

tee stage, or to delay the Committee stage, in order that members, such as the member for Maylands, may have an opportunity to place any amendments they care to upon the notice paper.

Other persons have been brought under my notice. There are those civilians who were transferred or removed in the very early stages of the war, and for reasons attributable to the war, to other parts of the Commonwealth, such as the Northern Territory, in order that they might engage themselves in building operations for defence purposes. In many cases they have only recently returned to this State, to find that the circumstances do not now exist which existed when they left the State. They now find that laws have been passed of which they have little or no knowledge. I am given to understand an amendment may be suggested by an hon. member in that respect. In all the circumstances, I shall ask the House to agree to the second reading but, if it is desirable that there should be some further alteration of this law to deal out a reasonable measure of justice, I am further going to ask the House that the Committee stage should be postponed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

As to Second Reading.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [9.45]: Mr. Speaker, I have not got the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member applying for a postponement?

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am moving the second reading.

Mr. SPEAKER: But the hon. member did not introduce the Bill.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Am I not entitled to do so?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may, on behalf of the member for West Perth, move that the second reading be postponed. The Bill will come up again next Wednesday, provided we get far enough down the list of Orders. It will have to take its turn, and it will probably be at the bottom of the notice paper.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If I do nothing, it goes down to the bottom of the notice paper.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member does nothing at all, the Bill will be struck off the notice paper.

Hon. N. KEENAN: On behalf of the member for West Perth, I move, in those dire circumstances:—

That the second reading of the Bill be postponed.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.47 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 27th September, 1945.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Questions: Authorised transport routes, as to waiving picking-up regulations | 894 |
| Wheat stores, as to acquisition for fodder conservation | 894 |
| Motion: Trans. railway, Kalgoorlie-Fremantle section, to inquire by Select Committee | 897 |
| Bills: Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board), 2a. | 895 |
| Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act Amendment, 1a. | 897 |
| National Fitness, 1a. | 897 |
| Adjournment, special | 908 |

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

QUESTIONS.

AUTHORISED TRANSPORT ROUTES.

As to Waiving Picking-up Regulations.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT asked the Chief Secretary: In view of the great inconvenience being experienced in the metropolitan and suburban areas, caused by the shortage of transport facilities, will the Government give consideration to waiving the regulations which prevent the picking up and setting down of passengers on any part of authorised transport routes?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Yes, but our inquiries suggest many difficulties.

WHEAT STORES.

As to Acquisition for Fodder Conservation.

Hon. A. I. LOTON asked the Chief Secretary: As it is reported that the Commonwealth Government intends that the State Governments shall have full responsibility for implementing the plans for fodder conservation, will the Government of Western

Australia give immediate consideration to the proposal of acquiring from the Australian Wheat Board for grain storage, and other purposes, those buildings that the Australian Wheat Board intends very shortly to offer for sale, or dismantle at certain centres?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The implementing of the fodder conservation scheme is the joint responsibility of the State and Commonwealth Governments and the question of the utilisation of the available grain storage facilities is already under consideration.

BILL—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.36]: I propose to vote for the second reading of the Bill, but I would like the Chief Secretary to advise the House on one or two points. I note in one clause that the Chief Justice, judges and the President of the Arbitration Court are exempted. I do not quite understand why they should be mentioned in the Bill at all. I am under the impression that the measure is to apply only to Government employees who receive less than £750 per annum. Another portion of the Bill refers to those employed in a permanent capacity.

An attempt is made to define "permanent capacity," but that attempt appears to me to make the matter rather confusing. It is difficult to see clearly, for instance, whether members of the Licensing Court would be included. I do not think for one moment that they would, but I would like the point cleared up, together with a few other matters of that kind. Apart from that, I have no objection to the Bill. True, it seems an unnecessary waste of time and energy to have—if I might put it this way—an employees' representative and an employers' representative on the bench with the chairman, because it means that for each party there is an advocate on the floor of the court and an advocate after the court adjourns to consider its decision; and it seems to me that the same result could be achieved by only appointing an efficient magistrate as chairman of the board, without any other members. However, I support the second reading.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.38]: Like some previous speakers, I feel that the Bill should be a valuable contribution to the creation of peace in the Civil Service. If it is amended along the lines suggested by Sir Hal Colebatch, I think the measure will go a long way in that direction. I am particularly interested in the clause which deals with the ability of those who are in receipt of £750 or less to appeal. When the Chief Secretary was speaking, I asked, by interjection, why the figure had been set down at £750, rather than £650 or £850, and I thought the Chief Secretary's reply was not adequate. I feel that £750 is just an arbitrary figure, which could be removed, and that the office, rather than the salary attaching to the office, should be the standard of merit with regard to appeal applications.

When this Bill was before the House last time, I voted against it, but I am voting for it this time. I believe the defeat of the Bill on the last occasion was entirely the fault of the Government, because the second reading speech was made at 12 o'clock on the night of the 14th December, and immediately the House adjourned until the next day, which was the last day of the session. It was one of those frightful all-night sittings, when the nerves of members are on edge. As I did not have time to read the Bill, I was influenced by the discussion which took place, and thought that the weight of the debate certainly favoured rejection of the Bill. To the late bringing of the Bill before the notice of the House I think was attributable its failure to pass. I am certainly going to vote for the Bill on this occasion as I have had time to study its provisions, and I recommend it to the House.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [4.42]: Mr. Dimmitt can place what construction he likes on the defeat of the Bill last session. I am somewhat with him when he says that one feature that contributed to its defeat was its late introduction. Another feature that I think was equally as important was the speech made against the Bill by Dr. Hislop who, judging from his remarks in the Chamber yesterday, is, unlike Mr. Dimmitt, still not enamoured of the Bill. I have taken the trouble to consult several civil servants, among whom were two who are on the council governing the Civil Service, and my in-

formation is exactly opposite to that which Dr. Hislop gave the House yesterday. Dr. Hislop said he had made inquiries from officers holding high positions, and had been assured that there were some grave disabilities attaching to the Bill, or something to that effect.

I am told that the Civil Service as a whole desires this Bill to pass, and it would be peculiar if that were not so, because I think other members—in common with myself—were circularised by the secretary of the Civil Service Association with a request that this measure be given earnest consideration and that if any member had any serious objections to the Bill and would be good enough to get in touch with the secretary, that gentleman would be only too pleased to explain anything about which members were not quite clear. It has been emphasised that we must have a contented Civil Service, and there is no need to repeat that; but I do not want it thought that I am willing to give that service everything its members think they should have. Having looked through this Bill, I cannot see any reasonable objection to the passing of the second reading. There are one or two minor matters that, if other members do not take action to deal with them in Committee, I intend to have altered. With a reservation regarding those one or two minor amendments, I propose to support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [4.45]: I think the House exercised a certain amount of wisdom in defeating this measure in the dying hours of Parliament last session. I have frequently stated in the House that I think, as far as important Bills are concerned, we should adopt the same practice. It has become a custom—not only of this Government but of all Governments—to keep a lot of legislation waiting and then, in the last hours, pile it down here expecting members of this House to give what might be called reasonable consideration to measures that have been submitted. Last session I asked the Chief Secretary to withdraw the Bill instead of having it defeated, so that it could have been dealt with immediately the House met again. We certainly are able to discuss this important measure now, and that shows the wisdom of having the opportunity to give it due consideration, because the measure that was submitted to us has been materially

altered—I think to the advantage of civil servants—before it reached us here.

I believe the civil servants are justly entitled to a board of appeal. While most of us will agree with Dr. Hislop's remark that efficiency should be the guiding factor in promotions, we have also to realise that, unfortunately, owing to the system that is in existence in the Public Service, many men come in, chock full of enthusiasm and anxious to show that they are efficient, only to find themselves tied down by rules and regulations; otherwise "red tape." To some extent, men in the Government service have to wait for someone either to retire or be called away from this earth for good, before there is an opportunity to obtain promotion. While it may be that frequently a certain amount of consideration is extended to men on account of seniority, I think those men are justly entitled to it when they have given many years of service and have had to abide by the regulations.

Those of us who have had much to do with the departments know that we have excellent public servants who would, I think, had they been employed in private enterprise, have made much better progress in the world than has been their lot in the Public Service. People look upon employment in the service as being permanent, and it is therefore necessary for some officers to wait many years for an opportunity for promotion. I, personally, do not like one clause in the Bill, and it will not be retained with my approval. I refer to the provision setting out that only an applicant who is a member of a union will be entitled to appeal. That is very unfair, if we are to deal with men on their merits. We know that unionism is compulsory, but I think to insert that provision is carrying it a bit too far.

There is one matter which I consider is a grave injustice to a section of the civil servants. I refer to those who are deemed to be temporary employees. Some of these men have been in the service for many years, but before the five-year period ends—I believe that is the period—they are given a holiday which breaks the continuity of their service and so they remain temporary employees. However, it is for the men themselves to try to get that injustice remedied. To me it seems to be something distinctly unfair. With other

members I cannot understand why a salary limit of £750 should be prescribed in the Bill, but that point can be considered in Committee. I shall vote for the second reading in the hope that several amendments will be made in Committee, and when the Bill becomes law, I hope it will give to employees in the Civil Service the measure of satisfaction contemplated by the Government.

HON. C. R. CORNISH (North) [4.52]: I voted against a similar Bill last session because it was presented at such a late hour and we were not given reasonable opportunity to study its contents. If we adopt a few of the amendments suggested yesterday by Sir Hal Colebatch, I believe this measure can be improved. In any business or organisation, particularly one like the Civil Service, it is necessary to have a satisfied staff. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, debate adjourned.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act Amendment.

2, National Fitness.

Received from the Assembly.

MOTION—TRANS. RAILWAY, KALGOORLIE-FREMANTLE SECTION.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. A. Thomson—

That a Select Committee of five members be appointed to enquire into and report upon—

- (a) Whether conditions in the post-war period, including modern transport facilities by air, sea and road, will warrant the construction of a railway of the 4ft. 8½in. gauge from Kalgoorlie to the metropolitan area.
- (b) If such construction is warranted, what route should this State recommend to the Commonwealth Government so as best to make use of the development value of the line and improve transport facilities and minimise traffic congestion.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South-East) [4.55]: In supporting the motion, I consider that the House should be grateful to Mr. Thomson for having brought this important matter forward. I regret that a copy of Sir Harold Clapp's report has not been made available to each of us. I believe that not

more than two or three members have seen the report, and at this important stage of the proceedings, it is essential that such a report should be submitted to members without delay. I hope the Minister will be able to secure a copy for each of us. The Chief Secretary, in speaking to the motion, gave us information that had not previously been available to us since Sir Harold Clapp's report was made public. We are more or less in the dark—

Hon. L. B. Bolton: We have been.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Yes, but the lights are on now. I was about to say that we have been more or less in the dark as to Sir Harold Clapp's proposals for the line between Fremantle and Kalgoorlie, and the appointment of a Select Committee would enable proposals to be put forward and a review made of the reports of various committees in order to determine the better route to adopt. The Chief Secretary told us yesterday that the distance from Kalgoorlie via Brookton and Armadale to Fremantle would be 20 miles greater than the Kalgoorlie-Northam-Toodyay-Avon Valley route. If the 20 miles is the only difference, and the adoption of that route will permit of much additional country being served by a railway, it should not deter us from adopting the longer route. Taking an Australia-wide view, I am satisfied that we must have a standard gauge of railway from Fremantle to Brisbane, but we cannot approve of the suggested basis that the State should find four parts of the money to one part provided by the Commonwealth. As Mr. Miles stated, the contributions by the two Governments should be the other way round.

I was pleased to hear the Chief Secretary say that the State Government had not committed itself to any definite plan for the standardisation of the line or the proposed route. The Select Committee, if appointed, will have a big task. The Chief Secretary informed the House that while he was not altogether in favour of the motion, he would not vote against it. The small share that the State will be called upon to pay towards the cost of the original survey will be a mere bagatelle, and that survey will play a most important part in determining whether the route through the Avon Valley shall be adopted. We were given information yesterday about the mileage of railways in the various States. The figures were very illuminating. This State, with its small

population, has more than its share to bear in regard to railway expenditure. This must be a Commonwealth matter. I hope the motion will be carried and that the proposed Select Committee will be appointed.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [5.1]: I intend to support the motion because I believe this Parliament has been unduly ignored by the Commonwealth Government in its decision to introduce a uniform railway system for Western Australia. Most of us agree that a uniform railway system throughout the Commonwealth is highly desirable. We hope that in due course when it is applied to this State it will be all that we could hope for. I feel that if later on objections should be raised, this Parliament, unless some action is taken to investigate the matter so far as it can do so, would be open to censure. I think the appointment of a Select Committee will enable us to go some way towards enlightening Parliament as to what is actually proposed, and place members generally in a better position to understand what the State has been committed to. I appreciate very much the fund of information that the Chief Secretary gave us yesterday. It is a pity, however, that we did not have it and still more information placed before Parliament at an earlier date. Had we been supplied with a complete statement by the Commonwealth Government, we would have been able to view this matter with much more confidence than we can at the moment.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan) [5.3]: I also think Mr. Thomson is to be complimented on bringing this matter forward. There are two or three points to which I would like to draw attention. It is beyond question that Sir Harold Clapp did a wonderful job on the Victorian railways. In doing that job he rendered material aid to country interests, particularly the fruitgrowers. He brought to bear on the matter of railway administration knowledge acquired in other countries. We have to accept him as a man who speaks with authority. The "Spirit of Progress" running between Melbourne and Albury is undoubtedly the finest train in the world. I do not know what importance we are to attach to the fact that this train is run on a 5ft. 3in. gauge railway, and that the rail-

ways following it in the matter of comfort and convenience are the 5ft. 3in. gauges in Victoria and South Australia, whereas 4ft. 8½in. now seems to be the accepted standard.

As to anything that may be said against the 4ft. 8½in. gauge, I point out that I have a good deal of knowledge of the splendid 4ft. 8½in. gauge in England. I have travelled from London to Edinburgh, a distance of 400 miles, in six hours, and had a most comfortable journey. I do not think there is anything to be said against the 4ft. 8½in. gauge, as a gauge. There are just two questions which the Select Committee, if appointed, should consider. The first is priority, and the second is finance. I am inclined to think that at present there is a great deal of danger in spending any large sum of money and employing any very large numbers of men on works that are not immediately productive. I think that priority in public expenditure should be given to those undertakings that will immediately, or very quickly, produce real wealth. Let us consider for the moment what these questions are! First of all there is the settlement of soldiers. That will cost a great deal of money and must be done thoroughly and efficiently.

Then there is housing, which has fallen behind on account of the war, and again requires a great deal of expenditure both in manpower and in money. Further, we have the rehabilitation of industry, both private and secondary, and a tremendous amount of money and manpower will be required there. All our farms are in a state of semi-dilapidation. Even when we turn to our own railways we know that a great deal of money has to be spent there to restore them to anything like efficiency. I do not suppose that any of our manufacturing industries can be brought back to their full purpose without the expenditure of a great deal of money. It is a question of to what extent these matters ought to take precedence over a work which will not immediately produce real wealth. I notice from the circular embodying the speech of the Minister for Transport, Mr. Ward, these sentences occur—

The cost of the project now recommended would be spread over a period of eleven years, or an average of about £7,000,000 a year. War expenditure in approximately seven weeks has been equivalent to the total cost of

this project. Having been spared the devastation of an invading force, we should not hesitate to protect our shores for the future.

This paragraph contains one sentence that is entirely misleading, and another that is open to serious question. The suggestion is that because we have spent £10,000,000 a week on war, therefore we can spend an equal sum on other things. I know that is the common idea in the mind of the public. I do not think we shall make real progress until that idea is knocked on the head, that people realise that the war has involved a tremendous cost, and that only hard work and a great deal of self sacrifice can bring us back to the position we occupied before the war. In some parts of Europe there is a type of sheep that has adapted itself to its environment and has developed a fat tail. During the winter when the snow is on the ground the sheep are able to live on their fat tails.

That is precisely what we have been doing. We have been living on our fat and upon our resources. It is now suggested that because we have done that in the last five years or so we can go on doing it. Is it not stupid to suggest that any sheep can go on living on the fat in its tail all through the winter, the following summer, and then through the ensuing winter? It has to restore itself and make ready for another winter; and we have to do the same. The suggestion of Mr. Ward that, because we have found all this money during the war period we can find it for this particular project, will not bear examination. The other feature of the statement I shall refer to in a few minutes. Having dealt with this question of priorities, I now come to the next question, that of finance. How is the project to be financed? If it is to be financed by taxation it will inevitably mean the crippling of industry. We are far too heavily taxed already to permit of any industry making the progress that ought to be made.

We can take as an example what happened in the Old Country after the last war. Taxation was very high in order to pay for the war that England had won. The loser does not pay. Taxation was therefore high in order to prepare for the war it was hoped would not come. It was very high in order to keep in demoralising idleness an army of about 2,000,000 unem-

ployed. What was the result? Industry was crippled in all directions. I remember the time when there was a large number of unemployed men, many in the shipping industry; yet millions of pounds were being spent on the Continent, partly in Germany, in building British ships. The fact of the matter was that industry and progress were paralysed because of the excessive taxation. We want to avoid that. If we impose heavy taxation in order to continue spending money at the rate we have been spending it during the war, we shall cripple industry, and shall go a long way towards destroying the economy of the country.

The next method of raising money is by loan. That again will mean the withdrawal of money that could be better employed in rehabilitation and in direct production. If the money is raised by loan it will impose an additional heavy burden on the future. The third method which I do not think the present Commonwealth Government would favour—although there was a time when it leaned toward that idea—would be to finance the undertaking by what is euphemistically termed bank credit. The only effect of that would be to increase the already enormous spending power in the pockets of the people without any equivalent production on which it could be spent. It would intensify the present inflation, and would go a long way towards placing inflation beyond control. These are the three methods by which the undertaking could be financed. I will now refer to the last portion of the paragraph appearing in Mr. Ward's statement which I quoted a few moments ago:—

Having been spared the devastation of an invading force, we should not hesitate to protect our shores for the future.

He assumes that the building of the railway will protect our shores for the future. I very much doubt that. I have read recently an interesting book. It is called "Paris, The Future of War," and is written by B. H. Liddell Hart, an authority who is recognised the world over. On page 71 he said, after examining the position thoroughly:—

Thus the nation which continues to base its military communications on railways and roads is running for a fall.

I do not think it is much use making any sort of preparation for another war. This

book was written before the days of the atomic bomb or other modern instruments of destruction in war. If there is another war railways will be easily destroyed from the air, and roads as well. To spend enormous sums of money and thus cripple ourselves as well as the country, and render it difficult for us to restore prosperity to our people, merely to do something that is only of problematical use in war, is not a wise step to take. There is yet another point. In the recent past we have had the experience of all sorts of methods of transport being restricted in the interests of the railways. The argument used is that Government money is involved, and that therefore the people's money has been spent on the railways and they must be protected. All sorts of restrictions are imposed against the use of the roads and of motor vehicles, and to some extent against the use of air services. If all this money is to be spent on the railways, what guarantee is there that it will not mean the imposition of further restrictions in methods of transport that are far more up to date than is a railway and are likely to be more extensively used in the future?

We cannot afford to forgo the most modern methods of transport, and I think the most modern methods will be by greatly improved motor cars and air services. If we are going to have this expenditure on railways and then be told it is the people's money and that we must therefore use the railways even though it means restricting the use of motor cars and aeroplanes, we shall find ourselves in a worse position at the end than we are in now. I was greatly impressed by the Chief Secretary's remarks at the conclusion of his speech yesterday when he told us what it would cost to put the whole of the railways in this State and in Queensland on to a uniform gauge. What he said seemed to put right out of the question any idea of doing that for a long time to come. I am not sure that having a 4ft. 8½in. gauge for some of our lines and 3ft. 6in. for others is not going to be embarrassing in many directions. Because it is impossible for too much light to be thrown on this question I shall support the motion. If the Select Committee is appointed, I make the suggestion that it devotes itself to paragraph (a) which will require it to find out—

Whether conditions in the post-war period, including modern transport facilities by air, sea and road, will warrant the construction of a railway of the 4ft. 8½in. gauge from Kalgoorlie to the metropolitan area.

If that question is not answered in the affirmative then it will be practically futile to talk about routes. I support the motion.

HON. C. B. CORNISH (North) [5.17]: I have great pleasure in supporting the motion, and I speak from a practical point of view of the two gauges because I have driven locomotives thousands of miles over the 3ft. 6in. gauge and over the 4ft. 8½in. gauge. My experience is that there is no comparison between the two. We might as well compare a 2ft. 6in. gauge with a 3ft. 6in. gauge. Our State railways have too much overhang and when our trains get up to any speed the locomotive and the carriages set up oscillation which causes a lot of wear to the train itself and also to the track. I have heard people argue that if we modernised our 3ft. 6in. railways we could get the same speed as with the 4ft. 8½in. gauge. That is quite wrong.

It would be possible to make a more stable railway but we would still have the oscillation, because of the overhang of the carriages. When such trains attained speeds of, say, 60 or 70 miles an hour, which are considered modern, the oscillation would bring about wear and tear and rough riding. The grades mentioned by the Chief Secretary are very good. If it is possible to get a 1 in 100 grade from here to Kalgoorlie it would help our present system a lot. Today we have a 1 in 40 grade with a big engine hauling 200 or 300 tons. That is very costly, and very slow. With a 1 in 100 grade it would be possible to average a good speed and the train would be a different proposition altogether. When considering the different means of travelling I had in mind travel only by air and by sea, but Sir Hal Colebatch has mentioned another, the motor vehicle. That means would certainly affect an up-to-date railway, but such a railway would appeal to many elderly people who would not travel by sea or by air.

If we had a train fitted out here so that passengers could travel straight through from Fremantle to Brisbane, without changing their carriage, we would have something to offer the public and I think

it would be availed of by thousands of people. There will be much more travel in the future than in the past, and an up-to-date railway is one of the finest means of travelling. At present when going from here to Brisbane, as I did a few months ago, it is a nightmare changing from one train to another. The traveller does not know whether he has left something behind in his carriage. All classes of people would patronise a service that could go right through. I think that Diesel engines should be introduced for the desert sections. I drove, 30 years ago, the engines that are in use today on the Trans Australian railway line. Today the same engines and the same means of power, namely coal and water, are employed. Both the water and the coal have to be carried thousands of miles over the desert to keep the engines going. An oil depot could be established half-way across, and an up-to-date Diesel engine could then go right through from there to the other end of the desert where there could be additional facilities.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Could such an engine pull a sufficient load?

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: Yes. The largest Diesel engine in France is stronger than any engine in Australia. Diesel engines could be made big and strong enough. Something else that should be considered is the question of the brakes. I have used both the vacuum and the Westinghouse brakes. To my mind the vacuum is far superior to the Westinghouse. We had a lot of trouble with the Trans railway in the early days on account of the Westinghouse brakes. I understand that that railway was equipped with those brakes because they were backed with a lot of money. Today the vacuum is cheaper to instal, cheaper to run, safer and simpler to handle than the other.

We have, in this State, never had an accident such as the one that occurred at Sunshine on the Victorian railways, which was caused through a fault in the Westinghouse brakes. That system allowed for the human element to come in. The porter, or whoever connected the train, forgot to turn the air pipeline taps and when the engine-driver tried to apply the brakes there was no response. The result was that he crashed into another train and many people were killed. That could not occur with the vacuum brake because it does not provide for a tap. Once

the train is connected the brake is there and works immediately the engine-driver wants it. Also when going down a long grade the brake can be used to steady the train, and when it is released full power is immediately available, but that is not the case with the Westinghouse brake. These matters could be investigated while dealing with the standard gauge.

As Sir Harold Clapp said, this would be a great means of putting our tomatoes, beans, peas and watermelons on the Melbourne and Sydney markets. We can grow these articles in the North in the winter, and in the past we have done that and sent them to the Eastern States' markets. But our produce has had to wait at Fremantle for an Eastern States' boat. Those vegetables have brought big prices in Melbourne. If we send them to Melbourne it allows the people there to have green vegetables when they cannot grow them themselves. I think Mr. Ward was quite right when he referred to this railway as a protection to the country. Today Australia is isolated. If we had a large Air Force so that we could detect an enemy coming to our shores, we would have to move our Forces to wherever the invaders were about to land. The only way to do that is to use railways and good roads. We must get to the vulnerable part as quickly as possible. If an enemy is going to land in Western Australia it will be useless having all our troops in New South Wales. The fastest means by which to move them are railways and good roads. We can protect our country if we have a large and efficient Air Force, because of our isolation. As Sir Hal Colebatch pointed out the financial side must be considered.

When we remember that we will be putting down a track that will be here for hundreds of years—railway tracks today are not becoming obsolete; new means of using them are being found—it is not so very important. Today smaller and faster trains are being utilised. The Diesel electric train will play a big part in the future of railways. The railway track provides the cheapest means of taking goods over the country. We have only to get the proper type of engine to pull our loads and our railways will help in the transport requirements of the country, and transport is one of our biggest problems. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion. I hope we will get a good committee that will go thoroughly into it. I would like

to see the line standardised between Kalgoorlie and Fremantle and from Port Pirie to Broken Hill, which would give a through run to Brisbane. That would be a wonderful asset to Australia. I think we could do without standardising our other lines for a long time. We would not have much trouble if we still retained the 3ft. 6in. gauge, because South Australia has three gauges, the 5ft. 3in. gauge, the 4ft. 8½in. and the 3ft. 6in., and that State seems to get along pretty well.

On motion by Hon. H. Tuckey, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W.

H. Kitson—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till the 3rd October, 1945.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.29 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 27th September, 1945.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Questions: Education, as to provision for deaf children | 902 |
| Shipbuilding, as to Commonwealth programme | 902 |
| South Fremantle power house, as to provision for alternative fuel | 903 |
| Greenough Electorate seat declared vacant | 903 |
| Leave of absence | 904 |
| Bills: Town Planning and Development Act Amendment, 1A. | 904 |
| Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act Amendment, 3A. | 905 |
| National Fitness, 3A. | 905 |
| State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment, 2A. | 905 |
| Closer Settlement Act Amendment, 2A., Com. | 906 |
| Administration Act Amendment (No. 1), 2A. | 916 |
| Mine Workers' Relief (War Service) Act Amendment, Council's amendments | 918 |
| Motions: Soldier Land Settlement, as to proposed legislation | 919 |
| Industrial Development use of munition factories, to inquire by Select Committee, defeated | 919 |
| Orders of the Day, as to postponement | 917 |
| Point of Order | 919 |

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

QUESTIONS.

EDUCATION.

As to Provision for Deaf Children.

Mr. FOX asked the Minister for Education:

1, Is he aware of the existence in this State of a number of young children who were born deaf following an epidemic of German measles?

2, In view of the necessity for commencing the education of these children at a very early age will the Government make special provision for these children as soon as possible?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, The question of providing special facilities for the education of deaf children is being given close consideration by the Education Department in conjunction with the Department of Public Health. At present plans are being drafted to provide the requisite accommodation.

SHIPBUILDING.

As to Commonwealth Programme.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Works:

1, Is he aware that the Commonwealth Government has decided to spend, during the current year, a further sum of £3,000,000 on shipbuilding, and that of that sum £600,000 will be spent in Queensland, £780,000 in New South Wales, £700,000 in Victoria, £700,000 in South Australia, £22,000 in Tasmania, £215,000 in the United Kingdom, and £3,000 in the United States of America?

2, Is Western Australia unable to undertake any of this work; and, if so, in view of the fact that certain vessels have been built here during the war period, why?

3, Have any representations been made to the Commonwealth Government with a view to obtaining a share of this work?

4, Did the Commonwealth Government make any representations to the State Government, prior to coming to a decision, to ascertain whether this State could undertake any of the work?

5, If not, and assuming an affirmative answer to No. 2, will he or the Government make an emphatic protest to the Commonwealth Government at its neglect of Western Australian interests in this matter, and at the same time supply the Commonwealth authorities with a statement of this State's possibilities as regards its industrial undertaking?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, Three hundred-ton wooden ships, 120 ft. steel ocean-going lighters, 100 ft. Philippine steel lighters and an 80-ton floating crane are being constructed in Western Australia. Practically the whole of the