

of the existing anomalies. I now propose to compare the Goldfields electorates with the electorates in my province, and I quote the following figures:—

Electorate.	No of Electors on Roll.
Boulder	3,437
Brown Hill-Ivanhoe	4,041
Hannans	3,444
Mt. Magnet	2,225
Murchison	3,237
Kanowna	3,094
	<hr/> 19,478 <hr/>

The PRESIDENT: Order! I would remind the hon. member that the Bill deals with an amendment of the Constitution. I hope he will link up his remarks.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I admit what you say, Sir. I am giving my reasons for opposing the Bill, and with your kind permission I shall continue with my comparison. The four electorates in my province that I have already quoted have a total enrolment of 16,964. To these I would add the following:—

Pingelly	3,672
Beverley	3,590

making a total of 24,226. That is as against the Goldfields total of 19,478. In effect, we in the Great Southern district are under-represented by one seat. We should be entitled to an additional electorate, because the difference between the two sets of figures is 4,748, almost equal to the number of the Albany electors. When the redistribution of seats was suggested years ago by the late Hon. J. Seaddan, we were under the impression, on the figures given to us, that an additional seat would be provided for the Great Southern district. To our amazement, when the redistribution actually took place we were worse off. The boundaries of the Wagin electorate were extended further outward to Ravensthorpe. I quote these figures as one of my reasons for opposing the Bill. I think that so serious an amendment of the Constitution should be submitted by the Government, not by a private member, however well-intentioned he might be.

On motion by Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.53 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 27th November, 1916.

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

QUESTIONS.

POLICE.

As to Arming Officers.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

1, Is it the policy of the Police Department to arm members of the Force when carrying out their duties in regard to criminal offences?

2, If not, will consideration be given to affording this protection to members of the Force?

The PREMIER replied:

1, Any Police officer who requests to be supplied with a firearm while carrying out his duties is supplied with one.

2, Answered by No. 1.

STATE BRICKWORKS.

As to Production, Etc.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for the North-West:

1, Are the State Brickworks at Byford working to full capacity?

2, If not, what is the position at the present time?

3, When will the works be in full production?

4, What action has been taken to provide against the loss of any skilled or experienced labour, pending full production?

The MINISTER replied:

- 1, No.
- 2, Through extraordinary efforts one kiln has operated continuously. The second kiln was closed owing to no coal being available. Essential repairs are now being executed.
- 3, Immediately after the Christmas holidays.
- 4, Twelve men are employed on repair work and a considerable number have taken their holidays. No loss of skilled labour is anticipated.

RAILWAY STRIKE.

As to "Current Legal Proceedings."

Mr. McDONALD asked the Premier: What proceedings are included in the phrase "current legal proceedings" used in paragraph 2 of the terms of settlement with the Locomotive Enginedrivers, Firemen and Cleaners' Union, dated the 22nd November, 1946?

The PREMIER replied: Legal proceedings current against members of the union.

BILL—TIMBER INDUSTRY (HOUSING OF EMPLOYEES).

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley) [4.34]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [4.35]: I do not propose to deal with the merits or demerits of this Bill, as they have already been fully covered in the second reading debate and during the progress of the Bill through Committee; but I wish to state that there is no-one in any part of this House who does not sympathise with the discomforts and unhygienic conditions under which workers in the timber industry are suffering. Least of all does the member for Mt. Marshall not share in such sympathy. But the member for Mt. Marshall is also not forgetful of many hundreds of other citizens who have no houses at all and are living under conditions of a most extraordinary character—on verandahs, in the back blocks of gardens, in sheds; in fact, anywhere, and under conditions that are almost impossible to imagine.

It is this aspect on which I desire to comment, because consideration of this aspect makes the Bill a total unreality. It is impossible to imagine that any Government would allow any sawmillers to supply sawn timber for the improvement of existing houses to the deprivation of numbers of others—many hundreds of others—who have no houses whatever. So assuming that this Bill, in its operation, when it becomes an Act, is not controlled by the Workers' Homes Board or by the successor of that board—the housing commission—but by the Government, no Government could be conceived that would allow sawmillers to supply sawn timber when there is so little of it to spare and so much wanted for many hundreds of people who have no houses at all.

Mr. Hoar: How do you propose to open up new mills, then?

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not propose to. I have not got them to open up. If I had I would be delighted to open them. The hon. member might as well ask me how I propose to pay off the national debt. It is impossible for any member, whatever his views might be, to give effect to that. I am drawing attention to the fact that this Bill, assuming the Government controls its operations when it becomes an Act, must be a dead letter for years. If, on the other hand, it is proposed that the operations shall be conducted subject to the control of the Workers' Homes Board or the housing commission, whichever authority may then exist, it is obvious that five years at least must expire before any permit could be granted, because the Minister for Health assured us only a few days ago that it would take at least five years to overcome the lag of material wanted for public hospitals. Therefore this Bill must remain in abeyance for five years. Under those circumstances it seems to me that the Bill partakes very largely of mere window-dressing since it is impossible to imagine that it could be carried into effect. I do not propose to be a party to a window-dressing measure, and therefore decline to vote for this Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley—in reply) [4.39]: A display of heroics by the member for Nedlands is entirely

unnecessary at this stage after the Bill has been so well debated. The measure will be subservient to the permit system just as any other building project will be. The work dealt with in the Bill will have to take its place and be considered in order of priority the same as other housing schemes; but the measure will not lie in abeyance for the next five years, as suggested by the hon. member. Certain progress will be made, as has occurred with housing generally. Many houses have been erected in the last 12 months and many of these ramshackle places will be attended to by way of repair and maintenance under the present timber control system. Further, there are many new mills to be erected in Western Australia within the next two years.

The Premier: Five are being constructed at the present time.

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS: That is so. Two large mills, which will be the biggest in Western Australia, are to be built within the next two years. It is in the interests of the timber employees to have this control by statute, if only for the future, as well as in the interests of the timber industry, and the majority of the sawmillers of this State are in favour of a policy for better housing and better conditions for the employees. I do not think there was any necessity for the matter to be raised at this stage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

MOTION—BASIC WAGE.

As to Inquiry into Declaration and Items for Fixation.

Debate resumed from the 30th October on the following motion by Mr. Cross:—

That in the opinion of this House and in view of the prevailing discontent due to the present method of arriving at the basic wage, and in order to prevent grave industrial unrest in this State, an immediate and complete inquiry should be made into (1) the adequacy of the present wage; (2) the various items taken into consideration in its compilation; and (3) the many items not considered but which affect the cost of living, with a view to arriving at a just and equitable basic wage.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [4.41]: Because at present the Commonwealth Arbitration Court is hearing an application for an increase in the Federal basic wage, with a view to a full inquiry later, and in view of the fact that as recently as this afternoon the State Arbitration Court has given consideration to the possibility of having a full inquiry into the adequacy of the State basic wage, and feeling that perhaps at this stage the matter might be almost sub judice, I think the object of my motion has been achieved. Therefore I move—

That this Order be discharged from the notice paper.

Question put and passed; Order discharged.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Marketing of Barley Bill (No. 2).

MOTION—RAILWAYS.

As to Inquiry into Efficiency and Administration.

Debate resumed from the 20th November on the following motion by Mr. Seward:—

That this House expresses its grave dissatisfaction with the Government Railways affairs in this State for the following reasons:—

1, The increasing inability of the railway system to handle freight offering.

2, The increasing discontent among the staff.

3, The dilatoriness in making improvements.

4, The doubt as to efficiency of the administration.

And calls upon the Government to institute a searching public inquiry at which employees can give evidence without prejudice to their positions, and other sections of the community be freely heard with a view to early restoration of a reasonable level of service and efficiency of management.

to which Mr. McDonald had moved an amendment as follows:—

That the following paragraph be inserted:—“(5) Greater freedom and opportunities for road and air transport.”

Mr. SPEAKER: I have looked at the amendment of the member for West Perth and, on account of its not being relevant to the motion, I shall have to rule it out.

Amendment ruled out.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [4.43]: The amendment was moved by me at the conclusion of a speech made on the main motion and from recollection of the terms of the motion, without being examined with my usual care. At my suggestion the member for Murray-Wellington was to move a further amendment, which appears at the end of the notice paper and which, I suggest, would make the matter of the inquiry into transport relevant, as being associated with the activities of the Railway Department. Would it not be possible for that amendment to be moved by the member for Murray-Wellington, thus to bring within the compass of the motion of the member for Pingelly a matter which may only fail to be within that compass by a mere matter of verbage?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is a borderline case, but I will allow such an amendment.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [4.45]: I move an amendment—

That a new paragraph be added as follows:—

(5) The restrictions in the interest of the railways of greater freedom and opportunities for road and air transport.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. Styants: I take it that it is now the amendment that is before the House, and not the original motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion as amended; the whole of it is before the House now.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [4.46]: I am inclined to support the motion moved by the member for Pingelly. In my opinion it is not rehabilitation that our railways require, but modernisation because, even if in the strict sense of the term "rehabilitation" is achieved, it will only take us back to the position in which we were immediately prior to the war, when our railways were probably as up to date as at any time in their existence. If we are to modernise our railways we must start on the permanent way, on the road bed. It is useless getting faster locomotives and rollingstock that will permit of higher speeds, unless the road bed is first attended to. That is the first essential in speeding up our railway service. It is interesting to note that in other countries that have a 3ft. 6in. gauge—I propose to quote

the railways of South Africa later on—they are able to produce a much more efficient service on that gauge than we have been able to achieve. As to the road beds, I will refer to the great mileage of 45-lb. rails that exists in this State. In most countries of the world, other than Australia, I think the 45-lb. per yard rail would be regarded as an anachronism.

Mr. North: And a false economy.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes. In addition to that, I believe that the Government and the Railway Department have adopted a wrong policy, in that for many years they have endeavoured to build locomotives for an out of date rail, rather than to modernise the road bed by putting in 60-lb., 80-lb. or 96-lb. rails as required, so that all the locomotives in the system could run over them. That is the main virtue of the Garratt engines—I refer now not to the A.S.G., but to the M.S. and M.S.A., which have given such good service in this State. Their redeeming feature is that they will work on 45-lb. rails and their tractive force is something like twice that of the other engines that will work satisfactorily on 45-lb. rails. In my opinion a false policy has been followed for many years, in that we have endeavoured to build a special type of engine to run on outmoded rails. It would have been much better had we put in 60-lb. rails, because those rails would take any type of locomotive running in this State. Then we would not have had this continual shuffling due to bringing in a load on 60-lb. rails and then having to break it down to two trains to permit them to run on 45-lb. rails. We could have had a through service so that all locomotives could be run over any route without any juggling of engines. We have a great mileage of 45-lb. rails, and that mileage is within a couple of hundred miles of the lines having 60-lb. rails.

As regards the A.S.G. engines—I do not propose to refer to the recent dispute because I hold distinct views on that matter—I am alarmed about the fact that the designer of the Garratt engine is still the Chief Mechanical Engineer in this State and that many undesirable features of the Garratt engine are being incorporated in some of the other locomotives being built here. I refer to the independent springing and the type of axle-box, which features have been condemned by the Royal Com-

missioner, and also the width of the engine. Although the Royal Commissioner stated that the width of the Garratt had not been adversely commented upon in Queensland, this is understandable because the Garratt has only the same width as the average type of locomotive used in Queensland.

Here, however, it is a different matter. Some of the enginemmen have been accustomed for 40 years or more to working on locomotives that permit of their leaning out without danger of coming into contact with trucks or open carriage doors. Although there is a notice posted in the cabin of the A.S.G. engines warning drivers and firemen not to lean out, it is natural for them in an emergency to do so and thus run into danger. The D.D., or suburban engine, has the same width as a Garratt within an inch or so, and this and other objectionable features are being incorporated in other locomotives being built here.

Some questions were asked recently—and I have asked questions over the years—as to the efficiency of and service being given by S. class engines. In answer to questions asked a few days ago, we were informed that one of these engines had been out of commission for 21 weeks in the last 12 months. Many of them had been out of commission for nine and 12 weeks, which represents up to 40 per cent. of their time laid up in shops awaiting repairs. I believe the lowest was 20 per cent. of their time laid up. Some years ago, when I asked questions about these engines, I was assured that they were all right and that they were merely passing through teething troubles. We understand that when an engine of new design is first put on the road there are always some slight defects to be corrected, but when we find that these locomotives are so much out of commission, it is time we had an inquiry by a competent person to ascertain the reason. Each of these engines cost £16,000 which, I think, is a record price for any engine constructed in this State, but there is also to be considered the tractive power of these engines that is so urgently required, and when they are out of commission for such long periods, one wonders whether they are such a success as has been claimed.

The drivers and firemen have no complaint to make against the S. class engines which they consider are crackerjack. The

complaint comes from the mechanical staff who are called upon to do so much in the way of repairs. It is an accepted principle that any new locomotive put on the road should run for three years before requiring major repairs. From questions answered in this House from time to time, it would appear that these engines have not been a great length of time in actual service and yet for a large proportion of their time, they have been laid up awaiting mechanical repairs. I was informed by a mechanic in the Midland Junction Workshops that the steam chest cages have always given trouble. This is borne out by the answers given to the questions asked the other day.

Mr. Mann: Who designed those engines?

Mr. STYANTS: Mr. Mills, I understand. I consider that a thorough inquiry should be made by a competent person into the Midland Junction Workshops. If such an inquiry were held, it would return handsome dividends to the State. I have had much information from reliable technical men complaining of general maladministration and faulty lay-out. A statement in the newspaper recently informed us that £40,000 was spent to instal some new furnaces at Midland Junction, and that the men refused to work near them because they considered them to be dangerous.

The answers we receive to questions asked in this House are not always satisfactory. Sometimes those in authority consider it to be good policy to give evasive answers, and sometimes the answers contain only a portion of the information that could be given. More than once, the information given to me in the shape of answers to questions has been directly opposed to the information I received from highly placed, reliable, technical men in the Railway Department. I will not say who was right, but an inquiry by a competent man into the whole management and set-up of the Midland Junction Workshops would, in my opinion, pay handsome dividends to the State.

I do not know of any system operating in the department for the training of local talent. I believe we have local talent equal to anything that could be obtained from oversea provided it were properly trained. In addition to training of this sort, I consider that a system should be inaugurated

whereby local engineers and transport officials, as part of their duty, should travel in other States and countries with railway gauges comparable to ours with a view to seeing what could be done to improve our system. If a policy of training our young men to the highest possible degree and then sending them elsewhere to see what is taking place in the way of railway development and advancement were adopted, the department would be much more up to date than it is at present. Competency, of course, should be the first consideration when appointing these men, and I believe that, having regard to the training facilities available for this talent in at least 99 per cent. of the cases, the man most suitable for the position is chosen. I do not think that a friend at court has very much to do with the appointment of these officials; and now that we have passed legislation providing for a promotions appeal board that position, in my opinion, is pretty well safeguarded. If a man possesses outstanding qualifications and is passed over in favour of someone not so highly qualified, he now has the right to appeal against the appointment and thus secure his correct position.

The countries I have in mind and from which I have received quite a lot of literature dealing with the modern 3 ft. 6 in. gauge railways are Japan and Java. Before the war I received a good deal of information from the Japanese Government about their railways. South Africa is another country that has an efficient 3 ft. 6 in. system. Recently I wrote to South Africa and have been supplied with some of the details of what can actually be done on a 3 ft. 6 in. gauge railway. I shall not touch on the financial side at all, but will deal with the technical side, in order to show what can be done on a modern 3 ft. 6 in. gauge railway. The financial results would not be comparable to Western Australia's and I do not propose to quote them. The Commissioner of Railways supplied me with the following information:—

Speed of trains. The maximum for steam-operated passenger trains is 55 miles.

That is against 45 miles an hour, which is the permissible speed limit on our railways. The South African Commissioner also said:

Electrically-operated train on the section Johannesburg-Pretoria is allowed 60 miles per hour maximum speed.

It would seem, therefore, that the 3 ft. 6 in. narrow gauge is not the only restricting factor as far as speeds are concerned. He continues—

Tests trains, both steam and electric, have been operated at over 70 miles per hour. Electric locomotives on order are designed for speeds of 60 miles per hour. The running time of the Blue train from Johannesburg to Cape Town, a distance of 956 miles, is 26 hours, the average speed, excluding stops, being 39.9 miles per hour. Recent tests show that throughout schedules of main line trains can be reduced.

That is a speed almost comparable to that attained on the 4ft. 8½in. gauge railways in the Eastern States. Now, the timetable allows 15 hours for the run from Perth to Albany, 340 miles. If we allow for 52 stops and 28 minutes for refreshments we get an average of 25 miles an hour, as compared to the 39.9 miles for the Blue Train from Johannesburg to Cape Town. A minute is allowed for each stop, because that is our department's regulation period for slowing down, stopping and getting away again. Therefore, if we allow for 52 stops and 28 minutes for refreshments, we get an average speed of 25 miles per hour from Perth to Albany.

Mr. Seward: Do you mean 28 minutes for stopping at all the refreshment places?

Mr. STYANTS: That is the time allowed for refreshments at all the stops.

Mr. Seward: Most of that time is spent at Chidlow.

Mr. STYANTS: That should not be so.

Mr. Seward: But it is.

Mr. STYANTS: Probably it is. I know that the stops at refreshment stations often exceed the time allowed; but I think it will be found that most of the stops for refreshments do not exceed 10 or 15 minutes. Let us now take the run from Perth to Kalgoorlie. The "Westland" takes 15 hours 45 minutes to run 380 miles, and that works out at 24 miles per hour. It will be seen, therefore, that there must be something drastically wrong with our railways when, on a 3ft. 6in. gauge, over a long distance—956 miles—in South Africa a speed of almost 40 miles an hour is attained. Our fastest trains cannot do more than 24 or 25 miles an hour. I would say, in passing, that it is an established fact, although a deplorable one, that our passenger trains now take longer to run a given journey than they did 35 or 40 years

ago. If one would check up on the ordinary express from Perth to Kalgoorlie, one would find that the timetable allows a greater length of time than was allowed 35 or 40 years ago. Instead of improving, we have actually gone back as far as the speed of our trains is concerned. Dealing again with the South African railways, the report says—

Speeds obtainable are affected more by gradients and curvature than by gauge limitations.

So it is not the gauge limitations that govern the speed, but the gradients and the curves.

The Minister for Railways: And the weight of the rails.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes. I propose to deal with the matter of the weight of rails in a moment. Recent tests made in South Africa show that the speed of through trains can be still further increased. Goods trains with 8-wheeled vehicles are permitted to run at a maximum speed of 55 miles an hour. The speed of goods trains on our own lines is 30 miles an hour, but that is frequently exceeded for the purpose of getting momentum to carry the load over a given grade that is ahead. Trains consisting of 4-wheeled and 8-wheeled vehicles in South Africa—equal to our single truck and bogies—are limited to a speed of 35 miles an hour. Dealing with the weight of locomotives, I would point out that the track from Fremantle to Northam consists of 80 lb. rails, and it is the only portion of our system that is comparable with the South African. To show what can be done in the way of tractive power, I shall quote again from the report—

Weight of locomotives on 80 lb. track, of Garrett type, 4-8-2 and 2-8-4, 215 tons in working order, tractive force of 78,650 lbs.

Let us compare that with the A.S.G. locomotive, which is the most powerful we have in Western Australia. That locomotive weighs 119 tons and has a tractive force of 34,000 lbs. on a 45 lb. rail. Our S Class engine has a tractive force of about 30,000 lbs. and weighs 119 tons. The S Class is the most powerful of our simple class locomotives. South Africa also has simple class locomotives which weigh 218 tons and have a tractive force, 96 lb. rail, of 43,200 lbs. Therefore, to say that we have reached the limit here, as far as tractive force is concerned, is of course ridiculous. As I said, the short stretch from Fremantle to Northam

is laid with an 80 lb. rail; but on a 60 lb. rail South Africa runs Garratt locomotives comparable to our A.S.G. locomotives and their tractive force is 60,700 lbs., compared with the A.S.G.'s 34,000 lbs. The simple class engine in South Africa, weighing 133½ tons and running on a 60 lb. rail, has a tractive force of 31,850 lbs. It has been the policy in South Africa, as it has become necessary to re-lay any main line, to put down 96 lb. rails instead of 80 lb. rails, because South Africa considers the 80 lb. rail is not in accord with modern methods. The report says—

Tentative designs for more powerful and heavier engines for the 96 lb. track are contemplated. Thirty years ago South African main lines were brought up to 80 lbs. standard. Since 1930 all main line relaying has been done with 96 lb. rails.

There are 2,000 miles of railway in South Africa laid with 96lb. rails. The report continues—

Only the secondary lines are laid with 60 lb. rails.

Yet the greatest length of line we have in this State is of 60lb. rails. It was mentioned the other night during the debate that the South African Government had been able to procure quite a number of locomotives during the war period; but I find on reading the report of the South African Commissioner that the first new locomotives his department had received for five years were those received towards the end of 1944. The report also discloses that the South African railways laboured under the same difficulties as did ours in connection with increased patronage, restriction of road transport, due to petrol rationing, etc. The South African railways had completely to eliminate excursion facilities. Even that did not have the desired effect. It was found necessary to adopt the queue system for bookings and this was found to be most satisfactory, although many people were disappointed.

The South African Government had placed large orders for rollingstock and tractive power, but nevertheless met with just the same difficulties as we did during the war period up to the end of 1944. I have quoted some extracts from the report of the Commissioner of Railways in South Africa and I have done so because, as I mentioned, quite a number of people here

are of the opinion that we cannot have a modern railway system for the reason that our gauge is only 3 ft. 6 in. Java runs speeds in excess of those attained in South Africa on a 3 ft. 6 in. railway, as also did Japan, according to the pre-war information which I received. In Japan there is an express service that runs from Tokio to a place the name of which I cannot pronounce. The distance is five miles shorter than the run from Perth to Kalgoorlie, and Japan's time, on a 3 ft. 6 in. gauge railway, was 8 hours 5 minutes in one direction and 8 hours dead in the other direction. That compares with our time of 15½ hours or 16½ hours on the ordinary run from Perth to Kalgoorlie! Our young men whom we train here should get the opportunity to visit these countries in order to learn what can be accomplished on a 3 ft. 6 in. gauge railway. If that were done, the efficiency of our railways would be much better than it is at the present time.

I think also an inquiry should be made into the method of recording railway finance. The present method I believe is most unorthodox and I do not think it would be adopted or used by any business firm. All that seems to be recorded are the receipts and working expenses, plus interest; that is just about the sum total of the report as far as finance is concerned. It must be borne in mind that our railways were mostly financed from overseas loans, not special loans. The State from time to time floated overseas loans and the railways drew a certain amount from them. The rate of interest on those overseas loans is much in excess of the rate on other loans which have been converted. During the financial depression, by means of Commonwealth debentures, the Government was able to obtain money at a rate of interest as low as one per cent. Today our railways are paying on the whole of their capital—£27,000,000—something like four per cent. The other debts of the State are being funded at a rate considerably less than that. The railways, however, have an offset. As their loans were floated overseas, they do not pay any exchange rate on the interest payable on the loans. In addition to that, the railways do not pay any sinking fund. They say that they keep their asset at 100 per cent. efficiency out of revenue. That would be found to be fallacious at present.

If we appointed an independent valuator to value the assets of the Railway Department he would find that they would be at a standard considerably less than the 100 per cent. claimed. The point that seems to me to be unfair is that the department is paying the average loan interest rate on the whole of its capital of £27,000,000 and, although it does not provide a sinking fund, the Treasury has, from time to time, redeemed the overseas loans. That has become such a burden that, of the earnings of the department, it takes approximately 25 per cent. to meet the interest charges. It might be regarded as a rash statement, but it is nevertheless true to say—and it can be substantiated—that although the capital assets of the department in this State are assessed at about £27,000,000 we have already paid £34,000,000 in interest payments. That reminds one of the time when farmers in this State were buying tractors, on time payment, for £450, and after paying £400, finding that they still owed about £650 for them. Some inquiry into that aspect might be worthwhile.

Because the railways do not pay any sinking fund or exchange on the overseas interest, the loss for the last six years, with the exception of this year, is shown by the department as being £1,631,000. But the Treasury officials say that because no sinking fund is provided or exchange paid on overseas interest, the loss for that period is £2,996,000. That is not my guess, but is what has been said by Mr. Reid, the State Under Treasurer. The deficit last year was almost £1,000,000. It appears that the railways practically decide the financial position of the State. If they have a good year the State has a correspondingly lower deficit. The railway loss last year was £956,000, and the deficit of the State was about £912,000. It would appear that the deficits of the Railway Department and the State approximately correspond on most occasions. Parliament has, to some extent been responsible for not providing finance to modernise the railways. In about 1934 the Commissioner suggested that certain funds should be made available to carry out a progressive rehabilitation scheme, but I do not think it was until about 1938 or 1939 that the Government decided to set aside £100,000 a year for that purpose. So, the responsibility for the obsolescence of

our railway plant is not entirely that of the department. I agree that it was not until 1940 that the attention of this House was definitely drawn to the critical condition that the system had been permitted to get into.

I think it was in 1940 when the Commissioner decided to notify the House that the position was really bad. About 80 per cent. of our locomotives are over 30 years of age, and an even greater percentage of our carriage stock is older than that. A very small percentage—about 3 to 8 per cent.—could be considered to be within the accepted life of a locomotive, namely, 30 years. There is no doubt that the position of the railways is serious, and even critical. The department is certainly unable to handle the amount of freight offering. The old question of road transport has been revived because of the recent industrial trouble, and it has to be admitted that road transport can provide a limited service during a crisis, but it is incapable of doing so, at a reasonable cost, in ordinary circumstances.

Mr. Abbott: That is a matter of some doubt.

Mr. STYANTS: I do not think there is any doubt about it. I have seen the record of tests of road haulage and rail haulage, and under the most favourable conditions the least, per ton per mile, at which road transport can handle goods is $4\frac{1}{2}$ d., and yet the average for our railways is 1.79d. While road transport can give a service in an emergency it is quite incapable in ordinary circumstances of handling the low priced freight and competing against the railways. That is an established fact. I believe the road transport system can render a definite and valuable service in this State, but as a common carrier, handling all classes of freight, it is hopelessly outclassed by the railways. Generally speaking it cannot hope to compete with the railways, but I believe that there are many instances where it would provide a better service than they do for the people in particular districts. In addition, I think it would be more economical from the State's point of view to run a limited road service.

If the railways were showing a profit the position might be different and there might be some argument for their retention in certain sparsely populated districts. But that is not the case; the department is showing

an enormous loss. If it becomes necessary, as is possible in the lakes districts of this State, that motor transport should be subsidised, I think that the subsidy required to enable road transport to handle all classes of freight would mean a smaller loss than that shown by the railways. Because of the recent railway trouble there has been an advocacy for a considerable easing of the road transport restrictions. As a general principle I cannot agree with that. In many instances I believe it could be done to the undoubted benefit of the residents of certain districts and also to the revenue of the State, but my mind goes back to the road and rail competition in this State prior to the coming into force of the State Transport Co-ordination Act.

I had, from time to time, an opportunity of seeing the operations of a firm named Shipways that was functioning between Perth and Kalgoorlie in opposition to the Railway Department. The conditions and wages of the employees were sub-standard. They would drive until all hours of the night and then camp by the road-side. I am speaking of the time of the depression, and that firm would pick up a man—someone unemployed—and give him £1 and his keep to assist the driver for the return journey, which would take about four or five days. There was no such thing as the eight-hour day for the driver—it was often an 18-hour day. But the main thing from the point of view of the State was that Shipways were not carrying all the classes of freight available, but only the cream of the traffic. They were bushranging the rate-book! One of the principals of Shipways told me that they could not hope to show a profit on any freight from Perth to Kalgoorlie that was less than £6 15s. a ton. I suppose that 80 per cent. of the requirements of Kalgoorlie involve a freight rate, from Perth, of considerably less than that. Timber, potatoes and vegetables are under £2 per ton and jams, sauces, pickles, chaff, oats, wheat, etc., are about £3 15s. a ton.

To lift the restrictions on road transport and allow these conditions to prevail again, would be uneconomical and quite unfair. Some classes of produce return quite a high freight rate and they, of course, can be carried by the trucks. I have in mind the fact that prior to the introduction of the State Transport Co-ordination Act certain pri-

mary producers were willing and anxious that the Railway Department should carry their superphosphate at .54d. per ton per mile, and their wheat, which was a medium class freight, but they wanted to bring down their wool, a high price freight, by motortruck, and return home with petrol. In the interests of the State, the railways must be protected from such competition.

I am not one who says that the railways should get unlimited protection. They should be prepared to give a good and efficient service and a much better one than is being given at present. They would be capable of doing that if they had a more up-to-date plant. I draw attention to the fact that passenger traffic is always a high freight, and that in the metropolitan area once a road transport service gets away from the railway line there is an increase in the fares charged. That is borne out if we take into consideration the distance from Perth to Fremantle and note the fares charged by the bus companies where they have to face immediate railway competition and then contrast the position with the buses in other parts where that competition does not exist. Members will then quickly see how the fares pan out and that is characteristic of road transport anywhere.

Mr. Abbott: That is because of the numbers carried.

Mr. STYANTS: Where the railways are in competition, the bus companies keep their fares down to the minimum, but where there is no railway competition they charge increased fares proportionately. As regards the airways, we have what would be considered quite unfair competition. Apart from a certain privileged section of the community, air transport will never become popular unless fares are greatly reduced. If one desired to travel by air from Perth to Sydney the fare to be paid is £28 and, in addition, one would have to pay for a night's accommodation in Melbourne. The quantity of luggage a passenger can take is restricted to 35 lbs.

I have in mind the case of a young woman with a baby 12 months old who desired to travel to Sydney by air. She was told that the weight of her baby, which was 21 lbs., would be taken as portion of the 35 lbs. weight of luggage she could take with her. As against that, the second-class fare by rail

from Perth to Sydney is about £12 12s., and a passenger has the right to take 1 cwt. of luggage. If the passenger travelling to Sydney by air were to despatch 1 cwt. of luggage by train to that city, the charge would work out at £5 4s., so that the cost of the trip to Sydney by air, plus the rail freight on the luggage, would represent an expenditure of between £33 and £34. On the other hand, if the individual travelled by train the expenditure he would incur would aggregate only £12 12s. If he travelled first-class from Perth to Sydney the fare would be £18 18s.

Thus it would seem that the airways are in a position similar to that of road transport, but to a more pronounced degree. They will not be able to compete with the railways on a fair competitive basis. From Perth to Kalgoorlie the cheapest freight rate by air is 1s. 6d. per lb. That is a particularly cheap rate. If we work out the rate charged on mail matter, which is 5½d. per ounce, that means something like 7s. or 8s. per lb. for mails. That is the only kind of freight for which the airways will be able successfully to compete against the railways. The cheapest air freight from Perth to Kalgoorlie, which, as I have pointed out, is 1s. 6d. per lb., runs out to £168 per ton. I do not know of any class of freight that the average person could despatch at that figure.

Mr. Perkins: They brought sheep from South Australia to Western Australia for the stud sheep sales and conveyed them by air.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes, just as they take tomatoes and beans from here to Melbourne. They do not load the planes up to capacity with those commodities but merely take so much as will complete their loading requirements.

Mr. Perkins: But the stud sheep were flown across in a specially chartered plane.

Mr. STYANTS: I would not like to pay the price that would be demanded for mutton if brought from South Australia to Perth by air and the freight were added to the price of the carcass meat. The airways can never compete successfully against the railways except for the highest priced fares and freights. While I have no objection to the inquiry that is referred to in the motion,

I think that both air and road transport have definite places in our transport system but nevertheless will never compete successfully against the railways in respect of ordinary freights.

One of the difficulties that the Railway Department faces is that during the war period neither long service nor annual leave could be granted. I made inquiries regarding the position at the East Perth loco. sheds and I found that 25 per cent. of the employees were either on long service leave or were taking their accrued annual leave, neither of which they could enjoy during the war period because of staff shortage. Recently the Railway Department had to cancel trains because of the shortage of locomotive staff. I think that during the week immediately prior to the recent strike the firemen and others incurred between 700 and 800 hours of overtime. I am pleased to hear that the Government has decided to employ in the Railway Department the cleaners who were selected for that branch, but were called up for service in the Armed Forces. The young men had been chosen as suitable by the selection board, but before they could start work they were called up for the defence of the country. For quite a long time the Commissioner of Railways was adamant and said he would not employ the men on their discharge from service. The young men on their return to the State were over the age at which they can be taken on by the department, which is 18 or 19 years of age. Some of them were 23 years old when they were discharged after four years of service in the Armed Forces and, as I say, the Commissioner of Railway was adamant that he would not employ them.

Mr. Mann: He is a bit of a dictator!

Mr. STYANTS: It was very unfair to the young men. I can cite the position of two young fellows who were selected by the board as suitable for employment as cleaners. They received their notices to start work with the department on the same day and each received his call-up to the Army on the same day. One of them knew the ropes a bit and realised that if he could actually get a start with the Railway Department even though it was for only half a day, his job would be guaranteed to him when he returned and his classification

would commence from the day he originally started work. He decided to ignore the call of his country temporarily and he started work in the department. The other man was more patriotic or, perhaps I should say, did not know the run of the ropes so well and consequently he reported immediately to the military authorities. When those men returned from the war the one young fellow was able to take advantage of all the re-employment conditions and so forth, while the other could not secure his position with the Railway Department at all. He was told that his job was not there because he had not actually started with the department before he answered the call-up.

I am very pleased indeed that, after negotiations that have extended over a considerable period, the Government has decided that these young fellows who were selected but had not actually started with the department when they were called up, shall now be employed. Many of them found themselves in dead ends when they came back, and that makes it all the more pleasing that the Government has decided that the Railway Department shall employ them. The position prior to the war with regard to the condition of locomotives and rollingstock generally was bad. Despite protests made by other members in addition to myself, the position continued, and we were told that as laymen we did not know much about it. I remember on many occasions hearing references to the unsatisfactory conditions in which the engines were for the work the department was asking them to undertake.

We were told when we pointed this out that the mechanics had said the engines were all right and that, as a rule, drivers were not particularly good judges. I think most people would say if they wished to know anything about an aeroplane, that they would take the word of the pilot as to the plane's efficiency and ability to do a particular job, rather than go on what the mechanic said who serviced the plane on the ground. While in their particular spheres, mechanics may be regarded as authorities, when it comes to the running conditions and the ability and efficiency of a locomotive to do the job required of it, I think the best judge is the driver.

Mr. Mann: Quite right.

Mr. STYANTS: Locomotives are like motorcars. Two engines can be built from exactly the same plan, have the same steam pressure, the same number of coupled wheels, the same cylinder provisions and so on, and yet one engine will be 25 per cent. better than the other. That such should be the case has been a mystery to technical men over the years, but it is an admitted fact. Two motorcars can be built to exactly the same pattern and on the same formula, yet one will be 25 per cent. better than the other. I agree with the member for Pingelly that the attitude of the Railway Department has always been that it was the authority and no-one else knew anything about it. That is one of the chief faults I have to find with the railway administration.

In 1940 the commissioner drew attention to the condition of the boilers of our locomotives and painted a very dismal picture regarding the rollingstock. The warning came too late. The war had then been in progress for some time and conditions in the railway service were becoming progressively worse. At the time no rehabilitation scheme could be undertaken. That is what I blame the Commissioner of Railways for, not on account of the inefficiency of the system, with which I shall deal presently. I blame him for not having paid heed to the warnings regarding the necessity for a modernising plan to be put in hand. I have heard many members stress the need for action along those lines and compare the systems operating in other countries having the 3 ft. 6 in. gauge, with our own. As one having some knowledge of the subject, I say that the Railway Department has a mania for overloading the tractive power of its engines. A Diesel coach has to draw two trailers behind it.

In other countries, in connection with fast passenger services, an engine is required to use up to 60 or 65 per cent. of its tractive power per passenger load so that it can run up hill at a reasonably fast rate and make up time on the down grades so as to maintain a fair average speed for the trip. We found that the PR class engine takes the express train to Albany or the Goldfields with a full passenger load of 356 tons, whereas its full goods capacity is 390 tons. The result is that the engines slow down to about eight miles an hour when negotiating long hills of, say, 1 in

60 grade, and cannot keep up a decent average. If we are to have fast passenger services, we must reduce the weight of the express train so that the engines may negotiate hills at a reasonable speed and maintain a good average. This to a limited extent has been practised in the case of the Westland express, which cuts off about 1¾ hours between Perth and Kalgoorlie. The maximum load of that train is 280 tons compared with 356 tons in the case of ordinary express trains.

Mr. McLarty: You are suggesting that there should be more passenger trains.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes, and faster trains. I do not agree with many of the remarks I have heard about the inefficiency of the railway service. It would indeed be remarkable if the staff of the department were not efficient. To my knowledge, they consist of men who have had a great amount of railway experience, and they have gained their knowledge the hard way. Nearly all of them have graduated from the ranks.

Mr. Mann: And have often had their hearts broken, too.

Mr. STYANTS: That may be so. These men have graduated from the ranks.

The Minister for Lands: Like the poor cockies.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. STYANTS: I do not suggest that men who have reached the highest positions have graduated from the post of porter, but they have graduated through the ranks of the particular branch of the service in which they have been employed. If I were asked to state a case where a man had been promoted to a position to which he was not entitled on the score of merit, I could not mention one. They have all demonstrated their ability to do the job they have been given, right from the inception of their service, and they have worked their way up. Generally speaking, the administrative staff and the workers are doing a particularly good job with the plant that has been placed at their disposal. I say without fear of contradiction that I do not believe we have an engine that can be said to be up-to-date, according to modern locomotive standards.

We have good engines, but most of them are between 30 and 50 years old. I admit there is not much of the original engines

left because they have been patched up and repaired, but the basic principle of the engines is exactly the same, with the exception that superheating has taken place, they have the same steam pressure—sometimes—and generally the boilers have been cut down because it was claimed that they could not stand the original steam pressure. In many instances, the steam pressure itself has had to be cut down. They have the same sized cylinders, the same valve gear and the same number of coupled wheels. They have not progressed at all in the last 40 or 50 years except as to superheating. In other countries, locomotives have radically changed in design and have been improved, but we have not done anything like that here.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: How old is the oldest P. class engine?

Mr. STYANTS: I should say it would be about 20 years old. It is a particularly good class of engine. The average life of an engine in progressive countries is approximately 30 years, but we have them in service 50 years old. More than 80 per cent. of our engines are over 30 years of age, which is a reasonable life for any engine. We should not be too critical of the men in the railway service. We are asking the Railway Department to do something with plant that is undoubtedly obsolete. I regard the position in the same light as if we were asking a man to get as much out of a motor-truck that was made in 1914 as we would expect him to get out of one that was of the 1945 model. There may be deficiencies in the railway administration, and probably there are. It is a huge organisation, and its ramifications extend from one end of the State to the other.

No doubt the service is obsolete and inefficient. Passenger trains are taking longer to travel a given distance than they did 30 or 40 years ago. The department cannot haul all the traffic that is offered. During the last couple of months I have been endeavouring to have sufficient wheat and flour transported to the Goldfields but was unable to do so because of the insufficiency of trucks. Those commodities are necessary in order that the community may carry on. I realise the difficulties the department has to contend with owing to its obsolete plant, and the many things it is called upon

to do with that plant. It seems that the money for the modernisation of the railways is available. If we can get the necessary manpower and can give it up-to-date equipment, we should be able to set about modernising the system. We should start with the permanent way. We should do away with 45-lb. rails wherever possible so that the locomotives can give better results. We should also build modern locomotives. I believe if we placed modern equipment in the hands of the present railway employees, there would no longer be any complaint about their efficiency.

MR. HILL (Albany) [5.53]: The motion has my support. I consider that a very thorough investigation and inquiry into the railway transport system generally will accomplish much good. I hope the House will not only agree to the inquiry but that the Government, when the report is published, will be guided by the recommendations contained therein.

The Minister for Lands: It always is.

Mr. HILL: I have some particulars that will give members an idea of how the railway system of Western Australia has grown. In 1882, the capital cost was £283,678, but in 1946 it had grown to £26,979,563. The number of miles open for traffic in 1882 was 64, and in 1946 the figure was 4,381. In 1882, the number of passenger journeys made was 95,221, and in 1946 the figure was 17,136,230. The tonnage of goods and livestock carried in 1882 was 30,661 tons and in 1946 it was 3,194,859. The total earnings in 1882 were £12,732, and in 1946 they amounted to £4,106,718. The total working expenses were respectively £13,180 and £4,026,760. It will be seen that our railways have grown from a very small baby into a big adult. We have to face the position that the railways have fallen down badly on their job. The rollingstock is worn out and obsolete, and we have no less than 101 locomotives which were in service before 1901. In addition, there is very serious dissatisfaction amongst the personnel of the railway staff.

I point out again that the present position is due to the fact that this State has not and never has had a proper transport or railway administration. The member for Kalgoorlie compared South African condi-

tions with those appertaining to Western Australia. In the former country, all transport is under the control of one Minister and one administration. In this State, nearly every one of our Ministers is handling or mishandling some phase of our transport. The railway system of this State has simply grown into existence. The politician who could pull the most strings got the railway. Probably the most glaring instance of that sort of thing was the railway from Guildford to Chidlow Wells, established somewhere about 1882. I believe there was a friend of a rather powerful politician who had a sawmill at Chidlow Well, and the railway was built to that spot and has gone forward from there. All our goods have, therefore, to be hauled over the grade of that railway instead of along the Avon Valley. In 1924, the general election resulted in the Labour Administration taking office. The member for Geraldton became Minister for Railways. I know of no member of the Parliament of this State who had such a wonderful opportunity to go down in history as a statesman as had that hon. member.

The Minister for Lands: He has done it.

Mr. HILL: I know of no member who so widely missed that opportunity. I remember the year 1924 well, because it is when I bought my first motorcar. It was the first car to go to the Kalbar River. Here I would tell a little tale which will couple up with transport. The car was coming along at a time when a lad was saying his prayers, and in the middle of doing so, he said, hearing the car, "There goes Henry." That lad was the grandson of Captain Douglas, and was one of the finest pilots who ever served in the Western Australian pilot service. The grandson has made a name for himself but not at sea. If members want to see the plane that lad flew, they should go to the Canberra Museum and see the Lancaster bomber, "G. for George."

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the hon. member connect his remarks with the motion?

Mr. HILL: I mention this to show the change in transport. When dealing with transport questions, we must consider them as a whole. Early last year, the Commonwealth Government sent the Director of Rail Transport to Perth to tell our railway people how to haul wheat. I refer to Major Howse. He met the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Pingelly and me. Almost the

first thing he said was, "If you want to run the railways effectively, you must have efficient ports, so that when the trains reach the port, they can unload and get back on the job without delay." In 1925, Mr. Bruce was making a speech and said, "Our aim must be a complete system of transport which will enable the total cost to be kept at a minimum so that the producers can compete on the markets of the world." He caused inquiries to be made by an independent expert from England, who did his job without fear or favour, and reported on the transport system of Australia and the local problems in the different States.

I do not think any man has been so viciously opposed and attacked in this House by the member for Boulder as was Sir George Buchanan. His recommendations were completely ignored by the Government. In 1928, the Commonwealth Government caused another inquiry to be made by a committee of Australians. That committee made recommendations similar to those of Sir George Buchanan. A summary of the report was published in "The West Australian" on the 22nd May, 1929. On the 23rd May, the report was considered by the Premiers at Canberra, and the Premier from Western Australia was present. No notice was ever taken of that report, either. I remember when I first met Major Howse. He was over here with Mr. McKenzie, Chairman of the Melbourne Harbour Trust and Mr. Debenham, Chief Engineer of the Maritime Services Board, New South Wales. They were considering the proposal to close Fremantle as a commercial port and to use the outlying ports for commercial purposes. The first words Major Howse uttered were, "What is this port zone system?" I said, "Do not talk to me about that! I have no time for it." He asked on what the system was based, and I told him it was based on one factor—railway mileage. I have a drawing here which shows how the State has been divided into port zones. That is one of the causes of the railways falling down on their job of hauling wheat and super. When we discuss the question of haulage and the handling of our railways, we need not only to consider railway mileage but to take other factors into consideration and we definitely need to run the ports for the country and not the railway system for the ports.

In the early part of this year, the Federal Stevedoring Commission visited the State. I met the members at Albany, and amongst the first things one of the members said was that as far as he could gather we in Western Australia tried to run the railways for the benefit of the ports. I said, "Do not talk to me about that! I am not in favour of it." Before we decide what ports we want, we should consider what ports should be used. If this inquiry gets right down to tinacks we will find that the port zone system has contributed very substantially to the failure of the railways to do their job.

It was stated by the member for Kalgoorlie that wheat should be hauled over the easy grades and around as few curves as possible. There is no line in the State with such easy grades as the Great Southern, and there are no curves on that line worth worrying about; yet it is one railway which is not used for the haulage of wheat. Then we come to the question of hauling super. I consider that super should not be carried at a loss to our railways, but we lose a considerable amount on the haulage of super because the superphosphate works are badly placed. Our troubles with regard to the haulage of super arise from the fact that the metropolitan area is over-stocked with works. The other establishment at Bunbury was put there at the Government's request and is definitely in the wrong place for back loading.

Mr. J. Hegney: A ship could not get in there the other day.

Mr. HILL: That was in this morning's paper. I remember what happened in 1939, the last normal year before the war. While we were hung up for trucks in the metropolitan area and at Picton for the haulage of super, trucks took 55,000 tons of wheat, 500,000 cases of fruit, and a considerable amount of coal, together with fruit cases and super, and hauled those things down to Albany. The trucks had to go back empty. I think I am safe in saying that the blunder the Government made in asking for those works to be established at Picton cost the State at least £500,000. With regard to wheat, I have here a table showing the load carried on the different grades. The ruling grade on most of our railways down to the ports is one in 60. The load of a Garratt engine would be limited by the strength

of the hauling gear on the train. The load on a grade of one in 60 would be 580 tons; on one in 70 it would be 655; on one in 80, 725; and on one in 100 the load would be 850 tons.

A few weeks ago the Minister for Railways entered the dining room and said, "The congestion on the Collie-Brunswick line is terrible. We will have to duplicate the railway there. Trucks are being shoved off and pushed on one side and there is a considerable amount of delay." I pointed out that there was another way to relieve the congestion and that was to utilise Albany. That is what an efficient administration would do. It would not be obsessed with the one idea that we must keep down railway mileage. What do I class as efficient administration? I have dealt with this matter before and my suggestions are largely based on the recommendations of the Federal Transport Committee of 1929. Those suggestions are that all transport should be under one Minister and that there should be a permanent department of transport. If that proposal had been adopted, and we had a Minister for Transport and a department of transport, there would have been no need for this motion, because such a department would have continually studied our transport problem, anticipating our difficulties instead of waiting until they arose.

I suggest that there should be a transport committee consisting of the Minister as chairman, the general manager of our railways, the general manager of the State Harbours Board, the chairman of the Transport Board, someone representing shipping interests, another person conversant with air transport, and representatives of the trade unions, the primary producers and commercial interests. In addition to that, I feel that we should have a director of railways. About 1938 there was a report by a Royal Commission on transport in South Australia. That commission recommended a directorate consisting of one person of proved administrative capacity, one of general commercial experience and ability, one of financial training and experience and two with experience as employees in the railway service. That there should be a representative of the employees on such a directorate was a revolutionary recommendation, but I am convinced that we will have to adopt

that course if we are to remove the discontent that exists in our State. I know that there is a feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of railway men, no matter where they are. I will give members a few instances of the kind of thing that causes such dissatisfaction.

One of the finest men I know is employed as a conductor. One night he found a couple of roughs on the train and one of them hit him across the face with a hurricane lamp and smashed his false teeth. He submitted a claim for a fresh set of teeth. The railway administration refused the request because teeth were not included in the schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act. That man had to fight for justice and finally his request was complied with.

A couple of years ago a conductor on the Great Southern railway found a male passenger washing in the ladies' lavatory. He said, "You must leave this place. It is a ladies' compartment." The man took no notice of him, and he repeated his request. He said, "You must get out of here." Finally he said that if the man did not get out, he would be put out. A day or two later that conductor received a "Please Explain" from the department, and he gave his explanation. It would not have hurt the administration to write him to the effect that he had only done his job and to commend him for doing it. Instead of that the department gave him a left-handed reprimand by inserting a notice in the weekly gazette of the department to the effect that conductors and others must at all times pay the utmost courtesy to passengers.

On another occasion the member for Williams-Narrogin was on the same train as my young son, who was coming from school. Something went wrong with the brakes and the Albany train broke down. The other brake jammed on going into Spencer's Brook station and the rear part of the train stopped over the points of the Goldfields line. The signalman at the 55½ miles made a blunder and the "Westland" went through with the Albany train still on the line. There was a guard alongside the telephone box at Spencer's Brook and he heard the telephone ringing and answered it. He was asked whether the line was all clear as the "Westland" had gone through with the signal at danger. The

guard kept his head and rushed along the line. The stationmaster was off duty, but he came out of his house and the pair put detonators on the line as a result of which the "Westland" pulled up the length of two carriages to the rear of the Albany train. The only notice that was taken of the smart work of those two men was that they were told that they were merely doing their job. Those are the things that are causing considerable dissatisfaction. I feel confident that if working men were allowed to have a say in the administration of the railways we would get far better results than are obtained at present.

It is recognised that passenger services need to be fast, but with regard to goods services the important thing is to haul as heavy a load as possible. The member for Kalgoorlie, who has had considerable experience of the railways, has already stressed the fact that, when possible, we need to reduce the grades. Up to date a sum of £700,000 has been spent on re-grading railways in this State, but not one penny has been expended on the Great Southern south of Narrogin. It would only cost £75,000 to establish a grade of one in 80 from Narrogin to Mt. Barker, and from Mt. Barker to Albany we have better than a one in 100 grade today. If wheat could be taken down that line, the little extra distance to be travelled as compared with that on the Bunbury route would be more than compensated by the heavier load which the engine could draw. But we have no back loading from the port, and my efforts to persuade the Government to adopt a policy encouraging super companies to erect works at Albany have met with little response.

Today our railways are paying interest on practically every penny spent on them. This year the loss on the railways was almost equal to the interest bill. Our State has not always been up against it as is the case today. While the member for Geraldton was Premier we had surpluses for five years. That money should have been used to reduce the debt on our railways, thus giving them a chance to make good. When it comes to competition with motor transport, we are faced with a difficult problem. Some years ago in South Africa there was a conference of representatives of practically every dominion and colony under British rule in Africa.

That conference unanimously agreed that the worldwide practice of charging high rates for high value goods and low rates for low value goods was essential to encourage primary production. But it reported that that policy was in danger from unrestricted motor transport. We need to regulate motor transport. We do not want to eliminate it, but we should eliminate the railways when motor transport is far more economical. In his report in 1927, Sir George Buchanan recommended that the Australian Governments would be well advised to limit railway construction to the main traffic lines and use motor transport to act as feeders.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. HILL: Before the tea adjournment I was referring to the conference in South Africa where the question of motor competition with the railways was discussed. We cannot allow motor transport to force the railways to abandon the policy of charging high rates for high value goods and low rates for low value goods. If the railways abandoned that policy it would be a serious blow to our primary industries. As a Parliament we must assist our railways and place them in a position where they can compete with motor transport. Our railway system is badly laid out to compete with road transport. Kojonup, for instance, is 90 miles by road from Albany, and about 140 miles by rail. It is 160 miles from Perth by road, but 260 miles by rail. When I was in South Australia six years ago I travelled down to Victor Harbour, with my cousin, who is Assistant Superintendent in the South Australian Railways, and was in charge of the railway system south of Adelaide. He said, "I will show you how we are competing with motor transport in this State. Victor Harbour is 80 miles from Adelaide by train and 60 miles by road. We have a flat rate from Adelaide to Victor Harbour for all goods, and at Victor Harbour we have motortrucks which take the stuff from the railway goods sheds to the various destinations to which they have to be delivered. For passenger traffic we have a special charge to encourage passengers to use the train, and at Victor Harbour there are motorcars waiting to meet the trains and deliver the passengers to the various guest houses."

Such a policy has not been adopted in Western Australia. I think that in some cases it would be better for the railways to withdraw in favour of motor transport. While motor transport has great possibilities, which have been brought home to us forcibly during the last two or three weeks, its capabilities are limited. A rather pathetic statement was made by the Minister for Works at a meeting in Albany recently. He was asked whether there was a possibility of completing the link between Northcliffe and Nornalup. Some people advocate pulling up those railways, because they are not paying, but I think we should connect them up. The Minister for Works said that railways were obsolete and motor transport was a modern means of transport. He omitted to point out that our Government today is duplicating the rail link between Bunbury and Fremantle. I venture to suggest that it would have been better for the State to have completed that link instead of duplicating a railway so as to force more traffic towards the metropolitan area. The railways must also face competition by air transport. For long distances running into thousands of miles, the railways are severely handicapped in competition with air transport, but I think our State railways, with proper management, should be able to hold their own in competition with air services.

There is an air service from Perth to Albany, but little time is saved in coming to Perth by air. Of course it only takes about two hours, but one has to travel in the daytime, whereas by using the train one can sleep during the journey, do a full day's work in Perth and be back in Albany the following day. Passengers do not like travelling in the old A.Q. coaches. They are too old and dilapidated, and it is no pleasure to travel in them for 340 miles. The A.Z. coaches are good, and I am confident that if the railways could provide better and quicker services within the State they would hold their own against air transport. Railway administration is a science, and in South Africa there is a school for training young railway officers. I think it would be a good proposition if we picked out some of our most promising railway officers and arranged for them to do a course in one of those South African schools. They would learn a lot.

Though South Africa is probably handling the transport problem better than any other country in the world, its senior railway officers continue to be sent oversea to learn what they can. I do not know of any of our senior officers being sent oversea to learn of developments in railway administration. In fact, some of them have never been transferred to the Eastern States for a period. Anyone is inclined to get into a groove. Men can learn much from books but there is nothing like practical experience in whatever activity interests one. Our job in this Parliament is not to run the railways, but to see that the Government appoints an administration that can do so. One thing that I do not completely favour about the South African system is the unified control. I think it would be better to have what I would call a co-ordinated control, and that is what we lack in this State today. I say without hesitation that our railway and transport problems in Western Australia are the simplest in the Commonwealth. We hear a lot about the 3 ft. 6 in. gauge and the 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge.

A few years ago I travelled from Broken Hill to Sydney. I got out of the Silver City Comet at Parkes and travelled from there to Orange on the heavy steam express train. That train took 3½ hours to do 72 miles. The next day I was talking to a railway man at Orange and mentioned that our ruling grade was about one in 60. He said, "You are lucky. We have any amount of grades of one in 40." On the Great Southern line the 3 ft. 6 in. gauge, with 60 lb. rails, could carry heavier loads, and carry them quicker than can the main railway from the wheat country of New South Wales to the coast. We have downhill grades nearly all the way, with only one or two steep pinches, while in New South Wales the wheat country is from 500 to 1,000 ft. above sea level, but before the seaboard is reached the railways have to go up to an elevation of 3,000 ft. before drifting down to Sydney. I trust this House will agree with the motion for a full inquiry into all our railway problems, and I hope that when that inquiry is set up full consideration will be given to the question of what form of transport administration is most necessary in this State. I once heard it said that there are three "ations" necessary, administration, organisation and legislation, and that of the three administration

was the most important. That is what we lack in this State, and that is why our railways have fallen down on the job. There is dissatisfaction among the employees, because of the unsound administration.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [7.40]: During last session this House carried a motion of somewhat similar nature to this one, regarding metropolitan transport. It referred to the suburban railways. I do not wish to add words to this motion, but would urge the Government, in the event of an inquiry being set up, to make sure that the motion carried last session in relation to metropolitan railways is not overlooked, but is included in the inquiry. That motion was to the effect that a report should be obtained by the Government as to whether we should electrify the metropolitan railways or employ Diesel electric traction and, thirdly, it dealt with railway crossings, subways, bridges and level crossings. That is not directly covered by the wording of this present motion. Looking back a few years one realises that perhaps a great opportunity was lost by the Governments of those days in not developing our metropolitan railway system, because with the advent of motor transport, which has transpired in the last 10 or 15 years, an enormous amount of money has been made by private companies, not in undue profits, but because they have been successful and have made money out of traffic which the railways previously handled as a monopoly.

In those years some of us who were then in Parliament urged the Commissioner of Railways to reduce the fares on metropolitan lines, with the sublime objective of trying to get money from the city railways in order to finance and improve country railways, the reason being that there was no possible means or opportunity of making money out of the country railways, which are more of a service. Even with modern methods, if the State were able to balance its budget on its country railways, it would be doing a good job. I think a great opportunity has been lost over the years on our State railways. The motion carried last session came on the scene a little late, but I still think that side of the matter should not be overlooked. At least half the people of the State live in the metropolitan area and constitute an enormous amount of traffic to

be handled if the railway passenger service can be made attractive to the public.

I am not suggesting to add anything to the wording of this motion, but another matter raised last session is still just as urgent to the people as it was then, and is, indirectly, a railway matter. I refer to the obstruction caused by the railway to road traffic right from Fremantle to Midland Junction. Throughout that distance there have been attempts made in places to provide bridges and subways, but they are inadequate. On the whole, the railways constitute a bar to traffic throughout the length of that obstruction. Over the years members have tried to get further improvements in the form of the widening of subways or the construction of a new bridge, the closing of a right-of-way or the installation of lights or other devices to warn people of the approach of trains.

To show the public interest in this matter, only last week-end I received a petition signed by 221 persons of my district urging better crossing facilities over the railway at Cottesloe station. The complaint is that old people cannot cross the line without breaking the law; they would have to knock down some of the pickets on the fences and boldly walk across. There is no provision for mothers with prams to cross the line. There is a sort of two-storied foot bridge over which it is quite impossible to take prams and the old people have long ago bucked at using it and they either pass through the picket fence or do not go at all. This may appear to be a small matter, but it is one that could be included in a general inquiry into railway administration in order to see how quickly we can improve the crossings over the main line and bring them more on a par with our road crossings.

It may be said that our highways are a death trap and contain some obstructions for pedestrians. There are white lines across the highways and various warnings of that nature, but the people are accustomed to half-minute traffic on the roads, with cars passing in both directions, and they run a much greater risk in crossing a road than in crossing the railway. The obstruction presented by the railway is a far bigger nuisance than the danger from road traffic. If the motion is carried, I hope it will include, in addition to the matters already so ably dealt with by the mover and other members,

a reference to the aspect I have just mentioned.

I was greatly impressed with the words of the member for Kalgoorlie. Many of the things he mentioned tonight have been said before by him and other members, but his words were an encouragement to many members to renew their efforts to get some improvements by reviving points which, over the years, have been brought forward but have not yet been dealt with. I believe that as a result of this discussion, there will be an improvement. When the previous motion of this description was moved by the member for Pingelly during the war years, it could then be truly said that other matters of more importance required attention, but now at least a year or more has passed since the war ended and there should be an opportunity to get right down to a consideration of the improvements outlined in the motion. I am not unmindful of the fact that the Government has announced on various occasions quite a number of improvements. It has announced the £4,000,000 plan for rollingstock improvements, an increase in the building capacity of the Midland Junction workshops and many other things. I trust that an inquiry will be sufficient not merely to cover all those points, but to have them re-opened and perhaps further improved.

I believe that the railways have a long use before them. I was interested in the remarks of the member for Kalgoorlie where he pointed out the obvious truth that traction on the ground must be more economical than traction which has to be supported in as well as propelled through the air. I believe that the railways for many years will serve a useful purpose, and I feel disgust that over the years such a disproportionate view should have to be taken of the capacity of the Canadian railways—our rival Dominion—and our own. Largely our railways have been run by the Government, whereas in Canada for many years they were privately owned, although it is true that in the last few years the Government of Canada has exercised greater control. The efficiency of the Canadian railways and the work they have done, apart from the fact that the lines there are of one gauge, is very marked when compared with the Australian systems. I do not think the people of Australia will much

longer tolerate the existing position. I believe that the influence of airway and road transport will cause a great deal of inquiry and misgivings amongst the Governments of Australia and that they will be determined to put the railways on a footing to make them worthy of this great country.

It has been said that the cost of railways to Australia has been something like £400,000,000 and that another £200,000,000 will be needed to modernise them and standardise the gauges. That proposal has been criticised and opposed in many quarters, but the fact remains that the expenditure of £400,000,000 has given us a very poor service, and I do not think the people of Australia will much longer tolerate the standard we have today. I even visualise the Government's considering the very revolutionary proposal of setting up some sort of trust, which could be controlled by the Governments through fares and conditions, but which would operate the railways in a business way and not in the political way they have been over the years, which has permitted of their going from bad to worse.

Mr. Cross: Would you sell the capital debt, too?

Mr. NORTH: The capital debt stands as it does for many reasons that are known to the hon. member but not to the public. The sad part is that the public does not realise that what is called public ownership of the railways is not public ownership at all. It has been a matter of borrowing millions of money largely from overseas with guaranteed preference-share interest of something like 4 per cent. The payment of this interest comes first and applies to the whole of the money invested in the railways. The people's equity does not consist of £10; there is no equity. The railways at the moment are the concern of those who lent the money. If those loans had been financed as the Midland Railway and other private railways have been financed, the shareholders would have been content during bad years to accept $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 per cent. interest on their money instead of which, under the system approved by our forefathers, we have been paying on a 4 per cent. preferred-stock basis, good or bad as the years may be. The question of improving the railways has come last of all,

if it has come into the picture at all. That is one reason why we cannot get results, and I feel sure that for this reason many of the Commissioners of Railways in Australia have lost heart.

In the sister Dominion, we find the profits are in accordance with the economic situation. In some years there may be no profits. In the Old Country, the railways have never shown as much profit as the Western Australian railways have paid in interest. If the British railways pay 3 or 4 per cent. they are doing extraordinarily well, but our railways have to show 4 per cent. profit before they start to pay their way. I trust that an inquiry will be held, that similar inquiries will be held in other States, and that airway and road competition will bring an awakening to Governments and probably produce better systems than we have had in the past!

On motion by Mr. Rodoreda, debate adjourned.

BILL—IMPRISONMENT FOR BETTING ABOLITION.

Second Reading.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [7.56] in moving the second reading said: In the course of discussing an amendment moved to the second reading of the Bookmakers Bill, I stated that I did not know whether we should not distinguish somewhat more than we do between certain classes of offences when imposing imprisonment and that I was prepared, while further consideration was being given to the subject-matter of the Bill, to subscribe to a temporary measure which, for the time being, would abolish imprisonment for the existing offence. As a consequence of the debate, as is well known, that Bill was defeated on the second reading.

While I believe, as I did at the time the second reading was discussed, that there should be further inquiry into the matters involved in that legislation—and I trust an inquiry will be made—I think it reasonable during the period that must elapse before any further action can be taken, either as a result of inquiry or not, that Parliament should examine the existing state of affairs in regard to imprisonment for certain offences connected with betting and should

determine whether or not a continuance of imprisonment is justified. For this reason I am introducing this Bill with the object of abolishing for the time being imprisonment for offences of a certain kind connected with betting and imposing instead a minimum monetary penalty.

I have noticed in newspaper reports of various prosecutions connected with betting that there has been a very wide divergence of opinion amongst magistrates and justices as to what penalty should be inflicted when monetary penalties are to be imposed. I have noticed that in respect of the same offence on the same day, penalties have ranged from as low as £5 to as high as £90 in different places in the State.

Mr. McLarty: Sometimes as low as £1.

Mr. WATTS: That may be so; I would not deny it, but I have not noticed a fine lower than £5 in the circumstances to which I refer. I have no hesitation in saying that such wide discrepancies in the penalties imposed should be avoided, if it is at all possible; but before I come to the actual provisions of the Bill, I would like to traverse for a moment the existing position in regard to betting prosecutions. It appears there are three methods which have been used in prosecuting starting-price bookmakers. One is under Regulation 327 to the Traffic Act for obstructing traffic; another is under the Police Act Amendment Act, 1893, Section 4; and the third under Section 211 of the Criminal Code. Section 211 of the Criminal Code is the one which deals with the keeping of betting shops and gaming houses. I shall quote it:

211. (1) Any house or room, or any place whatsoever which is used for any of the purposes following, that is to say:—

(i) For the purpose of bets being made therein between persons resorting to the place; or

(ii) For the purpose of bets being made therein between persons resorting to the place and—

(a) The owner, occupier, or keeper of the place, or any person using the place; or

(b) Any person procured or employed by or acting for or on behalf of any such owner, occupier, or keeper, or person using the place; or

(c) Any person having the care or management, or in any manner conducting the business of the place; or

(iii) For the purpose of any money of other property being paid or received therein by or on behalf of any such owner, occupier, or keeper, or person using the place as or for the consideration—

(d) For an assurance, undertaking, promise, or agreement, express or implied, to pay or give thereafter any money or other property on any event or contingency of or relating to any horse-race, or other race, fight, game, sport, or exercise; or

(e) For securing the paying or giving by some other person of any money or other property on any such event or contingency;

is called a common betting house.

Any person who opens, keeps, or uses a common betting house is guilty of a misdemeanour, and is liable to imprisonment with hard labour for three years.

Or he may be summarily convicted before two justices, in which case he is liable to imprisonment with hard labour for six months, or to a fine of one hundred pounds.

(2) Any person who, being the owner or occupier of any house, room or place, knowingly and wilfully permits it to be opened, kept, or used as a common betting house by another person, or who has the use or management, or assists in conducting the business of a common betting house, is guilty of an offence, and is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment with hard labour for six months, or to a fine of one hundred pounds.

Then follows the provision that the Western Australian Turf Club may maintain a totalisator. The Police Act Amendment Act of 1893 has a very similar provision, which I need not repeat, but which is sometimes used—I think more frequently than the Criminal Code—as a means of prosecuting in these cases. In more recent times, however, consequent upon the difficulties apparently experienced by law officers in conducting prosecutions under those sections, because the betting transactions were going on in places which were not a room, a shop or a place within the meaning of the Act, it has become more customary to lay these charges under Regulation 327 to the Traffic Act. That regulation provides—

No person shall, either alone or with another, behave, act, or stand on any road or footpath so as to obstruct the free passage of traffic along, through or upon the same, nor loiter nor act in any way to the annoyance of other pedestrians.

Regulation 336 to the Traffic Act provides the penalty—

Any person committing a breach of any of the foregoing regulations, either by act or

omission, shall on conviction be liable to a penalty not exceeding £20 or to imprisonment not exceeding one month.

It will be seen, therefore, whichever way one goes about it, provided the charge is heard before a magistrate or two justices—in other words, is dealt with summarily—provision is made for a maximum fine and/or for a term of imprisonment; and it has become quite common in recent months for magistrates in the first instance to threaten imprisonment, even for charges laid under Regulation 327 to the Traffic Act, and in some instances actually to impose it. As I say, pending some wiser course being found to deal with these matters as a result of inquiry—which I hope will take place—it has seemed to me that an end should be put to the responsibility of magistrates to inflict imprisonment for these offences, because I do not think in all the circumstances these offences can reasonably be placed in the same category as a number of offences for which imprisonment can be inflicted.

So far as prosecutions under Regulation 327 to the Traffic Act are concerned, we could doubtless have had it altered by another regulation providing a maximum penalty by way of fine and removing the power of the magistrates to punish by imprisonment. That, of course, would have involved some consequential amendment to Regulation 336 in regard to the penalty. But I would point out that if that had been done and the Traffic Regulations amended, all persons who obstructed traffic—whether they be bookmakers or persons engaged in betting or not—would be liable only to a maximum penalty of £20. I take it that when Regulation 327 was first drawn up, the intention was not to deal only with these offences. It was drawn up with the intention of dealing with persons who, for some riotous or unlawful purpose of quite another character, proceeded to obstruct in an unruly manner the traffic on any roadway and whose offence in consequence might easily warrant a penalty of imprisonment. But it has been used in recent months—indeed, I think, for a longer period—as a means of dealing with offences where the only real obstruction to traffic that arises is the fact that evidence is adduced that the person concerned in the alleged obstruction is engaged in carrying on betting operations. So it does not seem to me to be wise merely to amend Regula-

tion 327 to provide that there shall be no imprisonment at all for obstructing traffic in any circumstances; but rather does it seem to me wise that we should make special provision for this particular type of offence by legislation which would, for the time being, supersede the provisions of the Traffic Act in that regard.

It has also seemed to me that there is a distinct probability that offences of this kind may be dealt with in future under the provisions of the Police Act Amendment Act, 1893, or possibly under Section 211 of the Criminal Code. Therefore, if we are to adopt the principle which I am prepared to adopt in this Bill, that for every offence involving betting and dealt with summarily before magistrates, it is not desirable that a penalty of imprisonment should be imposed, it seems to me to be necessary to regulate the whole law regarding this matter. I want to make it clear before I pass on that street betting, as I understand the position, cannot be dealt with either under Section 211 of the Criminal Code or the Police Act Amendment Act for the reason that it appears a street has been held not to be a "place" within the meaning of the sections of the Code or the Act. Even to me it seems a rather remarkable distinction that a street is not a place. I think you will agree with me, Mr. Speaker, that one would be inclined to regard it in ordinary circumstances as a place, but that appears to be the state of the law under which these prosecutions have been made.

The Bill I am now introducing and of which I propose to move the second reading provides that, notwithstanding anything contained in the Criminal Code or in the Police Act Amendment Act, 1893, or in the Traffic Regulations, or in any other statute or regulation, where an offence is charged against any person in which evidence is adduced of betting having taken place, and in which a conviction is secured by evidence of betting, there should not be a penalty of imprisonment but merely a pecuniary or monetary penalty. I also propose to ask the House to agree to a minimum penalty, which I have fixed in this Bill in cases which come under the Criminal Code or the Police Act Amendment Act and which are dealt with summarily before a magistrate or justices, at £25 as the minimum penalty,

and in cases which may be dealt with under the Traffic Regulations, at a minimum of £10. It seems to me that we are justified in asking for a minimum penalty, in order that on the one hand the offence may not be too lightly regarded, and on the other hand that there may not be too great a divergence of opinion between magistrates as to the penalty which should be imposed in various cases.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: No maximum fine?

Mr. WATTS: That is provided in the Police Act Amendment Act, the Criminal Code and the traffic regulations respectively. Those maximum fines are not interfered with by this Bill. The imprisonment provisions in those statutes are, however, overridden by this Bill. There will be no imprisonment. The maximum penalties, however, are not interfered with. They remain at £100, £100 and £20 respectively. The minimum penalties, however, will be £25, £25 and £10 respectively, should this Bill become law. It may be noticed that the Bill refers to offences of which betting is an element or where a conviction is secured by evidence having been adduced of betting. It is only in respect of the traffic regulations that I shall make any reference to that point.

The other statutes make express reference, in the terms that I read, to betting of one kind and another; but the traffic regulation makes no express reference to betting of any kind; it simply refers to obstruction of the traffic. But, as I said, there are different ways of obstructing the traffic. In my opinion, this use has been made of the regulation merely to overcome the unfortunate legal definition of what is a place; and it has been customary, in all the charges that have been laid, as far as I can discover, in order to obtain a conviction in the terms that the prosecuting officer wants, to adduce evidence to the court of betting having taken place. That is why the Bill makes special reference to evidence of betting having been adduced. In order to confirm that statement to some extent I would like to quote from a report in "The West Australian" of yesterday, as follows:—

Fines for Obstruction: Six men appeared before Mr. K. J. Dougall, S.M., in the Perth Police Court yesterday on charges of having stood with others in such a manner as to ob-

struct the free passage of pedestrian traffic. In each case a fine of £20 with 2s. 6d. costs was imposed.

That happened to be the maximum penalty that could be imposed under the particular regulation. I will not mention the names of the offenders. The report continues—

Evidence was given that the accused were arrested between 11.5 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. on Saturday when engaged in street betting. A number of persons were standing around each of them and the manner in which they stood could have caused an obstruction to traffic.

Sgt. J. Clark prosecuted.

Midland Junction Cases: Fines totalling £25 were imposed on two persons by Messrs. T. M. Clune and S. Gardiner, J's.P. in the Midland Junction Police Court yesterday on charges of having stood in such a manner as to obstruct the free passage of pedestrian traffic. Both were said to have been engaged in betting operations at the time of their arrest.

In all eight of those cases evidence was given that the men were engaged in betting at the time of the alleged offence, and the convictions were recorded with extremely heavy penalties, taking into consideration the maximum imposed by the regulations. That, therefore, is the reason for the express reference in the Bill to evidence of betting being brought before the bench on the occasion of the hearing. I do not think I need enlarge on the provisions of the measure at this stage. Its intention is perfectly clear. I have, however, provided that it shall continue in force until the 31st day of December, 1947, and no longer.

I said, when I commenced, that I believed this to be a temporary expedient pending a close investigation into some better way of disposing of this undesirable condition, and substituting something less undesirable. If, however, by the 31st December, 1947, a satisfactory solution has not been discovered, or is not able to be completely put into effect by then, it can, as is the case with all other Bills that are restricted in operation to a period of time, be extended for a further period if the legislature thinks proper. In the meanwhile, as I have explained, the existing law comprised in the Criminal Code, the Police Act and the Traffic Act, will continue, subject to the restrictions as to penalties that are imposed by this measure when, in respect of the Criminal Code and the Police Act, the prosecutions are dealt with summarily before a magistrate or justices and,

in the case of the traffic regulations, in all cases, because, I believe, they are invariably dealt with in that manner. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH SCHEME FOR SUPERANNUATION (AMENDMENTS AUTHORISATION).

Second Reading.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [8.20] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is for an Act to authorise certain amendments of a scheme for superannuation established by the City of Perth under the City of Perth Superannuation Fund Act, 1934. It will be remembered that in 1934 I introduced the City of Perth Superannuation Fund Bill which afterwards became an Act. The superannuation scheme did not come into operation until some time in 1937. In 1941 I introduced a measure to amend the superannuation scheme established by the Act of 1934. The Bill now before members has a twofold object in amending the scheme of 1941. In the first place it proposes to alter the amount of pension which an officer of the council will receive on retirement from 1/120th part of his salary to 1/60th part.

The idea is to increase the pension for the older officers of the Perth City Council who were engaged during the non-contributing period prior to 1937. In order to bring that about the City Council is prepared, on the advice of its actuary, to pay an amount into the superannuation fund not exceeding £1,600 as the council's contribution of the Electricity and Gas Department, and an amount not exceeding £1,400 as the contribution of the other departments of the council, for a period of 22 years from the 1st July, 1946. That is the first object of the Bill. The other object of the Bill is to enable officers of the City Council who were absent from their employment because of being engaged in one or other of the various Services during the war, to make up the leeway of that time. As the Act stands the officers affected could not have paid in their superannuation payments regularly because the Act would not allow it; neither could the City

Council, as the employer, pay the subscriptions for them.

The second object of the Bill is, therefore, to enable those officers to pay the superannuation fees that they would have paid during the years that they were absent. In explanation of that, it will be observed that, whereas previously if no contribution were made by the employee it would be equally impossible for the council to make contribution, by virtue of this amendment the officer is given the right to choose whether he will make contribution to the superannuation fund by means of instalments distributed over 10 years to cover the contributions to the fund which he would have made had his service been uninterrupted by war. The City Council proposes, in this regard, to make it optional for the officers concerned to contribute in the manner suggested by this amending Bill.

There will be no compulsion on those officers to avail themselves of this provision if the measure becomes law. It will be seen that whereas the employee is due to pay his contribution to the fund in proportion to the salary he received at enlistment, the council is prepared to pay a contribution on his behalf equal to the sum that he would have paid had he received increases in salary during his absence in the Fighting Forces; and further to cover the loss of interest on the contribution of the employee during the 10 years over which the instalments are distributed. Briefly, the objects of the Bill are to increase the percentage of pension to give officers, who were in the Fighting Forces, a chance to pay in the amount they would have paid during their absence at the war, and for the City Council to pay in a certain amount of money to make them solvent.

Hon. N. Keenan: What would happen if such an officer refused to pay in?

Mr. NEEDHAM: I have already explained that an officer can avail himself of this opportunity, or refuse to do so.

Hon. N. Keenan: What happens if he refuses?

Mr. NEEDHAM: He would not come under the superannuation scheme.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Does the council pay his contribution, whether he contributes or not?

Mr. NEEDHAM: If he does not pay in, the council will not.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The option applies to the council in the same way.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Yes. It might be wondered why the word "officers" is mentioned and not the term "men of the wages staff." The explanation is that, as far as the superannuation fund is concerned, the wages employees are unaffected by their absence in the Services, as their pension is at a fixed rate and is not affected because of the above mentioned absence. There is nothing controversial in the measure, and I submit it with all confidence. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Shearn, debate adjourned.

BILL—CANNING DISTRICT SANITARY SITE.

Second Reading.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [8.32] in moving the second reading said: Just over a year ago I moved for a Select Committee to inquire into the new sanitary site which was to be established in South Perth. The question of the old site was said at the time to be a matter of extreme urgency but to date those concerned have not even used the new site. To indicate to the House where the new site is, I shall quote the Minister for Lands who, on the 7th November last year, speaking in this House said,—

Members will also be able to consult the plan hung on the wall. The site chosen is in the middle of the Collier plantation.

He repeated that statement later on when he said that the site was in the pine plantation. Possibly last year members did not visualise the rapid extension of housing operations likely to take place in South Perth. At that time I said I considered the site should not be used for sanitary purposes because in the vicinity were some of the finest building sites in the metropolitan area. During the same speech in this House the Minister for Lands said—

It is unlikely that any dwelling will be erected within three-quarters of a mile of the proposed site.

The member for Victoria Park was even more emphatic and said that there were then no citizens living within two miles of the

proposed site. In reply to that I claimed that there were houses at that time within one mile of it. Since that time arrangements have been made by the Workers' Homes Board for further land resumptions there and it now has secured all the land east of the Canning Highway right to the Collier pine plantation. If any member should take the trouble to visit the locality, he would now see a new township springing up there and a large number of houses being built. Further, it is proposed straight away to enter upon the construction of 700 or 800 more, and they should be completed within the next 12 months or two years.

Mr. Read: I hope you are right.

Mr. CROSS: My statement is correct. It will be a densely populated area.

Mr. Read: We will be gone by then.

Mr. CROSS: It is all very well for the member for Victoria Park to indulge in interjections. He is a member of the Perth City Council. It is because of the dilatoriness displayed by the City Council with regard to the old site and the neglect to go on with the new one promptly that necessity has arisen for action to be taken. It has been stated that the City Council requires the site for only two years and in the circumstances, in view of the fact that one year has passed the time has arrived for action to be taken to indicate the necessity for the desired removal and to insist upon its ratepayers being connected up with the present sewerage system or to have septic tanks installed on their premises. Again, to quote the Minister for Lands, with regard to the speed the City Council does things, speaking on the 7th November he complained about the actions of the council and said—

I was receiving deputations in which the City Council joined, and I found that the council was trying, in my opinion, to evade its responsibility.

The Minister for Lands: It must have been right if I said so.

Mr. CROSS: In the same speech the Minister said that the City Council was only playing with the proposal and was not living up to its responsibilities or trying to do its job. Because of the rapid growth of South Perth, the position is that if the Minister was right when he said the sanitary site was in the middle of the pine plantation, which is only 40 chains wide,

houses are being built within a quarter of a mile of that site. The object of the Bill is to compel the City Council to take action to see that its ratepayers are connected up with the sewerage system or required to instal septic tanks. From that standpoint the South Perth district will be able to comply with those conditions because even within the last 12 months quite a number of houses formerly served by the pan system have been connected up with the sewerage system.

Within two years it is almost certain that throughout the South Perth road district each house will be either connected to the sewerage system or be provided with a septic tank. In the City Council's area in Victoria Park there are 1,100 homes situated right along the sewerage pipes and yet not connected. If the people of South Perth can have their area attended to, then they are perfectly justified in asking that the City Council be compelled to fall into line. We are of the opinion that there should be no sanitary site within 12 miles of the Perth Town Hall. If the Perth City Council should take the necessary action, there is no reason why that should not be the position. I anticipate that the member for Victoria Park will undertake the task of apologising for the City Council's dilatoriness and claim that there are other parts of the area that cannot be sewered. He will probably claim that the council may not be able to secure the necessary pumping installations; some of the sewage will have to be lifted, and that will cause further delay. If we are content to accept an attitude like that we will probably continue as we are for the next 20 years.

The Bill provides that the council may continue to use the sanitary site for a period of two years from the 1st January next and that will give it an adequate period within which to clean up the situation. If the work required cannot be completed within that period probably another year's extension could be made available. The cleaning up of the position must be undertaken because the Health Act provides that it is unlawful to deposit night soil in any place where it will be a nuisance, injurious or detrimental to health. I do not know how on any sanitary site it is possible to prevent the flies that breed there, and this site will be in close proximity to where a large influx of population will be housed. I urge members to agree to the legislation. It pro-

vides the Perth City Council with a reasonable time within which to make the necessary provisions. If the people of South Perth can complete their installations and so on within two years, there is no reason why the Perth City Council should not achieve the same result. The time has long passed when a sanitary site should be permitted in close proximity to any dense population. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Read, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE HOUSING.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

BILL—EASTERN GOLDFIELDS TRANSPORT BOARD.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [8.41] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill to create the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board to take over, construct, maintain and work tramways within the municipalities of Kalgoorlie and Boulder and the road district of Kalgoorlie. It is being introduced at the request of those local authorities which have for a considerable time conferred and reached an amicable understanding and arrangement for the assets of the tramways at Kalgoorlie and Boulder to be handed over under the terms of an agreement or contract to these three local authorities, which will operate them as a transport board. The Bill is the product of those conferences and originally was drafted by the solicitor acting for the three local authorities. I will explain later the reason for the measure being introduced as a public Bill, for it can be clearly shown to be necessary for it to be so introduced. The Crown Law officers examined the Bill very thoroughly and had discussions with the solicitor for the local authorities to make sure there is nothing in it that in any way involves the Crown in undertaking to present the Bill to Parliament for those authorities.

The tramways of Kalgoorlie and Boulder have been operated for over 40 years by an English company—the Kalgoorlie Electric Tramways Ltd. Between 1889 and 1903 the tramways were constructed in accordance with the legal procedure of that time,

namely, an agreement was entered into between the local authority and the promoter of the undertaking. This was followed by a provisional order granted by the Minister of State concerned and later the provisional order was confirmed by an Act of Parliament. By 1904 the promoters other than the Kalgoorlie Electric Tramways Ltd. had assigned their interests to that company which, in fact, has ever since owned and operated the tramways. The schedules to the Bill set out the original agreements and Acts which brought the Kalgoorlie and Boulder tramways into being. These agreements with the local authorities concerned contained provisions which were customary at the time, giving to them an option to purchase after the period of 21 years, and providing that in the event of such option not being exercised the promoter was bound to hand over the undertaking to the local authorities as a going concern at the end of 35 years. The period of 35 years expired a few years ago; but owing to the war and the fact that it was not desirable then to upset an arrangement that had continued for so many years, the local authorities and the Kalgoorlie Electric Tramways, Ltd., had an undertaking by correspondence on a legal basis under which they agreed to an extension of the period until the 31st December, 1946. That is the date of the expiration of the present contract and it is necessary for Parliament to sanction the taking over by the local authorities of the tramways undertaking.

The main difficulty that confronts the local authorities concerned and which makes this Bill necessary is that although the company is bound to hand over its undertaking on the 31st December next, the local authorities are prohibited by Section 16 of the Tramways Act, 1885, from running tramways unless a Bill of this sort is approved by Parliament. They, therefore, require legislative authority to run tramways but, the matter having been considered by the three authorities concerned, they have decided it would be far better if the undertaking were handed over to and run by an independent board. It would be obviously undesirable for a tramway system which traverses territory of three different local authorities to be taken over piecemeal and run by the authorities themselves; so it has been thought better in order to safeguard the interests of all, that rather than have three such parties with a

separate interest and a separate jurisdiction within their districts a board should control the undertaking.

The Bill also authorises the carrying of passengers and goods in any road district adjoining Kalgoorlie and Boulder. A series of conferences took place last year and during this year between the local authorities concerned, and the Bill represents their complete unanimity in a desire to have a board established. That board will have a separate legal entity and the three authorities as such will have no responsibility in the running of the tramway system. The Bill provides that the board shall consist of six members and an independent chairman. Two members are to be elected by each local authority and the independent chairman is to be appointed by the Governor. Of the two members provided by a local authority, one is to be chosen by it and the other by its ratepayers. There are certain powers which are subject to the control of the Governor in Council. The power to borrow money in excess of £20,000 is subject to the approval of the Governor in Council and is possible only after the consent of the Governor is obtained. Any profits earned by the board after due provision has been made for reserves are to be equally divisible between the local authorities concerned, and this accords with the provision for the distribution of such moneys contained in the Fremantle Tramways Act, 1903.

In the drafting of the Bill the provisions of the Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act and the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Act have been substantially followed. There is one difference in this measure as compared with the Fremantle Tramways Act and that relates to the striking of a special rate. In the Fremantle district, the local authorities were responsible for the initial construction; and in order to raise the necessary moneys for the taking over of the undertaking, provision was made in the Act for striking a special rate if required. In the present instance, the board is acquiring a going concern and I understand that the amount represented in the transfer is purely a nominal sum and that it will not be necessary to raise any large amounts of money to enable the undertaking to be handed over.

The clauses of the Bill dealing with the constitution of the board, the election qualifications and the remuneration of members

are related to the Municipal Corporations Act and the Road Districts Act. The election of members by the ratepayers is to be taken at the time of the municipal or road district elections. So the election of such members is substantially the same as in the case of the election of councillors or road board members. The local authorities desire to anticipate the possibility of the proposed board being the authority to generate electricity; and provision for that is included in the Bill. I have mentioned that the borrowing powers of the board are limited to £20,000 and no loans in excess of that sum will be permitted without the consent of the Governor. The provisions relating to finance are modelled on those existing in the Fremantle Tramways Act.

In connection with this Bill being introduced as a public Bill, at the request of the members representing the four adjoining districts affected by the undertaking, I consulted with them in the presence of the Solicitor General and also with the Clerk of the Assembly as to the reasons why this should be a public Bill. It is clear that the initiation of the measure as a public Bill is pursuant to our Standing Order 262. The Bill provides for the improvement of three districts by the construction and running of tramways, and is promoted by two municipalities and one road board. Therefore, in the words of Standing Order 262, the Bill should "be deemed and taken to be a public Bill." I am advised by our Crown Law Department that the English practice in regard to such Bills is not so clear. Under the English Standing Orders a Bill relating to the "paving, lighting, watching, cleansing or improving" of any city or town is normally initiated as a private Bill. At page 673 of "May's Parliamentary Practice" it is stated—

A Bill relating to a city is usually held to be a private Bill. But owing to the large area, the number of parishes, the vast population, and the variety of interests concerned, Bills which affect the entire metropolis have, as a rule, been regarded as measures of public policy rather than of local interest; and although a Bill affecting the metropolis generally is not necessarily introduced as a public Bill, such Bills have usually been so introduced, and have either proceeded throughout as public Bills or have been dealt with as hybrid Bills.

In this State we have no provision for any hybrid sort of measure which could be introduced as a public Bill and later undertaken as a private Bill. The scrutiny that was given to the matter by our local people and the Clerk of the Assembly shows that the English law differs from ours to a minor extent on this point. But we have a definite requirement in our own Standing Order and Parliamentary practice that every Bill designed for improving any district and promoted by any local authority shall "be deemed and taken as a public Bill."

I thought it necessary to make that explanation as to why this Bill is being introduced by the Government. It is brought down for those local authorities at their request and at the request of members representing all of the districts concerned; and it is introduced as a public Bill because of the requirements of Parliament. As to its merits, it is really a matter between the existing company and the local authorities concerned, who have decided unanimously that they want a board constituted and that they themselves should have no direct authority and power in regard to the management and running of the undertaking. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. N. Keenan, debate adjourned.

BILL—CHARITABLE COLLECTIONS.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [8.57] in moving the second reading said: This Bill came from the Legislative Council. Under it, authority is sought to regulate the collection of money or goods for charitable purposes, and to repeal the War Funds Regulation Act, 1939, under which provision is made for the control of the activities of patriotic organisations arising out of the recent war. Members will recall that in 1939 the Government took immediate steps to introduce legislation for the purpose of controlling and supervising the raising and collection of money for patriotic purposes during the war. The legislative authority given, however, related to activities in connection with the recent war only. Appeals for purposes

not related to the war or for charitable or social welfare purposes are not covered by that Act. Thus we find ourselves in the anomalous position of having an Act to cover some collections but not covering other appeals, which are consequently under no supervision whatever. Since the end of the war, this anomaly has become more pronounced because of the fact that many of the funds have been cancelled.

I think the Bill may be described as amending legislation extending the control of war fund appeals to all public appeals whether for patriotic, charitable or social welfare purposes, a procedure which is considered necessary in the public interest. The control and supervision of patriotic activities have been very effective and I think that the legislation introduced during the war was essential and also very effective, particularly when it is appreciated that no less than £2,500,000 was collected for comforts and benefits for members of the Services during that period. That aspect of this State's war effort was covered by reports that have been tabled in Parliament from time to time. The people of this State have every reason to be proud of the work done.

Before dealing with the provisions of the Bill, I propose to give a brief resume of war fund activity and of the supervision exercised thereover under existing legislation. I have already stated that over £2,500,000 has been raised by the various war funds. In addition to these figures, as at the 30th June, 1946, £454,000 remains unexpended, as well as goods and materials valued at £76,000 which were then held by the various organisations. The Red Cross Society held the greater proportion of this, the figures being £280,000 cash balance and £64,000 goods and materials. The Red Cross will need all of this to carry on its activities on behalf of Service personnel, and ex-Service personnel at the various hospitals, and to assist in the many activities which its objectives cover. That society comprises one of the major war funds, of which there are 11 in this State. The others comprise—

Australian Comforts Fund.
 Salvation Army Wartime Fund.
 R.A.A.F. Comforts Fund.
 Y.M.C.A. War Service Appeal.
 Naval Welfare and Comforts Fund.
 Citizens' Reception Council.
 Merchant Seamen's Comforts Fund.

British Sailors' Society Welfare Fund.

W.A. Patriotic Fund for Soldiers' Dependents.

W.A. Sportsmen's Organising Council for Patriotic Funds.

Members will recall that a few sittings ago I introduced legislation for the purpose of dealing with the remaining assets of three of these organisations. Where necessary, similar procedure will be followed in respect of those I have just mentioned. Responsibility for the supervision of war fund activities is vested by the Act in the War Funds Council, which comprises Mr. J. Totterdell, the Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor of Perth, who became a member this year on the retirement through ill-health, of Dr. Meagher, the Hon. F. E. Gibson, M.L.C., Mr. A. Clydesdale and Mr. J. W. Vivian, and the Chief Secretary, as the chairman.

Up to date, 380 funds have been registered by the War Funds Council. The certificates of about 70 per cent. of those funds have been cancelled, and many others have wound up, or are winding up their affairs, and will submit final accounts before cancellation is effected, a procedure which must be followed in all cases. Members will no doubt be aware that the accounts of every registered war fund are the subject of quarterly audit for submission to the War Funds Council. Statements are closely checked and supervision is reasonably strict. Turning now to the Bill, I would like to say at the outset that its principles are identical with those in the War Funds Regulation Act, which is the one that is going out and being replaced by this. The proposal is to repeal that Act, and, in so doing, to put in its place a measure incorporating minor amendments which experience and circumstances have shown to be necessary, and to add provisions which extend statutory control of patriotic appeals to all charitable appeals.

No doubt it will be asked why there should be a continuance of charitable appeals. I do not wish to enter into any discussion on that question on this Bill, but the fact remains that there are charitable appeals, and every Friday we are still asked to contribute to some cause, and most people go around with a badge of some sort or another in their coats. If those appeals are to continue, as seems likely, we consider it right that there should be proper supervision

over them. It is proposed to call the Act the Charitable Collections Act, and it is suggested that it shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by proclamation. The Bill does not interfere in any way with the provisions of the Street Collections Regulation Act, a clause being inserted to that effect. In the Bill there is an interpretation clause, the main definition being "charitable purpose." This definition is similar to the one appearing in the War Funds Regulation Act, and other Acts of the same type, in the various States of the Commonwealth. It is not restricted to appeals for patriotic or war purposes, but is sufficiently wide to cover all appeals of a public character.

There is a clause in the Bill to prohibit the collection of money or goods, or the obtaining of money by the sale of discs, badges, etc., or the conducting of any entertainments for which an admission charge is made, if the moneys so collected or derived are applied to a charitable purpose, unless a license is obtained. Under the Bill—and this is a rather important point—the existing war funds are to be transferred from the War Funds Regulation Act to the Charitable Collections Act, thereby making the issue of a license to these war funds an automatic procedure. Although the War Funds Act will go out on the proclamation of the legislation, which I am now introducing, the funds in the hands of the Y.M.C.A., and the other organisations, not yet transferred by legislation or by resolution, will be automatically transferred under this Act.

The Bill provides for the setting up of an advisory committee which is to consist of five members appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the Minister. In this connection, it is pointed out that the present members of the War Funds Council, which is not an advisory committee, are quite willing, if the Government desires them to do so, to act in this capacity. They prefer not to continue as they have been functioning, but to act in an advisory manner. We can appreciate the reason for that. These gentlemen have done a particularly long and continuous job and, in many cases, an onerous one, and they probably feel they would be freer if appointed in an advisory capacity. The Bill sets out the procedure which must be followed in regard to appli-

cations for licenses. These are to be referred to the advisory committee for consideration, and report to the Minister. There is also a provision in the Bill giving power to the Governor to order the transfer of moneys, goods and securities held by any particular organisation to other destinations. A similar provision exists in the War Funds Regulation Act. The slight difference is that under that Act assets can be applied only to purposes connected with the recent war. Under the new Bill, assets may be applied to any charitable purpose. A proclamation by the Governor authorising the transfer of any asset cannot be issued unless it is supported by a resolution passed by both Houses of Parliament.

There are other provisions in the Bill, mainly dealing with the accounts of charitable organisations and providing the necessary authority for the Auditor General to investigate where necessary. That explains the principal proposals, the provision of which will not in any way prejudice the authority already enjoyed by existing well known war fund organisations, such as the Red Cross Society, the Salvation Army, the Y.M.C.A. and others, which will carry on the work they have always done except that they will be automatically transferred under this Bill and a license will be granted to them, just as during the war years. All the Bill seeks to do is to rectify the anomaly that I have explained by ensuring control of all the collections for charitable purposes and not, as at present, having control of some and not of others. Members will agree, after our experience during the war, that some supervision of these collections is necessary; and £2,500,000 is a lot of money. Some of us who had experience of the 1914-18 war appreciate the difference in the distribution of the collections at that time and the distribution of those of the recent war. To a large extent the people who are now carrying on are those who did the work during the war period, and they are used to this kind of supervision. I do not think any difficulty will be caused, and the public will be safeguarded. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1946-47.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 22nd November. Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

Vote—Departmental, £200,000 (partly considered):

MR. HILL (Albany) [9.11]: I listened with great interest the other evening to the member for Pingelly, when he referred to the enormous amount of loan money that had been spent by this State. Members who study the figures annually placed before Parliament, in the Estimates, must be appalled at the drift in the State's finances. It is not my intention to deal with all Government activities, as that would take too long. It will suffice if I deal with those Government activities in which I am particularly interested. Within the last few weeks the importance of our transport system has been brought home to us, and we have been shown how one small section of the community can more or less paralyse the whole transport system of the State. I propose now to quote figures to illustrate the financial retrogression of our transport activities. In 1924 the population of Western Australia was 360,000 and in 1946 it is 494,000. In 1924 the debt per head was £148 7s. 6d., and in 1946, £195 0s. 7d. In 1924 our railways had a loan liability of £19,638,000. The deficiency was £30,707. In 1946 the railways loan liability is £26,830,000 and the deficiency is £999,905.

In 1924 the tramways had a loan liability of £912,000 and a surplus of £4,689. This year the loan liability is £1,357,598 and the surplus £28,926. The figure for Harbours and Rivers in 1924 is not available but for 1946 it is £6,510,901. The deficiency is £60,614. For 1924 the Fremantle Harbour Trust loan liability was £2,156,399, and the surplus £117,797. This year it has grown to £3,482,000, with a surplus of £128,326. For 1924 the Bunbury Harbour Board loan liability was £453,457, and the surplus £796. This year the loan liability is £679,100, and the deficit £34,345. For roads and bridges the 1924 figures are not available, but for 1946 the loan liability is £3,443,985 and the deficiency £124,287. For the Ferries the 1924 figures are not available, but this year's figures are loan liability £10,725, and deficiency £8,624. The 1924 figures are not available for the State Shipping Service but

for this year the loan liability is £346,396 and the deficiency £16,630.

The net deficiency on our transport facilities was £1,262,934, and to that we must add the depreciation on our railways, rolling-stock, plant and buildings. In addition to the financial and material deterioration of our transport activities we must face the fact that our railways find great difficulty in hauling wheat, super, and other commodities, and there is grave dissatisfaction among the personnel engaged in our railways, ports and so on. I make no apology for again pointing out that if we are to improve our transport activities we must have sound administration, and a sound port policy. Nineteen years ago Sir George Buchanan referred to the need for co-ordinating our transport activities. Seventeen years ago a Federal committee did the same, and since I have been a member of this House I have been consistent in my attitude. When the present Premier took office he announced that we were to have a ministry of transport, and on the Address-in-reply this year we were informed that the necessary legislation would be introduced during this session. Yet so far nothing has been done.

Two years ago this House unanimously agreed to my motion asking for a State Harbours Board. The outports honorary Royal Commission made a similar recommendation. The Minister for the North-West, in his reply to my remarks a few nights ago, said he would reply to me next year, and so the Government continues to bungle on, ignoring the recommendations of experts, of Royal Commissions, and of Parliament. A sound and efficient administration would see to it that borrowed money was wisely spent, and that proper provision was made for amortisation. The bulk of the deficiency on our State transport activities today is due to neglect of such provision. Each year our State Government has to put a case to the Commonwealth Grants Commission for financial assistance, and if we are to expect sympathetic consideration from that body we must be guided by and take notice of its reports. I will once again call the attention of the House to paragraph 178 of the Eighth Report of the Grants Commission, which reads as follows:—

The expenditure out of loan funds on outer harbours in Western Australia is large and it does not appear to us that sufficient attempt is made to get an adequate return from the

users in the districts served. If the traffic will not stand the cost there is no reason for expenditure on harbours unless it is essential for the industry of the district, in which case the industry should be charged through a special rate. This policy has been tried in other parts of Australia, and insistence upon it has on occasions led the people of a district to decide that the expenditure on a harbour was not really necessary for their interests. A multiplication of harbours is uneconomic. It is true that in Western Australia the port of Fremantle returns a large profit, but this does not make up for the losses on the other ports. In any case the profit of Fremantle is no excuse for an unscientific and uncoordinated policy of harbour development. A large expenditure has been made on Bunbury harbour, which is only about 100 miles from Perth, and it is doubtful whether it has succeeded in overcoming the disadvantages of the port.

Up to date we have spent £7,500,000 on the ports of this State, and nearly one-half of that has been spent since the Collier Government took office in 1924. Though £3,500,000 has been spent on the ports of this State in that time the amount spent on the port of Albany was only £175. There are to be general elections in a few weeks' time, and the Government has already started its propaganda. The Minister for Works has been to Albany, where he endeavoured to dazzle the people by inferring that £2,500,000 was to be spent on that port. He then went to Bunbury and told the people that £840,000 would be expended on the harbour there. While I am pleased that the Government at last realises that something should be done at Albany, I am not one bit dazzled by that £2,500,000. As a matter of fact I feel as a starving man would feel who had asked for a loaf of bread and had had that moderate request refused, but had been promised instead an elaborate banquet in a couple of years' time. The brilliance of that £2,500,000 is completely dimmed by the fact that although there is £134,000 on this year's Estimates for harbours and £53,000 for bulk-handling terminals, Albany's share is nil. The very moderate request made by me and by my colleagues and the people we represent, as well as the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Outports, have been ignored by the Minister.

The preparation of a long-range and comprehensive scheme for the development of Albany and other ports is essential. The actual expenditure necessary at Albany today and recommended by the Royal Commission is rather small, but it is essential

that that expenditure be considered as part of a long-range proposal. Something like 25 different harbour schemes have been proposed for Albany and, for the sake of brevity, I shall refer to the latest as the Hawke scheme. If that is the best scheme our technical officers can produce, all I can say is I can quite understand why the Government imported Mr. Tydeman to report on Fremantle harbour.

The Minister for Lands: You are not a bit funny though you might think you are.

Mr. HILL: I am dealing with facts. The first and second sections of the Hawke scheme provide for 22 acres of reclamation and 1,600 feet of wharf at a cost of £750,000. When the Director of Works was giving evidence before the Royal Commission on Outports, I refused to accept those figures. I considered them absurd. I pointed out that £800,000 was the cost of building a harbour, wharves, etc., at Geraldton and that at Albany, where there is already a harbour, the Director of Works estimated the cost at £750,000. The proposed wharf would provide about two berths and it pans out at about £500 per foot, although nature has provided the harbour. The total expenditure on the port of Fremantle up to date, which included £1,500,000 on the harbour, is only £340 per foot. The difference was so great that the members of the Royal Commission placed very little reliance on the evidence of the Director of Works. Mr. Dumas said he would supply figures showing how the estimate had been arrived at. Here are the figures—

Plant, estimated cost	..	£40,000
Dredging and reclamation, 22 acres	£179,000

That would pan out at about 5s. per yard for dredging. The cost of dredging at Albany in 1908 was 3½d. per yard. The reclamation at Capetown, which is similar to the work that would be done at Albany, was 11d. per yard, at Melbourne 1s. 6d. per yard, and the Swan River 9d. per yard.

The Minister for Lands: Was the work at Capetown done by negroes or prisoners?

Mr. HILL: By proper plant under a contract. I have full particulars if the Minister would like them. I have also photographs and plans of the work. I suggest that the Minister, instead of interjecting, should study those plans and compare them with the proposed scheme for Albany.

The Minister for Lands: The two works are not at all comparable.

Mr. HILL: The wharf of 1,600 feet is to cost £380,000, which is equal to £237 per foot. In Adelaide—these are pre-war figures—a very fine wharf cost £68 per foot and in Melbourne, £60. The timber wharves in Sydney cost £30 and the wharf at Fremantle £100 per foot. Yet at Albany the estimated cost is £237. The shed at Albany is estimated to cost £90,000. The total book value of all the sheds and buildings of the Fremantle Harbour Trust is only £199,000. For Albany roads are estimated to cost £14,000, railways £13,000, equipment, electricity and water supply £25,000.

The wharves proposed in the Hawke scheme will be in the wrong place both for economical construction and economical working. The idea is to have one wharf 850 feet long and another 750 feet long. That is a silly length to adopt. Yesterday we had the captain and officers of a ship here to lunch. The length of their ship was 495 feet. A modern ship would be about 530 feet long. If the proposed wharf at Albany were built in one length of 1,600 feet, three modern ships could be berthed there, whereas under the Hawke scheme only two could be berthed.

Our greatest need at Albany today is more land, which could be cheaply provided by reclamation. The total Hawke scheme, however, provides for only 69 acres. I favour the scheme suggested by Sir George Buchanan, a rough drawing of which I have before me. It may interest the Minister to know that the leading engineers in this State have seen and endorsed that proposal, which provides for something like 400 acres of reclamation. We need 100 acres of reclamation at Albany for railway purposes alone. It might also interest the Government to know that Sir George Buchanan's scheme for Albany was endorsed by Mr. Stileman and the late Mr. McCallum. The lay-out of the wharf suggested by Sir George Buchanan is identical with that suggested by Mr. Stileman for the outer harbour at Fremantle, and the late Mr. McCallum truly stated in this Chamber that that was the type of wharf preferred in the main ports of the world.

The Minister for Works professes to be anxious to establish secondary industries throughout the State. There is only one

port in Western Australia where sites can be provided for industries on the waterfront and throughout the world there is a big demand for such sites. West of the town jetty, 250 acres of land could be easily reclaimed and the cost should be no more than the cost of reclamation on the Swan River. About 3¼ million yards would be required for the reclamation and the cost would be about £140,000. Can the Premier or any other Minister tell me where else it would be possible to provide 250 acres of land with a mile of deep water frontage in a perfectly sheltered harbour for £140,000?

I am not the originator of the proposal to develop the western end of Princess Royal Harbour for industrial purposes. Before the paper mills were established in Tasmania, Albany was considered, and the western end of Princess Royal Harbour was the site favoured. If the Minister so desires, I can take him down St. George's terrace and introduce him to the heads of two firms that would take over portion of the reclaimed land—25 acres—at a substantial rent. The Director of Works said in his evidence that the proposal to utilise the Princess Royal Harbour was impracticable because of the colossal amount of dredging that would be required. To reclaim about 400 acres would involve about 6,000,000 yards of reclamation. In 1908, 3,500,000 yards was dredged in Albany at a cost of £55,000. Unfortunately, the material, instead of being pumped ashore, was dumped off at Middleton Beach. Prior to 1939, 100,000,000 yards had been dredged at Melbourne, including 20,000,000 yards for reclamation purposes.

The new harbour at Cape Town included 15,000,000 yards of reclamation. The Melbourne Harbour Trust has a dredge—the "G.F.H."—which has a 42 inch suction pipe and can pump material for half a mile. Its capacity is 2,000 yards per hour. The South African Harbours Administration has a similar dredge, the "Blesbloc." The dredge "Governor Stirling" on the Swan River is capable of reclaiming 1,000 yards per day. The old dredge "Governor," which dredged at Albany and other ports of Western Australia, filled her hoppers of 750 yards capacity in 25 minutes. I am not suggesting that all of this work which I propose should be done at once. It should be done pro-

gressively and as required. The finest docks in the world would be more or less useless without a large area of level land alongside for railway marshalling yards and other purposes. Fremantle today suffers from that disability. One can go to a railway station today and see notices posted up, "Get your super orders in early."

The difficulties which our railways have to meet in connection with superphosphate are due to two facts: First, there are too many works in the metropolitan area and, secondly, the Picton works are in the wrong place for backloading. This year my superphosphate came from Bassendean. It cost 9s. per ton to transport the rock from Fremantle to Bassendean, and it cost me 7s. 8d. per ton railage. The super companies paid another 1s. 4d. per ton, being the difference in cost of haulage between Bassendean to Albany and Picton. I guarantee the railways lost close on £2 a ton on the haulage of that superphosphate. The loss to the railways on the haulage of super to the Albany zone is at least 25s. per ton; and this year that zone will use 28,000 tons. That means a loss of £25,000. The railway to Wagin will take another 14,000 tons, which will come from Bassendean. If that superphosphate came from Albany, there would be a saving of about 7s. 6d. per ton. That represents another loss of £5,250. The Narrogin railway will also get its supplies from Bassendean; it would probably be more economical to draw these supplies from Albany. The grades from Geraldton inland are one in 50; at Fremantle, one in 45; Bunbury inland, one in 40; and Albany, one in 50.

I remember a railway man coming in to vote at the election of 1939. He said to me, "You are getting my vote. I have read your article and you are absolutely correct in what you say. You should go to Wagin today. At the station there is absolute congestion. The wheat comes in and has to go to Bunbury. The super from the Albany zone has to come from Bunbury through Wagin, and the super from the Wagin eastward railway all comes from Perth. The station master, in order to relieve the congestion, has to put his railway trucks outside on the main line." I have been battling for this for quite a long while and I think I have said enough when I say that it is the Government of the State which

has most to gain from the erection of super works at Albany. The super companies do not want to erect another works, as those in the metropolitan area, in addition to the works at Geraldton and Picton, are sufficient for the whole of the State. The companies are losing heavily because the State is, as it were, overstocked with super works.

Before I entered Parliament, and since, we have been battling to have a site reclaimed on the waterfront at Albany for super works, as it would mean a saving of at least 3s. 6d. per ton of super produced. Requests made by the Albany Zone Council were turned down by the Minister for Works, and the council therefore asked me to write to him with a view to obtaining a more favourable reply. I shall read the correspondence that took place; I am sorry the Minister for Works is not present. I received the following letter from him—

In your letter to me of December 17th last in this matter you said the Secretary of the Albany Zone Conference had asked you to endeavour to obtain a more satisfactory reply than the one set out in my letter to the secretary of November 6th last.

My November 6th letter set out the main requirements for a superphosphate works, indicated it was thought no such works could be established on the waterfront, and offered the assistance of departmental officers to locate a suitable site in the district when one or other of the superphosphate companies indicates its intention to establish such works at Albany.

It is probable some confusion has arisen regarding the use in my letter of the words: "It is thought that no such works as those proposed could be established on the waterfront." Speaking in the purely physical sense, of course, it would be possible to establish the suggested works, or any works, no matter how undesirable or obnoxious their presence on the waterfront might be. To so establish them at Albany would, in my view, amount almost to an act of desecration, and I am very disappointed as well as surprised to find leaders of local thought advocating such action, more especially as there are suitable sites available away from the waterfront.

I would advise you again, as I have done on many occasions in the past, to concentrate upon persuading one of the superphosphate companies in this State to agree to establish a superphosphate works at Albany. That is the first and main essential, and concentration on other phases borders almost on a beating of the air and will certainly not bring any good results.

The State Government has from time to time advocated to the superphosphate com-

panies the advisability of establishing works at Albany as soon as conditions permit. If you and the other local people concerned feel your views in this matter are the right ones, you will of course be in duty bound to pursue them.

I wrote this in reply—

I beg to acknowledge your letter of January 18th.

I have carefully considered your remarks, and have not hurried my reply. I wish to stress this fact—that we must plan our port today, not for 10 or 20 years but for all time.

I am very disappointed at your attitude, as I thought that a proposal that would mean a reduction of 3s. 6d. per ton in the cost of the manufacture of superphosphate and that would give practical proof of the fact that this State has a port where industries could be established with their own deep-water wharf, would have your support.

The leaders of local thought who are advocating such action have been working for about 20 years, and have full local knowledge. I am very surprised at your raising the bogey that the works are obnoxious. A port is always, more or less, obnoxious. We have already a far more obnoxious establishment with the freezing works which are substantially closer to the town than the suggested sites for super works. The Rocky Bay works are not detrimental to the Swan River or Cottesloe, and the Bassendean works are not obnoxious to the town there.

I think that I would be correct in saying that if super works were established, as we suggest, at Albany, they will be more remote than any other works in the State.

The effluent from the Freezing Works, Butter Factory and Woollen Mills all goes into Princess Royal Harbour, and is converting the shallow foreshore into a very obnoxious place. About four years ago when I discussed the obnoxious growth of weed, or alga, with the Government Botanist, he stated that the only remedy was reclamation, as on the Swan. Such work would provide at Albany very valuable and urgently-required land.

Your advice that I should concentrate upon persuading one of the super companies in this State to establish works at Albany is eighteen years behind the times. Early in 1928, I had Messrs. C. W. Harper and John Thompson in my home when we discussed the need for works at Albany to provide back-loading. I told those gentlemen that if works were established at Bunbury in preference to Albany they would regret it. I offered to assist them, if necessary, to negotiate with the late Hon. S. J. Haynes—a very old friend of my family—for the purchase of Plantagenet Location 2, and when I pointed out a site could be reclaimed on the waterfront, Mr. Harper said, "Provide that site and we will provide the works." Fifteen months later, the Government made the colossal blunder of asking the companies to put works at Bunbury.

Eight years later, when I was first elected, the directors of Cuming Smith invited me to meet them in Perth. They advised me that the consumption of Albany zone did not warrant works. I replied that the port zone policy was one fit for the lunatic asylum; that the area which could most economically draw its supplies from Albany was consuming about 60,000 tons; that Albany was the only port where works could be established with their own wharf; and if they were not interested I would approach another company. They promised that they would inspect Albany. This they did. They saw that a site on the waterfront could be provided and upon their return to Melbourne a full directors' meeting decided that if the Government would provide such a site they would establish works there (provided that there was not another depression). This decision was made available to me confidentially, as the companies were badly hit with their action at Bunbury. Mr. Cuming interviewed your predecessor (Mr. Millington) but—so I have been informed—received no encouragement.

Mr. Watts and I introduced a very representative deputation from the Great Southern to Messrs. Troy and Millington, with the request that reclamation be carried out to provide sites for bulk-handling and super works. These Ministers were very unfavourable, and the deputation developed into an argument on statements and counter-statements, and the deputation left without achieving results. The State has since paid a big price for this. About 1938 things began to slump, and of course the war made the proposal impossible for the duration.

Your offer for departmental officers to assist to locate a suitable site is also many years behind. On 18th March, 1939, Cuming Smith purchased Plantagenet Location 2 from the Haynes estate. The local manager, Mr. V. B. Mureel, invited me to his office, told me of the purchase and said, "We still want the water-side site if possible, but we were not going to miss the opportunity to buy this land. If a site is provided on the waterfront, we will use this land for experimental purposes."

Four years ago 15 acres of this location was resumed by the Government for the petrol tanks, leaving 412 acres 2 roods 8 perches in the possession of the company. I am surprised that your departmental officers did not recommend the purchase of this location by the Government in 1939. When the natural advantages of Albany are used for the benefit of the State, this location, with its long frontage to the main railway line, will become very valuable.

I want members particularly to notice this concluding paragraph—

Permit me to point out that because the Governments have persistently refused over the last 35 years to reclaim our foreshore, Albany has lost super works, bulk-handling terminal; has only a limited wool appraisement; lost the dehydrator during the war and before the war

at least one firm was unable to start here because they could not find a suitable site for their warehouse, to say nothing of the Woollen Mills being in the wrong place. Port facilities must be provided to be ready for production. Albany's absence of facilities is 40 years behind production. Your colleague, Mr. Tonkin, has passed my letters on to the committee which you have appointed to deal with Albany. May I suggest that you do the same, and arrange for those gentlemen to visit Albany as soon as possible?

Mr. Triat: Very short and snappy!

Mr. HILL: This is the reply I received from the Minister—

In connection with your letter of 19th March last in this matter, I now desire to reply as under:—

1. The third paragraph of your letter misrepresents my attitude regarding the establishment of a superphosphate works at Albany. You will know whether the misrepresentation is deliberate or otherwise.

I did not misrepresent anything, but stated facts. The letter continues—

2. To claim that superphosphate works are obnoxious to anyone living in close proximity to them is not raising a bogey, as claimed by you, but is stating the plain truth.

I never said it did. The letter continues—

I am surprised that you are not aware of this fact. If you are still in any doubt about the matter, I suggest you have conversations with those people who live near the superphosphate works at, say, Pieton Junction or Bassendean.

As a matter of fact, one of the reasons I want them on the waterfront is so that they will be right away from everybody else. The letter proceeds—

3. I was very interested to learn from your letter that you had been trying for 18 years to persuade the superphosphate companies in this State to establish branch enterprises at Albany. Your persuasive efforts appear to be extremely slow in producing the desired results.

What a dignified remark to come from the Deputy Premier of the State!

The Minister for Lands: Snappy, was it not?

Mr. HILL: I have gained a great deal more than the Minister. The superphosphate company bought 400 acres of land and I gained its confidence—something which the Minister for Works apparently has not achieved. His letter continues—

4. I was surprised to learn from your letter that my offer of the services of departmental officers to assist any superphosphate company to locate a suitable site at Albany is many

years behind the times. My surprise is made all the greater because, on 16th November, 1945, I had a discussion at this office with Messrs. Harper and Cuming, of Cuming Smith-Mt. Lyell Ltd. regarding the possibility of that company establishing a branch industry at Albany. On that occasion, I assured Messrs. Harper and Cuming of my willingness to make the services of suitable officers available, and they expressed their thanks for the offer and said they would take full advantage of it at a later date when the company had made a decision to establish an enterprise at Albany. Those gentlemen must have smiled up their sleeves, because they knew they had a clear title to 400 acres of the best site available. The letter continues—

I think the last paragraph of your letter is a classic example of exaggeration.

And here is the champion part of the Minister's reply—

I find some difficulty in trying to decide whether you, as member for Albany, have, through your letter, indicated to me that the assistance of the Department of Industrial Development and Public Works is no longer required regarding the establishment of superphosphate works at Albany.

After my asking him to pass my letter on to the officer he appointed, he says he does not understand whether I want the assistance of his departments, or not! His letter concludes—

As the Albany Zone Conference is deeply interested in this question, and as you wrote your second last letter to me in this matter of their request, I attach a copy of this letter which I desire you to pass on to the secretary of that conference.

I passed that letter on, and their opinion agreed with my own.

Mr. J. Hegney: The establishment of superphosphate works at Bassendean kept that district back.

Mr. HILL: Such works need to be kept well away from residential sites. I suggested one site that is farther away from Albany than the freezing works, which are definitely obnoxious. The other site suggested is at the western end of the harbour. I would like members to go with me to Albany at low tide, and if they judged the place from the northern foreshore, they would never get out of the train.

Mr. J. Hegney: The fumes would be carried all over Albany.

Mr. HILL: No. I have consulted leading men, and if the works were established where I suggest, they would be as far from

Albany as the present works at Rocky Bay are from Cottesloe. We have 2½ miles of water front at Albany.

Mr. J. Hegney: They are complaining about destruction of plant life at Bassendean.

Mr. HILL: Yes. That is one reason why I am not anxious to see them established inland. They have had trouble at Geraldton. When the fumes from superphosphates go into the air they are inclined to sink. On the waterfront the tendency would be for them to sink and become absorbed in the water.

I come now to the question of bulkhandling. The Premier will be interested in this because he made the statement that it would cost more to handle wheat in bulk at Albany than at any other port in the State. That remark is rather misleading. The fact is that the commission certainly reported that more would have to be charged at Albany than at the other ports because the rule at Albany is to make ends meet, whereas the other outports are heavily subsidised by the Government. I will give a few figures showing the Government's comparative treatment of Albany and Bunbury—

	Bunbury.	Albany.
	£	£
Amount voted by Parliament since 1924 for harbour	190,000	—
Bulk handling	68,000	—
Amount to be spent this year (port)	10,000	—
Bulk handling	1,000	—
Rent for land	—	55
Capital costs, bulk handling	5%	10%

The Government adopted the attitude, "We will not subsidise any loss at Albany." Up to date the loss on the Bunbury terminal is £13,580, and last year the loss was £3,523. Here is another matter that rubs it in. The estimated cost of putting in a terminal at Albany was £11,000. The Government could not provide that small amount, but a year or two later a boat slip was required at Geraldton and the Government said, "Here is £10,000. Get your slip." The estimated difference in the cost of handling wheat, by bulkhandling at Albany, compared with the other ports, was about 1s. 1¼d. per bushel. When wheat was railed from Geraldton to Fremantle the then Premier objected and said that it was carried at a loss by the rail-

ways and should, therefore, go to the nearest port. Wheat is charged at 1d. per ton per mile. The cost today is something like 2d. per ton per mile to the railways. So it meant that sooner than grant a subsidy to the extent of little over 1s., to the port charge at Albany, the Government subsidised the railways 5s. a ton to move the wheat to Bunbury.

Another matter is the congestion on the Collie-Bunbury line. There are two ways of relieving that congestion. One is to duplicate the line at heavy expense, and the other is to divert the traffic of the Great Southern to Albany. I come now to the suggestion to spend £800,000 on Bunbury. When the outports Royal Commission was considering the evidence, one of the members of the commission suggested that we should recommend, practically, the abandonment of Bunbury as a port. I pointed out that we could not do that as there was an export timber proposal for the next 30 years. Had it not been for the timber trade at Bunbury, we would have had no alternative, on the evidence, but to recommend the abandonment of the port. As it is, we have recommended, first, that Mr. Tydeman be consulted to see if some means can be provided to stop the silting there.

When collecting evidence we found that Mr. Stevenson Young had no plans to prevent the silting of Bunbury. Mr. Dumas, who is not a harbour engineer, said he had a plan which would cost £500,000. His proposal is to extend the breakwater and the groyne and to shift the mouth of the inlet. That is all very well and there is no doubt that it would stop the silting in the harbour, but I am afraid it would cause a bar to form at the entrance of the harbour. It is easy to say that we will make another outlet for the estuary, but we have found, with our estuaries, that when that is done we have continual trouble with them. My opinion of Mr. Dumas' proposal is something like what the member for Boulder said a few years ago, but before dealing with his remarks, I wish to go back to the 29th November, 1932, when the then Minister for Works, Mr. Lindsay, had this to say—

Realising the seriousness of the position at Bunbury, I have tabled the file and plans for the information of members. The trouble at Bunbury is becoming more serious. We have

been doing certain dredging in the channel only, but the whole harbour is gradually silting up. The engineer, Mr. Young, has put up a proposal to extend the breakwater in a northerly direction to stop the drift of sand that comes in at the entrance, and to build a groyne to stop the drift down the coast. The first cost is going to be £160,000 for the breakwater and groyne, and that does not provide for any further work. To provide a deep water berth of 30 feet will cost in all £255,000. It will be some years before that work can be completed.

The Minister for Lands: He was a pretty good engineer.

Mr. HILL: Yes. Would the Minister for Lands class the member for Boulder as a bit of a fool, or a sensible person?

The Minister for Lands: Not nearly as big a fool as the member for Albany.

Mr. HILL: In 1933, the member for Boulder, who was then Premier, had this to say—

There is always a Government scheme. It is like the expenditure of loan money in many other directions. Although it is not immediately reproductive, it will be reproductive at some time. In years gone by we have justified the expenditure of considerable sums of money on the ground that it will ultimately prove reproductive.

Mr. Doney: Do you mean that by the expenditure of the larger sum this year you are likely to overcome the silting difficulty?

The Premier: I am looking forward to further considerable expenditure next year. What I am concerned about is that, even when the job is supposed to be completed, we may not have overcome the silting difficulty.

Mr. Doney: That is the doubt that is troubling me.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It is a Kathleen Mavourneen expenditure.

Mr. Needham: What are you quoting from?

Mr. HILL: From "Hansard" of the 23rd November, 1933.

The Premier: Now you have awakened the member for Perth.

Mr. HILL: Can we afford to juggle with £500,000 on an experiment? Our recommendation was that Mr. Dumas should consult with Mr. Tydeman to see if some means could be found to prevent the silting at Bunbury. We must try to maintain that port, and, if we can do so, we should use it as much as possible. We did not recommend that deep water be provided at Bunbury because it will never be used as a port for the South-West. I have had 30 years' ex-

perience of shipping fruit, and if I were at Donnybrook, I would prefer to pay the extra 1½d. per case to get the benefit of the improved shipping service at Fremantle. We have to face facts. The Bunbury Harbour Board is £460,000 behind, and if the suggested amount of £800,000 is spent there we will have to increase the charges at Fremantle in order to collect another £40,000 to pay for the loan. We considered Geraldton to be a beautiful harbour with very fine wharves, but there was absolutely no equipment there, and no lighting, and it seemed to be another case of a very fine ship being spoiled for want of a pot of paint! It will be necessary to have uniform port charges throughout the State. The ports of Geraldton and Bunbury will never be paying concerns. Fremantle is the best revenue-producing port today. If Albany had a fair share of the State's trade it also would be a paying proposition, and so would Esperance. I must admit that I was a little disappointed at the country at the back of Esperance, although I confess I did not see much of it. We should encourage the use of Esperance as a port for the Goldfields.

The Minister for Justice: There is some very good country at the back of Esperance.

Mr. HILL: I hope there is. The trouble with Esperance is that there is no loading to the Port; Albany has the opposite problem. I would like to see a proposal put forward to develop the hinterland of Esperance. It was a tragedy that the Esperance railway was not put through 50 years ago. Had that been done the port and its hinterland would have developed, instead of being at a standstill today. Another proposal of the Government, on which a man was brought out to report, was the construction of a commercial dock at Fremantle. Such a dock in this State would be a losing proposition. It would only be successful at a terminal port, which Fremantle will never be. The first attempt to construct a dock at Fremantle was abandoned after the expenditure of £230,000. Sir Maurice Fitzmaurice condemned Fremantle and its vicinity as the site for a dock, as did Sir Leopold Savile.

The attempt to make a naval base at Fremantle instead of at Albany robbed the taxpayers of Australia of about £3,000,000 or £4,000,000, and the Empire of a first-class

naval base. Three times I have seen Albany on the verge of becoming a naval base, but on each occasion there has been a swing, and a Labour Government has come into power, and that is how the position stands today. There is in this State a man who in 1928 was going to supervise the erection of fortifications at Albany because the Imperial Defence Council wanted that site developed as a naval port. I have here a litho. showing where the guns were to be placed. There was to have been a battery of 9.2 guns at Stony Ridge and two batteries of 6 inch guns. Had they been installed Albany would have been a strongly fortified base.

There is a little expenditure for tourist purposes. The tourist trade should be developed. In my electorate and that of the member for Nelson there are the Nornalup and Frankland Rivers. A modest request for expenditure in those areas has been refused. The late director of the Tourist Bureau, Mr. Hayward, said the tourist trade was something we should sell and on which we should never lose. Western Australia has a great future in developing that trade. I believe in facing facts, either pleasant or unpleasant. We should utilise our assets as far as possible, whether they are at Wyndham or Albany. We must see that borrowed money is spent wisely and that interest and sinking fund are provided for so that the debt may be progressively reduced. Had that policy been adopted all along, Western Australia would have been in a much happier position today.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—*Railways and Tramways*, £1,117,000; *Electricity Supply*, £816,000; *Harbours and Rivers*, £131,000; *Water Supply and Sewerage*, £1,385,000; *Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources*, £282,951; *Development of Agriculture*, £100,500; *Roads and Bridges, Public Buildings, etc.*, £800,000; *Sundries*, £219,811—agreed to.

This concluded the Loan Estimates for the year.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 10.5 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 28th November, 1946.

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

QUESTION.

STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT.

As to Easing Restrictions.

Hon. G. B. WOOD asked the Chief Secretary:

1, Is the Government aware that a very large number of people in the country received, during the recent railway strike, better road transport facilities than those provided by the railways in normal times?

2, Is the Government aware that a large number of people are quite unwilling to be obliged to return to railway transport for certain commodities?

3, In view of the aforesaid facts and the inability of the railways adequately to handle livestock and certain merchandise, will the Government consider immediately the easing of certain restrictions imposed under the Transport Co-ordination Act?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, No—not so far as low freights traffic is concerned.

2, For certain commodities—yes.

3, The facts referred to in Questions 1 and 2 are not considered to be a justification for easing restrictions generally but the Transport Board will consider each application according to its merits and will authorise road transport in cases where railway services cannot cater for loading offering.