

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 21st November, 1933.

been gazetted and yet there had been difficulty in getting the land thrown open for selection. The department advise that in such cases the land has not been required but that if inquiries were made, temporary reserves were lifted. I was asked what protection there was for a genuine home builder under Clause 38; it was stated that a speculator might buy up all the townsite blocks at a sale. I am advised it is not possible to provide any further protection than is already given in the Act. An auctioneer must accept the highest bid. I was asked whether anything had been done at Wiluna under Clause 45, which gives power to set aside certain areas for workers' homes. I am advised that the Act is only put into operation at the request of the Workers' Homes Board, and that, if such a request is made, lots will be set aside. Mr. Harris raised a question with regard to Clause 118. I am advised that this is governed by the Mining Act, and that what is meant is a proclaimed goldfield or mining district. Mr. Thomson raised a question regarding Clauses 127, 128 and 130, and asked what provision was made for a reduction in price in the case of C.P. leases granted under the Act. He suggested the insertion of a provision similar to Section 2 of the Industries Assistance Act, 1924, which gives the Minister power to write down. Under this Bill we cannot reduce the price of land held under C.P. conditions. The Minister for Lands is giving consideration to the matter and, if it is thought desirable to have this power, he would be prepared either to bring down an amending Bill or see if something could not be done in another place to deal with it. Mr. Piesse asked a question regarding overdue rents owed by returned soldiers and wanted to know if the men would be allowed to pay on a pro rata basis. The reply is in the affirmative; each case will be treated on its merits if the settlers pay current rents regularly. If so, the department will spread the arrears over the balance of the term of the lease. That covers the points regarding which information was desired.

New clause put and passed.

Schedules 1 to 28—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 9.18 p.m.

Question: Government employees, retiring age	...	1
Purchasers' Protection Bill, Select Committee, extension of time	...	...
Annual Estimates: Report of Committee of Ways and Means	...	...
Bills: Permanent Reserve, (A.A. 1162), 3r.	...	...
Health Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r.	...	...
Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r.	...	...
Reserves, 2r., Com. report	...	...
Fremantle City Council Lands Amendment, 2r., Com. report	...	...
State Transport Co-ordination, 2r.	...	...

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTION—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, RETIRING AGE.

Mr. WANSBROUGH asked the Premier, 1, In view of the declared policy of present Governments that 65 years shall be the retiring age of both salary and wage employees, is it a fact that the Public Service Commissioner and the Commissioner for Railways, during previous months, have disregarded such policy, by granting extension of time to certain senior officers? 2, so, will he make known the names of such officers, and the reason for the departure from the declared policy?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, In a few instances where disorganisation or inconvenience to the service would result from immediate retirement of officers the Government have approved of extensions.

PURCHASERS' PROTECTION BILL—SELECT COMMITTEE.

Extension of Time.

On motion by the Minister for Employment, the time for bringing up the report of the Select Committee was extended by one week.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1933-34.

Report of Committee of Ways and Means adopted.

BILL—PERMANENT RESERVE (A ↑ 1162.)

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: When this Bill was being distributed, I heard murmurs of, 'Forty-two clauses.' I admit that if taken literally, the measure does seem to be an extensive one, but actually it is almost entirely of a machinery nature. It is designed to give local authorities, either of their own volition or in combination with one another, powers that are contained to-day in the Metropolitan Water Supply Sewerage and Drainage Act for the installation of deep sewerage in country districts. Many of our towns should be possessed of a better method of controlling sanitation than the out-of-date pan system now in operation. Under the existing laws, no municipality or road board outside the metropolitan area, which is covered by the Act I have referred to, can instal a deep sewerage system. The Health Act does contain provision for sewerage to individual places or a set group of places, but no means are provided for the introduction of a general scheme. The question of bringing down this Bill as an amendment to the Health Act or as a separate measure was considered by the heads of all the departments concerned, namely the Health, Public Works and Water Supply and Sewerage Departments. It was agreed in consultation with the draftsman that it would be better to amend the Health Act than to bring down a separate Bill. There is only one thing new in this measure, and that I will refer to later. Several towns have gone a considerable distance towards introducing deep sewerage. Northam has obtained an engineer from the Eastern States to make surveys, take levels, and lay out the whole scheme. The local authority has been furnished with a report, which I understand cost in the vicinity of £800. I believe the local authority is prepared, if this Bill becomes law, to proceed at once with the installation of deep sewerage. Considerable

difficulty will have to be overcome. The installation of the septic tank system in Northam has proved almost a failure because of the nature of the soil, and it has also been practically impossible to get rid of the effluent in the township.

Mr. Sampson: It would be impracticable to cart it away.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is being done in some instances. Great difficulty was encountered at the Northam Hospital in overcoming the trouble. The engineers of the Public Works Department went into the matter. We were paying £327 a year for the removal of the effluent. The engineers recommended an expenditure of £750, which it was claimed would overcome the difficulty. We spent the money and carried out the instructions, but since then it has cost the Health Department £400 a year for removing the effluent. Actually we are more than £60 a year worse off than we were before the £750 was spent.

Mr. Latham: Was that spent after advice had been obtained from the engineers of the Public Works Department?

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes.

Mr. Latham: Then I advise you to be careful regarding the Northam scheme.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The Bill provides for deep drainage, not for septic tanks.

Mr. Latham: Such as that which we have along the river?

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No. I am not reflecting on the officers of the Public Works Department. They acted in good faith, and thought the expenditure would solve the problem. The nature of the soil, however, was such that it did not provide a solution of the difficulty, which still exists. The expert employed by the Northam Municipality was engineer for the Commonwealth on deep drainage and sewerage throughout Australia. He was brought over here to make the necessary surveys and recommendations as to where to instal the pumping apparatus, and where the sewage farm should be situated. The matter has now been gone into fully, and it is anticipated that the complete scheme for Northam will cost £60,000. That is Northam's affair. In my opinion, the money will be well spent. The member for Katanning (Mr. Piesse) ought to welcome the introduction of this Bill. On several occasions when I have visited Katanning I have been approached by the owners of three of the hotels, and one

large hostel with regard to the construction of a main drain. They were prepared to find the money provided they were given power to do the work, as they desired to obviate the cost of carting away waste water. We could not, however, give them the necessary authority, but if this Bill is passed, the power sought can be given. The safeguards with regard to the borrowing of money by local authorities under the Health Act will not be altered in any way.

Mr. Stubbs: How will they raise the money.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: By loans. They will first be required to submit complete schemes of what they are doing, and these will have to be approved by Executive Council before any money can be raised for the purpose.

Mr. Stubbs: Is that provided for in the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. The provision in that regard is exactly the same as that which appears in the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act. It has been found necessary, in framing the Bill, to construct it as part of the Health Act, to stand on its own. Several of the sections of the Act are being repealed in order properly to deal with the position and they will be re-instated in their proper place in the Health Act by the Bill now before the House. I have already indicated that all the necessary safeguards are provided. Nothing in the Bill will enable any department to force a local authority to instal, or attempt to instal, any system of deep sewerage. It will be a matter purely at the option of the local authorities, and on their own initiative.

Mr. Latham: Will local authorities have to consult their own ratepayers?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, if it is desired to borrow money. That safeguard is provided. While the Bill will not enable local authorities to be forced to carry out such work, if they desire to do so, it will provide the machinery by which the work can be put in hand and controlled. I think I am right in saying that Clause 3 provides the one new provision introduced into the legislation. It sets out that with the consent of the Governor-in-Council, the Government may, should they so desire, guarantee any loan required by a local authority in order to carry out deep drainage installations. There is nothing

to compel the Government to guarantee any such loan, but where it is desirable to do so, power is provided to enable that course to be adopted. That provision is included in the Bill mainly because I do not think any Government will take a risk by guaranteeing loans for the purpose I have indicated. The reason for that is that under the Health Act as it stands to-day the rate struck for sewerage purposes is levied on the property and not on the scheme itself. That being so, the Government will have absolute security for their guarantee. According to the advice we have received, the Government are of opinion that such a provision will assist the local authorities to raise money at a cheaper rate with the Government guarantee, than would be possible otherwise. By adopting that course, the Government will do nothing more than they should where they are satisfied that the scheme is of advantage to the community concerned, and naturally, action that will enable borrowing to be indulged in more cheaply will be in the interests of the ratepayers themselves. There has been a lot of talk about the expenditure of money on reproductive works. I know of no undertaking that could be put in hand that could be regarded as more reproductive than work such as I have referred to, particularly as it will be in the interests of the health of the community. A deep sewerage system is to be preferred to any of the other schemes now in operation. The Bill will enable local authorities to carry out the work that they desire in the interests of their ratepayers and the work will certainly be reproductive. In those circumstances, the Bill is long overdue and will prove of advantage in various directions. I have been assured by the heads of the Public Health Department, the Public Works Department and the Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department that the Bill contains no new principle and embodies nothing that is not included in the Health Act or in the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act. I have nothing further to add.

Mr. Latham: You could tell us something about the actual cost to the ratepayers apart from the capital cost. Is the sewerage to be pumped?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That will depend on where the scheme is put in hand. As far as I know the details of

the scheme at Northam—I admit I do not know very much about them—the local authorities there have already secured the services of a private individual to carry out a survey and submit a report. Nothing will be done until the report is considered by the engineers of the Public Works Department and by the Commissioner of Public Health. Before those authorities have endorsed the report, the local authorities will not be able to start the work.

Mr. Stubbs: And the same conditions will apply in any other district.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is so. Only after the work has been approved by the Governor-in-Council, can it be undertaken. Before that approval is given we shall have the advice of the engineers of the Public Works Department and of the Commissioner of Public Health. The Bill is necessary and will enable the local authorities to carry out exceptionally useful work. It will have a tendency to increase employment and provide it for those who seek work. It will give local authorities a chance to spend money in a direction they have desired for years past. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Stubbs, debate adjourned.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2.)

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [4.53] in moving the second reading said: The Bill represents the completion of the measure originally introduced and from which were excised the amendments to the Constitution Act. It provides for the extension of the principal Act until 1936, for the Commission being empowered to grant relief to unemployed persons, and for the distribution of money to be subject to Ministerial approval. The provisions of the Bill have already been discussed by the House and the principale debatable portion has been embodied in the Constitution Acts Amendment Bill. I shall not delay the House, but will move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Latham, debate adjourned.

BILL—RESERVES.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th November.

MR. LATHAM (York) [4.55]: The Bill is the usual one dealing with reserves that comes before members each session. As the Minister pointed out, it is aimed principally at clearing up the position regarding land held for the benefit of various districts. It will enable areas to revert to the Crown and provide authority for the Government to effect transfers. The Bill deals with matters affecting the Dongara cemetery and will enable land to be taken out of the hands of the trustees and placed under the control of the local authorities. When I was Minister for Lands, I found that many applications were made for land to be held in trust for the people in a town or district and when the trustees left the district concerned, there was difficulty in transacting any business in connection with such land. I hope that one day we shall decide on a policy under which land will be held only by local authorities. That would provide some continuity of policy and some protection to the public generally. I have no objection to the Bill, and there is no reason why it should not be agreed to.

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—FREMANTLE CITY COUNCIL LANDS AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 10th November.

MR. LATHAM (York) [5.0]: In this case the Fremantle City Council evidently allowed the sale of a piece of their own land other than that the sale of which was authorised by Parliament in 1929. I do not know that the House need concern itself with the question of the City of Fremantle selling their land. They probably found the other site more convenient for the electric lighting board, and acted as they did knowing that the necessary authority of Parlia-

ment could be obtained. There is no objection to the council disposing of the land. I presume the ratepayers of Fremantle have reaped the benefit of the sale.

In Committee.

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

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 14th November.

MR. LATHAM (York) [5.4]: Western Australia, in common with the rest of the world, is trying to grapple with the present unsatisfactory transport systems. Very little progress has been made with the solution of the problem. In picking up periodicals published from time to time, one can see that in all parts of the world road transport is now competing with the old system of railway transport, to the detriment of the railways. The difference is that in this State the railways are State-owned, so that any loss made by them has to be recouped by direct taxation of all the people, unless we can extract it from those who are using our roads. It is no use blinking the fact, of which we must have been aware for a number of years, that we have been creating this trouble ourselves. For quite a long time a large amount of public money has been spent on the roads of Western Australia, roads that should have served our railways and not been the means of facilitating competition with them. I admit it is difficult to differentiate between the roads that feed the railways and those that run parallel with them, because the man halfway between two railway sidings claims that he has just as much right to have convenient access to a railway siding or station as the man who happens to be an equal distance out from a railway. Unfortunately, we have very little control, except by direct taxation, of our road transport. Personally, I have always believed that the best method of controlling road transport is to impose a petrol tax, such as this State imposed some few years ago. That tax, however, was found to be ultra vires the Federal Constitution, and consequently we had to cease that method of taxation. If

we to-day raise the taxes on vehicles for private use, we shall penalise the people who sometimes find it very convenient to use a motor car for a pleasant outing. We would deprive those people of the opportunity of using their cars, and, after all, they are just as much entitled to use the roads as is anyone else. We have practically handed over to the Commonwealth Parliament the right to impose that taxation. Despite the fact that we know what has been done in other parts of the world to attempt to solve the traffic problem, this State has a foundation on which it can build some legislation which will co-ordinate transport. I use the word "co-ordinate" advisedly, because some people have the idea that there should not be co-ordination, but elimination. I hope we shall not in this State legislate for the elimination of anything that tends to spell progress.

Mr. Sampson: "Co-ordination" is in the title of the Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: Yes. I shall be dealing with something besides the title as we proceed. The time has arrived when evolution has forced on us a new mode of transport. It does not matter what we do—and what we do may prove expensive—progress cannot be stopped. We have spent huge sums of money in this State on railways and tramways. It is the people's money we have spent and we have carelessly handed over the sole control of the railways and tramways to those managing them. Because of that control, and because of lack of competition, I am afraid a system has grown up that has not tended to bring out the best in the service. Therefore, now that we have a new means of transport, the Railway Department are probably feeling the competition much more keenly than if they had been taught, as have been similar undertakings in other parts of the world, to expect competition. In Canada, Great Britain, America, and also on the Continent, railways compete with each other. They are not State railways, but are privately owned, and we find them vying with each other to obtain the business that is offering. In this State a person had to use the railways or else convey his goods by means of the old form of transportation.

Mr. Thorn: There is a greater volume of traffic in the countries you mention.

Mr. LATHAM: Admitted. I admit also that in this State there are more miles of railway per head of population than in those

countries. It must be remembered, however, that our railways are developmental railways and that they assisted us to dispose of our Crown lands. The privately-owned railways to which I have referred have had to depend entirely on freights offering and on passenger traffic. We sold our Crown lands because of the railway system. I do not say we have sold them at a very high price, but we have been able to dispose of something made valuable by the railways.

The Minister for Railways: They would never have been sold at all had it not been for the railways; they would have been given away.

Mr. LATHAM: I disagree with that. The land was lying idle and the actual sale value of it was what could be got for it.

The Minister for Lands: You must have regard to the services rendered in country districts, by way of education and so on.

Mr. LATHAM: That applies also to the city. We provide tramway and railway services for the city also. We even carry out reclamation works on the river to beautify the approach to the city. When agricultural lands are sold, however, there is no question of interest, it is merely the sale value of the land. The sale of Crown lands has been the means of providing quite a lot of revenue for the State in years gone by. I cannot tell exactly what that revenue has been, but it ought to be easy to ascertain the total value of the Crown lands that have been sold. It would probably run into a considerable amount of money.

Mr. SPEAKER: I trust the hon. member will be able to link up his remarks with the Transport Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: My remarks are linked up with the Bill, if I may be permitted to say so. The State is not likely to build railways in country that is not opened up or not likely to be opened up. I hope you will permit me to continue, as I propose to deal with the extension of railways at a later stage of my remarks. I think that we should have set aside during past years the money we have obtained from the sale of Crown lands as a credit against the capital outlay on our railway.

The Minister for Lands: That is an old story.

Mr. LATHAM: The Treasurer of this State, and of every other State, but this one particularly, is always anxious, however, to get his hand on every penny piece he possibly can, and that is bad business. Once

land is sold, it is necessary to construct roads and railways and provide a water supply, and after the roads and railways are constructed they must be maintained.

The Minister for Railways: It is bad business to tax people who are developing the country.

Mr. LATHAM: Of course it is. You are not only charging them for the land, but also taxing them.

The Minister for Lands: They are paying rent for the land.

Mr. LATHAM: If this Transport Bill were to be enacted for only a year, I would not advise the House to give very much consideration to it; but I hope the Bill will be the means of co-ordinating the transport services of the State, and so we have to look to the future, and not only to the present moment. I do not propose to render any assistance at all to legislation that will eliminate the railway service, the tramway service, or any of our road services. I do not think there is any need for that. So I hope the board, when appointed, will remember that their duty is to co-ordinate the services, not to give a monopoly to any one.

The Minister for Railways: But they cannot allow any service to develop at its own sweet will.

Mr. LATHAM: It would be easy enough to hand over all transport services to the railways and say, "You can get back to what you were enjoying 12 years ago, and we will abolish all the other transport facilities." But we have allowed the public to realise what these road services mean to them, and we cannot go back on it.

Mr. Lambert: Twelve years ago our railway deficit was not more than £500,000.

Mr. LATHAM: Our railway deficit has not been anything like that since 1922.

The Minister for Railways: Yet you say the railways have been useful in developing the country.

Mr. LATHAM: I say they have not set themselves out to obtain business. On that point I am going to give the House some information and let the House decide as to whether or not the railways have done that. They have not set themselves out to obtain business that has been offering. They know they have a monopoly, and if a customer does not like to use that monopoly he can go and find some other method. As a mat-

ter of fact the slowest method of transport I know of is our railway system; one can load stuff at Fremantle, and it will take a week to reach a point 180 miles distant. People will not put up with that, when there are other and faster means of transporting goods. Undoubtedly motor transport has come to stay, and the sooner we realise that the better it will be for ourselves. We have spent £26,074,171 on our railways and tramways, and our interest bill amounts to £1,048,272, or £2 8s. per head of the population. We have to give very great consideration to that. Every official and every man in the railway department should be giving his very best service. It is time we realised that some of them are getting valuable privileges. I ascertained from a reliable source that a railway man can walk into any railway station and get a railway ticket for a trip into the city at about half the usual rates.

Mr. Seward: And for his wife and family, too.

Mr. LATHAM: As often as he likes.

The Minister for Works: A man working in a brewery can drink beer as often as he likes.

Mr. LATHAM: But an assistant in a shop cannot expect to smoke cigarettes whenever he likes, nor in a sweet shop are the girls permitted to eat all the sweets they want.

The Minister for Railways: But all shop assistants get their goods at wholesale prices, which is of considerable benefit.

Mr. LATHAM: I say they do not get them at wholesale prices, although in some of the big shops certain small reductions are made.

The Minister for Works: Do not the farmers allow the farm hands to go out riding on the farm horses?

Mr. LATHAM: Of course not. If there be a saddle hack it may be used occasionally, but imagine any farmer permitting a farm hand to ride into town to go to the pictures!

The Minister for Employment: But if the farmer were going into town in his trap he would not let his servant walk.

Mr. LATHAM: A farmer is not expected to give his wheat away.

The Minister for Railways: Any farmer would give his farmhand a bag of wheat with which to feed his fowls.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member had better get back to the Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: It is time we gave serious consideration to the privileges extended to those who are running our railways for us. We freight some of their goods over the railways, and we give them fares at reduced rates and even free fares in some instances—and that when they are not travelling on Government business either.

The Minister for Employment: We should direct the Arbitration Court not to give them such privileges.

Mr. LATHAM: All this becomes a burden on our railways, and I hope the proposed board will give grave consideration to it. The motor transport people cannot afford to give their employees such privileges.

The Minister for Works: They give many privileges to their employees.

Mr. LATHAM: Anyhow, with that tremendous interest bill of ours we must see if it is not possible to get a little more from our railways than we are getting, and at the same time save some of the expenditure. On account of this tremendous capital outlay, I hope the proposed board will give serious consideration before it authorises, or even investigates, proposals for any further outlay in this regard. In the metropolitan area recently we have had two extensions of tramway services. We were not justified in making those extensions when there is a better method of transport available, namely a bus service. One of those two extensions is at Victoria Park, along the Albany-road, probably out to the end of the settlement somewhere, opposite the Edward Millen Home. The other is out at Mt. Hawthorn, where they seem to be pulling up in front of a hotel; I do not know whether they are going to pass it. But those districts were already served well. I agree there was need to remove the terminus of the line at Victoria Park away from the school because of the congested traffic, but surely it ought not to have been taken a distance of half a mile or more.

Mr. Sleeman: Was there any need to extend the Inglewood line?

Mr. LATHAM: I do not know.

Mr. Sleeman: Your Government thought so, else they would not have extended it.

Mr. LATHAM: I do not think there is a bus service to Inglewood, but certainly in those other two instances there have been

bus services catering very well for the public. So we are expending the people's money in competition with other established forms of transport.

The Minister for Railways: The logical conclusion of your attitude is that we should pull up all the tramways.

Mr. LATHAM: No, because you have spent the money on them, and so you will not be relieved by pulling them up, for that would cost more money. I do not suggest that, but as they become worn out the Minister will have to do what has been done in other capital cities, namely give serious consideration before relaying them.

The Minister for Railways: Six or seven years ago we relayed lines which will now be all right for the next 20 years.

Mr. LATHAM: At the end of the next 20 years progress will be such that—

The Minister for Health: We will give consideration to it at the end of the 20 years.

Mr. LATHAM: Neither the Minister nor I will be giving much consideration to anything at the end of 20 years.

The Minister for Employment: Why be pessimistic?

Mr. LATHAM: I am not pessimistic; it is optimism. I have read carefully through the Bill and I believe it has been hatched in a railway incubator. It was introduced by the Minister for Railways, but that does not influence me in that respect. Reading carefully through the Bill, I really think the railway incubator has been the means of bringing it to light. I do not think it was framed by the Public Works section, or by the people who control the road transport.

The Minister for Railways: It has been prepared to conserve the interests of the State—that and that alone.

Mr. LATHAM: But there is a wide diversity of opinion as to the best means of doing that. If it has been hatched in the railway incubator—

The Minister for Railways. It has not, so you are wrong for once. It was drawn up by a committee on which the railways had only one-third of the representation.

Mr. LATHAM: I know the Minister said the previous Government had something to do with the transport, and I know what happened then, although I do not propose to tell the House.

The Minister for Railways: You were not game to go on with it. You could not formulate a policy.

Mr. LATHAM: I am glad to have the Minister giving away the secrets of another Cabinet. Anyhow the Minister is wrong in that regard, for our programme was well filled without our attempting to do anything about that.

The Minister for Lands: If you were over here, your speech would be entirely different.

Mr. LATHAM: However, we need not pursue that argument, because if we did I would be able to put up some very good stories about it. I do not even say I am opposing the Bill. But I do know what consideration was given to the Bill previously, and so I know that the statement made by the Minister for Railways is not correct; the previous Government did not decide to introduce the legislation, which was only being framed.

The Minister for Agriculture: The easiest way would be to give everybody an open go.

Mr. LATHAM: Probably that would be very wise. Then we could simply say to the railway people, "Here you are; you own these railways, now take over the management of them." Then we would soon see very different results.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, in the freights imposed on super. and wheat.

The Minister for Agriculture: We might just as well pull up the railway lines.

The Minister for Railways: What about the fellow who has not got a railway line; is he never to get one?

Mr. LATHAM: I have not suggested that. The Minister has recalled what happened a little while ago. This side of the House did not oppose his railway Bill, so he is not justified in making that remark. To-day we have to give serious consideration to the extension of the railways. And even were it not for the settlement already in those places, and people looking forward to the coming of the railway, my attitude would not have been any different. There are still other parts of the State to be served by railways, with settlement already there.

The Minister for Railways. And without any transport facilities at all.

Mr. LATHAM: But consideration must be given to other forms of transport. Re-

verting to the railways, I do not think they have given sufficient consideration to goods traffic and passenger traffic. There has been no attempt to do here as is done in other parts of the world, where the railways have their own transport picking up goods and conveying them to the stations, especially in the cities.

The Minister for Railways: So you want further interference with private enterprise?

Mr. LATHAM: I do not wish to interfere with private enterprise at all. I want this road transport to feed our railways, as I pointed out in my opening remarks. I wish to encourage other transport, not in opposition to the railways, but as feeders to them. I believe it would be a profitable thing to pick up goods by road transport and convey them to the depots. If one arrives at the loading sheds in West Perth five minutes late, the goods will not be accepted for transport. Neither are the goods taken the day or the night before; they are accepted only at a fixed time. Those things should be altered. Perth must send away a huge number of parcels in the year. One would have thought a depot would be established in the heart of the city to receive such parcels.

The Minister for Railways: Is not the railway station in the heart of the city?

Mr. LATHAM: One can go into a Hay-street bootshop to-day and buy a pair of boots and ask for them to be sent away to the country, whereupon one is told, "By rail the charge is 2s., and by post 1s. 6d." Then, if one decides to send the boots by rail, one has to walk to Roe-street, passing the General Post Office on the way. The General Post Office has also a receiving depot in West Perth, and another in St. George's-terrace. I believe the railways would do well to have a depot in the city. Let them give it a trial by establishing the depot in some prominent place. Again, it is noteworthy that the State asks more than the Commonwealth for the carriage of a parcel. By post the charge is 1s. 6d., by rail 2s. That should be remedied. The Minister becomes annoyed.

The Minister for Railways: Oh, no!

Mr. LATHAM: I believe that the method I suggest would attract business to the Railway Department. Let me give an-

other instance. The Narembeen Road Board desired a consignment of Hume pipes, weighing 1 ton 17 cwt. 3 qrs. Consignment was to be made from Subiaco. The Railway Department said, "If you send them by rail, we will charge you three tons, which is the minimum." The charge for three tons to Narembeen was £6 9s. 9d. The road board found they could get them picked up at Subiaco by road transport and delivered at Narembeen for about £2 10s. The train had to run to Narembeen in any case. I do not understand why the Railway Department cannot reduce the minimum for consignments. It would not be so bad if a special trip were involved, but it is not. The trains run half empty, leaving behind goods which they ought to be carrying. These are some of the things the outside public know. Some ideas of the Railway Department are obsolete. The train to Narembeen runs three times a week, and instead of loading it with goods at lower rates, the department insist on making their rates high, with the result that the traffic goes by road.

The Minister for Railways: We know all about that.

Mr. LATHAM: Take the goods received by storekeepers in cases. If something is put inside a case, the case has to be marked on the outside to that effect and pay extra freight. Would it not be better to have a flat rate for all merchandise going to stores? In that way things could be levelled up. Such a system would, moreover, stop the picking of the eyes out of the traffic. I quite agree with the Minister for Railways on that point. It would be far better, I suggest, to fix a flat rate for all stores. In the long run the Railway Department would be just as well off. Again, there is not the same care exercised on the railways. The Minister can get a file supporting the instance I am now about to quote. Six chairs were consigned from Perth to Narembeen by rail. They were put into an open truck, with machinery. On arrival at the destination only one chair was in good condition; the other five were completely broken. The station master, upon his attention being drawn to the matter, merely said, "Owners' risk." That is not fair. It is the sort of thing that stops people from using the railways.

The Minister for Railways: That is an isolated instance.

Mr. LATHAM: No. It is one of many instances.

The Minister for Railways: What ridiculous nonsense!

Mr. LATHAM: There is said to be a tremendous amount of pillaging of goods on the railways. For that the railwaymen are not to be blamed entirely, because others have been caught in the act. Indeed, we do not know how the pillaging occurs. Nevertheless it does occur. Hotelkeepers complain bitterly of the pillaging. Consequently they say, "Let us entrust our goods to someone who will pick them up and deliver them direct." There are no excuses that can be offered by the man on the road for pillaged goods, because he has the handling of the consignment all through. On the railways goods are frequently shunted off at unattended sidings, to be picked up by the next train; and one does not know who goes along there. Instances have occurred of drums of kerosene being taken away. A railwayman does not pick up a drum of kerosene. The Commissioner of Railways merely says, "Owners' risk." While such things occur, he is not likely to secure further traffic.

The Minister for Railways: Goods can be conveyed at Commissioner's risk.

Mr. LATHAM: One has to pay very much higher freights for that.

The Minister for Railways: Not very much. Only a little more is charged for that service. Insurance companies charge for giving cover.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not sure that it would not be better for the Railway Department to charge a little more and carry some of the risk. With the high rates fixed, there is no security.

The Minister for Railways: We do not get much transport at high rates now.

Mr. LATHAM: The carriage of stock is another question, particularly lambs for export. I do not think the Railway Department attempt to get that trade. There is a coal train which runs from Collie right through to the goldfields, along the Bruce Rock-Corrigin section, every Tuesday. The department do not even attempt to pick up sheep by that train. The main thing is to assist our agricultural and pastoral industries by enabling them to get their stock to market in the best possible condition. On the line in question owners have to load

their stock on Monday, and it arrives here on Wednesday morning. In the case of a motor truck, the sheep are loaded in the evening and arrive in prime condition the next morning, and the probabilities are that the farmer who consigns by road gets 3s. or 4s. per head more for his stock. When I was in England I noticed that the London and North-Western Railway Company were sending out motor lorries to pick up beef to be transported to the abattoirs on the outskirts of London. They picked up the beef in trucks to save them from being knocked about on the roads. Our Railway Department will have to set themselves to get some of this trade. I am not sure that the railways would not be justified in putting on some road transport to feed the lines. The railways are there, and have to be used; and I believe they can be used cheaper than any road transport. The main thing is to feed the lines and keep the trains full. The Minister's statement as to the loss from wheat transport is not right. Wheat is carried in full trainloads. If all other goods and commodities were carried in full trainloads, the cost of transport would be much less than it is. I think the cost of the carriage of wheat is 1.01d., and the total earnings 1.49d.

The Minister for Railways: But we lost on the 1.49.

Mr. LATHAM: There was a loss at the end of the financial year, I admit. The deficiency could be made up in the manner I suggested to the Minister, by curtailing some of the privileges that are now extended. I know it is not going to be easy, because they have existed for a number of years. However, they will have to be given up; otherwise the railway men will find themselves out of employment. For my part I believe that the railwaymen would be anxious to assist, and that it is only a question of telling them what is required.

The Minister for Employment: That will be telling the Arbitration Court that they are wrong.

Mr. LATHAM: It would not hurt the Arbitration Court to go into recess for a while.

The Minister for Railways: It is because of saying such things that you are over there on the other side.

Mr. LATHAM: No. The statement I made was dishd up in a certain way.

The Premier: The very words you used!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The subject under discussion is the State Transport Co-ordination Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: It was transport from one side of the House to the other. Two pounds eighteen shillings a week! I never suggested such a thing in my life. It would be well if we could keep our trains full, instead of running big empty coaches from one junction to the next.

The Minister for Railways: We must give the people some service.

Mr. LATHAM: Undoubtedly. Let us give a service such as Professor Hytten suggested should be given. Let us break our trains up into smaller units. We should have a passenger unit.

Mr. Cross: What about steam coaches?

Mr. LATHAM: I believe those would be preferable. We have a bus service. Let the Minister send out the steam coach for a trial on a branch line. Let the goods trains carry a bit extra instead of heavy coaches being hauled along with two or three passengers. Further, such travelling is most objectionable when one has been used to journeying in a motor car. The other is like travelling in a wheelbarrow.

The Minister for Employment: You would make a good Commissioner of Railways.

Mr. LATHAM: The city is pretty well catered for in connection with transport at the present time. As the Minister for Employment has remarked, I would make a much better Commissioner than the gentleman who is there at present, but when I wait at the corner of Murray-street and watch No. 8 trams going to the car barn empty, and those that are going to Victoria Park overcrowded, I sometimes wonder why there is not an officer there to say "We will load this one up." If it were a private individual controlling the trams and he allowed them to become so overcrowded, he would be prosecuted without any doubt.

The Minister for Railways: The cars never run empty to the car barn.

Mr. LATHAM: On one occasion I made a suggestion to an inspector and he became almost rude and denied that people had been waiting for between 10 and 20 minutes.

The Minister for Railways: There are not any No. 8 cars running between 5 and 6 o'clock.

The Minister for Employment: What the hon. member does not know about tramway working would fill a volume.

Mr. LATHAM: What the hon. member thinks he knows about everything would fill five volumes. In big cities the traffic seems to be handled without any difficulty. There is no congestion in London, for instance, although there may be congestion sometimes on a road where the traffic is very heavy. I am not sure, if the suggested board be appointed, that they would not permit city traffic to go on as it is.

The Minister for Railways: There is no reason why it should not.

Mr. LATHAM: The bus services are well carried on and the companies are working amicably with the Government services.

The Minister for Railways: There is no proposal to cut them out.

Mr. LATHAM: There is no knowing what the proposed board will do.

The Minister for Railways: You never know what a judge will do.

Mr. LATHAM: No one can tell what a board will be prepared to do. I have obtained from the bus companies operating here some figures that might prove of interest to members. Twelve-and-a-half per cent. of the gross earnings go into taxation to-day. A metropolitan truck weighing 6 tons 10 cwt. pays a license fee of £22.

The Minister for Railways: That is not information; do you think that the railways do not pay for services rendered?

Mr. LATHAM: I am only supplying information and the Minister must not get cross. The license fee of a truck when it goes out on to the road—one of the Minister for Works' roads—pays £78 5s.

The Minister for Works: Not my roads, your roads.

Mr. LATHAM: A 30-seater bus pays £129 15s. Under the Bill a metropolitan truck will pay £22, but the country truck, using the main roads, pays up to £123 10s. as against £78 5s. under the present Traffic Act. The 30-seater bus, however, under the new proposal will pay up to £359 15s. That seems to me to be prohibitive.

The Minister for Railways: Do not forget that each railway truck has to earn £60 or £70 a year.

Mr. LATHAM: But the increase from £129 to £359 is pretty substantial.

The Minister for Railways: And each railway truck has to earn £60 or £70 a year in interest to pay for its upkeep.

Mr. LATHAM: This money it is proposed to raise under the new legislation is to be handed over to the Government.

The Minister for Railways: The Government does not get a halfpenny of it. It is spent on roads.

Mr. LATHAM: Well, it goes into Consolidated Revenue, or perhaps after the expenditure of the board is met the balance will go into Consolidated Revenue. A bus earning, say, £2,000 per annum—I do not know that any are earning that amount—pays petrol tax to the extent of £161, or 6.98 per cent. of its earnings. For its seating capacity it pays £85, or 3.69 per cent. of its earnings; for its vehicle fee £2 or .1 per cent. of its earnings, and by way of vehicle license £38, or 1.65 per cent. of its earnings, making a total taxation of £286, or 12.42 per cent. of its earnings. The total paid in seating taxation by the buses is £7,200; and in license fees £2,100. The petrol consumption of the buses amounts to approximately 500,000 gallons, the amount paid annually in wages £45,000, and insurance of passengers £1,700. There are issued 104 bus licenses and the number of owners of the various services is 15. The buses started their operations in 1924 and the control is by a board consisting of officials from the Public Works Department, Police Traffic Branch, the Railways and Tramways, the local governing bodies and the bus owners. The board has given satisfaction to the people who use the buses, though I am not sure about the Government.

The Minister for Railways: And you will remember that there was a protest against inaugurating that system. I was held up as a kind of rajah.

Mr. LATHAM: I can hardly understand that, knowing the Minister as we know him. I could have understood it if that designation had been attributed to some other member of the Ministry.

The Minister for Railways: And there was also a silly fear expressed when I proposed to run the trams over the William-street bridge.

Mr. LATHAM: It is necessary to have co-ordinated transport legislation. Wherever it is possible to provide for it, traffic should go to our railways, but the railways should make an effort to cater for it. They must awaken themselves considerably. The Bill affects not only those who are running the railways, and the Government who have

found the money for the railway system, but it affects also the motor bus proprietors and the commercial vehicle owners, and most important of all the people generally. So that we should pass into law an Act that will commend itself not only to the people whom we are going to tax but every interest concerned. I suggest that the Bill should be referred to a select committee, and in that way establish a solid foundation.

The Minister for Agriculture: What would the select committee do?

Mr. LATHAM: The select committee would find out whether the Bill was capable of being improved and whether control could be better than it is to-day. On many occasions when travelling about I feel that we could do much better than we are doing to-day, particularly when I see tremendous loads of wool being conveyed on motor lorries. We should certainly limit the height of those loads, as well as limit the speed. Some of the trucks travel at a rate faster even than motor cars. In these directions there is need for control. The constitution of the proposed board is wrong, in my opinion. I should like the Government nominee to be the chairman, and I should also like to see the country interests and metropolitan interests represented.

The Minister for Railways: What about the Milk Board; how is that constituted?

Mr. LATHAM: I do not know that that has much to do with this proposed board.

The Minister for Railways: Well, what about the Market Trust?

Mr. LATHAM: That was practically elected by the Government.

The Minister for Railways: Appointed.

Mr. LATHAM: Well, appointed by the Government.

The Minister for Railways: Then this proposed board could be appointed.

Mr. LATHAM: I should like to see as chairman of the board a Treasury official, or someone who has a knowledge of the State's finances. The Government would thus be protected. Country interests and city interests should also be represented and the board would thus function satisfactorily.

The Premier: What do you mean by city interests? There is a great diversity of city interests.

Mr. LATHAM: The bus services that would be affected.

The Premier: Do you mean the bus owners?

Mr. LATHAM: Let us get someone who will watch the interests of the people just as one representative on the Milk Board is watching the interests of the consumers. I admit that country interests would be a little more difficult to represent. We could say that certain lines should not be carried on the roads. Where we could assist the primary producer would be in the direction of enabling him to export his goods in a better condition.

The Minister for Agriculture: They demand railways and then use motor trucks.

Mr. LATHAM: The primary producers use motor trucks because they are more efficient. The Minister for Agriculture has a full knowledge of the position. To-day the man on the land has to watch every penny of expenditure. He himself has to be efficient and he must use the services that are efficient as well. If the railways are not efficient, we cannot blame him for not using them. I cannot imagine the Minister himself putting sheep on the train on Saturday night to send them to market if he knew he could reach the same market by sending them on the following Tuesday by other means. I am prepared to support the second reading of the Bill. I know we are going to get into trouble over it, but we could probably clean up a lot of the trouble if we listened to the grievances of those who are most likely to be injured by it.

The Minister for Agriculture: That would take 12 months.

Mr. LATHAM: So long as we put up legislation that will provide a solid foundation upon which to operate, it would not matter if this took several months, but I do not suggest it would take two years to do.

The Premier: It should have been done during the last three years.

Mr. LATHAM: We always seem to have plenty to do. Even at the end of three years of the present regime no doubt something will have been left undone.

The Premier: There will be nothing so important as this.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not so sure of that. We brought down a Traffic Act, and the Minister fought for it as the Minister for Railways to-day will have to fight for this Bill.

The Minister for Railways: You got a lot of support from our side. Indeed, I did not have to change my opinion when I came over to this side of the House.

Mr. LATHAM: I think the Minister has changed some of his views.

The Minister for Agriculture: As a city member I spoke in support of the tramway extensions.

Mr. LATHAM: The Minister's support was rather obsolete. The best method of transport to-day is provided by buses. Of course we must use the existing tramway services, and make the most of them, but we should not extend them.

The Minister for Agriculture: People still demand tramways.

Mr. LATHAM: We should have the backbone to stand up against them, and give them the right kind of service.

The Minister for Agriculture: They will demand a tramway service, and when they get it they use buses.

Mr. LATHAM: The Government are extending the tramways quite close to the Minister's electorate. No doubt there will be an outcry there directly for bus transport. If people demand both forms of transport, let them have the bus service, and let us get out of the business.

The Minister for Agriculture: That would have been sound advice 30 years ago.

Mr. LATHAM: There was no such thing as motor transport then. I have heard people say we should not provide a sinking fund for our railways.

The Minister for Agriculture: Sydney has both trams and trains running.

Mr. LATHAM: Sydney has electrified trains, and is fairly up-to-date in modes of transport. There are buses, poll taxes and all sorts of things in Sydney, and many things that we do not want. I hope that whatever progress we make will be solid, and that it will not lead to our being obliged to scrap things we should not have started. There will be no need for any scrapping if we do not extend our tramway service. I do not suggest we should refrain from building railways into areas where farmers are already settled, seeing that they will never be able to develop their holdings successfully without such means of transport. It is impossible to carry wheat long distances by road, as things are at present, even if we use road trains.

The Minister for Railways: You must support the railways to allow them to do their job.

Mr. LATHAM: In the South-West there are some railways which need never have been built. It would be possible to cart all that comes from those localities by means of a couple of trucks. I am sorry the Commissioner of Railways did not adopt that method when he had authority to do so. That was in the time of the Minister himself.

The Minister for Railways: No. You remember a special session of Parliament was held at the instance of the Mitchell Government in order to authorise the construction of those railways.

Mr. LATHAM: That Government did not build them. I am not talking about that, anyway. I believe we arranged that two motor lorries should be put on.

Mr. Wansbrough: And the farmers would not use them.

Mr. LATHAM: The railway was then built for them. They now use the road and allow someone else to get the benefit of the traffic. Serious consideration will have to be given to this matter. I know that goods were being sent out by a store-keeper who was charging 2s. 6d. per cwt. for delivery, while the railways were running merely for the sake of the tourist traffic.

The Minister for Railways: Are you talking of the Nornalup line?

Mr. LATHAM: Yes.

The Minister for Railways: I thought you were talking of the line from Pemberton.

Mr. LATHAM: I ask the Minister to allow the Bill to go before a select committee so that we may provide a good solid foundation for this new type of legislation.

The Minister for Works: How long would that take?

Mr. LATHAM: About a fortnight. I do not know when it is proposed that the House shall rise.

The Premier: We will adjourn the House definitely when the Bill is through.

Mr. LATHAM: I hope it will be referred to a select committee. Within a fortnight we should have all the information we require. The only control we have over the measure is in this House, but it may take a long time to go through another place. The Premier should qualify his interjection by saying that Parliament will rise when the Bill has passed through this House. There is some justification

for the measure. We must do something to control our transport so that it may be efficient for people who need to use it. I hope the Minister will agree to the reference of the Bill to a select committee.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [6.8]: I propose to vote for the second reading of the Bill, but am not prepared to support it in its present form. It is a Bill for an Act to provide for the improvement and co-ordination of the means of facilities for transport. A casual reference to it will I am sure, prompt any fair-minded person to say that it provides for a too effective control and a too vigorous dealing with those who are concerned with road traffic by motor trucks and motor buses.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is too much conversation going on in the Chamber.

Mr. SAMPSON: I appreciate the difficult task which confronts the Minister in bringing forward legislation which is an innovation in this State. The problem dealt with has never yet been satisfactorily settled by other countries. It is to be hoped that as the result of the information which the proposed select committee would obtain, progress will be made towards the production of a workable measure. I trust there will be no undue discrimination in regard to those who are operating on the roads to-day. I am prompted to make that remark because of the many clauses in the Bill, the object of which seems to be to lessen the opportunities of transporting goods and passengers on our roadways. I believe that both rail and road traffic are essential. We cannot go back to railway traffic alone. There is a law which cannot be disputed that there can be no retrograde step in respect to the improvements which are gradually being brought about for the assistance of mankind. It would be a paying proposition to vacate the transport field in the outer suburban areas entirely in favour of motor buses, unless our railways were electrified. Rail travel is too slow to-day for those who live in those areas. As a result of the improved conditions which operate where motor buses are running, the trade previously enjoyed by the railways is gradually becoming less and less. I have on different occasions watched the trains running into the outer suburban areas. I am satisfied that we would lose less if some of

the trains were stopped and the time table reviewed and re-cast. Having in view the small number of persons who use the trains, I think it would be better for all concerned if this were done.

Mr. Hegney: Are you applying for the Commissioner's job?

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not claim to be qualified for it. It is my intention to continue my representation of the Swan electorate so long as the electors view the matter as they do to-day. The buses operating within 20 miles of the Perth and Fremantle Town Halls can do the work far better than can the railways. If they were allowed to do it, it would be a means of reducing some of our losses. It is a painful thing for anyone who is interested in the welfare of the State to notice the number of carriages that are being hauled backwards and forwards that represent so much junk, because they are not used and perform practically no public service in the carriage of passengers. It would appear that the Bill indicates a fear on the part of the Minister and those concerned with the railways that unless the wings of competition are clipped they will drift further to leeward. That fear is well founded. The railways are doing worse in the outer suburban area and in certain other ways. I do not intend to advance destructive criticism. I want to deal fairly with the matter, and would urge upon the Minister and those responsible for the Bill also to deal fairly with those who are concerned in road transport.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. SAMPSON: I appreciate the statement made by the Minister that any suggestion advanced by members would receive consideration. I do not think the Minister was quite correct in stating that it would cost the same to send a parcel—for instance, a pair of boots—by post to Kalamunda as it would to Wyndham. There are four scales covering postal rates. The first relates to postage within 30 miles of the office of posting. The second refers to postage a distance of 30 miles within the State; the third deals with postage to an adjoining State; the fourth relates to postage to places elsewhere within the Commonwealth. I would repeat what I stated during the discussion of the Railway Estimates, when I said it would be possible for the Railway Department to in-

crease its revenue if the cost of forwarding parcels were reviewed. In the course of his speech in moving the second reading of the Bill, the Minister gave some details regarding the tonnage transported by road traffic. I do not know whence those particulars were obtained. So far as I have been able to discover, there are no reliable figures available, so his details must have represented estimates. During his speech, much was said regarding the transport of superphosphate, wheat and wool, while other lines were also referred to. I have a few particulars regarding the conveyance of superphosphate and wheat, and I think the details will be of interest. It was stated that those in control of motor trucks went in for certain classes of goods only, and did not attempt to touch other less payable lines at all. A statement made to me by a motor truck owner was as follows—

I carry per motor truck such goods as power kerosene, petrol, oils, crude oils, etc., at less than first-class railway freights for small lots to stations in the wheat areas, and from these stations to the farms absolutely free. I bring back wheat to Perth at railway freights and empty petrol drums free. I employ two men and pay them £6 per week, which is above the award. I can make a good profit at these rates.

This man claims that he can make a reasonable profit at those rates. There is a definite statement that by availing himself of the alternative class of traffic—the better class out and the lower class in—he can pay good wages and make a reasonable profit.

Mr. Wansbrough: Did that man give you his mileage per week?

Mr. SAMPSON: No, but I have further particulars that will have a bearing on that point. Another motor truck owner tells me that he can transport goods from Kalgoorlie to Perth and does it at the rate of 1.76d. per ton per mile, and he claims that his business is profitable. That rate means £2 15s. per ton for the 375 miles that divide Perth from Kalgoorlie. Superphosphate and other fertilisers, wire netting and wire are carried to York by another carrier, and he brings back vegetables on the return journey. In each case he charges railway rates. The superphosphate is carried at 10s. per ton and the vegetables at 20s. per ton. Yet another motor truck owner provided me with particulars of his operation between Perth and Cranbrook. He delivers super to the latter centre and conveys the fertiliser to

farms up to 48 miles from the railway line. He does that at railway rates and on his return trip he carries wool on a similar basis. He tells me that he is getting along satisfactorily.

The Premier: And how many hours does he work?

Mr. SAMPSON: He tells me that he employs five men, each of whom is earning double the basic wage.

The Premier: I do not believe it.

The Minister for Railways: How many hours a week do they work?

Mr. SAMPSON: I told these motor people that I wanted the information to be definite because I might want them to substantiate it later. One man said that I could call upon him without any diffidence and, in fact, one man signed the statement that I have read.

The Premier: Some people will sign anything.

Mr. SAMPSON: Having dealt with that phase, which I consider very illuminating, I would remind the House that the proprietors of motor trucks and buses pay heavy license fees, and apart from what the State collects, we know that those people have to pay heavy duty charges, in addition to the excise duty on spirits. When it is stated that the motor trucks and the buses do tremendous damage to our roads we must, in all fairness, recall the fact that they pay for the use of the roads. If we could secure from the Federal Government the amount that is paid as excise duty on motor spirits, the roads would be in much better order than they are to-day. I admit that in many instances the roads at present are in good order. Imbued by a wish to make constructive suggestions, I asked the Minister for Railways, during the discussion on the Railway Estimates, if it would not be possible for the rates to be reviewed, because it seemed remarkable that the proprietors of motor trucks, which carry comparatively small loads, could successfully enter into competition with the well-equipped State railways, which run on steel rails and are operated with the advantage of the organisation that has been built up over a period of years. It is indeed remarkable that they can compete and apparently prosper.

Mr. Cross: Some of the motor proprietors are paying £1 a week and have boys to drive their trucks.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have not met them; I have given particulars made available by

motor truck and bus proprietors with whom I have discussed this matter. I asked the Minister if it would not be possible to review the railway rates and he replied, "Yes, but the farmers would then go out of existence." I have shown by the statements I have quoted from motor truck proprietors that it is questionable whether they would go out of business. It is only fair that if they carry wheat or superphosphate one way, they should be permitted to carry the better class of traffic on the return journey. At the same time, I do not want it to be thought that I am opposed to a Bill that is truly a co-ordinating measure. At the outset, I said that I am convinced it is essential that such a Bill shall be passed, not only to protect the railways, but to conserve the interests of the public, assuring for all concerned the best possible service in the circumstances. No one can dispute the service rendered by both forms of transport. It can be admitted that the motor buses have transformed transport within the metropolitan area. Another suggestion I made had reference to railway fares. I cannot understand why it is that single fares only are provided for long distance journeys. It would mean considerably added revenue to the railways if return tickets were issued. I am afraid we forget, when considering the losses from which the railways have suffered, the great growth in the number of privately-owned motor cars. We are apt, perhaps unfairly, to blame the motor truck or the motor bus for having reduced the earnings of the railways. I know they have reduced those earnings to some extent, but, in my opinion, the main reduction has been caused by the increase in the number of privately-owned motor cars. It is said that the railways have allowed many concessions, and I agree that that is so. The railway authorities are considerate in respect to the treatment of school children and others who are in receipt of those concessions. I have been looking into that phase, and have considered the position of children who live in the outer suburban areas. I asked one bus proprietor what was the rate he charged at present for conveying school children from Kalamunda to Perth and return. He said the rate was from 2s. 6d. to 4s. per week, which is in excess of the sum charged by the railways. It might pay the Government to subsidise the buses to some extent, and to cease running a railway service that, because of the poor patronage accorded it by

the public, appears to be unjustified. That phase affects another district—Wattle Grove, east of Victoria Park on the journey towards the Kalamunda foothills, a distance of from seven to nine miles from the city. The charge levied by the motor bus proprietor for the conveyance of children, where there is no competing train, is 2s. per week. That works out, on the basis of eight miles each way, at one farthing per mile.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

The Minister for Railways: The railways charge 1s. per month.

Mr. SAMPSON: I understood that the children travel free.

The Minister for Railways: In some instances 1s. a month is charged.

Mr. SAMPSON: I admit that the railways are a State-owned utility, and that if the trains did not run to some of the centres I have in mind, consideration would be given to subsidising some established form of transport. As I said, I think it would be a paying proposition to review the time table and stop certain trains from running. Varying rates are charged to-day for the carriage of fruit on railways. I had a talk with a storekeeper at Kalgoorlie some time ago and he told me it was a work of art—that is how he expressed it—to find out what it costs to carry goods to Kalgoorlie. Another person who lived at Norseman told me that it paid him better to instruct his merchants to send his orders by road, as he knew exactly what the cost was and he was not embarrassed in consequence of being charged varying rates. Biscuits and tea, for instance, I understand are carried at different rates. These may seem small matters but to the storekeeper who desires to ascertain his exact costs, they are important. I was in Mt. Barker recently and made inquiries with respect to rail traffic. I was told a man was gathering skins in that district from the various farmers. He went from point to point, and previously transported the skins by rail from Mt. Barker to Perth. He encountered so much trouble, however, that finally he decided to run his truck to Perth himself. He did so and from that start the business has progressed until to-day he has four trucks running. Another person who was concerned with the selling of fruit and vegetables told me that, not-

withstanding the charge by motor truck was a little higher—3s. 6d. as against 2s. 10d. per rail—he found it more profitable to send his goods by road. I asked why and was told that very frequently parcels of fruit sent by train were pillaged. The loss was severe and consequently an alteration in the method of transport was decided upon. That is a very serious charge, but the fact that a rate in excess of that charged by the railways is being paid to-day to bring fruit and vegetables to Perth by road is an answer. Clause 33 of the Bill—

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in discussing the clauses of the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: Clause 33, Mr. Deputy Speaker—that is all right so far?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. SAMPSON: And that is all I have said. Clause 33 deals with the operating of trucks within a certain radius of the Perth Town Hall.

The Premier: Now you are discussing the clause.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am afraid so; and, as a matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you, as one who has had some experience on the floor of the House, I am sure will agree it is difficult to discuss a Bill without in some remote way discussing a clause of it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in discussing the clause.

Mr. SAMPSON: I shall not refer to the number of the clause. A portion of the Bill relates to the operation of certain goods vehicles within a certain radius of the general Post Office in Perth. I am told that recently a deputation from the Chamber of Commerce discussed the matter with the Minister, who agreed to give favourable consideration to a reasonable radius, perhaps 30 miles or more. The reason I refer to this matter is because of the importance of the carriage of primary products. Power should, in my opinion, be given to exceed the radius of 15 miles mentioned in the Bill.

The Minister for Railways: Power is given to the board to do that.

The Minister for Employment: The hon. member need not refer to that clause now.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the radius is about 30 miles or more, I shall not say anything more on that matter.

The Minister for Railways: Power is given to the board to vary the distance.

Mr. SAMPSON: As the Minister will see, a definite distance is mentioned in the Bill and I have taken the opportunity of referring to it.

The Minister for Railways: The board has a discretion.

Mr. SAMPSON: Where there is no railway, no embargo should exist. I think that is reasonable. There are fruit and vegetable producing districts which are not served by the railways and from whence commercial motor vehicles might be allowed to operate without any of the disabilities which otherwise would apply.

The Minister for Railways: That will be so. There would be no embargo on a truck going to Yanchep Caves.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am glad to have the Minister's assurance that that is so. I was unable to see any such provision in the Bill. With regard to the carriage of produce of farms or forests, or farming requisites, or requisites for the production of timber, between any farm or forest and the railway station or town nearest to such farm or forest, I venture to suggest, in order to remove any ambiguity, that the "nearest seaport" be substituted for the "nearest town." That would be more helpful. For instance, when export apples are being shipped from various districts, it is important that they should be handled as little as possible. Every time they are handled, they are injured. Every time soft fruits, such as peaches, pears, apricots or plums are handled, they deteriorate in value. If a select committee is appointed, I trust they will give special consideration to that matter. The Bill defines the word "goods." I hope it will be agreed to exclude primary products from the definition of "goods." The Bill sets out in a certain part to limit the hours of those driving vehicles. In this respect it is reminiscent of the Bakers' Bill which was before the House some years ago. Members will recall the arrangement which was referred to by the late Mr. Davy as an unholy alliance and will also recall that the Bill ultimately met with the fate which many thought it deserved. The present Bill attempts to fix hours that shall be worked. It is unfair, to say the very least, to restrict by an Act of Parliament the hours which a man may work on his own

motor truck. There are too many people already receiving sustenance and obtaining relief work, and too many who are unable to avoid having to face the bankruptcy court. I challenge anyone to say that it is possible for a majority of those who enter into business to pay their way without working more than the recognised number of hours.

The Premier: Servants engaged in State transport have their hours regulated.

Mr. SAMPSON: I know that is so.

The Premier: What kind of competition is that?

Mr. SAMPSON: The Premier will agree that they have very special privileges. They have no trouble with respect to accounts. They have a gracious and kind Treasurer to find the money if the railways are running at a loss.

The Minister for Railways: The taxpayer has to pay that.

Mr. SAMPSON: What is the position? Losses do occur. Is the railwayman obsessed with the awfulness of it? But picture the man who owns a truck. He lies awake wondering how he is going to meet his bills.

The Minister for Railways: And then he goes to sleep on his way down from the hills.

Mr. SAMPSON: Not necessarily. I listened to the Minister talking the other night about a man going to sleep on a truck. It was stated that he should work only a certain number of hours because his strength was insufficient to enable him to exceed those hours. It was said 5½ hours was ample.

The Minister for Railways: They have this position to meet in England.

Mr. SAMPSON: We are a long way ahead of England in some respects.

The Premier: We would be a long way behind if you had your way.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not think so. I have sufficient faith in Australians to believe that they will stand up to the average man of any country, and in most instances will win. The Minister says these men must not work more than 5½ hours at one stretch, which is to say that 5½ hours is not a particularly lethargic or sleep-producing period. The Minister knows that it is sometimes in the early hours of the day when accidents occur in factories. That is a remarkable thing. I was surprised when

I looked up the figures and found that to be the case. In the early hours of the day, at about 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning, there is a bigger percentage of accidents than there is later in the day. Who will say that during those 5½ hours the driver will not go to sleep?

The Minister for Railways: He has a better chance of remaining awake for 5½ hours than for 12 hours.

Mr. SAMPSON: There is a big difference between 5½ hours and 12—more than 100 per cent.

Mr. Cross: What break has he in the 5½ hours?

Mr. SAMPSON: It is set out in the Bill. I dare not mention the clause.

Mr. Cross: Under the Bill, they can work 13 hours continuously.

Mr. SAMPSON: May I remind the Minister, as a motorist, he knows that if he is on a long journey and gets sleepy, he pulls up at the side of the road and has a sleep for ten or 20 minutes or half an hour.

The Minister for Railways: Then he is all right until he hits something.

Mr. SAMPSON: What I have stated is an acknowledged practice among motor drivers. There are times when a man is tired and has a very strong inclination to doze.

Mr. Ferguson: Not after 5½ hours.

Mr. SAMPSON: I went through Central Australia with a man who, it seemed to me, was at the wheel night and day. I am not suggesting that, however. What I say is that a motorist, if he has any common sense at all, will pull up and have a sleep if he gets very tired while driving. I am glad the Minister for Health does not smile in a disbelieving way, because he knows what I say is true. I do not want to say anything I should not, but suppose we follow this remarkable statement by the Minister that after 5½ hours a driver must have a rest, what control has Parliament over the hundreds and thousands of motor cars driven by owners? Is there any suggestion that they constitute a danger to road traffic?

The Minister for Railways: Do the men in your factory work more than 5½ hours in a stretch? Put it up to your employees and see how they get on.

Mr. SAMPSON: With regard to the three men I mentioned, I have given particulars, which can be substantiated, that they are getting more than double the basic wage.

The Premier: I do not believe it. Give us your figures.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am prepared to do that. If the Premier will honour me by receiving those three men, I will bring them along.

The Premier: No, I would not believe them. Bring me the figures.

Mr. SAMPSON: Here is the statement of one of them. He is the proprietor.

The Minister for Railways: How many hours a week does he work?

Mr. SAMPSON: He certainly does work over the hours.

The Premier: How long?

Mr. SAMPSON: I cannot tell you. However I am prepared to bring those three men along. Let us get back to the question of private motor car travelling. Does not the Minister himself, when he drives to Geraldton sit at the wheel more than 5½ hours?

The Premier: He stops for luncheon.

Mr. SAMPSON: They do not all stop for luncheon. They cannot work more than 11 hours out of the 24. Does that mean three men on the truck in order that they might carry on for the whole 24 hours? On certain of our trains, men work longer hours, but are paid overtime.

The Minister for Railways: No, they do not.

Mr. SAMPSON: Very well. But these other men are operating for themselves in many instances, and are quite pleased to work the longer hours, since it means they are getting ahead. They employ other men, who average more than double the basic wage.

The Premier: What, £7 per week?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes. One man earns more than that. He told me he earned £9 last week.

The Premier: Working how many hours?

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not know, but he works long hours and, evidently, in accordance with an award.

The Minister for Railways: These bedtime stories!

Mr. SAMPSON: I will get back to the story of the private car driver, and ask what is the Minister going to do to protect other road users?

The Minister for Railways: We are fixing reasonable conditions of labour in the Bill. How would the hon. member like it if somebody in his factory worked 99 hours a week?

Mr. SAMPSON: If those men are paid in accordance with the award, well and good.

The Premier: There is no award.

Mr. SAMPSON: Very well, all the more credit to those employers who pay the big wages they are paying. They require to have very good men to do it.

The Minister for Health: They will not complain about the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: No, so long as they are permitted to work. There was previously some discussion about the men who might be displaced because of the labour-saving system of bulk handling of wheat. May I ask whether the Minister has any plan in view for reinstating any men who, under the Bill, may be displaced from motor car driving?

The Premier: The goods will have to be carried somehow.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am told that the man on a short lead runs 100 miles in $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours. The restriction of $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours would be impracticable on the run from Meekatharra to Wiluna, a distance of 114 miles, because in view of the rough road it could not be covered in $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours. What would the driver be expected to do in those circumstances?

The Minister for Railways: Pull up and have his lunch and go on afterwards.

Mr. Marshall: I should like to ask what the driver is doing there at all, in view of the railway.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is what the Minister is asking. But the truck driver has 114 miles to travel over a rough road. Is he, for the sake of the few miles he could not cover in the $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours, to be compelled to get out and sit in the sun while he eats his lunch, or is he to be allowed to go on to Wiluna, where he can have his lunch in comfort? There is no alternative; he must either get out and eat his lunch in the sun or go on.

The Premier: He can sit in the shade of the truck.

Mr. SAMPSON: With the sun directly overhead, he would have to get under the truck, where the oil would drip on him. There is in the Bill a clause which I think I may fairly leave to the member for Murchison. It provides that in any prosecution under the Act and averment in the complaint that any person is the owner of a public vehicle and is unlicensed, or that the public vehicle was operated on a road,

shall be deemed to be proved in the absence of proof to the contrary. That may be necessary, but I will leave it to the member for Murchison, and he may dilate upon it.

Mr. Marshall: The board will not use that clause, anyhow.

Mr. SAMPSON: There is in the Bill almost unlimited powers to make regulations. I do not object to that. I appreciate the very difficult problems the Minister has to face, but I feel that while they are difficult they must not be overcome by making victims of those engaged in any other industry. And with all due respect, it does appear to me that the Bill has in view only one thing, namely the wiping out of commercial motor vehicles. I hope the Minister will withdraw from the stand he has taken towards the constitution of the board, namely that two members out of three shall be appointed by the Government. That would hand over to the board power to wipe out all opposition to Government transport. I hope the Minister's sense of fairness will prompt him to review that. If the board is to consist of three members, there should be only one Government nominee, while if it is to consist of five members, the Government might appoint two, leaving the rest to be appointed by independent authorities, if they can be found. The Bill prescribes that the board shall have power to decide upon licenses. I should like to see the right of appeal given to disappointed licensees, but it is not clear to whom they might appeal. However they should have such a right, because there are many operating buses or commercial vehicle services who, if they lost their licenses, should have opportunity to state their cases. The Minister has said it will be on lines somewhat similar to those of the licensed victuallers' licenses and be renewed from year to year if no charge be levelled against the licensee. But in the event of a charge being levelled, consideration should be given to the establishment of some tribunal by whom an appeal could be considered. The Bill contains a partial embargo on the use of local fuel, such as charcoal producer gas. This occurs in the second schedule, where an additional fee of 20 per cent. is chargeable when any substance other than petrol is used for power.

The Minister for Railways: That is in existing legislation.

Mr. SAMPSON: It might well be amended. We are striving to produce a gas for the operation of internal combustion engines. Already we have many tractors operating on charcoal gas, and I am sorry to see that it is proposed to add a 20 per cent. impost on commercial vehicles using for power any substance other than petrol.

The Minister for Railways: In all the State, there is only about one motor running on producer gas.

Mr. SAMPSON: At Wongan Hills there has been great development in the use of producer gas for farm tractors.

The Minister for Railways: But not for transport.

Mr. SAMPSON: Not yet, but who shall say that even in the near future producer gas will not be used for private cars?

Mr. Doney: It is being used for that purpose in one case I know of to-day.

The Minister for Railways: We may consider your suggestion.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am glad to hear that. Consideration should be given to a number of cases where there are trains and motor buses operating. As I have said, there are cases where the trains should not run, and other cases where there should be greater co-ordination of all forms of transport. The proposed board could do a great deal of good, but it must be constituted fairly.

The Minister for Railways: Wherever in the world such a board has been appointed, it has carried out its duties with great advantage.

Mr. SAMPSON: Perhaps I am unduly nervous.

The Premier: This is not experimental legislation; it is in existence in other parts of the world.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, I believe that in South Australia good progress has been made. We have believed for years that the internal combustion engines should be used in conjunction with our railways, that there should be feeder trucks and feeder buses, and possibly that by the co-ordination expressed in the Title of the Bill something may be achieved. I hope I may say without any impropriety that so far as I can see there is no co-ordination apart from that expressed in the Title. That is what has caused me some anxiety, because I do feel that we should hold the scales of justice fairly, and that the whole of these men, whether railway workers or motor workers,

are as citizens of the State deserving of a fair deal.

The Minister for Railways: That is the board's job.

[The Speaker Resumed the Chair.]

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [8.17]: The subject has been dealt with so fully already that I shall be very brief. In introducing the Bill the Minister has tackled a big problem, one that has been exercising the mind of the world. I heard the Premier's interjection that this is not experimental legislation but is operating successfully in other parts of the world. Nevertheless, the problem to be tackled by the proposed board is so complex, and the interests involved as between road men and railway men are so conflicting, that the ingenuity of the board will be taxed to the utmost in bringing them into accord and so evolving co-ordination. The tackling of the problem has been too long delayed. The Leader of the Opposition dealt fully with the question, mentioning many things which I can endorse. He cited cases at Trayning and elsewhere to illustrate the problem facing the man who has to get his goods delivered in the country. Prompt despatch, lower freights, and safe delivery appeal to the man who has to struggle to make both ends meet. Our railways are greatly handicapped. They are tied down in many directions, whereas the private person using the road has a free hand. There is the matter of regulating the hours of the workers. I can see what is in the Minister's mind. The railway service is hampered by certain conditions, whereas the man using the road is not similarly restricted. Again, the user of the road can pick his traffic, can select those things which bear the higher freights. In fact, he can pick the eyes out of the traffic, leaving the railways to carry the heavy stuff at low freights. These factors must be taken into consideration. As regards the appointment of a select committee, I support the Leader of the Opposition.

The Minister for Railways: Give us some of your reasons now.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: While as a rule I do not agree with the shifting of duties on to the shoulders of a select committee, I consider that such a body is better adapted to the obtaining of evidence and information

than this Chamber is. Such a task is possibly outside the scope of the House. Again, as regards the composition of the board I support previous speakers. It seems to me that the board will consist of three civil servants.

The Minister for Railways: It cannot, under the Bill.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It will probably resolve itself into that.

The Minister for Railways: The Bill says that the board shall comprise two civil servants and one member who shall not be a civil servant.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Then there will probably be two railway men and one outsider that does not appeal to me, and I hope a board of a different composition will be established. Again, the handing-over of excess railway revenue to the Consolidated Revenue Fund, as proposed by the Bill, appears to me undesirable. The surplus should go towards the same purpose as was served in the past by Main Roads Board expenditure. It would be beating the air for me to give instances where railway administration is not calculated to compete with road traffic. Under present conditions the Railway Department have not a dog's chance of competing with road traffic. I hope the Bill will bring about co-ordination, and not elimination, of road traffic. In these days of progress we must not go back on ourselves. Road traffic has come to stay. I trust the Minister will agree to the appointment of a select committee to study all the various conflicting interests with a view to bringing about co-ordination. I often smile when the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) speaks about pulling up the line between Perth and Fremantle or converting it into a motor track for heavy traffic. There the hon. member is looking ahead a bit. I may mention an experience I had recently. I happened to go to the Trots at Fremantle on Saturday night, and returning by the late train I was struck by the fact that while three buses loaded with passengers were making off up the road, I found at the railway station that there were only four passengers on the train for Perth. The bus passengers were taken into the centre of the city. We got off at Subiaco, hoping to catch a tram there. However, the last tram had gone, and we had to walk to our home. That is

only a small incident, but it shows that the advantages of the motor bus as against the train must appeal to the ordinary person.

MR. F. C. L. SMITH (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [8.25]: Hon. members generally will agree that this measure is long overdue. There is no need to argue at length as to its necessity. It is obvious to the most casual observer that control and co-ordination of the various forms of transport must be exercised if the interests of the public generally are to be conserved. I recognise that users of transport under the existing competition are enjoying temporary advantages arising out of that competition. However, there is no question as to the temporary character of those advantages. In fact if the competition existing between various forms of transport facilities is allowed to continue uncontrolled and unrestricted, there can be only one end to it, and that is the disorganisation of that form of transport which caters for the community upon a State-wide basis—the railways. Railways are organised upon the basis of rendering service not only to thickly populated areas warranting large traffic facilities and giving assurance of profit, but also to thinly populated districts involving service over a long range of mileage and to distant centres where, if profit were the only consideration, there would never be a railway. The Railway Department operate various feeder lines catering for sparsely populated districts, and they do that not only as an effort toward the development of those districts—a point frequently stressed here—but as a duty, a necessity, and a well-recognised obligation in any properly organised system of transportation. This evening's debate has evoked a certain amount of criticism with regard to railway policy and administration. We had similar criticism here on a recent evening, but not much of it was of a constructive character; nor has some of it been of an important nature. The question of catering for meals, the price of tea and scones and fares and freights were debated. There was a good deal of complaint voiced regarding lack of train connections. However, I venture to say that similar criticism of railway organisation is to be heard in all the various Legislatures of Australia. Our railway organisation and administration may not be perfect. I have no doubt that there are isolated instances of freight rate

which to the outsider appear to be unwarranted, and that certain acts of railway policy are not above criticism. I could mention several instances of acts of policy with regard to freights which I consider are not above criticism, but taking a broad and reasonable view of railway management, of fares and freights, of time tables and policy generally, I certainly think it has to be agreed that our railways are administered in the best possible way when all the facts are taken into consideration. It must be remembered that there is a wealth of experience behind railway administration in this State. That is in the possession of those who are charged with the management of our railways. That experience is experience that an average critic does not possess, and it must not be forgotten either that our time-tables, our fares and freights and even train connections are the outcome of that experience. Comparison was made here the other evening between the efficiency of our railway administration and that of Victoria, and possibly such a comparison might reflect to our disadvantage. In this State however we have a mile of railway for every 90 people, whereas in Victoria they have a mile of railway for every 448 people. It follows as a natural corollary that in a highly developed State like Victoria, with a greater ratio of population to the mile of railway, that there should be a better prospect of goods and passenger traffic there, and in consequence railway management in that State might appear to accomplish a more exacting efficiency than it does in this State. But with all the efficiency that is evident in Victoria, if such an efficiency is greater than it is in this State, we find there that with all the special advantages which they have in that State for competition, with the short distances, as the member for Guildford has pointed out, and a greater ratio of population per mile of railway, those railways are putting forth their best efforts, but cannot hope successfully to compete unless something is done to protect them in the interests of the public generally, and something is done to restrict or control and co-ordinate the various forms of motor transport that are picking out the payable traffic, taking, as it were, the eyes out of the business, that the railways are organised to

undertake. In the last issue of the Perth "Sunday Times" there appeared the following paragraph which is illustrative of the position in Victoria:—

An alarming state of affairs, is how the Railway Commissioners describe the railway conditions in Gippsland in a striking report issued to-day following on their tour of inspection this week. "Everywhere we went," the report said, "we were faced with a picture of active road competition, so extensive that it is no exaggeration to say that it threatens the continuance of existing railway services. Without entering into a freight war far more ruthless than has hitherto been contemplated anywhere, there are under present conditions no practicable means open to the railways to meet this competition.

That shows it is not only in Western Australia that the problem of motor competition is confronting the people.

The Minister for Railways: And we do not want a select committee to find that out.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: There is no need for a select committee to be appointed to discover anything like that, or even the need for a Bill of this description. It is in respect of the widely organised character of the services which the railways render in various areas without regard to profit in the carriage of goods and passengers at a rate which is unprofitable that a railway service differs from motor transport. It is because of this also, the wide basis on which they are organised, and the services they are rendering on the broad basis, that they are restricted and throttled in the matter of effective competition with motor transport which is confining its activities to roads where profits can be made, and to the higher classes of freight that is of a payable nature. The latest railway returns show that 68.89 per cent. of the goods were carried at less than the average rate of 1.49d. per mile, and showed that 1.49d. per mile, the average rate, was not a payable average, and not sufficient to meet working expenses, and pay interest on the capital invested. The return shows that nothing less than 1.75d. per cent. is a payable average, and it also shows that over 75 per cent. of the ton mileage for last year carried on our railways was below that profitable average. The commodities that were carried below a profitable average price were coal, coke, hay, straw, chaff, wheat, firewood, timber, fertilisers, and grain other than wheat. So that

all those who are interested in these various commodities are surely entitled to some consideration insofar that their interests should be protected from the unfair competition of motor transport. We hear many criticisms of differentiating railway freight, and I know too it is assumed that the differentiation arises out of some commodities being more valuable than others, and that therefore, those commodities can afford to pay more. That might be one reason possibly why there is differentiation in the freights, but there are other reasons, much more deeply seated reasons, and the chief of them is that attention must be given in the railway business, as in any other form of business, to getting a volume of trade commensurate with the basis on which it is organised. There are certain inflexible overhead costs that have to be met, and it is essential in all business that a certain volume of trade should be done commensurate with the basis upon which the business is working, even though some of it is not profitable. At one time I was connected with the printing business, in which the member for Swan is interested. He knows that in that business there are a lot of standing jobs which a printing establishment undertakes that are not profitable in the true sense of the word. Those jobs may pay working expenses, but they will not pay when overhead costs are taken into consideration. At the same time that class of business in a printing establishment is very desirable from the proprietor's point of view, because it helps the volume of trade that is done, and it finds work for the men, and will at least pay their wages. Those wages have to be paid whether that class of work is there or not. That class of printing is usually of a recurring character, and it is measured by the amount of profit the printer can get on other work in his establishment. If an opponent were to rob him of all the profitable printing, or of half of it, he could not do so much of the other class of work with which he is really maintaining the volume of his business. The same thing applies to the railways. If the profit-paying freights are to be plucked from them by motor transport it follows as a natural corollary that the whole system will have to be reviewed with an eye to its curtailment, and confining its operations to the profit-paying freights only. That would not be of advantage to the general community.

Mr. Marshall: And would not lead to the development of the country.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: No.

Mr. Marshall: It would ruin the wheat-growing industry for a start.

The Premier: These low freights are only temporary. It will all come back upon the farmer later on when the railways have to be reorganised.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: The more profitable freights the railways carry, the greater will their capacity be to render service to those who are producing goods that cannot be marketed satisfactorily unless a low freight is charged upon their transport. No doubt some of the producers would be pleased to see present conditions continue, in the hope that they will go on for ever. That is all very well. Just now they are able to make a selection of the various forms of transport and patronise that which offers the best rates, but it is obvious to those who give the question a moment's consideration that that cannot continue indefinitely. Commonsense demands that we should give cover to the concern that is operating on a broad basis, so that the service it renders and the interests of the people to whom it is rendered may be adequately protected. The Bill will go a long way in that direction. I hope the board will be appointed as a full-time board. It will have plenty of work to perform in co-ordinating the various forms of transport, and regulating them so that they may give the greatest good to the greatest number, consistent with justice being meted out to all concerned. Three members are quite sufficient, both in the interests of economy and efficiency. Greater confidence would be inspired by a board of three than one consisting of a larger number. Certain clauses of the Bill relating to the removal of members would be less necessary if the board comprised three instead of more persons. I disagree with the provision that two-thirds of the representation shall consist of Government nominees. We want all interests concerned to have confidence in this organisation. I do not think those interested in motor transport could have any confidence in a board two of whose members were Government officials. The field of selection would be greatly restricted. The Bill provides that members shall be persons who are capable of assessing the financial and economic effect upon the State as a whole of any transport policy. The men who could conform to that

qualification would not be easy to find. Whilst I have no objection to a Government official being appointed if he happens to be the right man for the job, I see no reason why the selection of two-thirds of the board should be confined to Government men. We should have the widest possible choice in constituting the personnel of the board. It is not even essential that they should have a knowledge of transport details. Professor Hytten says in his report that the South Australian Government did not appoint a board consisting of men with a wide knowledge of transport working, but that its operations had been very successful. I agree that it is not desirable that the various interests concerned should be represented. There is sure to be a clash of opinion, as the professor points out, resulting in a compromise unsatisfactory to both parties. Provision is made in the Bill for the investigation of certain matters at the direction of the Minister. The board should be allowed to undertake investigations on its own initiative as well as into those questions to which their attention was directed by the Minister. If the license fees prescribed in the Bill are to be added to those already existing, I consider the whole question of fees should be reviewed, including those dealt with in the Traffic Act. I have never been able to see the wisdom of taxing motor bus proprietors upon the seating capacity of their vehicles, though I could understand a system which imposed a license fee based on the percentage of earnings of each motor bus. It is seating capacity that the public want, and the proprietors should be encouraged to provide that which will adequately cater for their passengers. Any special fees imposed upon bus proprietors should be based on earnings. That system would not be satisfactory in the case of vehicles carrying commercial goods. If the Bill means that license fees on the various buses that are operating in the metropolitan area, and giving an excellent service to residents who formerly were not well catered for by any other form of transport, are to be increased, either the service will be curtailed or the fares will have to be increased.

The Premier: Or perhaps the profits reduced.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: That is possible. Many bus proprietors operating in the metropolitan area are not making big profits, though some of them are doing so.

The Premier: Some companies are making huge profits.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: That is all the more justification for imposing a fee based on the percentage of traffic earnings.

Mr. Marshall: One company should not be allowed to operate on its present route, because that runs parallel to the railway.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: That is the fairest basis upon which to license any bus service catering for passenger traffic.

Mr. Griffiths: A sort of income tax.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: It is a well recognised form of income tax. The Kalgoorlie Tramway Company has been operating for 30 years and has given a service commensurate with the demands of the district as good as is found in any part of the Commonwealth. The principle of paying a percentage of the traffic receipts to the various local bodies through whose districts the company runs its trams has been in operation since the inception of the service.

Mr. Hawke: Are the tram lines still holding together?

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: They will hold together for a long time yet. New rails have recently been laid. When the transport board is formed, I will have a job for it to do on the goldfields. Not long ago I endeavoured to effect a co-ordination of the tramway service and the Railway Department with a view to providing better transport facilities for about 400 workers, who have to walk a mile from the tram terminus at Boulder Block to the Chaffers shaft. I suggested to the Railway Department that they should give the tramway company the right to run their trams over a section of the railway line that is very little used. I was told it would involve a serious and expensive signalling system. I believe the real position was that the tramway company did not want to pay for any overhead construction expenses because there was no possibility of increased returns for their capital expenditure, and the Railway Department were not anxious to operate a line because it was of a losing character. There is not sufficient traffic offering to warrant the competition that would be set up between the railways and the tramway company if that particular line were to be operated again. Nevertheless, the possibility is there for the board to achieve co-ordination between the operations of the

Railway Department and the tramway company, respectively, with a view to giving the miners, who now have to walk a mile to the Chaffers shaft and a mile back to the tramway when they knock off work, some reasonable transport facilities. The other night, when the Minister was speaking, I interjected that the bus routes would be put up for auction every 12 months. It would seem that the Bill provides for that. I presume, of course, that if the board were given that power they would not exercise it to the full. I do not anticipate that they will. After all, those who have invested their money in bus services over various routes must be given security of tenure if the best service possible is to be rendered the public. The Bill also provides that the board shall report upon all new railways. That seems to be a departure from past practice. I understand that at present the Railway Advisory Board undertake the investigation of proposed railways and furnish reports to the Government. If the transport board is to be super-imposed upon the Railway Advisory Board, whose report has to be presented to Parliament before a Bill for the construction of a proposed railway can be discussed, we cannot take any exception to the proposal. It will represent a further safeguard.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Possibly it would be a good thing if we appointed a further board to review the work of the transport board.

The Minister for Railways: We cannot have too much information regarding a railway project.

The Premier: The construction of a railway might be proposed and the transport board decide that the service would be better provided by road.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: Yes, and the Railway Advisory Board would probably deal with the proposal from a railway point of view only.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And possibly we would see, as soon as the railway was authorised, that a road was built immediately to enable motor transport to enter into competition with the railway.

Member: Roads will be built wherever railways are authorised.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: The Bill contains a provision, the effect of which will be to protect the Commissioner of Railways

against the operations of road vehicles carrying passengers. So far as I can read the provisions of the Bill, the board will have power to make provision along those lines where circumstances warrant that course being adopted. With regard to commercial goods vehicles, I am of the opinion that where such vehicles are used only for the transport of the goods belonging to the owner himself, those vehicles should not be licensed under this particular measure, nor should the board have any control over them. The board's activities should be confined to the control of those vehicles that are catering for the transport of goods belonging to other people. As to the powers that are to be vested in the board, I have, generally speaking, very little objection to offer. I feel that a lot will depend, as it must always depend in similar circumstances, on the wisdom and discretion exercised by members of the board. The success of the board generally in the task with which they will be confronted, will depend upon the composition and structure of the board rather than on the nature and extent of their powers, provided, of course, that those powers are sufficiently wide to meet the requirements of the task with which the board will be faced.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [9.7]: The difficulty in dealing with the Bill is largely that of the difference between railway losses, in view of motor traffic, and public convenience. They are the two factors involved. I propose to offer very few remarks regarding the Bill, not as one having expert knowledge but because of the fact that it concerns metropolitan members particularly as it affects motor traffic. Members are called upon to speak very often on subjects with which they are not entirely familiar, but the public demand that we shall take some interest in matters that could be better handled through experts. With regard to the railway aspect of the questions involved, it seems to me that what we have to find out, either through experts or through the Minister for Railways, is how far, in future, the railways will continue, even as they are to-day. We know that heavy freight will always be carried by the railways and to-day the question of passenger traffic on the railways is of great importance. All

sorts of ideas have been expressed as to what should be done, including the provision of fast railway coaches, to cope with the traffic and to compete with road transport over long distances. Unless something of that sort is done, it seems to me that the railways will fast be converted into carriers of heavy freight only. If that were to be the position, then the Bill could be greatly simplified. Another aspect of the railway problem is that the Commissioner is handicapped by the necessity to run the railways in a political sense, perhaps not directly but certainly indirectly. In addition, as money is tight and he cannot get what he has required for years, he is still further handicapped. For years past, I have noted in the annual reports submitted by the Commissioner of Railways, repeated requests for money in order to enable him to deal with re-grading and other necessary work, but he is never able to get a quarter of the amount he requires.

Mr. Cross: And he has to shoulder a heavy interest bill.

Mr. NORTH: I will come to that point later on. Quite apart from the fact that motor transport will increase and take a greater part in the life of the country than at present, the Railway Department has never had a fair deal. The Commissioner cannot improve the facilities as he desires, and give the service that is required, quite apart from the question of competition altogether. That is always the experience in connection with railways controlled by the State. Another point that has to be considered is that as long as we have our railway system run over a narrow gauge, and Australia as a whole has not a uniform gauge, we shall not be able to secure the results that we are entitled to expect from such a system. It means that in Australia, too much rolling stock has to be maintained to cope with the requirements of the several services. We cannot reduce the cost because we have three or four different gauges operating in different parts of Australia. That is a factor that must always be taken into consideration when we are discussing this problem. It is not a matter of railway acumen or expert knowledge; it is a matter of recognising the existence of conditions that prevent changes being made. Members will remember that sometime ago a Royal Commission was appointed in

Australia to deal with the railway gauge problem throughout the Commonwealth. Among the members of the Commission were two world experts in railway matters. They decided upon one policy but the third member of the Commission, who was a banker, disagreed and set the decision of his colleagues aside. The result is that Australia continues with the different gauges over which railway transport has to be dealt with. That involves unnecessary charges for the provision and maintenance of rolling stock in the different States. Another difficulty confronting the Commissioner of Railways is the non-paying lines. Sometime ago I made a suggestion that this State should adopt the system that has been in vogue in Victoria for some time. In that State they separate the non-paying lines from lines that are commercial propositions, and make the former a charge against Consolidated Revenue. Such a system here would give the Commissioner of Railways better heart to grapple with the task of making our railways pay. The last point I shall make regarding the railway side of the problem is to stress the importance of immediately, whatever may be the fate of the Bill under discussion, providing fast coaches to deal with the passenger traffic and leave the long-distance trains purely for freight purposes. I understand that in South Australia that is being done and I cannot see why that phase should not receive immediate attention here.

Mr. Wansbrough: Is it possible to secure the railway passenger traffic?

Mr. NORTH: I do not suppose it is with mixed trains, but if we were to run fast coaches, limiting the service to passenger requirements and leaving the heavy freight to the ordinary trains, we would recapture much of the traffic that has been lost. However, that is a matter for experts, and I do not want to go into it too closely. As to the motor question, it is obvious that that form of transport will increase as the years go by and additional roads are built. Since we first put down roads, we have improved the system and now construct very fine roads. In the future better and cheaper roads will be constructed. Mechanical construction will be used to a greater extent, and less human labour will be involved. All these considerations will tend to leave the handling of heavy freight to the railways. I cannot see any objection

to that, provided that the passenger traffic is attended to in the proper way. In any business it must be obvious that if a man is offered conveniences that suit him, he will avail himself of them. If motor transport offers the farmer the convenience of taking his wool direct from the farm to wherever it has to go, it is obvious that that form of transport will receive the consideration it deserves. We are fast reaching that position. It will avoid indirect handling as often as possible and wherever motor transport can be used to avoid double handling, it may be taken for granted that it will be availed of. Two questions enter into the consideration of the matter. The first is: What is the comparative cost in Western Australia to-day of maintaining and building first-class roads as against the comparative cost of building and maintaining satisfactory railway lines with reasonably heavy rails? I believe I am right in saying that a first-class road can be built and maintained at a much cheaper cost than a railway line can be constructed and maintained.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And can the same service be rendered?

Mr. NORTH: I am coming to that. I think it is so, and if that is the position it means that we will be forced, sooner or later, to confine the railways entirely to heavy bulk traffic. I can see no objection to that myself. I do not see why we need endeavour to force the passenger traffic on to the railways if road transport is cheaper to maintain. That, however, is for experts to determine and I merely mention that phase. The other question is, can Australia produce a cheap, economic fuel? I believe so. Those two questions go to the root of the Bill. For those reasons, I urge that the proposed board should be entirely independent and not tied to any particular system of transport. The third, and to me most important, of all considerations is that which was mentioned in an interjection by the member for Canning, and that is the interest bill. From arguments that have taken place in the House recently, and from what has appeared in the Press, it seems to me that perhaps the most burning question which every country has to consider is the much discussed money reform. If it were possible to construct roads and railways without having the burden of interest to carry, then the questions of reconstruction and improvements would present no

menace at all. There is no doubt our tramways would be taken up to-morrow and replaced by motor vehicles, were it not that there was the question of the interest on the capital involved to be considered. When the money reform that has been talked about so much in various countries is brought into force, invention will not be hindered or checked by vested interests. Nearly everyone knows that thousands of inventions are buried each year. They do not see the light, not because they would not be an improvement to existing services, but because they are bought out and hidden for the reason that they would interfere with vested interests in the tremendous capital put into existing concerns. If the new money system I have referred to were inaugurated—and I hope it will be—there would be no question in the future concerning the capitalisation of railways and other huge undertakings; we should discuss questions purely on their merits. I would remind members of a very interesting experiment made during the Great War. There was then no question of costs or overhead charges. It was a matter of life and death. A question arose regarding the respective merits of motor transport and railway transport. Everybody concerned, including yourself, Mr. Speaker, knew that there was a big field for both motor transport and light railways. The railways were used to transport heavy freight, while the motor buses were used to transport the soldiers. That is a guide for us. At present we are hampered because of the possible loss of money invested and because of overhead costs; but there it was a question of life and death and what was best to be done. As it worked out, heavy freight was carried over the rails, while the soldiers were transported by motor buses. If it were possible to provide for an independent board, then I would not urge for the appointment of a select committee. If, however, we cannot secure an independent board, then I think we are justified in asking for a select committee, because the matters dealt with in the Bill are really outside the knowledge of members of Parliament, except the Minister for Railways, the Premier and some other hon. members who have made a study of the subject. If a board were appointed, its members would have permanent positions and they could make the inquiries which otherwise should be made by a select committee. My last point

is this: the real trouble, as I see it, and I think members will agree with me, is not that our railways are not carefully administered, but they are starved for money for well-known reasons; and, secondly, there are not enough people here to use them. The final solution of this question will be—although I do not say it will come in our time—when every bushel of wheat grown in Western Australia is consumed by people in Western Australia, who live here and make their own goods here. When our population reaches five millions, which the wheat we now produce will feed, our railways will be on a sound footing, especially if they are confined to the transporting of heavy freight.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [9.21]: It can be said that the value of the Bill, if it becomes an Act, will absolutely depend upon the personnel of the proposed board. The board is to be given power to do certain work which, in my opinion, should have been done years ago. I regret exceedingly that the Minister who introduced the Bill did not do so when he first became Minister for Railways. At that time we could have organised things on a much sounder and more economical basis than is possible to-day. However, it is never too late to mend and the Government are to be commended for tackling this question even when it is getting somewhat late in the session. The object of the Bill is to co-ordinate and regulate existing transport services. We know that competition can, and will, arrive at a stage when it interferes with efficiency. Competition is only healthy when in the main it is economically sound, but when it reaches the stage where two great services are competing in such a way that the returns of both are adversely affected, then efficiency is interfered with. The shoddy is introduced so that those who are endeavouring to give us service can exist on the poor return they get for it; in other words, over-capitalisation interferes with efficiency. For instance, we arrived at a period in this State when we found competition in the hotel business was interfering with the efficient service rendered by the hotels. That was because there was not enough population to support them all. We then found that the good standard set by the better class hotel was brought down, by over-competition, to the level of the lower class hotel. We therefore decided the time had arrived when a licenses reduction board

should be appointed to remove that unfair, unreasonable, uneconomic competition which existed and to put the industry on a sounder basis. That has been accomplished. The Bill is to achieve something of the same kind. It is a bigger job and on a larger scale, but something of the kind is to be attempted. The unregulated competitor that is proceeding to-day has had the effect of bringing down the standard of our transport facilities. For instance, the practice to-day is to install temporary expedients because the competition is such that it will not permit of increased capitalisation. Roads and railways are not properly maintained because neither the railways nor motor transport is getting the support to enable either to capitalise up to the required standard. The State, therefore, has to-day to take official notice of this competition and see that it does not interfere with the proper maintenance of both services. A very sound reason for the Bill is its provision for the preservation of a proper industrial standard. Reference was made to-night to the industrial conditions awarded to those associated with our transport arrangements under State control. People outside the House have compared the standard of wages, hours and general conditions awarded to transport workers under Government control as compared with those connected with other forms of transport. We know that over-competition will gradually, but surely, reduce the proper standard. It is always well for us to maintain a good standard and it can be said that, so far as our transport arrangements in Western Australia are concerned, we have done so. If, however, existing conditions that have been referred to this evening are allowed to continue, where men snatch sleep on the roadside, and work all days of the week, and where there is no regard to their earnings, then of course the standard must be lowered. The board no doubt will take into consideration those economic factors which go to maintain a reasonable standard of living for those associated with transport work. As a justification for a Bill of this description, we have to say definitely that we must seriously review the privileges enjoyed by and the want of restriction of motor transport. We have to remember, as was pointed out by the mem-

ber for Claremont and other members, that the railways were constructed to develop the country. The earning capacity of a railway line was not considered, but simply the need for the railway to assist in land settlement and development.

Mr. North: Something bigger than profits.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It was not a question of profits. For instance, I introduced numerous railway construction Bills authorising the building of hundreds of miles of railways. I had to justify those Bills, as other Ministers have had to do, but I did not go into the question of whether the railway would be profitable or not. What influenced the introduction of the Bill was the fact that a given tract of country would be thrown open for settlement and that economic production depended upon railway transport. Parliament authorised the construction of those hundreds of miles of railway because they would result in land settlement and land development. It was quite wrong for us to lose sight of that fact and allow other influences to get to work to build roads alongside those railways before they had become paying propositions, before they had a reasonable time within which to recover from the pioneering stages of expenditure and losses. Before they had a chance to demonstrate that it was possible to work them at a profit, this new road competitor stepped in and proceeded to undermine that which had not been properly established. Sufficient time had not been given to the railways to become established on a permanent, economic basis. Therefore, we have provision in the Bill for a board. I presume the board will take into consideration the enormous amount of money that has been expended by the State upon railway construction that has contributed so materially to the development and production of the State. We have another illustration of the need of a Bill like this in connection with land development. Generally speaking, we develop the lands of the State by railway construction in anticipation of settlement, and we provide the money from the Agricultural Bank for the development of the lands. After we have spent a fair amount of money in developing the land and providing the capital for the selectors, we then take them on to a given stage, after which we allow

private financial institutions to come in and take the cream of it. After doing the difficult part of the land development we allow others to get the more profitable part. Exactly the same thing is happening to our railway activity. We have opened up the country and secured settlement, and after this has been done with the people's money, private interests come along and, without any restriction are operating under disgraceful conditions. It is quite wrong that we should see trucks of wool and sheepskins flying through our metropolitan area on a Sunday afternoon. I do not say it is wrong simply from a religious point of view, but certainly it is wrong industrially. I live in Guildford where, being on a main road, we notice these things. Some control is necessary when we find competition of that kind and growing week by week. At a given stage in the history of our National Parliament the Bruce-Page Administration, having accumulated a surplus were fearful that there was going to be a change of Government, and that the surplus might be distributed in social services; so they conceived the idea of extending patronage to the large motor interests by introducing the road grant proposal. It was purely fostering a vested interest. A new system had been introduced of investing capital in transport equipment, and capital had increased its hold on those activities to such an extent that it became a power in the land. It would not have grown had the States not fallen to the proposal and subsidised that road grant expenditure, co-operating with the Commonwealth to build all those main roads in competition with our railways. The whole thing was economically unsound and should not have been undertaken by the States. We cannot rush into new expenditure of that kind unless that new expenditure either increases production or increases population. The main factor must be an increase in population. I have always ridiculed this policy of constructing main roads parallel to our railways, as being uneconomical. I have preached in this House that our chickens would come home to roost, that it was impossible for us to go on building competitive roads against our railways. Road transport has not increased population in Australia, nor has it increased production. It has exploited the population that exists, and it has also exploited the production of those on the land. That ap-

plies very definitely in Western Australia. There has been an exploiting influence, and it has been subsidised in this way, that those importing the motor vehicles and distributing them to the public, knew perfectly well that their distributions would be limited in proportion to the roads available for those vehicles. And Governments used the national funds to build the roads in order to help the motors. To-day our railways are suffering because of that competition. What should have been done when they put on the petrol tax for the purpose of raising funds for the main roads, was to recognise that they were crippling the State's assets, that the Federal contribution was going to reduce the possibilities of the States meeting their interest obligations and their liabilities. For we were crippling one main earning industry where a large amount of borrowed capital has been invested. What should have been done was to recognise that the roads being built would decrease the value of the railways in proportion to the comparative possibilities of the roads. That should have been met by withholding portion of the money available for roads, and using it to reduce the capitalisation of the railways, which was becoming a burden on the people. And what we should have done was to tell the Federal Government that we would co-operate with them, provided that the true economic aspect of the proposition would be so used that as the State asset depreciated by the expenditure of that Federal money, so the State assets should be recouped by a portion of the Federal money; in other words, the over-capitalisation of the railways which has been contributed to by the construction of main roads, should have been recouped so as to give the railways a chance to meet their obligation. It is totally unfair that a small population of 430,000 people unable to maintain their railways should be called upon in addition to contribute to the maintenance of roads in competition with those railways. Yet not satisfied with that position we have now started an air service to multiply the competition for a limited volume of traffic. There are in Western Australia people who will read American papers issued from centres of huge populations. As soon as they see a new form of transport they immediately urge that that new form be brought to Western Australia; this with a total disregard of the fact that our small population cannot carry it. There

are lots of things that we individually would like, but which we cannot afford, and so we deny ourselves. Yet, in point of transport, we are trying to ape those countries that have made great strides in transport—strides that have been possible only by virtue of the huge populations catered for. Our small population cannot do things that come easily to the population of New York, yet we try every day to do them, and of course we fail miserably. The financial position of our State is becoming less sound year by year because no regard has been given to those factors that lead on to more disastrous results. Holding those views I welcome the proposal to establish a transport board so that the State shall be given a fair chance to carry the burden of debt that is ours. Much will depend upon the personnel of the board. If a wise selection be made, probably all will be well. The Government and the people have a tremendous lot at stake in money invested in transport facilities, and therefore it is only reasonable to say that the people's money must have the people's representation, and we cannot go outside those that have been interested in this kind of thing, and who understand the Government's point of view, and are familiar with the administration of Government affairs. I believe that to get proper protection for the people, to see that the people's asset is safeguarded, is absolutely essential. I do not want to deny the people's right to get the most modern system of transportation, but I do again urge that there is an economical side which must be studied; and the board will have to do that. However, all that can best be done, in my opinion, by those who understand the development of Western Australia, who have been educated in the public service to realise the amount of money that has been invested. Therefore I regard the Government's proposal respecting the constitution of the board as wise. Where the big investment of capital is, there the big representation is justified. Other interests can be safely protected. In my opinion, the Bill is framed to give reasonable protection to outside interests, to protect the State's main interest, and to give Parliament that review of the board's activities which is essential. Personally I regard the Bill as wisely designed and well drafted. Possibly there may be amendments proposed in Committee. Nevertheless, viewing the measure from a broad basis, one realises that the

need for it is so pressing that one must welcome it and give it hearty support.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [9.48]: I do not think much is to be gained by holding a post-mortem as to why the present situation exists. I was sorry to hear the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson), whose remarks I always listen to with great interest, cast blame upon the Bruce-Page Government for the provision of money for roads. Even if that turns out, in the light of recent events, to have been a mistaken policy, it was acquiesced in by all the States, whatever may have been the complexion of their Governments, almost unanimously, and was generally thought to be a proper step to take.

Mr. Stubbs: And gave employment to a great number of men.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, and opened up this country and made life much more tolerable, and industry much more possible, by the provision of decent means of road transportation. I am not by any means convinced that that money was unwisely spent, or that it failed to serve a useful purpose in Australian development. The real point is that motor transport has been like a young giant; nobody expected it would grow up so fast. It has grown up so fast that almost before we had time to realise it—

Mr. Marshall: That is like the modern child.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. It grows up very fast. Road transport has become a tremendous factor in the transportation industry before we had time to realise it, and before there was a possibility of adjusting between the relative operations of rail transport and road transport. In the course of some recent observations, the general manager of the Midland Railway Company of this State, who of course saw fully the railway point of view, set out figures concerning the comparative capital invested in rail transportation and motor transportation. While we have some 340 million pounds invested in the whole of Australia in railway transport, we have, also in the whole of Australia, no less than 120 million pounds invested in motor transport.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Of course, in vehicles only: the people supply the roads.

Mr. McDONALD: From the latest returns I notice that the total taxation contributed by motor transport amounts to some £9,000,000 a year. True, a large part of that money goes for making and maintenance of roads; but if that contribution were not taken from the motor industry, it would have to be found by the general body of taxpayers. So we find that the motor transport industry does contribute the very substantial sum of £9,000,000 annually in vehicle fees, traffic fees, and petrol tax towards the revenue which is used for the public services of the State.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Oh, no!

Mr. McDONALD: I was going to add, admitting all the time that a large part of that revenue goes to maintain the roads of which the motor transport industry has a peculiar use.

The Minister for Railways: A practically exclusive use in Western Australia.

Mr. McDONALD: That is so. Even admitting all that, nobody can possibly visualise any modern State, least of all Western Australia, deprived of motor transport. We must realise that roads in this State—perhaps not the parallel roads, to which objection is taken—must be there for motor transport, and that motor transport plays an absolutely essential part in the transport requirements of Western Australia. We find, therefore, that readjustment becomes necessary because motor transport has suddenly—largely due, I think, to the war—assumed dimensions so great that it is causing a serious dislocation in our rail transport and its finances. We now propose to pass this Bill, which I think every section of the House feels to be justified, for the purpose of co-ordinating the different forms of transport. There is really only one clause of the Bill concerning which, in my opinion, the House need seriously concern itself; and that, as has been pointed out by many speakers—therefore I shall not spend much time on it—is the clause dealing with the personnel of the proposed board. The board will have an extraordinarily difficult task. They will have to legislate, not for existing conditions, but for something which in five years' time may be almost entirely different. By that time conditions may be such as we can hardly visualise at present, by reason of altered inventions and of improvements in forms of transport, rail or

motor. The board are also to deal with many millions of pounds. There are going to be very few tribunals in Australia charged with the administration of so many millions of pounds. The question before the House is whether the members of the board are to be free from any association with either interest, motor transport or rail transport, or whether the board shall be representative of those interests. Those are the two choices. But a half-and-half board I regard as impossible. I know the Minister desires only to have a board which will be best in the interests of the State and will have the confidence of all sections of the community.

The Minister for Railways: And a due sense of responsibility.

Mr. McDONALD: In our community, when people are appointed to positions of this kind they almost invariably rise to the occasion. Although they may have had prior associations, they become impartial and judicial in their feelings, and do conscientiously strive to do justice to all parties concerned.

The Minister for Railways: In Victoria the board are representative of ten different interests. Finally, after hearing all the interests, the boards gave a unanimous decision.

Mr. McDONALD: That is an indication of what I have just stated. Here we have a proposal for a board of three, of whom two are to be Government servants, or in other words two are to be representatives of the Government, who are the owners of the rail transport. If we just reverse that and think of a board on which two members should be employees or representatives of the motor transport interest, we have conditions which nobody can possibly support. It may well be said that Government servants are not necessarily biased servants but can take a more impartial view than the employees of private industry. I do think a Government servant very desirous of doing his best must have his feelings coloured to a certain extent by the point of view to which he has been trained. Therefore, if we are to have representation of interests, there should be equal representation of railway interests and equal representation of motor interests.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What about capitalisation?

Mr. McDONALD: Although the present-day capitalisation of railway systems in

Australia may be 340 million sterling, the present-day value may be very much less than that figure.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: On what do you base your calculation of equal representation?

Mr. McDONALD: There should be one representative of the motor interests, one of the railway interests, and an independent person. The alternative is to have, as in South Australia, a board which has been successful and which is composed of people who are not representative of any section at all, who are absolutely dissociated from any prior contact with either interest. Those are the two alternatives which appear to me to be before the House. Many of us have had some experience of the nature of boards or tribunals representing conflicting interests. I do not think they are as successful as they might be, because however desirous of doing their best the parties may be, they nearly always find themselves, on account of their prior training, at variance, and the result is that the decision is left to the third person concerned, or to the independent people who may be on the tribunal. I think we might well avoid that, either by having entirely independent people, or else by having equally balanced representation of rail transport on the one side and road transport on the other side, with one independent person holding the balance between the two representatives. I do not propose at this stage to say more. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) has referred very properly to the all-important question of the constitution of the board, who are the crux of the whole Bill. I think the hon. member's remarks deserve a great deal of attention from the Government.

Mr. McLARTY: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [10.9]: In addressing myself to this Bill I have no wish in any way to decry the work of the Railway Department. The railways have to a great extent rendered possible the development of the State, but, while recognising that, one has also to recognise the fact that we have progressed a great deal of late years, and that it is necessary for the Railway Department to keep abreast of the times. It has been asserted by previous

speakers that the cry is always for reduction of freights, especially from primary producers. But that is not so. As far as I understand the position, there are instances where high freights may be reduced; but the general cry against the Railway Department is for a more convenient service. Up to the present, in my opinion, the Railway Department have not given that service; and by not having given an up to date and convenient service they have brought about the competition that now exists from motor transport. The other contributing factor to the present position of the railways has been brought about by the building of roads parallel with our railway lines. That is a policy I have never been able to understand. Travelling throughout the country, one will find a road built by the Main Roads Board running parallel with the railway line, in fact, only a fence dividing it from the railway, almost for 100 miles. Naturally, those roads, which are suitable for motor transport, must be used. They are used especially by **primary producers** to transport perishables to the market. It follows that they must use those roads when the railway service is not convenient. Two factors operate in compelling them to do so. One is the freight charged by the railways, and the other the question of getting their produce to market. Dealing with the freight question, I have mentioned that in some cases the rate is, in my opinion, too high, especially the rate charged by the Railway Department for small parcels. Without going into details, I can give one instance where a farmer got a spoke for his harvester last year. The spoke cost him 6s. 6d. and the freight 6s. That, of course, seems to be an exorbitant rate; and it is one of the things that militate against the success of the railways. A general revision of the tariff rates might result in a reduction. Another matter that has been brought very prominently before the farming community in recent times is the freight charged on licks for stock to combat diseases. Here we find that for a truck load of this lick, four tons, the rate is 34s. a ton. Many farmers, however, do not require a ton, but a lesser supply. If they get 3 cwt. only, the freight, instead of being 34s. per ton is 38s. 4d. per ton, while one cwt. costs 50s. per ton. It is thought that if these rates are revised and reduced, it might induce farmers to utilise the railways to a greater extent. I

mentioned last week, and I do not desire to go over the same ground again, the question of passenger traffic and the framing of the time table to suit the requirements of a district. I instanced two main towns along a certain line and said the local authorities had asked for a more convenient service for the district. They were unable to get it, because it was stated that the requirements of another town many miles away from that district were more important. As has been pointed out by the member for West Perth and other members, the main clause in the Bill is that dealing with the board of control. After listening to the speeches that have been made on the Bill and also to the speeches made on the Railway Estimates, I am of opinion that a board of five is preferable to a board of three. My reason is that five would give representation of varying interests on the board.

The Minister for Railways: That is wrong.

Mr. SEWARD: It may be, but it is my opinion.

The Minister for Railways: Would not such a board be very unwieldy?

Mr. SEWARD: I do not think so. At all events, it could be tried and if it proved to be unwieldy, then the personnel could be altered. The proposed legislation is experimental and that is one of the reasons why I desire the measure to be referred to a select committee for further investigation, so that we shall not make a false start, because it must be remembered that under the Bill the proposed board will be in office for three years. Therefore, it might prove a costly experiment if we come to a wrong decision with respect to the board. In favouring a board of five members, I would say the chairman should be appointed by the Government. There should be then one representative for the Railway Department, one for the motor interests and two for the various primary producers, the farming industry, the pastoral industry and the gold mining industry. If those various interests were directly represented, their interests would not be overlooked. With the independent chairman, a better representation would be obtained because, as I have pointed out, direct representation is required by the primary producers, in order that their many

difficulties and troubles might be bought prominently before this board and taken into consideration by it when dealing with traffic control. One of the reasons which particularly prompts me in coming to that conclusion is the question of the transport of perishables from the farm. That matter was mentioned in the previous debate. I think the Minister for Mines (Hon. S. W. Munsie) interjected at that time, inquiring if it were a habit of many farmers to send their lambs to market by motor truck. It is well known to everyone in the farming industry that that is so, and it is becoming more prevalent each day. In fact, from towns in the Great Southern district about 90 to 100 miles from Perth, farmers are running two trips a night. The first truck leaves about 5 or 6 o'clock on Tuesday evening and delivers the lambs to Midland Junction, and then returns for a second load which is delivered in time for the sale on Wednesday morning. That is very important to the owner of the lambs, because under that system he does not take them off the pastures until Tuesday afternoon, whereas if he used the railways he would have to take the lambs off the pastures on the Monday, truck them on the Tuesday, and then they would not be killed until the following Thursday or Friday.

The Minister for Railways: How many truck loads are sent? Would you guarantee to give us eight trucks a week? We will then run the train.

Mr. SEWARD: I cannot guarantee that. I will come to that point in a moment. By using motor trucks to bring these lambs to market, the farmers save a day and a half's feeding and it has been proved that he can gain about 3s. a head in a normal market. Of course I admit the market will sometimes show a drop of 3s.; but with a normal market, and by using a motor truck, the farmer can gain from 2s. 6d. to 3s. per head. That is a very great consideration to the producer and one could not expect him to utilize the railways in that case.

The Minister for Employment: Possibly he would also use the truck to take his super back to the farm.

Mr. SEWARD: That is another matter.

The Premier: The railways lose a great deal in carrying his super.

Mr. SEWARD: I do not think they do.

The Premier: Nonsense!

Mr. SEWARD: What about the wheat?

The Premier: There is no profit in that.

Mr. SEWARD: Of course there is not!

The Premier: There is not.

Mr. SEWARD: At Fremantle we find the Harbour Trust Board putting down lines on their territory to carry wheat, and the Government get 10d. a ton to haul it over those railways.

The Premier: The loss on the carriage of super is £100,000 a year.

Mr. SEWARD: The railway authorities charge 10d. a ton for haulage over lines that the harbour authorities have not had to lay down.

The Premier: There are no harbour charges for the handling of wheat.

Mr. SEWARD: There is a charge for hauling it of 10d. a ton, and the Railway Department are not called upon to maintain the lines over which it is hauled.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is 9d. a ton.

Mr. SEWARD: It is 1d. a ton from the railway to the weighbridge, 9d. from there in, and 9d. a truck for weighing. The cost works out at 12s. 5d. on a ten-ton truck.

The Minister for Employment: There have been no casualties in the rush for trucks for the carting of wheat.

Mr. SEWARD: There have been a good many. I have been amazed to see the number of trucks lying idle at Spencer's Brook, all marked "for bulk wheat only." If they belonged to a private company I think some use would be found for them.

The Minister for Employment: Are there many private trucks carting both wheat and super?

Mr. SEWARD: I could not say. There are many motor trucks acting as feeders to the railways. The member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) said that the use of trucks did not increase the yield of wheat. Actually they have played their part in that matter. They have made it possible for carting to be done at the same time as harvesting, and this has enabled the farmer to deal with a larger area.

The Premier: Our wheat freights are the lowest in Australia. The South Australian rates were double what ours are.

Mr. SEWARD: They may be 100 per cent. lower than anything else, but that is not to say they are justified. For the past few years, and during the depression, the farmer has had to get the best price possible for his products. The only chance a man has of getting rid of his old sheep is

to fatten them up and send them to the carcass market to obviate wastage. This market is held on Friday morning. There is no railway service from the locality I speak of, and if there were, there would be great difficulty in securing cold storage trucks. The farmer is able to kill the sheep on Thursday, and run them down by truck to the Friday morning market. If the board were to consist of men who were not familiar with this sort of thing, they might prevent the trucks from running and ruin the market for the farmers. I want to ensure that these things are taken into consideration. I am prompted for this and other reasons to suggest a board of five representatives of the different interests. I am opposed to the appointment of two Government officials, for that would mean a preponderance of representation to the Railway department. I am of opinion that the department are responsible for a great deal of the freight they have lost, and I think people other than railway officials should be appointed to the board. This is a measure that should be thoroughly investigated so that no mistake may be made in it. I have for many years held the opinion that there should be no further tramway extensions. That system of transport is obsolete and unsuited for the traffic of a large city. It is also too noisy, and is not mobile. It runs along set routes, and cannot be altered. When big sporting events are held in various centres, the necessary number of buses could readily be set aside to deal with the traffic, being taken from routes where at the time there is no great demand for them. It is much safer for people in the city to use buses that can go alongside the footpath both to pick up and set down passengers. With buses there should be no necessity for one way traffic in the city. No difficulty is experienced in London where big buses move in and out of the traffic at will. I do not suggest the tramlines should be pulled up, but as repairs become necessary various sections could be lopped off and the routes shortened. When any new suburb requires to be opened up this could be done by motor bus service. I hope the Minister will accept the suggestion to refer the Bill to a select Committee so that it may be made as good a measure as possible. Comparisons have been made between this and other States. The member for Brown Hill-

Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) referred to a report dealing with Victoria. He touched upon the most thickly populated part of the country districts of that State, where exceptionally good roads have been laid down by the Main Roads board, parallel to the railway. The towns there are only about five miles apart, and that portion of the State lends itself particularly well to motor transport. The position is different here where our towns are more widely separated, and the distance traversed between them is much less easy to negotiate.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [10.18]: No public man who traverses our country roads can come to any other conclusion than that motor transport has to be reckoned with as a serious competitor of the railways. Recently I travelled along the main road from Perth to Albany, with the Premier. On that occasion, we met at least a dozen trucks loaded with wool between Perth and Williams, and some of the lorries were drawing trailers. That is a serious matter for the railways. Wool provides a fair profit to the railways in comparison with wheat, fertiliser, and other commodities. The Bill is a good one, but the board should not comprise a majority of Government officials. If Government officials are going to dominate the board they may only represent the views of the Railway Department, and give scant consideration to those who are engaged in various forms of primary production, such as fruit-growing and fat stock raising. Many of these growers reside in the Great Southern areas. I am using that area as an argument in favour of my point of view. The distance between Fremantle and Wagin is 200 miles by rail but by road it is 143 miles. As members know, the Commissioner of Railways fixes his rates on a mileage basis. Those who are apt to adversely criticise farmers for sending their produce by road, overlook that phase regarding the cost of transport. The Commissioner of Railways and his officers have done their best, particularly in the face of keen competition during the last two or three years, to provide interest and sinking fund on the capital invested in the railways. The Commissioner has done remarkably well, but I am convinced that what is essential is a review of the freight charges. Everyone knows that certain classes of freight are conveyed at bare

cost. I heard the Premier and the Minister say to-night that some goods were carried at a loss. I always thought that wheat just about paid its way.

Mr. Latham: When conveyed by train-loads, of course, it pays.

Mr. STUBBS: We know that if a loss is made, the Commissioner has to increase freights on certain other classes of goods in order to make up the deficiency. Not many years ago I was engaged in a large way of business in the country. One of my managers forwarded a case of farm butter from Dumbleyung to Perth. When the consignment reached Perth and was opened, the case was found to be full of bricks. Naturally my manager put in a claim against the Commissioner for the value of the butter that the Commissioner had admitted in writing had been stolen in transit. On the other hand, the Commissioner contracted himself out of the liability by saying that the butter had been consigned under a rate that freed him from any responsibility. The time is overdue for a revision of freight rates to cope with present-day road traffic conveniences. An instance came under my notice a fortnight ago when a prominent business man of Kojonup, who desires to be loyal to the Railway Department and has always consigned practically the whole of his goods by rail, told me that he had secured a butcher's basket from the Institute for the Blind at Maylands. The cost of the basket was 5s. 11d. but the freight amounted to 3s. A similar article was carried by motor immediately afterwards at a cost of 6d. These may be small matters, but big business has always started in a small way and has gained by experience. I think the majority of the members of the transport board, when it is constituted, should not consist of railway or other Government officers. Certainly the Government are entitled to representation on the board, but not necessarily a railway officer. The board should consist of a number of men without personal interest in either the Railway Department or any form of transport. Surely the Government will be able to secure the services of three good men who will be able to deal fairly with all concerned. Fifty years ago nearly the whole of the transport of goods in Britain was done by means of barges drawn through canals by

horses when there was no wind, or by sail when a favouring breeze was available. Is there anyone in this Chamber who would imagine for one moment that the canal system should have been retained in Britain for all time? The railway system was introduced and soon eliminated the majority of the barges from the canals. We can carry the argument further and say that because in Egypt the land was tilled by means of primitive plough and ox, the cost of growing wheat would be considerably more than 2s. a bushel. Of course we have progressed since those times, and present-day conditions warrant me in placing this phase of the question before the Government. I am of opinion that the Bill should be referred to a select committee. There are but four or five weeks between now and Christmas and I do not see how the Government can expect to have the Bill passed through both Houses before the end of the session. I would suggest that the Bill be allowed to pass the second reading stage and be then referred to a select committee, the members of which, if their work is not completed before Parliament adjourns, could be appointed an honorary Royal Commission. Then if the Government desire the Bill to become operative by the 1st July next, the House could stand adjourned until such time as the Royal Commission's report was available for consideration and Parliament could then be called together to deal further with the Bill. The measure is so important that every member should be prepared to see to it that the interests of the different sections of the community are conserved. The capital invested in the State railways is so vast that it is essential proper consideration should be given to the whole matter, and I am afraid that if steps are not taken to co-ordinate railway and road traffic, the revenue of the department will decline seriously. I am desirous of assisting the Government to have placed on the statute-book a measure that will be of advantage to all sections of the community. I support the second reading of the Bill and hope that the Government will refer it to a select committee, who will be able to report, among other things, on the personnel of the proposed board. That, after all, is the crux of the Bill. If we do not get a good board to control transport, we are only wasting our time. I will support the second reading.

Mr. THORN: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [10.31]: Undoubtedly the Bill is necessary to cope with the serious competition the railways are receiving from motor transport, but there is one thing I should like to point out, namely that we have allowed this position to drift on for so long. Successive Governments must have seen that it was going to arise. We all saw horses being pushed out of transport service, and surely to goodness our railways must have known that in a short time they would find motor transport displacing them in turn. We have no hope of developing our lands without the assistance of our railways. Yet we find a private company coming to the State and getting a concession of huge areas of land each side of the railway line to the aggregate of 3,300,000 acres. The company disposed of that land and the money received went into their revenue and helped to reduce their capital cost. We ask our railways to run out developmental lines into remote areas and to stand the whole of the overhead expenses, we making no provision for them in that respect. In fairness to our railways we should have given them areas of land within a certain distance on both sides of the lines and allowed them to have the revenue derived from the sale of that land to reduce their capital cost. It would have assisted them to a very great extent. Undoubtedly our railways are hauling very low freights, such as wheat and super, and it is time we came to their assistance.

The Minister for Employment: It is a slow bleeding to death at the moment.

Mr. THORN: Yes, but we have been responsible for it to a large extent. It should have been dealt with six or eight years ago. Instead of that, we have allowed the motor interests to build up a big industry, and now it seems we are going to impose a great hardship on them by putting them out of the business they have built up. We should have stopped it long ago.

The Minister for Employment: It is no hardship on them to tell them they must observe reasonable conditions of labour.

Mr. THORN: But their men have time off and spells by the way. They cannot run perpetually; they must have their rest.

Miss Holman: I know a couple of young fellows who could not stand up to it.

Mr. THORN: That may be so, but only in a few instances.

Mr. Cross: Make some inquiries as to the Wiluna traffic.

Mr. THORN: I do not wish to be parochial, but I represent an electorate the production from which is almost wholly of a perishable nature. Undoubtedly Wanneroo will not come under the Bill, because they have no railway and they must have motor transport for the marketing of their produce. On the Midland line we have mostly fruit producers, citrus growers, vine growers, poultry farmers and milk producers. They have no service, for the Midland line does not provide a daily service, and it is very necessary that perishable products should be marketed daily. Then we get over to Toodyay, which is close to the main line. We have put up to the railway authorities a proposition to run a motor coach to Clackline to connect up with trains running daily to Perth. But the railway authorities considered that an unprofitable proposition from their point of view.

The Premier: That is one of the things the board will recommend.

Mr. THORN: I hope they do.

The Premier: I am sure of it.

Mr. THORN: The railway authorities did not see fit to do it beforehand.

The Premier: But this will be a new board.

Mr. THORN: Anyhow, I must put up the case for those producers. They have no service and unless the railways are prepared to provide a service for them we cannot stop the motor transport in those areas, because it is very necessary. We have no railway service in the Swan district, but there has been built up a very fine bus service which has been of great advantage to the people, who can now get into town daily, whereas previously they were practically marooned. With the Leader of the Opposition, I hope the Government will agree to send the Bill to a select committee.

The Premier: I think you must have been consulting with him.

Mr. THORN: No, it is only that wise men think alike. This is a big complicated measure of many clauses which it will be necessary seriously to consider from every

point of view. A select committee should be of great use to the Government in the handling of so important a measure. It should not be rushed through, but should have the advantage of a select committee so that it might be considered from every point of view. The personnel of the board is very important. In my opinion, it should consist of one Government official with Treasury knowledge, one representative of the primary producers and one independent business man, not interested either in motor transport or in railways, an independent business man who could give his commercial knowledge to the board. This is such an involved measure that we should have a select committee on it. The Bill is undoubtedly far-reaching, and will give the Government great power. It is causing representatives of the primary producers great concern. I sincerely hope the Government will agree to the proposals of the Leader of the Opposition and of other speakers on this side of the Chamber.

The Premier: We cannot do that until the second reading has been carried.

Mr. THORN: I conclude with that suggestion.

MR. PIESSE (Katanning) [10.41]: Ministers may be well satisfied with the trend of the debate. Every speaker, I think, has agreed that there is need for such a Bill as this, and for a transport policy. I desire to commend the Minister for bringing in the measure, although it is somewhat belated. However, "it is never too late to mend." I can only hope that when the Bill has been referred to a select committee, a measure will be evolved protecting our railways from the unfair competition with which they have had to contend during recent years. At the same time, the measure should not eliminate other services which have been greatly appreciated by many of our primary producers and have assisted in the development of our primary industries. Like other members who have spoken, I view the appointment of a preponderance of Government members on the proposed board with some alarm, unless due consideration is to be given to the importance of not altogether eliminating motor transport. We know that is not the intention, but there is a certain amount of suspicion in the minds of those who have been making use of motor trans-

port. They fear that a preponderance of Government representation on the proposed board will mean that certain forms of motor transport, which are highly beneficial to the State, may be eliminated entirely. I am satisfied that if the Government do the right thing by appointing to the board the most skilled persons available, we are not likely to run any risk in that direction. I agree with the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) that if we have in the Government service men duly qualified, there is no reason why at least one of the members of the board should not be a Government servant. I wish to remind the Government again that there are many complaints against the Railway Department for want of consideration. Some people say that our railways have become obsolete. I do not agree with that altogether; but I do realise that after motor transport has been allowed to pick the eyes out of the traffic, the railways are likely to lose that interest which otherwise would prevail. Motor transport as we know it to-day has grown more particularly on account of the depression; many who are engaged in the undertaking were forced into it by inability to obtain a living in any other direction. No doubt it is alarming to those in control of the railways that motor competition should have grown considerably during the past year. One of the reasons why the primary producer uses motor transport in preference to the railways, especially in the carriage of wool, is that the motor transport goes on to a farm, loads up the product, and takes it direct to the warehouse. If the Railway Department could evolve some means of co-ordinating with motor transport and using it to create work for the railways, possibly a good deal—

The Minister for Employment: A motor truck could also pick up the super. and take it direct to the farm.

Mr. PIESSE: The primary producer cannot lose sight of the fact that unless a Bill of this kind is passed to protect the Railway Department, he will lose in some other direction, because the railways have been built to pay. Unless the railways are protected, there must be an entire readjustment of railway freights. No one is more concerned than the primary producer in a measure of this kind. The railways must be continued on a profitable basis, but not at the expense of the primary producer. I can only hope that when the board is appointed the

services of the best men obtainable in the State, will be secured.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 10.51 p.m.

Division taken with the following result:

Ayes	17
Noes	6

Majority for	11
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AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. W. H. Kitson	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. W. J. Mann	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. R. G. Moore
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. G. W. Miles	Hon. V. Hamersley
	(Teller.)

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 22nd November, 1933.

	PAGE
Bills: Land Tax and Income Tax, 3R., passed	2045
Constitution Acts Amendment, Standing Orders suspension, report, 3R.	2045
Reserves, 1R.	2045
Fremantle City Council Lands Act Amendment, 1R.	2045
Land, report	2045
Mine Workers' Relief Act Amendment, Com.	2045
Adjournment: Special	2052

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

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Standing Orders Suspension

On motion by the Honorary Minister, ordered: That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as to enable the Bill to pass through its remaining stages at this sitting.

Report.

Report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. T. Kitson—West) [4.37]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Question put.

The PRESIDENT: It will be necessary to divide the House on the question.

The PRESIDENT: There being more than an absolute majority of the total number of members of the Council voting with the "Ayes," I declare the third reading carried.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Reserves.

2, Fremantle City Council Lands Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—LAND.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—MINE WORKERS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 10th October; Hon. V. Hamersley in the Chair, the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 7—Amendment of Section 48:

[Hon. C. B. Williams had moved an amendment "That beginning in line 15 of paragraph (b) the words 'may if it is of the opinion that such mine worker's case is one which brings hardship' be struck out, and 'shall' inserted in lieu."]

The HONORARY MINISTER: I oppose the amendment, the object of which is to