



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY 01ST MARCH 2017

RAIL SAFETY NATIONAL LAW (SOUTH AUSTRALIA) (MISCELLANEOUS NO 3) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 16 February 2017.)

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:46): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I acknowledge your tolerance. I want to speak to the Rail Safety National Law (South Australia) (Miscellaneous No 3) Amendment Bill 2017. I am quite happy to speak on this bill after that withering attack from the member for Napier.

In December 2009, the Council of Australian Governments implemented national rail safety reform, creating a single rail safety regulator, and developed the Rail Safety National Law. The Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator was established as a body corporate under the law and facilitates safe rail operation through accreditation of operators, industry guidance, education, training and other matters. The National Transport Commission identifies legislative amendments in cooperation with the regulator and participating jurisdictions.

Ministers of the Transport and Infrastructure Council approved this bill on 6 November 2015, and South Australia, being the host jurisdiction, is responsible for passage of amendment bills through the South Australian parliament, subsequently automatically adopted into legislation by other participating jurisdictions through an application act. This bill is the third amendment package brought to the South Australian parliament, similarly to additions to the national Rail Safety National Law (South Australia) Act 2012.

This amendment bill introduces powers for the regulator to charge additional fees for major rail projects, designed to ensure regulatory oversight of operations, so that they can be properly maintained as the number of rail projects increases. The bill also includes a review mechanism that will allow a rail transport operator to seek a review of the regulator's decision that a project is a major project.

The bill also specifies the Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board Limited as a prescribed authority for purposes of sharing information to achieve national law objectives and clarifies that a registered person may surrender a private siding from its registration without the need to surrender the entire registration or go through a variation process, as is currently the case. It also introduces a procedure for a rail transport operator to surrender an exemption granted by the regulator separate from the regulator's powers to suspend or cancel an exemption.

There will be some subordinate legislation that will specify the additional project component fee amounts and the criteria the regulator must consider when determining

whether a project component fee is payable. From what I understand, this bill has the support of ministers of transport, the infrastructure council and major stakeholders, such as the rail industry associations.

I want to talk about a few issues to do with rail in this state. I note that the member for Napier brought up the issue of Gawler electrification. Yes, it has been a long time coming. We have seen the poles put in and nothing else happen. We have seen the embarrassment of diesel engines having to take electric trains to be serviced because there are no electric facilities to do the job. I have a long family connection to the Gawler area, with both sets of grandparents having lived there and one of my grandfathers having been a porter on the railways back in the day when you had porters.

The Hon. S.C. Mullighan: You should run for Light.

Mr PEDERICK: I have plenty of contacts. There are plenty of Pedericks buried in that area, up at Gawler River on our country. Yes, I probably could have had a run up there, but I have never lived up there. My father lived in that area.

Certainly, there is the issue of when that electrification is going to happen, if it ever gets off the ground. I look at what has happened with the Seaford line, where we have seen major breakdowns with the loss of power, poor quality cabling in place, services having to stop for many hours and substitute buses so people can have public transport on the Seaford line.

Another rail issue I want to talk about is the demise of the Mallee lines, which I think is terrible. It is sad that there have not been enough dollars put into the Mallee lines to keep them up to speed. I know that when they were last operating a couple of years ago the trains had to go very slowly, and they were just grain trains heading out to Pinnaroo or out through Karoonda towards Loxton. You certainly have to have the trains running only at night and certainly on days like this, when the temperature would be in the high 30s during harvest, the trains run at 25 km/h, so, yes, they were inefficient. In the end, I believe that was used as part of the excuse to shut those lines down.

The offset of that effect is that it puts thousands of more tonnes on the road, and that was certainly exemplified in this most recent harvest, which was the biggest harvest in South Australia's history and when so many more tonnes of grain had to come up those Mallee roads. I have talked in this place before about getting some overtaking lanes out there. There have been various theories about how the Mallee highway, up through Lameroo and Pinnaroo, was built; some say someone followed a goat and one theory is that perhaps they were paid more to survey more corners into the road because it certainly looks like that.

As someone who travels along it many times a year and has travelled along it many times over my lifetime, it is a terrible road. In fact, plenty of people have put to me that, if the rail corridor is not going to be used, it would have a much straighter road, but that would be a huge project. I think you would be far better off bringing the rail back to speed instead of going down that path, but it is certainly something that has been discussed in Mallee circles.

With the loss of those lines, we do lose a whole range of opportunities. I fear that we will have issues where Victoria will gazump us in getting rail freight around to the north. Victoria is looking at putting in rail through Mildura and further north in Victoria, whereas our rail lines out to the Mallee are closed down. This is a real pity for road users because those roads are getting pounded now by that extra tonnage.

During harvest, Viterra did get there in the end, but they were a little bit slow in building bunkers at Tailem Bend. I was talking to them during harvest. I suggested to them before harvest that they would need to build some bunkers in that area and they thought they would hold off. Just before Christmas I was told, 'They might build four or six bunkers.' In the end, they built 12 scratch bunkers, and they had the capacity of 220,000 tonnes. Tailem Bend is that inland strategic site or that inland grain port.

I should never get a text message from Viterra saying they are full of a variety, and I did say that to them at times. They want grain to go to Tailem Bend, but they are bypassing sites such as Peake and Geranium, and the Coonalpyn bunkers were not open and I am told will never open again. Coonalpyn is obviously in the South-East, not on the Mallee line, but in the direct line to Tailem Bend. We need to have grain in there and certainly there was a need for Lameroo's bunkers to be opened because of a whole host of tonnage of barley coming over from Victoria on our roads again.

I think we have missed a real opportunity with the rail where we could have had some opportunities for two-way freight in Victoria. I can understand why Viterra would not want to do it. Why would they want to put grain into Victoria when their ports are in our state? I get that, but there is also a lot of grain that goes that way, especially in a big grain year like this. Whatever happens, there is opportunity for grain to go over there for piggeries, feed lots and other uses, which could have been carted more suitably on rail.

Sadly, we are where we are and I am just glad that the Adelaide-Melbourne line is in good nick, and that is certainly utilised to a large extent by Viterra and others. They can load some pretty big trains—3,000 or 3,500-tonne trains—and they can do a couple of them a day. They can get grain going to port relatively quickly, so we want to see that continue. I noticed the member for Napier, as the other side do because they did not think about it, had a crack at our Globe Link policy.

Mr Bell: Good policy.

Mr PEDERICK: This is good policy, member for Mount Gambier. I think it is great policy. This has been an idea that has been thought about for 15 to 20 years and we have said, 'Let's get it out there. Let's get it progressing.' This is not just a rail bypass around the Hills but also a road bypass around the Hills, and a freight airport that can operate 24 hours a day out of the Monarto region in my electorate.

I reckon I could just about read the minister's mind of what he will say about rail freight going around north of the city. I know the minister has said in the past that 80 per cent of truck freight has to come into Adelaide. I have not checked those figures, but what I do know is that you could send trucks around to the north and connect up with the road train route where you have trucks towing two trailers coming straight into Port Adelaide, which they do now.

There is a real opportunity with Globe Link for road freight, bringing those trucks around to the north of Adelaide pulling two trailers. The junction could be at Monarto where they hook up the second trailer. They could then go in around the top, making that far more efficient. We could also do that with the rail. As far as freight is concerned, rail freight is not really that viable between Adelaide and Melbourne because we are too close.

The simple fact is that with rail freight you need those long leads, whether you are going through to Perth or Darwin. You certainly do not need to go up the Hills from Monarto, up through Mount Barker, going through all those Adelaide Hills areas at Blackwood and down through there. But Labor's plan obviously is that they will just keep trains going up through the Hills, through Blackwood, upsetting all those constituents, and then they will have to come down into the city.

As far as truck freight is concerned, currently a lot of the freight comes down the hill. In the past, we have seen some terrible accidents at the bottom of the hill, at the Glen Osmond intersection. The freight goes around Portrush Road, shoots around to Hampstead and heads down to the Port. I can tell you from experience of driving that route that it takes about 45 minutes to get to the port from Glen Osmond. Again, the Labor Party, the Labor government, do not want to bypass. They want to shoot the trucks straight into Badcoe, up near Elder, giving grief to all those residents throughout the City of Adelaide.

This is going to grow into the future as our freight grows into the future. We have a great opportunity with Globe Link to bring both road and rail around the city. This also links in with our plans with Globe Link to have an airport. As far as the eastern side of our state is concerned, I think it is the best location you could have. It would only be about four hours from Port Augusta, four hours from Mount Gambier, two or 2½ hours from the Riverland, 20 minutes from the Hills and on the doorstep of the Murraylands and Mallee. I think it is an ideal location to aggregate freight, as many companies have done over years now.

We have a Big W forwarding centre at Monarto. They use great code technology to split up their loads to be sent around Australia from that location. So, it is already being used as a freight area, and there is great opportunity for other companies. I know Scott's and a whole range of others that have gone in there, as has Australian Portable Camps. There is so much opportunity from that area to expand not only rail freight options but road freight options and air freight options as well.

These things do come at a cost. People have asked me, 'How are you going to pay for it?' Well, it will not be our money because we will not have the billions of dollars in this budget to pay for it, especially after this government is finished with it. It will need federal funding, private investment and some state co-investment. It is visionary ideas like this that really will lead us into the future in the 21st century. There are lots of opportunities and we need to grasp them. We need to stop shutting down rail in this state, and we need to embrace opportunities and develop them.

As we have said, if we gain power in March 2018, in our first 100 days we will spend \$20 million putting the business case together on why we should have Globe Link, why we should have that better, faster access of rail around the City of Adelaide to save all that freight going up through the Adelaide Hills, coming up past Blackwood and down into the city, blocking up intersections along Cross Road with train freight that could be far better suited going around to the north of Adelaide. There may be some freight that has to come into the city, and it could tap in from the north. As I indicated, there are so many options, not just with the rail freight but with road freight and a potential increase in road train operations to get efficiency and far better freight movements into the future.

Let's hope we get some far better outcomes. I say to the government, do not debunk our ideas just because they are great ideas and are forward-thinking. Just get on with it, and let's have some great transport designs into the future. With those few words, I support the passage of the bill.