heirisson Island, Goodwood, Langley Park, Lake Monger and Smith's Lake. The incidence of fluctuating water table, which is often as close as 2ft. 3in. below the surface, even in dry weather, makes these areas unthinkable because of the phenomenal cost of de-watering to a depth of 18ft. or

providing for the raising of the whole of the pool structure on piles similar to those on which the Narrows Bridge is to be built. Other engineering problems would be correspondingly intensified involving not only a high initial cost but heavy maintenance throughout the life of the pool.

To build a pool in an area with a high water table would require to provide a resistance of up to 2,000 tons on each occasion the pool is emptied.

Suggestions have been made that Lake Monger or swamp areas already provide a ready-made pool. Natural lakes and swamps are useless and would create conditions worse than the disadvantages of swimming in the Swan River.

The water in a swimming pool must be kept sterile and therefore requires filtration and chlorination. Low-lying areas with the water table close to the ground surface and sometimes above, leave no capacity to absorb the filter wash water and scum gutter discharge from any pool.

I wanted to read that to indicate that the Perth City Council went to a great deal of trouble before finally arriving at what it feels is the best available site in the metropolitan area. I agree, however, that many people do not accept that view; they do not accept the opinion of the Perth City Council that the site in King's Park is the best one. As a consequence, I feel that if we are to give a sound, reasoned judgment on the Bill, we should know a little bit more about the matter than we do now, particularly about sites in other parts of the metropolitan area.

I would not be opposed in any way to the appointment of a select committee—in fact, I would be in favour of it—after the second reading of the Bill in order that we might be better informed on these matters which are at the moment, after all, only matters of speculation. I think it would be a good idea if members agreed to appoint such a committee.

Many reasons or excuses have been advanced by people who are prejudiced against the proposals. To add to the swelling tide of inaccuracies we have the statement which has been used fairly frequently in the metropolitan area that the report and plan for the metropolitan region proposes to place an olympic swimming pool at Burswood Island instead of at King's Park. Again there is absolutely no truth in the suggestion. I have a statement by the Town Planning Commissioner which, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, I will quote in order to clear up this point once and for all. Mr. Hepburn says—

I notice from Press statements that the Hon. Minister for Lands is likely to be introducing in the near future a

Bill in connection with the above proposal which now requires the sanction of Parliament.

I am aware of the considerable controversy which has been aroused by the proposal and I am also aware that there are both strong opponents to the scheme and strong proponents.

The matter has never been officially referred either to me or to the Town Planning Board for an opinion and it is essentially a proposal similar to a "Town Hall" on which each member of the community has very strong and quite divergent opinions. It is, therefore, not an easy matter on which to make a decision.

While the Town Planning Board has not considered the matter, I personally can see no objection to the establishment of an aquatic centre in King's Park on a carefully selected site and built to a suitable layout. It has been suggested that it would mean the removal of a number of valuable trees, but this would certainly not be the case on the site at the corner of Thomas-st. and King's Park-rd. which has been under discussion. It is further claimed that serious traffic difficulties will arise. I do not consider that this will be the case provided that a suitable layout is designed.

I find it quite impossible to imagine that the whole of the area under natural vegetation in King's Park will remain in this condition for ever. The only part of King's Park which is extensively used by the public for the purpose of recreation is that section along Fraser-av. which has been developed on formal park lines and from which most of the natural vegetation has been removed. I feel there must be further development of this nature as time goes on and that the area covered by natural vegetation must decrease.

I am concerned, however, at some statements that have been made recently to the effect that the report and plan for the Metropolitan Region propose the Olympic Pool at Burswood Island rather than at King's Park. This is not at all the case and no specific recommendations were made in the Report or Plan as to the situation of an Olympic Pool, although Page 98 of the Report envisages the possibility of a pool in King's Park:

It was proposed that Burswood Island should develop into a major regional sports centre. It was also proposed that King's Park should be carefully guarded and its future development very closely supervised, although it was envisaged that it

would develop gradually and would not remain for ever completely in its natural state.

I believe that the statement regarding an Olympic Pool at Burswood Island has arisen from a plan prepared in this office many months after the Report was printed, showing how Burswood Island could be developed as an Olympic sports centre and provision was naturally made in this plan for all sports, including swimming. The report accompanying the plan, however, made it quite clear that the site of a pool on Burswood Island was not intended as an alternative or preferable site to King's Park, but purely to indicate that swimming facilities should be provided if a complete coverage for all sports was established at Burswood Island.

The position is quite clearly now one for decision by Parliament, but I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister for Lands could be advised of my remarks above, particularly relating to the Burswood Island alternative to King's Park, in order that he may be apprised of the correct position.

So we see another red herring, as one might say, either caught or completely destroyed; one other idea based entirely on wrong premises has now seen the light of day by a competent officer—in fact, the head officer—of the Town Planning Commission.

Then we have those people who argue that King's Park is not the most accessible site; that we would have a type of traffic congestion that we would not be able to control. Again I have from the Commissioner of Main Roads a report on this subject which shows how little people know about the particular matter. In fact, I think the ordinary layman such as myself would accept the junction of these roads—King's Park-rd., Thomas-st., and so on, especially considering that Thomas-st. will have to be widened—as one of the best and most accessible parts in the city of Perth from a transport point of view.

Mr. Lawrence: I hope we do not have to pull down the Wandana flats!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Commissioner of Main Roads states—

I have been much impressed with what seems to me a completely adequate reply in the Lord Mayor's yellow leaflet to the strictures that have been raised regarding the Aquatic Centre project. Observations over many years indicate a steady and what seems to me an inevitable depreciation in the Park's indigenous flora. Such harsh woody flowering plants as grow on the coastal sand areas around

Perth are very vulnerable to hot Veldt grass fires, controlled or otherwise, and the natural tree species are becoming less in number and with conditions much against their regeneration. The completeness, generally, of the Lord Mayor's comments leads me to write, for what value they may be, some notes regarding the traffic aspect.

Mr. Ackland: Reverting to the parking, how does the proposed parking for the aquatic centre compare with what you saw at Melbourne during the Olympic Games?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I would say that what is suggested in this proposal is more efficient because in Melbourne the authorities endeavoured to use every available piece of ground within a reasonable distance of the centre of the city. And in so doing, they frequently had to go long distances to find parks and other areas of land capable of taking the large number of vehicles.

Mr. Ackland: You are not likely to have that in King's Park.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The plans provide for five separate areas for parking; and, as the Commissioner of Main Roads points out in his letter, there is plenty of opportunity for expansion near Thomas-st. To continue the quotation—

It seems that with the permanent seating planned for the Olympic pool, together with the temporary seating for special events, there will be accommodation for 5,000 spectators, and it is estimated that such a concourse would require storage for between 700 and 800 cars. The parking areas proposed will provide for about 500 cars and so the excess of 200 or 300 cars will need to be catered for elsewhere. These could conveniently be parked along the verge of Thomas-st. where adequate road reservation is available. The present average hourly traffic flow along King's Park-rd. is 440 vehicles per hour in two directions and in Thomas-st. the average hourly flow is 620 vehicles per hour. Flows of this order could not unduly impede access to and from the aquatic centre. If the exodus of vehicles from the centre occurred at evening peak then police control would be desirable but there is the existing road system in King's Park itself. This would provide adequate relief. In the distant future ultimate traffic flows in the locality have been calculated as peak hour figures and it is likely that King's Park-rd. will carry 870 vehicles per hour and Thomas-st. 2,000 vehicles per hour. By the time these

figures are reached, however, Thomas-st. will almost certainly have been developed to the dual carriage-way stage of construction. Such improvement, coupled with the fact that the road system of King's Park would provide substantial relief, should cater for the relatively small number of vehicles arriving at or leaving the centre.

Mr. Leach continues further along those lines, but I think that is all I need read of his views as far as this Bill is concerned. I have given the house the considered opinions of our expert officers in various branches of the Government service in order that members may have an opportunity of giving consideration to every phase of this subject. I have dealt with a number of the so-called reasons which people in various walks of life have advanced in an endeavour to attract others to their banners in order to oppose the proposal that is now before the House. After all is said and done, when we examine the so-called reasons for objection, we find that they are not reasons at all, but only excuses based on a blind, unreasoning prejudice.

Mr. Bovell: Those are very strong words and they are certainly not justified.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I meant them to be strong words.

Mr. Bovell: Every member is entitled to his own opinion.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Members are entitled to their own views, and no one would try to deny that. But I challenge any member to disprove this statement: There has not been one reason advanced yet by anyone against this proposition that could not be knocked for six.

Members: That is only your opinion.

Mr. Nalder: You said that before, in this House.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Members will have an opportunity of putting forward any other reasons they may have; but I am dealing with some of the reasons which have been advanced, and which have caused resolutions to be carried by various organisations, and various letters to be written to members. I have dealt with some of those major reasons.

Mr. Bovell: You have no right to reflect on us.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I say that unless members can give sensible and valid reasons and can substantiate their views by reasoned argument, their attitude must be based on prejudice and nothing else—

Mr. Bovell: If that is the Minister's attitude, he had better make another speech.

Mr. Nalder: He is only making a mess of this one.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There are many people who think differently from some members opposite.

Mr. Bovell: That is our right, in a democracy.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is possible that most members have had this type of letter, and I think it should be placed on record—

Mr. Nalder: They all came from the one typewriter.

Mr. Norton: Who posted them?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know.

Mr. Norton: They were all typed on the one typewriter.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That may be so; I do not know. But if they were all typed on the one typewriter, one cannot blame the Perth City Council for that, because there are plenty of organisations—I have the names of a dozen before me—which have banded themselves together to resist this horse-and-dray state of mind that some members have. In doing so, in order to keep down expense, I have no doubt they may have used the same equipment. These are authentic letters received from various organisations in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Norton: At least two of them are signed by the same person.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The W.A. Hockey Association, which claims to have 2,000 hockey players in the metropolitan area and hundreds more in the country, gives 100 per cent. support to the Bill.

Mr. Evans: Notice the typing of all those letters.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The W.A. Amateur Cyclists' Union gives 100 per cent. support to the proposal. The W.A. Amateur Athletic Association gives similar support to the proposal. The Australia Day Regatta and Aquatic Carnival Association, with 16 aquatic bodies affiliated, unanimously favours the proposal contained in the Bill.

Mr. Johnson: Have they seen the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The W.A. Speed Boat Association does the same thing. The Australia, British Empire and Commonwealth Games Association is also well behind it.

Mr. Oldfield: Have you had a letter from the King's Park Board?

The SPEAKER: Order! This is a controversial Bill, and I must ask members to refrain from interjecting because, as they know, it is highly disorderly. Members must allow the Minister to continue his speech, and they in turn will have the same right to speak. I ask members to reserve what they have to say until that time.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: The W.A. Olympic Council, with 15 affiliated bodies, unanimously supports the project. The W.A. Women's Basket Ball Association, with 1,400 members, desires to record its support. The State Amateur Swimming and Life Saving Club, with 380 members, supports the proposal. The W.A. Amateur Water Polo Association, with 350 members, desires to record its full support. The W.A. Rowing Association gives its blessing to the project. The Surf Life Saving Association of W.A. shows at considerable length how much it approves of the proposal. The W.A. Amateur Swimming Association, an affiliated organisation of 22 clubs and approximately 2,000 active members, wants to be closely associated with the proposal.

In addition, I have a report by the Lord Mayor of Perth, which indicates that he has recently contacted 20 business organisations at random throughout the metropolitan area and has requested the managements to have the views of their employees recorded. The result was that out of the 18 plebiscites which have been received to date 1,533 people voted "Yes," 269 voted "No," and 32 had no opinion—a total of 83½ per cent. in favour of the proposal.

Also, the Lord Mayor sent a letter to all local authorities throughout the State, including copies of the council's proposal; and he said the Perth City Council would welcome an opinion, if the authorities felt disposed to give one. The replies received totalled 28, and 17 expressed definite support; eight had no opinion and three were opposed to the proposal. So I think it is worth while at this stage to make some reference to the amount of outside support that there is for the City Council's proposal to place an aquatic centre in King's Park.

I appreciate that it is not a one-way argument by any means, and I am quite prepared to support the appointment of a select committee in order to ascertain if there really is a better site. If so, let us leave it at that, or at least try to have something done about it. But without that information, I feel that some members—and I have no desire to insult them—are prejudiced, and prejudiced in an unreasonable manner, because they have not made a sufficient inquiry into the matter, or have not given this Bill the consideration which it is entitled to receive.

When the 1954 legislation became law, and Parliament assumed the responsibility of trustee for King's Park, on behalf of the people, it did not mean that Parliament felt that this proposal should not be listened to, or that it should not be treated on its merits. Parliament did not mean that this measure should be defeated because of prejudice, or for any similar reason. I feel now, as I said in 1954, that that sort of attitude can only bring

a great deal of trouble. Parliament has a real obligation in regard to this matter, because it took the power out of the hands of the King's Park Board; therefore, this legislation should be viewed in a proper manner and decided on its merits.

The Perth City Council—which is prepared to do so much for Perth, and for King's Park—is entitled, in my opinion, to have its views, as are contained in this Bill, fully considered without let or hindrance from anyone. The responsibility which was imposed upon Parliament in 1954 should be recognised by all members; and any move which is designed to circumvent a proper consideration of this Bill is, in my opinion, an offence against the basic principles on which our state of society rests. I say that the Perth City Council is entitled to have full attention given to its proposal, as contained in this Bill.

I believe that there is an overwhelming body of public opinion, outside the walls of this House, which is in favour of King's Park as the logical site for this particular amenity. I think that a number of members, maybe with the best intentions in the world, have misread the situation, and now find themselves opposing this measure in greater numbers than would be the case if the matter had been freely debated and decided upon elsewhere. Has anybody ever asked himself why people, when they go to King's Park, keep almost religiously to those areas of land which are comprised in about 30 acres where man, by his efforts, has made the natural bush even more beautiful? It is because the bushland, the hinterland of our park, is not fit to visit; people will not have a bar of it because there is nothing attractive there.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Don't be silly!

Mr. Roberts: What is wrong with the Australian bushland?

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: If it were attractive, more people would go there.

Mr. Bovell: You had better go back to England.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: The Superintendent-Secretary of King's Park has informed me that only a handful of people go into the back parts of the reserve during the course of the year. If we want to encourage people to use the park more, and to give more enjoyment to those who visit it, we have to do something about it; we have to put something in it—something for them to look at, or something for them to do. I know I am right when I say that most of the progressive countries in the world have been developing their parks for many years. That applies in England, on the Continent and in Canada, and no doubt in many other parts of the world.

Mr. Bovell: Not in Africa.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: They have been developing the hinterland of their reserves for the use of the people—for the enjoyment, recreation and pleasure of the people. After all, that is what the parks were designed for; that is what our King's Park is for. It says so in the dedication; and that is something which members should realise when a worthwhile legitimate proposition, such as this, is placed before them.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: It says that the primary object of the park is the preservation of the indigenous flora.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It does not.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That is what is on the board in the area you want to despoil.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have a photostat copy of the original statement regarding the reasons why the park was set aside. It was set aside as a public park and recreational ground.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: If you had been to the corner you would have seen in capital letters, printed on the board, what I have just told you.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know anything about that. I am quoting from the files in the Lands Department, and they are what count. There might be a notice saying "Parking Prohibited," but you would always see cars parked around it. Someone, in developing his case against this proposal, referred to the Stanley Park, in Vancouver, British Columbia. The Superintendent-Secretary of King's Park took the trouble to write to the superintendent of that park to get some information about a park which is very similar to ours. It is about 1,000 acres of bushland, and he wanted to satisfy his mind about what the people there were doing with a park similar to ours. In reply the superintendent of Stanley Park states—

It appears from your communication that King's Park must be very similar in general character to our Stanley Park in that both are natural forested areas, with roads, parking areas, bridle trails, tennis courts, bowling greens and other recreational facilities scattered about throughout the area, all quite close to the centre of the city.

Over the past 60 years, since the setting aside of Stanley Park, the records indicate that it has been one continual battle keeping things out of the park and, during that time, applications have been turned down for almost everything you can imagine, including the installation of scenic railways, roller rinks, dance halls, merry-go-rounds, ferris wheels, floating stages, rickshas, golf driving ranges, golf courses, rest homes,

guest houses, etc. Of course, a great number of intrusions were allowed, most of which have proved quite beneficial, and these include: picnic areas, rose gardens, tennis courts, bowling greens, athletic fields, outdoor theatre, rowing club, yacht club, pitch and putt golf course, bridle trails, miniature train, zoo restaurants, refreshment booths, swimming pools, checker boards, comfort stations and so on.

I want to point out that the people in Vancouver still have some 800 acres of their natural bushland left in that park, but they have vigorously developed 200 acres. That is what I think we should do in King's Park. I believe that we should develop 200 to 300 acres for all sorts of recreational requirements—I would not favour, however, the provision of cheap entertainment—and in doing so, we should have a master plan for the development of King's Park, which development should be spread over a great many years, so that we would be able to have a certain area for the use of the people in general and retain the remaining portion—approximately 600 acres—forever in its present state if members so desire.

Even if that were done, I can still imagine that a great deal of work could be performed with benefit to the natural bushland. Whatever we do, it should be something worth while. If one could hover over Perth on a fine Sunday in a helicopter, one would see all our arterial roads leading away from Perth filled with motorcars travelling to Canning Dam, Mundaring Weir, National Park, Arluen or other places in the hills and beyond. They would all be getting as far away from King's Park as they possibly could.

Several members: Oh!

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is absolutely true! What is more, we do not do anything about it. So far as King's Park is concerned, we should aim at a long-range target and set out to prepare a developmental plan. I do not know of any better location anywhere to reserve land for the use of the people. In that lovely setting, highly situated overlooking the Swan River, King's Park should be one of the main attractions not only for Perth people themselves, but also for all visitors to this State. It should be developed and improved so that people could go there and spend a full day in beautiful surroundings if they so desired. They cannot do that today, apparently, because obviously they would rather leave Perth than wander around in their own park.

To those who are vigorously opposed to this Bill—with or without reason—I would point out that no one to date has been able to advance an argument that would stand up to the light of day; and further

I would say to them, "You have no moral right to retain in its original state, for evermore, over 900 acres of valuable land in the heart of a growing metropolis in order that a mere half-a-dozen people might wander through it once a year." There is no reason for that attitude to be maintained. Other countries use their parks to greater and better advantage than we do, and it is about time we started to develop ideas in keeping with the requirements of a rapidly expanding city.

Mr. Lawrence: Wouldn't you like to be kept in your original state?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would have its compensations. Whilst appreciating the reasons for the objections to this proposal, I consider that we should do something with at least a portion of King's Park. Our thinking and planning for the future should be such that the generations to follow will be grateful for what we have done. I think that Mr. Howard, the Lord Mayor of Perth, and his councillors should be highly commended for what they have already done and what they propose to do in King's Park for the benefit of the people of Perth as a whole.

On the wall of the Chamber there is an aerial photograph of the proposed site, a sketch of the aquatic centre, and also an artist's impression of it when finally it becomes an accomplished fact. I want to emphasise that this would be no mud-hole in the bottom of the river. The Perth City Council plans to give to the people of Perth one of the finest aquatic centres that can be found anywhere in the world, and, what is more, in one of the finest locations in the world. Although what members see on the wall of the Chamber is only an artist's impression, it is they who have the power and the right to make it a reality in a tiny corner of the park on the right-hand side, where no one ever goes.

The Minister for Transport: Quite right!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This is a serious matter, because we now have a chance—since we took away the power from the King's Park Board—to do something worth while not only for the present generation of youth whose representations have been made in the letters I have read tonight, but also for the generations who are yet to come. If we are any sort of statesmen, we are in duty bound to give far more consideration to the merits of this proposal than many have been prepared to do up till now. I commend this measure to the House and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. LAPHAM (North Perth) [8.48]: I thank my colleague, the Minister for Lands, for introducing this Bill, because at least it gives me an opportunity to answer back. On this issue I consider that the Press has been most unfair. All members have known what the objects of the

Bill were away back in 1954. When I introduced an amendment to the Parks and Reserves Act in that year, it was to prevent the leasing of or interference with King's Park in any way. Although the provisions of that measure did not prohibit the erection of an aquatic centre in King's Park, it did provide that an aquatic centre should not be erected there unless the scheme had the approval of both Houses of Parliament. At that time, every aspect of the Bill and the future of King's Park was debated in this House, following which the measure was adopted and finally enacted. To my mind it is most unfortunate that a period of time from 1954 until now should have elapsed before this Bill was presented to us, because it means that three years have been wasted; three years in which the Perth City Council could have been going about its duty—which it could have done 30 years ago at least—of establishing still-water facilities for swimmers in this State.

Since 1954, we have been inundated with all types of propaganda in regard to this question. Some of this has been roneoed, some has been printed—and printed at great expense—and also we have had the spectacle of letters coming in containing the headings of the different organisations, but all of them apparently typed on the one typewriter. This indicates that there is some person at the controls and that this was being done according to a set plan. There was plenty of organisation behind the type of letter we have received. All this has made me wonder how far some people are prepared to go to put forward a view, and to crush all opposition to an opinion which has with them become a complete obsession.

I feel that this Bill, in the circumstances, has some merit. At the outset, it will decide the fate of the park. Secondly, it should give a lead to the King's Park Board as to what this House expects of that board in relation to its policy governing the park. Above all, I feel the measure should terminate the spectacle of public functions being used for purposes other than those for which they are intended. On many occasions I have had to sit it out at a public function and hear talk of an aquatic centre, when the function concerned had nothing whatever to do with an aquatic centre. I felt it was most unfair that I should not have been given the opportunity of answering back.

The Bill itself is a simple one. It is quite clear. There is no ambiguity about it at all. In its provisions it does, of course, include a lease. In essence, however, it is a Bill—

For an Act to authorise the King's Park Board to lease 20 acres of Reserve No. A1720, known as King's Park, to the City of Perth for the purposes of an aquatic centre, and for other and incidental purposes.

I would like to say at once that the newspapers have not been at all fair when dealing with this matter. They have indicated how difficult it is for correspondents to have a view published that is contrary to the policy of the paper concerned. I feel that members should bear that in mind when they talk about the oft-repeated phrase of "freedom of the Press." In essence it means freedom for those controlling the Press to do as they please. We know that pressure has been applied on members on many occasions and in different ways, even to the extent of misrepresentation and ridicule. The newspapers seem to have two photographs of me; one they use when they like me, and the other when they do not.

The Premier: They are both rather nice, though!

Mr. LAPHAM: I thank the Premier for that remark. I still feel, however, that the majority of members do not favour an aquatic centre being established in King's Park. The issue before us is quite a simple one, but while it is simple, it is nevertheless momentous in its implications. It is not whether an aquatic centre should be established in King's Park; nor is it even the site of the pool that, in my opinion, comes under review. The whole question is whether an area of ground known as King's Park reserve should be allowed to be whittled away piece by piece, until nothing remains of its original nature, and until its true identity is lost.

Hon. D. Brand: What are you going to do to retain its true identity?

Mr. LAPHAM: That is a simple matter.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Leave it alone.

Mr. Ackland: Tell us how you will deal with the veldt grass.

Mr. LAPHAM: I knew the hon. member would stick his neck out. Here is a man who knows everything about sheep, and all there is to know about grazing, and yet he does not know that veldt grass will not stand up to grazing.

The Premier: I suggest we put a few members of Parliament up there to graze.

Mr. LAPHAM: I feel that members should not worry whether they are placed at the top or the bottom of the popularity poll; I feel their main concern should be whether they are breaching the trust reposed in them—a trust that they should preserve this park for posterity; preserve it for the children yet unborn.

Hon. D. Brand: How are they going to get a Bill through the House?

Mr. LAPHAM: They will have no difficulty at all.

Hon. D. Brand: I should think it would depend on who is here.

Mr. LAPHAM: To my mind, it is not a question that the newspapers, or others—who have been dormant on the swimming needs of the public for many years—now realise that a still-water amenity is necessary, but whether we are going to part with King's Park in any way at all. It is not the first time this matter has been raised; it has been going on ever since the park was first dedicated.

Let me take members back to 1899 when Sir John Forrest introduced a Bill known as the Permanent Reserves Bill. This is what Sir John, the then Premier, had to say—

This is a very important measure, though I do not think it contains controversial matter. The object is to provide that reserves proclaimed by the Governor by powers given under the Health Act, as parks, squares, or otherwise for the embellishment of towns, or for the health, recreation, or amusement of the people, or for cemeteries, should not, after being gazetted, be sold unless under authority of Act of Parliament. I am sorry to say there is a tendency on the part of the public to get hold of portions of reserves for quasi-public purposes.

There we have the old, old story. Sir John continued—

When towns are laid out, the Lands Department are careful to leave a good many reserves for parks, squares, and recreation purposes; and, as soon as the lands open for sale are disposed of, many applications are made for portions of the reserves, with the result that the original intention of the department is frustrated.

Mr. George: By tennis clubs.

The Premier: Squares and open spaces will be much required in the future, and it is felt that no department should be entrusted with the disposal of public reserves. As the law stands, there is nothing to prevent the Government selling the Perth Park, or any other piece of land, which may have been set apart for public purposes.

Mr. George: Even the City Council can dispose of public lands.

The Premier: No.

Mr. George: The City Council have done so in connection with the Esplanade, in Perth.

There again we have the same old story.

The Premier: What did the Premier say then?

Mr. LAPHAM: For the information of the Premier, the City Council may give a lease of public lands—

The Premier: What did Mr. George say then?

Mr. LAPHAM:—but cannot dispose of them for any length of time. That was what the then Premier said. He went on to say—

The Government, on the other hand, can sell reserves, and, by a simple proclamation, withdraw them from public use and give a title to private purchasers. Such a state of things ought certainly not to be allowed and if this Bill be passed, no public reserve can be diverted from its original purpose, unless by Act of Parliament.

Of course the measure went to another place; and as a consequence, an amendment was moved and passed in that House which ultimately came back to the Legislative Assembly. The amendment was that the reserve was divided into two categories, known as A and B class reserves. When moving that that amendment be agreed to, the Premier stated that Class A had reference to reserves of a permanent character used as parks, squares and so on; and from the time that such reserves were gazetted, they could not be interfered with except by Act of Parliament. He went on to say that the principal object of the Government was to secure for ever, for use of the people, all reserves set aside for parks and squares in towns and suburbs. That was plain enough in 1899.

Mr. Potter: Who used that park?

Mr. LAPHAM: I could not say. I was not there at the time. The Premier continued further on to say—

While it was quite right that the Governor-in-Council should have power to declare all necessary roads and streets through reserves, he ought not to have the same power in regard to reserves classified A in the Bill. In the case of Perth Park, for instance, it would not be right or advisable to give this power.

Now Mr. George comes into the picture again, and is reported as follows:—

Parliament ought to be jealous of any encroachment on reserves set apart not merely for the present, but for future generations. In the old country he had seen commons land filched away under the rights of a lord of the manor or the decision of a municipal corporation, and he knew that in one large town such land had to be repurchased for public use, at a big price. On the Esplanade in Perth, for instance, encroachment had been permitted in the shape of a bowling green. Bowling, no doubt, was a desirable recreation, and though that enclosure added to the beauty of the reserve, yet the ground had been practically taken from public use. Some little time ago there was a proposition, which he thought was being carried out, to set apart a portion of

the Perth Park as tennis courts, for the use of one class of people; and, while he did not wish to speak disrespectfully of people connected with the Bowling Club or the Tennis Club, he gave these instances to show the danger of reserves being diverted from their original purpose.

That is fair enough. Surely we all understand what was meant when Perth Park, now known as King's Park, was set aside.

Mr. Court: What date are you quoting from?

Mr. LAPHAM: From the year 1899.

The Premier: Who said that?

Mr. LAPHAM: The Premier. Under those circumstances I should not have to continue reading as far back as 1899, because it clearly illustrates to my mind, and I feel to most people also, that even in those days there was concern about the fact that some people and some authorities wanted to filch from those parks, little by little. The position was, of course, that an objection was raised to tennis courts and to bowling greens, but in our parks today we see plenty of bowling greens and tennis clubs. As a matter of fact, most of our parks have been given away for those purposes.

The Minister for Transport: What is wrong with that?

Mr. LAPHAM: Lord Forrest had this to say on King's Park—

This will enable the children of a thousand years hence to see what the bush was like when Stirling came here to found the city.

How are the children in a thousand years hence going to be able to visit King's Park and see what the bush was like when Stirling went there to found a city, if we allow it to be cluttered up with aquatic centres, hockey fields, and so on? There was even support for an aquatic centre from the speedboat association. I do not know how it fits into the picture, or whether it wanted some of the parkland. Where we are giving away the park, piece by piece, the children of a thousand years hence, or even 50 years hence, will not be able to see the bushland.

Hon. D. Brand: Were there any large trees in King's Park when Stirling went there?

Mr. LAPHAM: I would ask members to clearly note the words of someone who has been recognised as a statesman.

The Premier: Do not embarrass me!

Mr. LAPHAM: He mentioned nothing of aquatic centres.

Mr. Potter: They were not thought of then.

Mr. LAPHAM: Of course not! He knew that a river flowed nearby, and he felt we could keep the river clean and swim in

it. But how wrong he was! In his statement, Lord Forrest indicated to us the intention of the founders of the park. There is not the slightest doubt of that in my mind. Today we are in the enviable position of having preserved the park, with the exception of a little area taken up by the tennis club and the bowling green.

Mr. Court: All of which was excised or leased during his term of office.

Mr. LAPHAM: That is quite right. A policy has been adopted in regard to King's Park since 1903. It is now 1957; and in the intervening 54 years, no one has been able to touch any part of that park.

Mr. Court: His halo must have slipped for a few years.

Mr. LAPHAM: Some people would like to think that the halo slipped from him. As far as I am concerned, King's Park is representative to me of something Western Australian. In 50 years' time we will have no woodland fringe around the city, and the only place where the children of that time will be able to go to see anything of the Australian woodland—

Mr. Potter: And veldt grass.

Mr. LAPHAM: —will be in King's Park, provided that the King's Park Board does not change its policy. Just imagine what the park would be like in 100 years' time, if it could be held in its natural state for another 100 years. It would be a great tourist attraction.

Mr. Potter: It would be worse than it is now.

Mr. LAPHAM: Why would it be worse than it is now? There are ample illustrations to show that natural flora, if left alone, can triumph over any exotic plants. There are plenty of illustrations of that in Western Australia. All we have to do is to change our policy in regard to the park, and there will be no difficulty at all.

Mr. Potter: There will be—

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the member for Subiaco to keep order.

Mr. LAPHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker! I am satisfied that in the metropolitan area there is a need for swimming pools and even aquatic centres. We need quite a number of Olympic pools. We have needed them for a long, long time. Those who are now clamouring for them have been particularly silent about them for many years. All of a sudden they have come to life at the present. But the tragedy is that I am placed in the position where I have to frustrate them, because they want to destroy one asset to create another, and I am not prepared to agree to it. Kalgoorlie had a swimming pool 40 years ago. There was that still-water amenity. I swam in it, and so have thousands of other children.

Mr. Heal: How did you go?

Mr. LAPHAM: Quite well. It took a long time for other country centres to follow, but at long last they did. Then the pressure was exerted on the Perth City Council and other local authorities, and at last they decided to do something about the matter. But they have been a long time doing anything about it. As I said, the tragedy is that they want to go to the wrong place. I would not mind if it were in North Perth. In fact, in 1953, I made an approach to the Perth City Council for swimming facilities in North Perth.

Hon. D. Brand: Is this the ground for opposition?

Mr. LAPHAM: That is the paltry sort of thing that is going on! Because I have been interested in obtaining swimming facilities, I am now being accused of taking a paltry view because they are not in my electorate.

Mr. Lawrence: Can you swim?

Mr. LAPHAM: That is what I disagree with and take exception to, because when it was pointed out to me that the Smith's Lake area was not suitable, I accepted that view. However, I feel there are other areas in which the pool should be placed.

Mr. Ackland: Name them.

Mr. LAPHAM: I have a number of letters from business organisations—practically every business organisation in the metropolitan area—asking that I plead their case to the Perth City Council—they would not have much chance—so that the pool could be erected in their own respective areas. In the electorate of the member for Leederville, there is an area around Vincent-st. near Bourke and Lofus-sts., about 20 acres near the school, which is an ideal spot, without any engineering difficulties. There are other areas around Inglewood as well as plenty of other sites in the metropolitan area. A pool near Vincent-st. would serve West Perth, North Perth, Leederville, West Leederville, Wembley, Scarborough—

The Minister for Education: Mt. Hawthorn.

Mr. LAPHAM: Yes.

The Minister for Transport: East Perth would be satisfied with King's Park.

Mr. LAPHAM: Every person would have to travel to King's Park and catch two vehicles.

The Minister for Transport: And be happy to do it.

Mr. LAPHAM: The newspapers, which have never used their influence to get still-water facilities for the public have, at the instigation of the Lord Mayor, suddenly developed a conscience in regard to this matter. They say now that something should be done about providing a still-water amenity. They say, "What is to happen to mother and her children and

how will they learn to swim?" Yet, over the years, when the kiddies were drowning in clay holes at Midland Junction or at Lake Monger, Shenton Park or Butler's Swamp, there was no attempt by the newspapers to clamour for still-water facilities. The kiddies drowned, and that was all there was to it. However, they now suddenly remember mother and the children, and wonder how they will learn to swim!

Having made their decision—a decision by a few men—they want to slate everybody who is opposed to their point of view and will use every despicable tactic to do it.

Mr. Court: Are you referring to the Perth City Council or to the Press?

Hon. D. Brand: You are not being fair.

Mr. LAPHAM: I have been on the receiving end; the hon. member has not.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will have an opportunity to speak later.

Mr. LAPHAM: I would like to give members an illustration of how there has been some shifting of ground. I cannot understand why it takes place, and I feel that pressure must have been brought to bear on members of the King's Park Board for this to happen. I would like to quote an extract from "The West Australian" dated the 12th September, 1946, in which the superintendent and secretary, Mr. Watson, is reported as saying, "The fame of King's Park rested largely in natural bush so close to the city." He goes on to say, "The policy of the board is based, to a large extent, on the preservation of the existing area against any type of alienation."

That was only a decade ago, yet, all of a sudden, we find a complete switch by the board. Under what pressure? It does not do these things for nothing. Again, in "The West Australian" of the 10th December, 1949, the secretary made further reference to the loss of the State's unrivalled flora through settlement, clearing, bush fires and indiscriminate wild-flower picking and stated, "The last stronghold of our lovely flowers would be our national parks and more remote areas of State forests." It is quite apparent now that the King's Park Board has changed its ground in regard to the sizeable portion of the park and has agreed to give it up for a sporting amenity even though, in my opinion, there are plenty of other sites in the metropolitan area.

Let us go back to the initial status of King's Park. There appears to have been some uncertainty in the early part as to exactly how it would develop. We find this in the Year Book of 1902-1904, page 1126—

Sir Malcolm Fraser, who had been instrumental in the initial moves for the establishment of the Park in 1871

wrote, "Everything has been done to preserve the native trees and flora, so that the wild flowers and shrubs are a delightful feature of the Park."

Sir John Forrest's dream of a "sanctuary of bush land right in the heart of the City" was a reality to the early Boards, as may be witnessed by their management policies. In the 54 years which have elapsed since the tenancy of the tennis courts was granted in 1903, the successive Boards have resolutely refused any similar or other encroachment on the bushland areas. The widow of one of the first members, Mrs. G. Temple-Poole, wrote in "The West Australian" of the 26th October, 1954: "As the wife of one of the original members of the King's Park Board, I wish to state that Lord Forrest, Sir Winthrop Hackett, Mr. G. Temple-Poole and Mr. A. Lovekin had one thought in mind—to preserve for all time, in the heart of the city, a priceless possession . . . an indigenous park."

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LAPHAM: There is not the slightest doubt when she goes on to say, "Surely the public will protest against the proposed invading." The public has done so; I have received scores of letters congratulating me. One was delivered tonight. I shall read it—

Dear Mr. Lapham,

No, you are not my district representative in the Legislative Assembly, but for a very long time I have wanted to write and congratulate you on your foresight and courage in trying to preserve King's Park for posterity.

Mr. Lawrence: Bravo!

Mr. LAPHAM: The letter continues—
I was very annoyed and concerned when I read in last Tuesday's "West" a letter from—

I will not say who it was from—

in which he strongly criticised the action of the 30 members of Parliament who told the Premier in advance how they would vote on a Bill dealing with an aquatic centre in King's Park.

If the said correspondent had bothered to do any research . . . he would have discovered that the whole question had already been very fully debated in Parliament, both sides thoroughly aired their views . . . in Hansard 23, 24, 25 and 26 all the Third Session, 1954.

The Minister for Transport: Which is wrong.

Mr. LAPHAM: A very enlightened correspondent.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: She was a good judge, that woman.

Mr. LAPHAM: The letter continues—

Although that was the last session of the old Parliament, most of the members were returned, with very few exceptions, so that these members were not really jumping the gun but saving time. No doubt in my mind their object in approaching the Premier was to let him know that most of them held the same views as in 1954, and so that he, the Premier, could make it quite clear to the Lord Mayor that he might as well get ahead with plans for other sites, he, the Lord Mayor, having already wasted too much time in this regard.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LAPHAM: The letter continues—

The attitude of Western Australians born and bred is very different from that of newcomers whether from other States or countries. We love the type of bushland in the park. To us it is so uniquely and distinctively Australian. Not, perhaps, the well-ordered type seen in the older countries. Why should we not preserve our own individuality? Remember the verse—
"Breathes there a man with soul so dead . . ."

I will not continue it. That is an illustration of the letters I have been receiving in regard to the King's Park controversy since it commenced.

The Minister for Transport: What is the age of that woman?

Mr. LAPHAM: I have never met her.

The Minister for Transport: I bet it is nearer 99 than anything else.

The Minister for Education: She must be wise if she is 99.

The Minister for Transport: She might even be senile.

Mr. LAPHAM: It indicates that all thinking people are endeavouring to see that King's Park is retained intact for posterity. Even in 1927 this issue was raised. In February of that year the Government appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Mr. J. B. Hawkins, to inquire into the hospital needs of the metropolitan area. The committee, in its report published in "The West Australian" of the 24th June, 1947, recommended—

Upon mature consideration . . . your committee has come to the unanimous conclusion that the only site that would adequately meet the situation—

Mark particularly "only" and "adequately"—

—is a portion of King's Park. Your committee therefore recommends the allocation of an area of 35 acres with a frontage to Thomas-st.

Of course, that luckless suggestion brought a hornets' nest around the committee. Sir Hal Colebatch, just returned from London after a term as Agent-General, wrote in "The West Australian" of the 25th June—

If I were forced to admit that there is no adequate and suitably situated space available (in the sense of its being still public property) I would still contend that it would pay us far better to resume the required area—which, after all, would mean the acquisition by the State of an appreciating asset—rather than to take away 3 per cent. of the best of our parks for a purpose, which though amongst the noblest of the people's activities, is not the purpose for which it was set apart. May I suggest to the committee that it is easy to pick upon King's Park as the one entirely suitable spot for a hundred different and worthy purposes, and to the Government that the report be referred back to the committee with an intimation that the public parks and reserves of the city are not available as hospital sites.

Of course, "The West Australian" bought into this; it was not going to be outdone. This is the editorial—

Admittedly the difficulty of obtaining a suitable site . . . is not easy to overcome. Evidently the committee of investigation so found it, or its members would never have been audacious enough to recommend the laying of covetous hands on 35 acres of King's Park. That recommendation does such violence to popular sentiment and so flagrantly disregards the people's frequently expressed antagonism to the alienation, no matter for what purpose, of even an acre or two of this natural domain, next to the Swan River, the city's proudest natural possession, as to debar it from serious consideration.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Tell them what the City Council said.

Mr. LAPHAM: I shall. The City Council had something to say. I do not know whether it has ever taken this resolution off its books, but the Perth City Council, at its meeting on the 27th June, 1927, hastened to condemn the proposal and passed a resolution as follows:—

It is of the highest importance in the interests of the people of this city, and in fact of the State of Western Australia, that King's Park shall be retained intact for the use of the people forever.

The Minister for Transport: Hear, hear! Not as a prickly bush area.

Mr. LAPHAM: Of course, the then Premier—the late Phil Collier—had something to say. He said—

I want to make it clear that the Government will not allow any further infringement of the park area . . . King's Park is for the people and must be preserved intact. The policy of the Government is "Hands off" and no further encroachment will be permitted.

The Minister for Transport: Not encroachment; development.

Mr. LAPHAM: That is according to the view one takes. I referred earlier to the newspapers when they refused to publish any view detrimental to their own policy. These facts that I have just related—in connection with the select committee, and in regard to the editorial of "The West Australian" and to the statements by the Perth City Council and the Premier—were sent in a letter—as a letter—to "The West Australian," and what happened? The editor wrote back as follows:—

I should like to publish your letter, but there are two objections to such a course. We have an extremely heavy correspondence on the park, and secondly I doubt whether there is a very strong connection between the 1927 proposal and the current controversy.

Mr. Potter: They were right for once.

Mr. LAPHAM: Actually, of course, it would have been very embarrassing to the newspaper to publish a letter of that nature. As the newspaper stated that there was heavy correspondence in regard to the issue, I think we had better have a look at the "Daily News" which is almost the same paper—I think the "Daily News" and "The West Australian" are owned by the same people—and their policies would be the same. What do we find? In the issue of the 7th August of this year there is a letter as follows:—

The M.P.'s. who signed the petition . . .

(Sgd.) S. J. Parker, Fremantle.

We turn over to the 9th of August where again we find—

The M.P.'s. who signed the petition . . .

(Sgd.) S. J. Parker, Fremantle.

That shows just how much correspondence the "Daily News" had on the aquatic centre at King's Park. The controversy was stirred up by the newspapers, and they did not have sufficient correspondence, so they turned around and duplicated this letter on the 7th and 9th of August. But when a correspondent sent a letter with some relevant facts, they would not print it, on the ground that there was too much correspondence on the park. Then we had another statement by "The West

Australian" of the 12th April, which indicates that this is not a controversial issue. It said—

Only 130 people attended the Perth Town Hall meeting held last night to discuss the proposed aquatic centre. The Lord Mayor, Mr. H. R. Howard, strongly criticised public apathy on a matter which he said concerned 30,000.

I think he was entitled to criticise the public apathy. The position did affect 30,000 people and only 130 attended. I think I could do better than that at an electioneering meeting.

Hon. D. Brand: You should wait and see.

Mr. LAPHAM: Before concluding, I wish to allude to an editorial in "The West Australian" of the 25th July last, the issue following the day on which I had intimated to the Premier that a Bill to allow the construction of an aquatic centre in King's Park was certain to be defeated. To substantiate my verbal statement, I gave the Premier documentary proof; and the only unfortunate thing I did was to give him the proof instead of merely showing it to him.

The Minister for Transport: Why do you say it was unfortunate? Were you ashamed of it?

Mr. LAPHAM: No; I gave the statement to the Premier.

The Minister for Transport: What is your complaint against the Premier?

Mr. LAPHAM: My complaint is that it appeared in the Press.

The Minister for Transport: Are you ashamed of it?

Mr. LAPHAM: No; but the Press indicated that it was a petition, although it was not. It was only done to show the Government what would happen to the Bill if presented to this House.

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

On motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman, time extended.

Mr. LAPHAM: I thank members for giving me the opportunity to continue. In its editorial, "The West Australian" said—

There is not the slightest justification for a petition and Lapham had no moral right to hand it to the Premier.

"The West Australian" was told it was no petition, but a statement that members of this House were decent enough to sign so that I could indicate to the Premier that there was very little hope of a Bill of this nature succeeding in this House; and as he is my leader, I felt I had every justification for indicating that fact to him and supporting it by documentary proof—

The Minister for Transport: To the extent of going to the Opposition benches?

Mr. LAPHAM: I never went to the Opposition benches in regard to it; but it became known that anyone who wanted to sign a statement informing the Premier of the position in regard to this Bill could do so.

Mr. Heal: That is different from what I saw.

Mr. LAPHAM: The member for Mt. Lawley signed it. He knew all about it—

The Minister for Transport: And he has been whipping the cat ever since.

Mr. LAPHAM: Of course "The West Australian" said we should examine our morals; but I think that journal should look after its own morals and allow me to take care of mine, as I think I am more competent to do so. "The West Australian" continued—

It is hard to resist the conclusion that some of the 30 members signed in the hope that sufficient signatures would be forthcoming to induce the Government to drop the Bill. If this is so they are guilty of political cowardice.

What a ridiculous statement! Most of the members who signed debated the issue in 1954 and made it clear where they stood. Those who did not speak on the issue were also definite as to where they stood—

Mr. Rodoreda: This was not the issue.

Mr. LAPHAM: I relish the opportunity of speaking to this debate; and I hope the debate will be a factor in inducing the King's Park Board to change its policy in regard to the park and go ahead and make it an indigenous park, as it was originally intended to be. One member of the King's Park Board whom I met at a function admitted that he hoped that all around the park would be playing fields for small games; and when I questioned him, he admitted that as the population grew, those playing fields would have to extend further into the parkland—

Mr. Rodoreda: And he was wrong.

Mr. LAPHAM: Of course not!

Mr. Rodoreda: Why?

Mr. LAPHAM: Because that was his policy.

Mr. Rodoreda: Why was he wrong?

Mr. LAPHAM: Because it is hoped that the park will be there to show children 1,000 years hence what our bush was like when Stirling first founded this city. I saw a letter which one member of the King's Park Board sent to a friend of mine, and in which he said—

Hyde Park, London, St. James's Park, and Kensington Gardens have all been developed in a way which ultimately we sincerely hope King's Park will develop.

There is an indication of what is intended to be done with King's Park; not to leave it in its natural state, but to develop it according to the old customs and ideals of other countries; to go ahead and ape them, just as we have aped them in too many ways already. As a matter of fact, many cities in Australia are beginning to weary of what has happened to their parklands. On the 28th April a Melbourne newspaper published an article by Frank Fitzgerald entitled "Stop Stealing Our Parks," in which he said—

What a glorious city Melbourne would be if its great belt of parklands had been preserved intact. In 90 years 880 acres provided by the original planners have been filched with the connivance of itchy official fingers. Only a little piece at a time; only a little nibble, but they have added up.

And today we have a little nibble taking place at King's Park. Only 20 acres today, and then we will be asked for a little more for something else tomorrow.

The Minister for Transport: It will not reduce King's Park by one square inch.

Mr. LAPHAM: Once we start giving away portions of King's Park, we will lay down a precedent that others will follow, and there is no telling where it will finish. I will now read a letter dated the 29th August last year by S. H. Congdon, a man I have known for many years and one who was prominent in the cycling field some years ago. He said—

It appears now that the Olympic swimming pool will be built in King's Park notwithstanding the wishes of the vast majority of citizens in Western Australia. I have been one of the old-fashioned brigade who to date has favoured the idea that the park should be preserved in its natural state for all time.

I am prepared to change my ideas, but I would like to suggest that instead of just building the swimming pool the whole park be transformed into one huge sporting arena catering for motor racing (cars and motor cycles), cycling and all field sports. Instead of the dangerous "round the houses" motor-racing events at present held through the main streets of many of our rural towns, a wonderful five or ten mile track could be constructed in the park. King's Park appears to be the only area available for a continental type road motor race track. What a great advertisement it would be for Western Australia if the park was converted into a huge modern sports area and used for the staging of the Empire Games if they are held in Western Australia.

The Minister for Lands: That is not in the Bill.

Mr. LAPHAM: Of course it is not! But it illustrates what would happen if we started to give it away a little bit at a time.

The Minister for Lands: We are not giving anything away.

Mr. LAPHAM: It is to be regretted that the State was not given the right to hold the Empire Games here. But we may get an opportunity later on; one never knows.

The Minister for Transport: It has not been properly decided yet.

Mr. LAPHAM: Maybe; but things do not look too bright in that direction. If a pool is built in the park, and it is used for the Empire Games, or for any swimming carnivals, it is only right that other sporting bodies should be given similar privileges by allowing them to hold their sporting fixtures in the park. I can see what will happen if we leave these things until the last minute. Everybody will be running around because this State has been given the right to hold the Empire Games, and they will be saying, "Where will we put this and where will we put that?"

Mr. Johnson: In Leederville.

Mr. LAPHAM: No, in King's Park. I am opposed to the building of an aquatic centre in King's Park, although I suppose it was unnecessary for me to state that, because members must have realised it by now. I have seen the plans of the aquatic centre, and in my opinion they are magnificent. I congratulate those who were responsible for them, and I hope that they will be used to build an aquatic centre in an area other than in King's Park.

I will lend every assistance possible in finding an area and in helping in every way to get the project started because, as I said earlier, I used to swim in still water 40 years ago. Ever since I have been in Perth—over the last 35 years—I have been looking for somewhere to swim, other than in the sea. I enjoy swimming in the sea, but I like swimming in still water because I have been accustomed to it. But I have been like a voice in the wilderness and very little help has been given to me in that direction. Even the swimming associations have been peculiarly silent on this issue.

The Minister for Lands: There is no doubt about where they stand on this proposal.

Mr. LAPHAM: It is at least something to know that they have decided on it. The swimming associations, the Perth City Council, and—I feel sure—all members of Parliament agree that Olympic pools in the metropolitan area are necessary. The only thing upon which we do not agree is that swimming pools are necessary in King's Park. I will do everything in my power to see that facilities for swimming are made available for the children, for the adults and for competitive swimming in the metropolitan area. I oppose the Bill.

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

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd August.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [9.46]: I listened very carefully to the Minister for Transport when he introduced the Bill. Since then, we have had two speeches from members who are opposed to it; I refer to the Leader of the Country Party and the member for Blackwood. We have had many discussions in recent weeks on the question of transport, and I think all members realised that a Bill such as this would come before the Chamber, because of the announcement in the Governor's speech at the opening of Parliament.

However, I think that the Bill goes much further than most of us expected the Government was prepared to go; and I doubt whether all members, and the public generally, realise just how much private road transport will be restricted if this Bill is passed in the form in which it has been introduced. During his speech the Leader of the Country Party went right through the measure in considerable detail, and I do not propose to weary the House by going over that ground again.

Mr. I. W. Manning drew attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. PERKINS: I want to emphasise that some of the latter provisions in the Bill dealing with exemptions that are enjoyed by primary producers at present will have a far-reaching effect. I very much doubt whether the Minister has considered the disastrous effect the Bill could have on the motor trade in Western Australia if it is carried in its present form. If primary producers are to be restricted to the extent proposed by this measure, obviously the purchases of motor trucks by primary producers are going to drop considerably.

The Minister for Transport: Are you suggesting that one of the primary reasons for primary producers purchasing trucks is to run them backwards and forwards to Perth?

Mr. PERKINS: I am not suggesting that at all. For the greater portion of the year, a vehicle purchased by a farmer would not be able to be brought into Perth for that purpose. However, if the Minister studies the provisions of the Bill, he will realise that a primary producer will be permitted to cart goods in his own motor truck only from his nearest railway siding. For instance, if a farmer in the Bruce Rock area wanted to obtain water troughs from the Electroweld Steel Engineering Co. or from the Hume Pipe Co. at Kellerberrin he would not be permitted to drive his truck to that point to pick up the

troughs, according to my reading of the measure. It would be necessary for him to have them railed to his nearest railway siding, and he would have to pick them up there.

Whilst I believe that some primary producers could well do without purchasing large motor trucks to cope with their own transportation needs, on the other hand there is an inducement to have a reasonably good vehicle that can be used to travel to distant points to load anything that is required, from the point of view of running a property with the least inconvenience. Another exemption which is of great value to primary producers is that of being able to transport machinery to distant points—in many instances to the metropolitan area—for necessary repairs. Such an exemption is allowed by the Transport Board at present under the provisions of the Act. The Bill, however, seeks to waive that exemption.

I will admit that although it is desirable that as much of this repair work as possible should be carried out in the local country centre, nevertheless there are many specialised farming machines in use on farms today; and sometimes, unfortunately, it is a fact that the specialised repair facilities can be found at no point closer than Perth. That is no reflection on those who service these specialised implements; but it could be that some special equipment is required by farmers as a necessity, and it is not an economic proposition to have repair facilities at numerous points throughout the country areas.

When, at the opening of Parliament, we heard from the Governor's Speech the intention of the Government to amend the State Transport Co-ordination Act with the object of restricting the rights of primary producers particularly, some of us envisaged that perhaps the Government intended to limit the maximum loads, or possibly even the types of commodities that could be carried.

For instance, the Minister—not only during this session, but also on previous occasions—has paid a great deal of attention to the quantity of fuel that is back-loaded in motor-vehicles by members of the rural community. I realise that there is a great deal of motor fuel being carried to farms from Perth, and in some instances farmers make special trips to the city in order to cart fuel back to their properties because they consider it is an economic proposition.

Nevertheless, I doubt very much whether that type of carting represents a large percentage of the total quantity of fuel used in the country districts. It is rather difficult, however, to obtain figures on that question. I have tried to secure some figures in a few country districts to ascertain the total quantity of fuel used and the percentage that is carted back to the

country centres from Perth. It is quite obvious, of course, that the figures vary from district to district. I still hold the opinion, nevertheless, that the amount of fuel carted by motor-vehicles from Perth to the country centres represents a very small percentage of the total used.

If the Minister was of the opinion that the waiving of this exemption to farmers would be a material factor in contributing to the improvement of the financial position of the railways, one would have thought that he would take special measures to ensure that this type of traffic was carried by the railways. The Minister, however, has adopted a different approach by introducing a Bill which takes away from primary producers practically all rights to cart produce to the city, with the exception of a very limited range of perishable commodities—principally livestock and perishables—and waives entirely the right of farmers to cart anything to their properties by way of back-loading.

I can assure the Minister for Transport that the reaction in country districts is extremely unfavourable, and I consider that the attitude which the Government has taken on this question is designed to achieve anything but to encourage people to put up with the poor facilities that exist in country districts compared to those enjoyed by people residing in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Transport: These concessions do not apply to the country people as such; they apply to farmers and not to other country people.

Mr. PERKINS: It is not such a material point as far as other country people are concerned. Obviously, the farming community to which the Minister refers are those who live some distance from a country town. In the ordinary course of events they need to maintain a truck or some kind of vehicle to transport themselves and essential goods from the country town to the property they are working, whether it be only a short distance to the railroad or not.

In some instances a considerable proportion of that type of carting can be done by a cartage contractor; but, nevertheless, it is necessary for a farmer to maintain some sort of vehicle to work his property. I think the Minister will agree that on every farm there is some kind of truck maintained for that purpose. The other people to whom the Minister referred practically all live in the towns which are adjacent to railway facilities. In most cases there is not the same need for them to maintain a motor truck.

I think the Minister will appreciate the point, that the public transport carts direct to their door; whereas, in the other case, the public transport can only come to the nearest siding, and there still

exists a transport problem from that particular point to the property. It is in this that the differentiation lies between the primary producer as such, and the rest of the country community.

The Minister for Transport: I think of the sawmiller, the timber worker and the goldminer, who are all isolated.

Mr. PERKINS: All the people mentioned by the Minister enjoyed these concessions under the Transport Co-ordination Act. It applied to mining areas and to sawmilling areas.

The Minister for Transport: To neither case. I think you are mixing it up with the licensing of vehicles.

Mr. PERKINS: I have always understood that the prospectors, for instance, enjoyed this particular concession. At any rate, that is beside the point in the immediate argument. The important category is that concerning the motor trucks belonging to the primary producers who are either working the land or grazing stock. They are the people who are immediately concerned; and, incidentally, they are some of the biggest producers of freight for the Railway Department.

I think the Minister must agree that with very few exceptions indeed the primary producers who took advantage of the concessions under the First Schedule of the Act—no matter how much was carted on their trucks as a result of those concessions—carted a very small quantity compared with the total tonnage they produced for transport over the railway system. I still think the Minister has got this matter somewhat out of perspective.

There is no doubt at all in my mind that, if this Bill is carried in its present form, it will have very great repercussions indeed in our country districts, and it will cause considerable dislocation in what has come to be regarded as the normal operations of the farming community.

I very much question whether it will have any material effect on the finances of the Railway Department. I have in front of me the last available railway report in the Votes and Proceedings of 1956, page 2830 of which shows the break-up of each £1 of revenue. If the Minister examines the particular graph he will note that goods and livestock bring in 16s. 7d. The next greatest item is passenger traffic, which brings in 1s. 7d. Parcels and mails traffic bring in 8d.; road and refreshment services bring in 8d.; and other miscellaneous services bring in 6d.

It will be seen, therefore, that goods and livestock at 16s. 7d. entirely overshadow all the other operations of the Railway Department. The Minister is suggesting that that percentage of traffic being carried on farmers' trucks—most of it in

backloading from the city; a smaller percentage, presumably, on the forward load to the city in order to qualify for that backloading—will make a material difference to the finances of the Railway Department.

Frankly I very much doubt that that will be so; and I notice that, when introducing the Bill, the Minister produced a few figures to support that contention. It seems to me that all members in this House must be seriously concerned about the plight of the Railway Department. There is no doubt that sharp differences of opinion are likely to arise when we discuss in detail what is necessary to put the position right.

I have always viewed with a great deal of suspicion the contention that the only way in which the finances of the Railway Department could be corrected is by putting a greater tonnage of goods and passengers over that particular service. Undoubtedly the revenue can be increased to some small extent; but I do believe it can only have a very slight effect, comparatively, on the very difficult financial position facing the Treasurer in relation to the Railway Department.

Unfortunately, the average country dweller, particularly those of the farming community, who has been so seriously affected by the discontinuance of services on certain country branch lines as a result of this type of legislation, is naturally likely to feel most hostile towards the Government when considering the drastic action that has been taken in closing railway lines and in refusing primary producers the right to cart their own produce, as compared with the lack of action on the part of the Government in cleaning up the affairs of the Railway Department. It is hardly the right time to discuss in detail the financial affairs of the Railway Department, but, of course, that does come into the question because, when he introduced the Bill, the Minister spent some time on the necessity for legislation such as this to help deal with the problem.

I would direct the Minister's attention to another graph at page 2830, which is adjacent to the graph I quoted previously, giving the proportion of expenditure on each item in each £1 of the total expenditure in the Railway Department. There, members will see that in each £1 of expenditure in the railway system, motive power and depot repairs account for 6s. 3d. and traffic for a further 4s. 3d., which makes 10s. 6d. out of each £1 of expenditure, and directly relates to the actual running of trains on the railway system.

This item is entirely divorced from track maintenance, overall administration and so on. That seems to bear out the contention that, irrespective of how drastic

legislation, such as this, will force traffic into the railway system, it can never correct the serious problem in the Railway Department. The other figures covered by each £1 of expenditure are as follows:—

- 7d. road and refreshment services
- 1s. 5d. depreciation
- 2s. 10d. workshops repairs
- 3s. 4d. track maintenance
- 1s. 4d. other expenditure.

In considering those various items, it is clear that track maintenance must be met, irrespective of whether a few or many trains traverse the different sections of track of the railway system of this State. Of course, this particular item is directly affected by the density of traffic and the amount of goods which are carted by the road transport system independently of the railways. The Government should have a close look at the several items I have mentioned if it is to correct the very serious drain on the revenue of the State which goes towards buttressing the railway system.

Members will notice that I have not quoted any figures of interest payments because for several years now the Railway Department has not met any of the interest bill at all. The Treasury would be very happy if the Railway Department could cover its ordinary working expenditure, without contributing anything towards payment of interest on the capital invested in the railways. In those circumstances I feel that the introduction of this measure by the Government at the present juncture, before it has taken any visible and definite action to reduce greatly the expenditure in any part of the railway system, can only have a disheartening effect on the rural community. It will do nothing to create goodwill towards the Railway Department.

I would like to mention the position in the districts where the railway services have been discontinued. One would have thought that in those centres the Government would extend some consideration to the needs of the people, seeing that their farming operations have been dislocated to a great degree by the discontinuance of the rail services. In a great number of cases the cessation of any kind of service by the Railway Department, even to the carriage of the everyday requirements such as fruit and vegetables, has taken effect. In the districts where the residents have had to make their own arrangements to obtain such essentials from the railhead, it is a further smack in the face for them to know that the Government is introducing this legislation, which will take away their right to cart their own goods to any other point in the State in order to market them.

Mr. Lawrence: At what financial loss to them?

Mr. PERKINS: Those particular people will have to cart their own goods no matter what it costs them, whether it be profitable or otherwise. It should be a matter for them to judge themselves.

Mr. Lawrence: You were discoursing on the subject. I thought you would have known.

Mr. PERKINS: I do not presume to have such detailed knowledge as to be aware of the costs of individual farmers in any particular area. Surely we can go too far in restricting the personal liberties of the citizens of this or any other State! Admittedly the Railway Department and the Government are facing a very difficult position. Is it going to make the position any better by taking such drastic steps as contemplated in the measure, which aim only at restricting the rights of the individual before the Government has made any other move to popularise with the rural community the service it is providing?

In recent times I have noted that the Railway Department has appointed either one or more public relations officers. I have met one of them and I thought he was doing a most excellent job. His approach to the rural community seemed quite good. My information is that he has been the means of influencing some business into the Railway Department which formerly had been carried by road transport. I believe that such an approach can be strengthened considerably. If a more understanding attitude had been adopted by the Railway Department a great deal more of such traffic could have been diverted to it. For instance, in very many areas of the State the livestock services provided by the Railway Department are at least as good as anything provided by road transport.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That does not apply to all areas.

Mr. PERKINS: My own experience in sending lambs to Midland Junction or Robb's Jetty, or sending cattle and sheep to Midland Junction, is that they travel at least as well in railway trucks as in road vehicles. It is very rarely that I send lambs to market by any other means than the railways.

Mr. Hall: How many hours are they on the track?

Mr. PERKINS: From the particular siding where I load, the stock will go on the train at about 12 o'clock and arrive in Midland Junction at 6 or 7 o'clock next morning. That is quite a reasonable service. I have found that most of the crews of stock trains are reasonably careful to ensure that the stock arrive at Midland Junction in good order. The information that I have received from stock agents is that overall the stock despatched from the wheat and sheep areas—I do not presume

to speak for the South-West, where the problem might be different—by railway wagon arrive at least in as good a condition as stock arriving by road transport.

Mr. Ackland: That is not the case on the Mullewa line.

Mr. PERKINS: The member for Moore has referred to a line where distances are greater. When stock are in trucks for more than 18 hours, there is a lot to be said for using road transport. However, the point I am trying to make is that in regard to a lot of this traffic, the Railway Department is able to give a reasonably good service and, in these circumstances, I can assure the Minister for Transport that there is no prejudice on the part of the farming community against the Railway Department. They are anxious to use the railways to the maximum extent possible.

Mr. Ackland: If they can get service.

Mr. PERKINS: Yes. I will now refer to some other goods which I believe are probably the least profitable traffic which the railways carry. For example, take some types of building material which occupy a good deal of space in trucks and are not very heavy. The freight is very high, but requires a lot of supervision by the Railway Department as a considerable staff is required at Perth goods sheds for loading and more en route. It is hard to get full truck loads, yet that is the class of goods which the Minister for Transport is trying to force on to the railway system with this particular Bill; they will be the goods most affected. Unfortunately, the Railway Department has given the poorest service in regard to these goods, and that is the reason for so many primary producers making trips to Perth in order to collect goods of that nature.

I will give the House one instance which came directly under my notice. A farmer at Newdegate, who was doing extensions to a house, ordered a considerable quantity of asbestos sheets from Perth at the time when labour was short and asbestos sheeting was not easy to get. The firms who merchandised it were not prepared to crate, and the only way the traffic would be accepted, was to load it into railway trucks uncrated. These particular sheets were loaded into a truck uncrated—I do not know who was responsible for the loading—and it was not a good truck as bolts were sticking up from the bottom and slats had to be used to try to protect the sheets.

However, somebody else loaded beer barrels in the same truck and, in the course of some heavy shunts between Perth and the destination at Newdegate—I do not think the beer barrels went that far; I think they went to Lake Grace—they rolled about the truck; and I leave it to the imagination of members as to the condition of the asbestos sheets when they arrived at

Newdegate. The fact of the matter was that not one whole sheet came out of the truck.

The Minister for Transport: How were the beer barrels?

Mr. PERKINS: I do not know; but, as member for Roe, I received no complaint in regard to the beer barrels, but received a very vigorous complaint about the condition of the asbestos sheets. On behalf of that individual, I took the matter up with the Railway Department. After a great deal of correspondence and lengthy discussion, the Railway Department disclaimed all responsibility for the loss because the goods were carried at owner's risk and it could not be shown that any officer in the Railway Department was responsible for negligence respecting the sheets getting broken.

For my part, I do not know who was responsible for the negligence—and it does not matter very much at this particular stage—but the department refused to pay compensation. The officers of that department indicated that the sheets should have been taken at commissioner's risk, which is the standard reply one gets. They say, "Why don't you pay 10 per cent. more to let the Railway Department take ordinary carrier's risk?" The Railway Department would not accept at commissioner's risk, unless the goods had been crated. The firm refused to crate them and hence the buyer was placed in the position he was.

Mr. Bovell: Would the Railway Department accept the commissioner's risk at an unattended siding? I do not think it would.

Mr. PERKINS: No. I think goods have to go to an attended siding where someone can sign for them. Newdegate would have been all right in that respect. The point I am trying to make is that it would be much more economical for country residents—in this case, the primary producer—and I think, in the long run, it would not be detrimental to the Railway Department, if goods such as that could be obtained by the primary producer, who should have the right to backload it. I just give that case as an instance, but it occurs with many other goods. It applies to many small machines. They sometimes arrive in good order; but, on the other hand, if someone is careless in loading—they get loaded into a roadside truck—we know what would happen. When goods are carelessly loaded in Perth, they often get severely damaged in the course of a heavy shunt.

The Minister for Transport: Certain types of commodities are exempted by permits given by the Government and the Transport Board.

Mr. PERKINS: I fully expected that reply to be made. My reaction has been that it is very difficult to get these permits

from the Transport Board, and a further difficulty is that no one can be sure he will get the permit until he arrives in Perth and makes a personal application for it. It is possible to do this by telephone or correspondence, but I think all members who represent country districts know the difficulties inherent in that type of application. I do not want to reflect on the efficiency of the Transport Board as I realise it has many difficulties and there are always some people who are not reasonable, which makes the board ultra cautious.

The Minister for Transport: The feeling in many cases is that it is ultra generous.

Mr. PERKINS: I do not wish to comment on that. It may have been in some cases, but I have no means of knowing.

The Minister for Transport: I will bring a list—you mention the list number—of one, two, three or six meetings where there has been a complete schedule of the permits granted, and I think you will be amazed at the variety of types of commodities.

Mr. PERKINS: I know there are a considerable number of permits granted, but the point I desire to make is that it is extremely difficult to cover all that I envisage in that type of transport.

There is a further difficulty in regard to parts which are urgently required. Not long ago I had advice of the experience of one of my neighbours who had broken the mainspring in his crawler tractor, rang the agent in Perth, and then asked me to pick up a new spring when I was returning, as I had my utility here. I told him I would do so and I rang the agents, but in the meantime they had put the spring on the train. The next morning, after I had returned home, my neighbour rang me and said, "What about the spring?" I said, "The agents put it on the train and assured me it would be waiting at the station for you." He rang the station, but the spring was not there. Members can imagine his reaction.

By some ill chance the spring had been sent on a round-about route and did not arrive until that night, and this man lost a day's cultivating just after the first rains came; and the Railway Department built up a great deal of ill-will from that individual.

The Minister for Transport: But could not that apply to the local engineering works, a flour mill, butter factory or saw-mill? It is not confined to the primary producer.

Mr. PERKINS: I hardly expected the Minister to make this proposition: Because someone is badly situated, a facility

should be taken away from someone else who is even worse off so as to put him in the same bad position.

The Minister for Transport: I am not admitting that anyone is in a bad spot.

Mr. PERKINS: I point out to the Minister that it is for some of these other cases that the permits, to which he refers, are required. I have no doubt that in many of these instances the individuals are not legally entitled to run their vehicles to Perth and pick up particular articles. But the other type of individual who is not allowed to do that, if he is in urgent need of something, naturally rings the Transport Board and obtains a permit. I think that probably the great number of permits that the Minister has been referring to relate to that kind of service.

So I would emphasise that the legislation, if it is carried in its present form, will have a profound effect in country districts. I feel that the Minister is risking a tremendous amount of ill-will from the people who are the biggest customers of the Railway Department, in return for a problematical improvement in the finances of the department.

The Minister for Transport: Customers for the non-profitable and non-paying freights but not the customers for the better-paying freights.

Mr. PERKINS: We have heard for ages this argument about the paying and the non-paying freights. We know that in the days gone by the grain and super rate was a very low one compared with others, but it has been progressively raised until now I believe, notwithstanding what the Minister says, if we had an independent accounting inquiry into the Railway Department, we would find it is the most profitable traffic carried.

The Minister for Transport: You are definitely wrong.

Mr. PERKINS: This is a matter which is difficult to prove; impossible probably.

Hon. A. F. Watts: The Premier said that it is a better proposition to carry iron ore than to carry wheat.

Mr. PERKINS: That has a vital bearing on the question, and it seems as though the Premier is at variance with the Minister for Transport.

The Minister for Transport: I think that was an unfortunate choice of words on the part of the Premier.

Hon. A. F. Watts: It may have been, but there they are.

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

On motion by Mr. Hearman, time extended.

Mr. PERKINS: I wish to reply to the Minister's interjection because I regard it as vital. In case all members are not conversant with the exact procedure, I point out that so far as grain is concerned, all the railway department has to do is to provide the wagons, haul them and keep the track in order, and what goes with it. I cannot imagine a less expensive set-up for the railway department in connection with any other traffic that it handles.

In contrast, we might take some of the other traffic which the Minister for Railways says is the highest-priced traffic, and one might expect it to be profitable. Let us take the carriage of building materials which is a high-priced freight and which will be disallowed under this measure. In many instances this class of goods has to be handled by railway officers. It is stowed by porters and it is checked by railway staff. In many cases it is not consigned in full truck lots.

Mr. Roberts: And it is not railed in full train loads, either.

Mr. PERKINS: That is so. It is usually railed in odd trucks. It is notorious that the turn-around of trucks carrying this type of miscellaneous traffic is very slow. A truck carrying grain or superphosphate will probably make two or three trips while one of these trucks is completing one trip. In this measure the Minister is concentrating on cutting out the right of the primary producer to cart high-priced goods, and he is also refusing the right of the producer to cart even the cheapest-priced freight which, he says, is unprofitable.

If this type of freight were unprofitable, one would think that the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Railways would be only too anxious to get rid of it. But not a bit of it! I have a lurking suspicion at the back of my mind that the Minister for Transport realises that this type of freight is not nearly as unprofitable as the officers of the Railway Department have been accustomed to tell us.

The Minister for Transport: Where do you think this loss of £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 is coming from?

Mr. PERKINS: I think a tremendous amount of it has been incurred in the various specialist services which the Railway Department provides, but I am not in a position to be specific; no member of this House is. I put this to the Minister: If the department's responsibility began and ended with the carting of bulk freight goods such as ore, grain, coal, etc.—where the Railway Department only has to provide the trucks, and the loading and unloading is done for the department, and even the accounting is done for it because it all goes through a large outside organisation—how much staff would the railway

department require? In the circumstances one can well imagine that the number of men and the amount of equipment needed by the railway organisation would be only a fraction of what is provided at present. We are all realistic enough to know that we cannot make these changes overnight. We have a certain organisation with us and the sensible thing to do is to make improvements as quickly as we can to get the Railway Department on to a sounder basis.

My final point and request to the Minister for Transport and the Government is that there should be a start in putting some of these reforms into practice so that we may see that the Railway Department is putting its own house in order before such drastic changes are made as are envisaged in this Bill. I cannot emphasise too much the dislocation that this measure will cause, if agreed to in its present form, in the rural communities and, further, the hostility that it will create towards the Government in the minds of those who are the biggest customers of the Railway Department.

The Minister for Transport: They will still be the most favoured section of the community.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [10.41]: I am sorry to be contributing to the debate at this late hour, but the Minister would not agree to an adjournment and was adamant that any contributions that were to be made to the debate should be made. As the representative of a rural constituency, I will not pass a silent vote on this measure which I believe is another instance of the Government's attitude towards the primary producers, who are the backbone and foundation-stone of any prosperity that the State enjoys and will enjoy in the future. Admittedly, during the postwar years primary producers have reaped some of the reward for which they worked for many years prior to the buoyancy which has been experienced since the war.

It was my unfortunate experience during the depression years as a bank officer in the rural areas of this State to know the hardships that the primary producers endured. The Minister would now have us believe they are a privileged class, but they are the class which even then was carrying the prosperity of the State—if any—on their shoulders, and it was solely by their sacrifice that we were able to come through those difficult financial times. It was only by virtue of the fact that the primary producers remained on their properties that they were able later to enjoy some of the fruits of their earlier labours and the State was able to show the progress that it did show in the post-war years.

The real reason for the introduction of this Bill, of course, is an endeavour by the Government to make the farmers pay

through the closing of certain sections of the outback railway system of this State. Originally 842 miles of railways were scheduled to be closed and of that distance I do not know how much remains operative. I understand that a very large proportion of that length of line has been closed and the primary producers in those areas have been left without a dual transport system.

Hon. A. F. Watts: About 750 miles of railways have been closed.

Mr. BOVELL: I realise the financial difficulty with which the Government is confronted, but the closing of this length of railway has only contributed to a greater loss by the Railway Department. The Premier has estimated that during the present financial year the railway losses, without taking interest into consideration, will exceed £7,000,000; whereas before these closures, the loss for the last financial year was approximately £4,500,000. The Government is therefore faced with the problem of endeavouring to meet these losses, and the primary producers are being called upon to carry the burden.

For my part, I wish to issue an emphatic protest against the attitude of the Government. In this Parliament last session we saw the Government impose a tax on improved agricultural land and increase probate duties. It is not every farmer that dies leaving a large estate. The great majority of primary producers, when their time comes to pass on from this world, leave very limited assets; and many of them are financially involved with banks, stockbrokers and the like, with the result that their families are often faced with the responsibility, if they are to carry on the properties, of raising more finance from the institutions I have mentioned.

All in all, the Government's aim during this Parliament seems to have been to make the farmers contribute the finance necessary for the Government to carry on. This Bill is purely a measure to prevent farmers and other primary producers from using to the best advantage their own modes of transport. It is necessary for farmers in the South-West often to bring livestock to the Midland Junction market by road as the railway services are not sufficient to get the stock to market in time or in the best condition. Those people have been permitted; and, I take it, under the Bill will still be permitted—

The Minister for Transport: It is questionable whether 50 per cent. of that freight carried by road in the circumstances you mention is permissible under the Act, and if there is not a commonsense approach to this Bill, it may be necessary, administratively, to do something about that. This is not a threat but merely a statement of fact, because the position is so serious.

Mr. BOVELL: The Leader of the Country Party dealt with that and said that the Act as present was not policed.

The Minister for Transport: For one of the few times in his career, he has been completely and utterly off the beam.

Mr. BOVELL: I do not know whether he has. I thought the Minister, by interjection a few moments ago, substantiated what the Leader of the Country Party said.

The Minister for Transport: I want to make the position perfectly clear. The Act does not allow it, but the Transport Board has authority, under the Act, to grant certain additional concessions; and those, of course, can be withdrawn at any time without reference to Parliament.

Mr. BOVELL: I take it that under this Bill there will be a more rigid enforcement of the law regarding the road transport of stock, which is vital to me in regard to my parliamentary representation, and furthermore I gather that in future it will not be possible for the farmer to take back from the city commodities for his own use. That privilege has been extended in the past, but I take it that this Bill will wipe it out completely. It will also be interesting to know—and the Minister gave no indication of this—what additional personnel will have to be employed by the Transport Board if and when this Bill becomes law.

The Minister for Transport: Correction there. The member for Moore asked that question and the answer was, "No additional staff whatever."

Mr. BOVELL: It appeared to me that great numbers would be required in addition to the staff now employed by the Transport Board. I do not want unduly to criticise the personnel of the board. At all times I have found—and I have said this at the meetings held in my electorate when members of the Transport Board went down there in connection with the closure of the Busselton-Margaret River-Flinders Bay railway—when I have had occasion to visit the Transport Board, I have received courtesy and consideration, even though I have not obtained everything I asked for.

The board has a job to do; and if Parliament passes Acts, naturally members of the board have to administer them and we cannot blame them for what I consider are injustices to country people. The main feature of the success of any business venture is competition, and I feel that this Bill is directed against road and rail transport competition. We have to realise that road transport is taking an increasingly greater part in our economy.

Mr. Potter: One would not have thought so a few months ago, in view of all the protests that were made.

Mr. BOVELL: I consider that a number of commodities have to be carted by rail. The Government's action in going ahead with indecent haste and closing outback railway lines without first of all ensuring that the whole of the railway service was overhauled, and economies made in every sphere of railway activities, is not in the best interests either of the people in the districts concerned or the State generally.

This Bill also will be an injustice to beekeepers. They are only a small section of the community but the Minister for Agriculture recently introduced legislation connected with that industry. The commodity which they produce is small in quantity and therefore I think that the existing practice of their being allowed to transport honey, hives, etc., in their own vehicles should be allowed to continue.

The Minister for Transport: What hardship does this Bill impose upon beekeepers?

Mr. BOVELL: I have spoken to an executive of the Beekeepers' Association and he is of the opinion that it will interfere with the smooth working of honey producers. I cannot say any more than that at present, but I am prepared to accept his statement in that regard.

The Minister for Agriculture: Without being able to explain it.

Mr. BOVELL: It is the Minister's responsibility to explain the position and I am telling him that, in my opinion, and from the advice I have had, this legislation will not be in the best interests of beekeepers.

The Minister for Transport: But bees, hives, appliances and so on will still be exempted under the Act.

Mr. BOVELL: But the honey will have to be transported by rail.

The Minister for Transport: That is so.

Mr. BOVELL: I think it is only a pin-pricking measure, and, in view of the limited amount of freight that the railways might gain from the beekeepers, the Minister could have left them out of the Bill under discussion.

The member for Blackwood has asked a number of questions in regard to operating costs and the average earnings of the railways. The Minister for Transport, in reply to those questions, stated that the average earnings per ton mile were 4.13d. On another occasion the member for Blackwood asked the Minister as to the cost of operation of the W.A.G.R. per ton mile for the year 1955-56 and the Minister replied that the assessed cost of operation was 5.16d. per ton mile. From that, I gather that the more freight the railways carry, the greater the loss.

The Minister for Transport: No.

Mr. BOVELL: If the average earnings are 4.13d. per ton mile and the operating costs are 5.16d. per ton mile, it would appear to me that the more freight the railways carry the greater the loss, unless the average earnings per mile can be increased.

However, I am opposed to this measure because I feel it is not in the best interests, firstly, of the State of Western Australia; secondly, of the primary producers generally; and, thirdly, of country communities. The great bulk of country communities are made up of the farmers in those districts. Admittedly, that is not so in the mining areas; but as I represent an area that mainly comprises primary producers, I can only talk from first-hand knowledge of the difficulties that confront farmers.

The Minister for Transport: Wouldn't there be more people in the country who are not primary producers than there are people who are primary producers?

Mr. BOVELL: All told?

The Minister for Transport: Yes.

Mr. BOVELL: I could not tell the Minister, because I have not the statistics.

The Minister for Transport: I think there are.

Mr. BOVELL: I would say that in the electorate I represent, despite the fact that there is a reasonably large town and a number of people living in retirement due to the pleasant climatic conditions, the great bulk of the people would be primary producers of one sort or another.

Mr. Ackland: Or those who service them.

The Minister for Transport: Yes, but they do not get the benefit of these concessions.

Mr. BOVELL: Indirectly they do, because they rely on the primary producers for their continuity of employment.

Mr. Ackland: The prosperity of the State depends on the primary producers.

Mr. BOVELL: That is so. Our prosperity depends on what is produced from the soil. I believe the Transport Board has all the powers that are required vested in it now without the Minister introducing this Bill, especially in view of the real effect it will have on the farming community, and when he is fully aware of the difficulties already confronting those people. We can only hazard a guess what the future of farmers will be if this Bill becomes an Act. I oppose the second reading.

On motion by Mr. Ackland, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.1 p.m.