

instead of dealing with three other Acts. I am advised by the Crown Law Department that were we to make mandatory agreements, we would have to amend all three Acts. Subsequently in a few months' time, if what was done were found to be unsatisfactory, it would be necessary to adopt the same procedure again and amend the three Acts.

In the circumstances, the Bill has been introduced to repeal, among other things, the relevant sections of the three Acts concerned. The member for Kalgoorlie said we were asking the House to agree to giving an open cheque to the Commission, but I submit that all the Bill seeks to do is to provide an easy means of arriving at an agreement with a local authority in a simple manner by means of a simple agreement that has to receive the approval of the Minister.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Hill in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Housing in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Power to enter into agreements and supplementary agreements:

Mr. STYANTS: I am not at all impressed by the contentions of the Honorary Minister. I thought the Committee was to be allowed to know something of the nature of the agreements to be entered into between the State Housing Commission and a local governing body. The Honorary Minister said that something less than the whole of the rates collected by a local authority would be required and, if that is so, why did he not simply make provision for, say, 75 per cent. of the rates to be used for the purpose set out? When amending legislation was placed before the House in 1947 the terms and conditions under which agreements could be made were set out in the Bill, and that procedure should have been repeated in connection with the Bill now before the Committee.

Local authorities know from experience the difficulties that have arisen under the existing legislation, and I have no objection to endeavours being made to overcome that situation. Experience has taught them just what kind of agreement is necessary and what variations are required. That being so, the Honorary Minister should have been in a position to inform the Committee just what is necessary. We should not grant authority which would allow differing agreements to be entered into. The Committee should not be agreeable to allowing the Commission and local authorities to enter into any kind of agreement they thought fit. Such agreements should be on an identical basis and should not vary in principle or terms.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.1 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 17th October, 1950.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Question: Railways, as to educational standard, traffic and loco. employees ...	1212
Bills: Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment, 3r., passed ...	1212
Supply (No. 2), £7,000,000, Standing Orders suspension, 2r., remaining stages, passed ...	1212
Electoral Act Amendment, 1r.	1219
Health Act Amendment, 1r.	1219
Prices Control Act Amendment (Continuance), 1r.	1219
Acts Amendment (Increase in Number of Ministers of the Crown), 2r., Com., report ...	1219
Fauna Protection, 2r.	1227
State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment, 2r.	1230

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

QUESTION.

RAILWAYS.

As to Educational Standard, Traffic and Loco. Employees.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN (for Hon. G. Bennetts) asked the Minister for Transport: Owing to the difficulty in obtaining suitable young men for employment in the traffic and loco. branches of the railway service, will the Government give consideration to accepting applicants with a VI standard qualification instead of the VII as is now required?

The MINISTER replied:

The Railway Department has accepted a number of lads with sixth standard certificates, and other suitable qualifications.

BILL—PUBLIC SERVICE APPEAL BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and passed.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £7,000,000.

Standing Orders Suspension.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [4.34]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable a Supply Bill to pass through all its stages at the one sitting.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [4.35]: I do not wish to raise any serious objection to the motion, but why the rush to pass this Bill? We have had a lot of this sort of thing in the last few months and it seems to be becoming a habit. While I have no serious objection to the motion if it is

necessary to adopt this course, I hope that the Government will not, because of our leniency in the past, move the suspension of Standing Orders unnecessarily. We ought to avoid rush legislation at all times. So, unless it is absolutely essential that the remaining stages be passed at the one sitting, I consider that the motion should not be moved. I record these few words of protest in order that the Government may adopt this procedure only in the most urgent circumstances.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland—In reply) [4.37]: It is the usual procedure for Supply Bills to be passed through all stages at the one sitting. These measures are brought forward as matters of urgency when the funds that have been authorised have been exhausted or are nearing exhaustion. This Bill has been brought down so that the ordinary Supply may be authorised in the usual way. There is every reason why we should follow precedent and no good reason why we should depart from it.

Question put and passed.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: As the amount of £6,000,000 granted under Supply Bill (No. 1) is now exhausted, it is necessary to ask Parliament for a further sum of £7,000,000 in order that the services of the Government may be maintained until the Estimates, which are now before another place, are passed. The amount of £7,000,000 required under the Bill is made up of £4,500,000 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and £2,500,000 from the General Loan Fund.

For the three months ended the 30th September, the expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund was £6,402,138, while revenue amounted to £5,846,693, a deficit for the three months of £555,445. Expenditure from the General Loan Fund totalled £2,451,734. It is hardly necessary for me to point out again that the cost of administration, maintenance and development has been increased very greatly by the high costs of material and services. I hope that members will approve of the measure and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [4.40]: I do not want the Minister to think that it is becoming a habit with me to speak on Supply Bills, but we do not have many opportunities of having a general debate, so I wish to take this one to deal with several matters. When speaking on the previous Supply Bill, I dealt with the Fremantle harbour extension scheme. During the course of the Address-in-reply debate, I spoke on one or two matters,

and the Minister has since replied to me, but, as I have not had a chance to reply to him, I wish to say a few words now.

With regard to the Fremantle harbour, I feel that the attitude I adopted was quite justified, and it has since been vindicated, because, subsequent to the report being submitted, some alterations were made to the scheme. It is admitted that that was not done by Colonel Tydeman, but by a committee which was appointed to consider the matter. That shows how careful a Government must be before it proceeds with any gigantic scheme of this description. A committee was appointed to investigate the Tydeman scheme, and certain alterations have been made already. I understand—I do not know whether I read this in the Press or heard it said in the House—that it is the Government's intention to bring an engineer from South Australia to investigate the Tydeman plan. I would like the Minister to say whether there is any truth in that and, if so, when the engineer is expected to come here to conduct his inquiries. I would also like to know whether he will be dealing with the matter simply from an engineering point of view, or whether all aspects will be taken into consideration.

Regarding housing, the Minister replied to the repeated complaint of the other Fremantle members, as well as myself, that we have not had a fair deal in the West Province, and he produced some figures. Well, those details just prove the old saying that figures can prove anything. I suppose the Minister's figures were correct. He attempted to show that in the area he mentioned there was eight per cent. of the population of Western Australia, and 10 per cent. of the houses had been built there. He used those figures to show that we had received our fair share of homes. What the Minister did not tell the House was that in the computation of the population quite a large slice of the Fremantle area was omitted.

The Fremantle Road Board area runs for a number of miles towards Rockingham and, if we include the Rockingham district with it, we find that it extends for a distance of 18 miles in that direction. In that area there is a fairly large population, but the figures the Minister gave took no notice of the number of people residing there. The Minister mentioned the number of houses built, but did not say anything about the number reserved for key personnel of the power house, who are not residents of the Fremantle area at all; nor was any consideration given to the large number of people from outside the district who have been provided with homes there. So I say that an entirely false impression has been created by the figures supplied by the Minister. We in Fremantle are not satisfied with the deal we have had with respect to housing.

Hon. W. J. Mann: I do not remember your ever being satisfied with anything!

Hon. G. FRASER: We have never got to the stage of having our requirements met. When we do get to that stage, we shall be perfectly satisfied.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: I cannot believe it.

Hon. W. J. Mann: I hope I shall live to see the day.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not think the hon. member will, because I do not regard the Government as capable of reaching that stage. The position is getting worse and not progressing. It is a crablike action. We are entirely dissatisfied. We want to see an attempt made to do away with the camping areas. We have something like 160 families housed in the old military camp, and they have been there for about five years. Originally it was intended to be a staging camp only. Admittedly, a number have been moved out, and that again has been one of our complaints. They have been moved out, to the exclusion of other residents in Fremantle who are waiting for homes; but I shall not go into that phase now.

I repeat that, notwithstanding the figures produced by the Minister, both from the housing and the population aspects we are still dissatisfied. If consideration were given to the number of people brought in from outside the district, quite an entirely different percentage would be arrived at. Until we get something near to what has been done in other parts of the State—particularly in the Perth area—we will always raise this complaint. The Government can satisfy us quite easily by a more extensive building programme in the Fremantle area. I suppose the Minister included in his figures the homes that have been built at Mulberry Farm, although I cannot remember now. The houses there are entirely for migrants and certain tradesmen; or at any rate, that was the purpose originally.

If a check were made, I think it would be found that the majority of those places have gone to migrants. I do not know how many houses have been built there, but I suppose there would be about 40 or 50. That number, added to those built in the Fremantle area, would alter the percentage considerably. We have a very big problem, but I do not know that the Government has yet realised that fact. We have thousands of workers clamouring for homes, and I am pleased that the Government is going to continue building workers' homes. At the same time, we do not want it to curtail the programme with regard to rental homes. I have dealt with that subject before, and do not intend going into it in detail today. An industrial area like Fremantle must have a considerable number of rental homes, because they will always be required. Members know as well as I do

why ordinary rental homes are not being built today. As a matter of fact, they have not been built for the past 20 years, whereas houses have been erected for the use of the owners. In some of the old districts rental houses are being condemned each year, and no fresh ones are being constructed in their place. So we want the Government to continue with the building of rental homes and not to curtail that programme in order to build on the ownership basis. I trust that those items will receive further consideration from the Government and I now support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South) [4.51]: I want to take this opportunity to bring before the Minister the matter of cemeteries. Last year Parliament passed a Bill to enable the Government to truncate portion of the Northern-highway at Guildford. But so far nothing has been done and the state of the old Guildford cemetery is becoming worse. Then again, I do not know what the Government anticipates doing with the East Perth cemetery. I believe a board or committee was set up by the Government to go into the matter and a report has been considered by Cabinet but apparently the proposal put forward was too elaborate and has been turned down because of the cost.

Only last Tuesday morning I visited the East Perth cemetery. I do not know whether other members of this Chamber go down there or whether they have made it their business to carry out an inspection. But, to my mind, the state of some of the older graves calls for urgent attention from some authority. Some of the vaults have been broken and the slabs on the top have been prised off. There is one particular grave—I will not mention the name—where a huge marble slab has been prised up and dropped into the vault. The fence around it has been almost dismantled and that looks to be the work of some of the younger element trying to look in to see what is inside the vault.

A caretaker is employed by some authority—I do not know who it is but I think it must be the State Gardens Board—on three days a week between the hours of 3 and 5 p.m. Members can see by the time he spends there that he is not able to keep a close check or do very much work at the cemetery. That man has no authority to make any minor repairs to the graves, the railings or anything else down there unless he obtains the written consent of persons who are responsible for, or have some connection with, the people whose remains lie there. I want the Minister to tell the House just what the Government has in view in this connection and what the Government is prepared to do for those pioneers whose remains now lie in the East Perth cemetery.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [4.56]: I rise to say a few words because in the Address-in-reply debate I spoke on the opening day of the session and had to respect the wishes of those who wanted to go to afternoon tea. On that occasion I referred to the Department of Agriculture and soil conservation. Although I do not wish to drag out this debate for a lengthy period, I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to various points in connection with those two subjects, with particular stress upon that of soil conservation.

In the past few months, since I have been elected to this Chamber, I have travelled over a considerable area of country from Perth as far north as Northampton, out to Mullewa and down the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line. In every district I have been disagreeably surprised at the soil erosion which is taking place in all those areas. When I spoke previously I think I did mention it would be a good idea if a separate department could be set up to deal with this problem. I realise that a Soil Conservation Commission has been set up but it is more or less under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture. To my mind it should be a separate department altogether and its administration should be the job of one particular Minister. It is rather lamentable that at present we have an Honorary Minister in charge of this department. However, it may well be that the position will change within the next few days. I do not know, but that is a matter for decision by this House.

I want the Minister to convey to Cabinet the wish of every member who represents a country area that the problem of soil conservation should be tackled earnestly. At the moment we have about six or eight men in the department where we should have 60 or 80. To my mind, if we spent 10 or 20 times as much money as we are devoting to the work at present we still would not be spending too much. If we look at the ravages of soil erosion by wind or water in other countries we can well assume that this State, if we permit the position to continue as it is at present, will be in debt to such an extent that it may not be possible to tackle the problem. Therefore, I think we should spend the money before the effect of erosion is fully apparent. Although over the last few years the job has been tackled, it really has not been approached in an earnest manner.

Although the Honorary Minister needs no reminding, I would stress that we have lost far too many men from the department. We have lost several men, including Dr. Teakle, who was our leading man on soil conservation matters. He went to Queensland some two years ago. Just when the Government will wake up sufficiently to consider this matter and give it earnest attention, I do not know, but I am hoping

that the Minister will use every endeavour, when he meets Cabinet, to do something about soil conservation. Passing to the Department of Agriculture, I think the same conditions apply there. Insufficient officers are employed on the staff and something should be done to give these men greater remuneration for the work they undertake. The men employed by the department have to be well educated, attend the University and pass examinations to obtain their degrees. I do not know what their salaries are but there are not too many men in the department at present who are receiving over £800 or £900 a year.

Hon. L. A. Logan: And they work 50 hours a week.

Hon. A. R. JONES: They are expected to work while there is work still to be done, and they do it during week-ends and at other times as well. These officers are receiving only £800 or £900 a year while a good many other men, who did not progress beyond their primary school education at present earn about £20 a week without much difficulty. The men in the department, like other professional men, such as doctors and lawyers, must spend a good deal of money on their education. It costs a lot to keep them from the time they leave primary school until they really commence work. Therefore, I would not say that a salary of £1,500 a year at least would be overpaying the men we have in the department at the moment. To my mind this is the only way in which we can encourage a man to join the department and to stay here: it is the only way to encourage men, who are at present only students at the University, to take the degrees necessary to fit them for some office in the departments we have.

Another matter which has been brought to my notice during the years I have been interested in politics in this State, is the question of Government spending—no matter what Government is in power. I do not think we can blame any one Minister or any one Government more than another. Around the provinces and electorates one does hear people say that while Ministers have the right, and find it necessary, to travel, there is too much expense caused in private running. I would like the Minister to keep that in mind, because quite a number of people are complaining that when there is a job to be done, the Minister should use the cheapest means of transport and not the more expensive means of travel such as by Government car.

I do not know what a Minister is allowed, but when he is working in his own electorate and in his own home town he should use the cheapest form of transport. It has been brought to my notice that over the years there has been too much expenditure in private running. This does not apply only to Ministers, but to men who are heads of departments. We see Government cars going to and from the places where these

men are living. I think the Minister should watch the departments very closely to see that the use of vehicles is not abused.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: It is better for the country for them to travel.

Hon. A. R. JONES: That may be so, but I think there is a limit to the use to which these Government cars ought to be put.

Hon. G. Fraser: When is a Minister off duty?

Hon. A. R. JONES: Never! I trust the Minister will take particular notice in the matter of soil conservation and of what I have said about the Department of Agriculture when Cabinet meets again, and if something can be done in that direction it will be better for this country. I support the Bill.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [5.4]: It is very difficult for anyone to get up and make a reasoned speech on a Supply Bill running into millions of pounds without knowing to what objects the money is to be devoted. It appears to be necessary that Supply Bills for these amounts should pass through all stages at one sitting of the House. It rather savours of the idea that Parliament must not interfere with the amount allowed to Governments. In the past, however, it has been the privilege of Parliament to refuse Supply to the King in order that his Ministers might review their actions.

The time must come when members of Parliament will require to pay a good deal of heed to the administration of this country. It might prove a salutary lesson to Governments if on some occasions they were refused Supply on some particular item in order that they might review the administration. I stress the point that I believe the time is arriving when we as a State shall have to review our attitude to money for public services which, in the past, have been regarded as a means of subsidising the efforts of those living in the distant areas, or of those carrying out productive work for the State. The time will surely come when some of those conditions will be ripe for review.

It seems unwise to allow some public services to develop the attitude that they must necessarily be run at a loss. If they continue to run at a loss, there is a psychological effect upon the administration and upon the workers in regard to the tasks which they carry out. It will do our services a lot of good, I feel, to be brought to the stage of operating at cost, if not at a small profit. I have always had the feeling that the Railway Department would be a much better organisation if it could look at its balance sheet at the end of the year and find it had made a small profit.

If it were considered that the railways are State-owned in order that undeveloped areas might be opened up, why not subsidise that particular work from Consoli-

dated Revenue? Let us say to the Commission of Railways, "You tell us what it is going to cost to make the railways pay and we will then ask Parliament to permit the Minister to draw upon Consolidated Revenue in order to allow you to achieve your end." It would be very much better that way than to allow our State organisations to look at their future as a continued loss. Some may say that those people living in far distant parts would be penalised, but one must realise that those people are probably not, in some respects, meeting the same costs as are the people living nearer the city. I think therefore it may balance out.

It would be a very wise move to review some of our transport in the metropolitan area with a view to the adoption of a uniform charge whether it be for one mile or 20 miles. There are many cities where the tram or street car service is based on a uniform charge rather than a charge by distance, and it is becoming recognised that if one wants to decentralise the city it is one of the best methods of achieving that end. For example, if a worker lives at Bayswater or Inglewood it is necessary for him or her to pay a considerable increase in fare by virtue of the distance.

Possibly the whole matter of continued loss to the Government through its public services could be met by a complete financial reorganisation, and I think it would be wise for some body to be set up to review the position, because we are reaching the stage year after year of being informed of growing deficits in almost every governmental undertaking. The late Lord Keynes gave us a very real idea of taking money from inflated currency during a period of prosperity and putting it aside in order to prevent a depression in times when money is harder to come by, and it is a mystery to me why we have not adopted his methods more closely than we do now.

All Governments appear to have conceived the idea that they must spend everything that comes into their possession and in addition to that, probably ask for more for developmental purposes. The amount of money which has been spent in this State is growing even beyond the process of inflation, and Governments are looking all the time for more avenues in which to spend. Surely in these times when money is easy to come by it should be private enterprise that should expand rather than Government services.

Looking recently at the alteration in taxation rates in Australia today, one wonders how we could meet the expense caused if some disaster such as a war should overtake us, because the rate of taxation from the war-time period to today is still relatively slight and it leaves scope for only small increased taxation to meet the extravagant needs of war. While we are told we have to prepare for such an emergency, thinking people must wonder

where the money will come from if we are faced with such a disaster. I would, therefore, stress that the passing of Supply Bills should not be undertaken lightly; they should not be passed rapidly through the House and then be forgotten by members.

In addition to framing legislation, our task here is to keep an eye on the cost of administration of governmental services in the State. I would appeal to the Government at this juncture to set up an organisation to review entirely all those State organisations, services, etc., which are being operated at a loss and which formerly were regarded as a means of subsidising our people and which today, in the light of the prevailing economic conditions, should surely be made to pay for themselves. In that way I think we would contribute considerably to the control of inflation because, while this money is being circulated, it is a question of borrowing from Peter to pay Paul.

I think there should be a little more control over the question of finance in our State. It is difficult at a moment's notice to make a reasoned speech on the State's finances, but I hope that when other Bills of this sort are brought down members will be prepared to look carefully into the economy of our State and reason whether the time is not ripe for a detailed review of Government expenditure.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [5.15]: I desire to reply to the remarks of Mr. Jones concerning soil conservation. I would point out to him that we have been told our Soil Conservation Act is the best in Australia. We have a soil conservation committee which advises the Commissioner, and on that committee are representatives of the country areas, of the Lands Department, of the Forests Department, and so on. Mr. Jones referred to the lack of personnel in the department. That has caused me a considerable amount of concern. Not that we have not the money to employ personnel, but we cannot obtain suitable people to do the work. I am happy to say that we hope to have at least five men from the University joining the department this year.

Hon. G. Fraser: Could you have held any of those you lost because of insufficient salary, by increasing the pay?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. That did not come into it at all. Personnel were simply unobtainable. We have not lost any; we just have not had them. The Soil Conservation Act has not been on the statute book very long and we are building up the department. I do not believe that we should have 70 employees, as the hon. member suggested, but it is my opinion that the strength of the department should be considerably greater than it is at the moment. We are, however, making progress and some months ago I was instrumental in

getting an expert from the Eastern States, a man employed by the C.S.I.R.O. on soil conservation work, to come to Western Australia to advise our Commissioner.

That step was taken after consultation with the Commissioner and was no reflection on him. The expert spent some little time in Western Australia, principally looking into the problem of salt encroachment on our farms, and he has recently submitted a report, which may or may not be made public in the near future. I think the hon. member should be satisfied that we are trying to do something in this matter, and I believe we will make progress as time goes on.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Is it absolutely essential for us to wait for University graduates?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. Unfortunately, no other people are ready and anxious to enter the department. That applies to other departments, too.

Hon. A. R. Jones: If the remuneration were sufficient, it might be different.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have made some attempts to secure an increase in the salaries of all officers of the department of which I have control, but members must know that it is quite outside my jurisdiction. After a certain amount of effort on my part, however, the Public Service Commissioner has promised a reclassification of the whole department, and that will take place very shortly. I think I have stated in this House before that the salaries paid to veterinary officers here are comparable with those paid in the other States. Veterinary officers in Western Australia receive salaries equal to, or in excess of, those paid to similar officers in all the other States, with the exception of Queensland.

I also wish to touch briefly on the remarks made about Ministers using cheaper methods of transport. Every Minister in Australia has a motorcar. I found that in the other States all the Ministers have drivers. In South Australia a Minister has a man who does nothing else but drive him around; and when the Minister is in his office, this driver sits outside waiting for him to come out. We do not go to that extent here. Personally, I do not make use of the services of a driver. I do not suppose I have been driven more than 500 miles.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Do cars last longer in those circumstances?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: My car is in very good order, after having been used for two years. It has not suffered at all as a result of my driving. However, I do not take this step for reasons of economy, but as a matter of convenience. If I do require the services of a driver, I can obtain one. I do not think that there is any extravagance in the matter of Ministers travelling around the

country. As for their keeping an eye on their officers, I do not believe that is a job for a Minister.

Hon. L. Craig: Nobody objects.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Craig says that no-one objects. But the point was raised by Mr. Jones, and I thought it only right that I should make some reply. I do not think there is a great deal of extravagance in regard to the transport of departmental officers, but it is not the job of Ministers to keep an eye on them. Personally, I have enough to do without that.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [5.21]: I find myself in a similar position to that of Dr. Hislop. The speed at which this measure is being passed through the House gives us very little time to collect our thoughts in regard to certain aspects of Government finance. I was impressed by the remarks of Mr. Fraser in connection with housing. Undoubtedly there is a very acute housing situation in this State. In spite of efforts made to alleviate the position, it is apparently alarming in its propensities and in the hardships which are being inflicted on people of all classes.

In his remarks, Dr. Hislop was critical of the expenditure of certain departments. I intend to particularise regarding an item which has been in the news recently, and in relation to which certain questions were asked in this House. It deals with the decision of the Department of Native Affairs, at a time such as this, to pay the sum of £7,155 for a house in Mt. Lawley for which I understand the highest bid at public auction, a few weeks previously, was something a little above £6,000.

The use to which the home is to be put is apparently a worthy one, though whether it is in the best interests of the people it is proposed to benefit, is debatable. However, I do not want to deal with that aspect. My desire is to point out that, at a time like this, the Government has spent £7,155, a sum considerably more than a house-hungry public was prepared to offer for the place. On the figures supplied to this House, it will cost over £2,000 annually to run the home. No figures could be given as to the cost of furnishing it, but to furnish a house of such proportions would entail the expenditure of something in the vicinity of £1,000. All this money is to be spent to carry out what, when all is said and done, is a very doubtful experiment.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: No doubt at all.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Moreover, it is an experiment which apparently is going to inflict a certain amount of hardship on people who live in the immediate vicinity of the home. There is a splendid house diagonally opposite, for which I am credibly informed the owners were offered £6,000 in recent months, when they could not give vacant possession. That

house was sold a couple of weeks ago, since this project was made public, and the unfortunate owners could get no more than £4,000 for it. If that is not inflicting hardship on the owners of property in that locality, I am open to correction. However, I will leave that aspect of the matter.

This is my argument: If we are sincere in this matter of coping with the difficult housing situation, and houses such as this are available for purchase, surely the Government's first obligation is to our own people residing in the city and suburbs. A house like the one under consideration could easily have been converted into flats to accommodate at least a dozen or 15 people. In that way something tangible and worthwhile would have been done; something not open to public criticism; something that would have returned revenue and which would in some small way have assisted to solve what is a very critical problem. That is one item concerning which, on a measure such as this, members are entitled to be critical; and I am sure that in voicing that criticism, I am speaking on behalf of a very large section of the people of this State.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland—in reply)

[5.28]: Some members have contended that more time should be given to the consideration of what is, after all, an interim supply Bill. I have the assurance of one member who has had considerable experience in this House that he cannot remember a single occasion when a Supply Bill was not passed through all stages at one sitting. So much for that.

Dealing in turn with the remarks of members, I would first answer Mr. Fraser's question whether an engineer from South Australia has been engaged to report on the Tydeman plan. That is so. I am not quite sure of the terms of reference of his inquiry, but the proposal is in line with the Government's anxiety that everything shall be done in the best interests of the State and that nothing shall be done in conflict with those interests. When the Tydeman plan was first presented, a committee of high-ranking officers of our Government departments was appointed to examine it and they studied it for some months before submitting recommendations. That is an indication of the attitude of the Government in not attempting to implement any plan that is put before it without the most careful investigation first being made.

With regard to the remarks of the hon. member about housing, I think my reply dealt specifically with the position at Hilton Park. The Government is aware of the need for housing, not only in the area represented by the hon. member, but also in almost every other part of the State. This problem is not confined to Western Australia, but is common to

every State in Australia and to every country in the world at the present time. Our own problem in this State has been aggravated by the great increase in our population during the past three years.

Over 50,000 migrants have been admitted to Western Australia during that time and our problem has consequently been intensified. We realise that migrants are necessary if our State is to develop as it should, but their presence does for the time being make the housing question more difficult. I can assure the hon. member that the State Housing Commission had no desire to present an unbalanced picture, and if he examines the figures again, with regard to the areas mentioned, I think he will see that the percentages given were correct and that they compare, in many instances, more than favourably with those for other and comparable areas in this State.

During his remarks, Mr. Loton mentioned the cemetery at Guildford. I know that some action has been taken in that regard but cannot, at the moment, inform the hon. member exactly what has been done. I can assure him, however, that the matter will be referred to the department concerned. I agree entirely with what he had to say about the condition of the cemetery at East Perth, as that has been a subject of concern and discussion for some months. A committee was appointed to prepare a report and submit recommendations. Those recommendations have not been adopted in their entirety, but a modified scheme has been approved of. It includes a general tidying up, fencing and provision for beautifying the area. We have received the assurance of the Perth City Council that once this work has been done, the council will undertake to keep the cemetery in order.

The remarks of Dr. Hislop were interesting and I agree with many of them. On my suggestion there is under consideration at present a plan that would enable the Railway Department to come nearer to balancing its budget than has been the practice in the past. Part of that plan would be the writing-down of capital and the reduction of interest rates to the department as has been done in most of the other States. Neither of those steps, however, has yet actually been taken in regard to our railways. Whether the Government will be able to adopt the recommendations that have been submitted, I do not know, but they are definitely in line with the suggestions made by Dr. Hislop.

In reply to the comments of Mr. Heenan, I would point out that the Government does not resume any property without a careful report from an authorised resumptions officer who takes into account all the factors involved. It can and sometimes does happen, that a house is particularly suitable for a specific pur-

pose and, as not many houses are now offering, it has been accepted as good policy in certain instances to pay an extra sum for such a house, so as to take advantage of the opportunity of getting it and to take into consideration the vacant possession factor. As members know, vacant possession is regarded as having some value. In this respect the Government has taken action only on the advice of its expert officers, and with due regard to the facts of the case. The remarks of Mr. Jones have been dealt with in detail by the Honorary Minister for Agriculture. I trust that members will support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Electoral Act Amendment. (Hon. H. C. Strickland in charge.)
- 2, Health Act Amendment.
- 3, Prices Control Act Amendment (Continuance).

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—ACTS AMENDMENT (INCREASE IN NUMBER OF MINISTERS OF THE CROWN).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 12th October.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.40]: I support this Bill because, as members are aware, I was an Honorary Minister for about nine years and know full well the duties of that office. The population and the activities of this State have increased greatly in recent years. They are still increasing and the duties of Ministers in control of departments are becoming heavier and heavier. I think it would be in the best interests of the State to do away with the positions of the Honorary Ministers and appoint them as full-time Ministers. This afternoon Mr. Jones referred to the Soil Conservation Branch of the Department of Agriculture which, of course, is administered by the Honorary Minister for Agriculture. I am convinced that the work of a Minister in charge of a department such as this can be done much more effectively—particularly when he is in country districts—if he is a full-time Minister. My own experience over a lengthy period proved to me that an Honorary Minister has a full-time job and I think our departments should be administered by men in the position of full Minister.

I hope we will not have a recurrence of what happened in the past when the number of Ministers was increased from six to eight. When that was done it was generally understood that there would be two Ministers in this Chamber from then onwards. I think it is imperative that while this Legislative Council lasts—

Hon. L. Craig: What do you mean by that?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: —there should be two Ministers in this Chamber. We do not know what may happen in the future. I have been a member of this House for 25 years or more and I have never before known of two Ministers being asked to do so much as our two present Ministers are doing. I am now going to criticise the Government, because I consider that Cabinet has loaded the Leader of this House far too heavily. It is unreasonable that he should be overburdened with responsible departments and also expected to carry out the onerous duties imposed upon him in this Chamber. Further, I do not think we have ever had an Honorary Minister performing such responsible work as does the present one. It enhances the argument that he should be elevated to full ministerial rank. I have no hesitation in supporting the Bill, because I think it will be to the advantage of the State generally.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [5.46]: I am not sure whether the Title of this Bill is not a misnomer because it suggests that the measure is to increase the number of Ministers to 10. We have already 10. Further, I think the title of "Honorary Minister" is also a misnomer, when we consider the volume of work performed by those holding such offices and the remuneration they receive. We know exactly the degree of work which one of them in this House does. I am one of those who believe in a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, and if anyone is entitled to that it is the Honorary Minister for Agriculture. We refer to him because he is in this House, but I think the same remark applies to the Honorary Minister in another place. Apart from that, if a man does his job well, he is entitled to payment accordingly. In effect, the Bill will add something to the salaries of Ministers because at present they are asked to pass some of their remuneration on to the Honorary Ministers. I do not think too many members would be prepared to give up a portion of their salaries in order that some extra amount might be paid to another man.

Hon. G. Fraser: It would be a good idea to pay for it out of the wool proceeds.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I will talk of that on some other occasion. When I spoke on the Address-in-reply debate, I referred to raising the status of the Department of Agriculture, and the remarks which I

made then still stand. The Honorary Minister has one of the most important portfolios that any man can hold in this State, and therefore I am in favour of this move, the object of which is to give the Ministers controlling the Department of Agriculture and other like departments what they are entitled to receive.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [5.48]: Although I am not opposing this measure, I still contend that a more equitable distribution of work among the Ministers could be effected. I am not sure that there is justification for ten full-time Ministers. I do know that we have Honorary Ministers who perform even more work than some of the fully-paid Ministers. The duties performed by the Chief Secretary are usually given to a man who has not a great deal to do in comparison with some who hold other portfolios, because such office is made up of bits and pieces of various departments.

Usually, the Minister in charge of this House has been the Chief Secretary, and my memory goes back a long way. I was not at all impressed by the arguments advanced by the Minister when he introduced this Bill. I can never understand why the Ministers in South Australia, with a population of 700,000, in comparison with ours of 557,918, can do their work as effectively as they do. The Minister told us that there was not a great deal of difference between the States. I now have the facts before me, and I can tell the House that South Australia's Budget revenue is £32,800,000, and loan moneys £21,000,000, compared with our Budget revenue of £26,739,549.

Hon. H. K. Watson: How does the number of members of Parliament in that State compare with ours?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It has not many more than we have.

Hon. H. K. Watson: It has 58.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It may have a few more than we have.

Hon. L. Craig: Compared to our 80 members, it has less.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It may be that Ministers have a great deal more to do in this State because of the greater number of members.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I can give you the answer.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am not opposing the increase in the number of Ministers, if the Government considers it necessary to pay its Honorary Ministers full-time salaries, because I do not think they should work for nothing.

Hon. L. Craig: They do not work for nothing.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: When I say that, I mean the amount they are dependent upon from other Ministers. In my time, we had only eight full-time Ministers and for a while we had only seven.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: You did not have the money then.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No, I agree; but I do not think we had any less work to do than the present Ministers have. At that time it was a question of looking after the unemployed and the farmers, with a lack of money available with which to do the work. Since then, and during the last few years particularly, Ministers have been enabled to discard some of their responsibilities by the formation of boards and commissions. It was mentioned that the size of Western Australia, as compared with that of South Australia, justified an increase in the number of Ministers. It is true we have a big territory in the North, but we have appointed a committee to more or less control activities in that part of the State although, of course, it is still subject to ministerial control.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: It is only an advisory committee.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: They are men who do all the checking up and give all the advice. The Government has not the responsibility of actually doing the work. All it does is to say "yes" or "no" to the requests and recommendations submitted by this committee. For a long time we have passed the responsibilities of Ministers on to boards and commissions. We have the State Housing Commission and the State Electricity Commission, for instance. They all have statutory powers and responsibilities within themselves. If one cares to read the Acts controlling them, it will be found that that is the position.

Hon. L. Craig: Very desirable, too!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It is an extraordinary thing that the hon. member, who is the chairman of a road board, strenuously objected when it was suggested that such local authorities be subject to ministerial control.

Hon. L. Craig: You are guessing.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am not guessing: I know. If that is the case and the hon. member agrees it is so, why do we want ten Ministers?

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: As Mr. Logan has said, we already have ten.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I admit that. When I entered this House, we had six Ministers. They had great responsibilities, and I dare say that more work was done for Western Australia then, because it involved the opening up of the South-West and other farming areas of this State. It constituted real work and

was something from which we obtained a great deal of benefit. The Government is doing work which could be undertaken by private enterprise, and for that reason I object to this act of the Government, because why was it necessary for us to take over the whole of the electricity supplies throughout the State? I am fearful of what might happen in that respect. We have built up a gigantic concern as to which we have no opportunity of checking whether the expenditure is justified.

If we had only some private concerns running power stations in portions of the State, we might be able to make a check against the activities of the State Electricity Commission which we appointed. I do not doubt that they are good men who control it, but I would like to know how Mr. Dumas finds time to carry out the responsible task that is entrusted to him by statute. Apart from his duties as chairman of the State Electricity Commission, he is Director of Works, he has something to do with the zone committees, and all that sort of thing.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: And the North-West and Albany.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes, and the North-West. With the millions of money involved, this State Electricity Commission should be one man's work alone. How Mr. Dumas has time to do the work I do not know.

Hon. L. Craig: Are we not dealing with the increase in the number of Ministers?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am speaking in this vein because I want to know what Ministers do when they appoint men such as Mr. Dumas to shoulder some of their responsibilities. If the Minister were controlling the electricity supplies of the State, it would be a full-time job for him but, by statute, we throw such responsibility on to a civil servant. I am not going to oppose the Bill, but I was not at all impressed by the arguments of the Minister when he introduced it because they had nothing to do with the justification of the Bill. No-one suggests that South Australia is a badly managed State. It has a great number of secondary industries. There is one thing it does which we in this State do not do, and that is it keeps out of industries which rightly belong to private enterprise.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: It established a State Electricity Commission just recently.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That is the only undertaking it has taken over.

Hon. L. Craig: It delegates its powers.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It certainly has established a State Housing Commission, but it is more or less under Commonwealth control, which ours has not been.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: How many Ministers are there in South Australia?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Six.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I will give you the answer as to South Australia, but not here.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The Premier of South Australia seems to get around quite a lot, and learns a great deal. He has visited this State on several occasions, to my knowledge, and he can certainly travel to Canberra much more easily than can the Premier of our State.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: He is a superman. I think he is doing three men's jobs.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I should say that the Minister interjecting is doing three men's jobs also, if I know anything about the position he holds. I believe we could have apportioned the work much more equitably among the existing Ministers. The Minister in charge of this House is greatly imposed upon. The portfolio of Transport is a job on its own and is an extremely difficult one. In addition to that, he is saddled with a great number of Bills which have to be introduced in this House. The allocation of portfolios has been badly made. I know I shall be reprimanded privately for saying that which I am, but that is my opinion, and I am expressing it where it should be expressed.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: How do you reconcile your remarks with your support of the Bill?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am supporting it for two reasons. One is that we are asking one man at least to do his work for less salary than that paid to a full-time Minister. That is the principle which is mainly causing me to support the Bill. The second reason is that I believe the majority in this House and in another place are in favour of it. Nevertheless, I see no reason why I should not express my opinions. We are only too ready to hand money out generously today because at the moment we have a lot of it; but there will be times in the future when we shall have difficulty in meeting the commitments which we are passing on to the community today. As I said before, I am not going to oppose the Bill because we have a perfect right to pay more to the men who are allotted to do the work of Ministers, especially when we have two of them in this House who earn every shilling they get.

In another place there are eight Ministers and some of them could very well be deprived of some of the positions they occupy today. I have no desire to be unkind to anyone in that respect and I admit it may be claimed that they are doing useful work. Looking back over the past, I can remember when the business of this House was in the hands of one Minister. I can remember the time very well but, of course, he had a good House to deal with, just as the present Minister has. I do not think we

should agree to a proposition simply because another place decides upon it. We have every right to discuss the matter fully and to present our views. We have unloaded much of ministerial responsibility on to commissions and boards. We should ask Ministers, particularly those in another place, to accept more responsibility for the work they should do and not allow so much to be taken over by boards and commissions.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [6.2]: I have been waiting for a lead from some Minister or ex-Minister to enable me to make up my mind as to whether or not I should support the Bill. We have heard from one ex-Honorary Minister and an ex-Minister, but I find they are like lawyers because they are each a little bit one way or the other and therefore I must make up my own mind.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Thank goodness for that!

Hon. G. FRASER: I could certainly not get any lead from them. I regard the position as this: We must have eight or 10 full Ministers and no Honorary Minister at all. In fact, I will not have Honorary Ministers on my mind. If a man is worthy of the office he holds and the position warrants his appointment, he should be a full-time Minister. For that reason, I have decided that it must be a matter of eight Ministers or 10 Ministers, and there must be no Honorary Ministers at all. I am surprised that that provision has not been included in the Bill. It should be, although I will not be prepared to move in that direction. I think the Bill should distinctly state that no Honorary Ministers shall be appointed in future. Unless we provide for that contingency, we will find that after the 10 full portfolioed Ministers have been appointed, in a year or two we shall again have Honorary Ministers in office, with the result that we shall have a repetition of the position that confronts us now. Some definite action should be taken in the matter.

Hon. H. L. Roche: You want more than assurances.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am accepting the point of view that there is sufficient work to warrant the appointment of 10 full-time Ministers. Sir Charles Latham has had experience of this in the past, and I think it is a crying shame that the present Leader of the House is being imposed upon—I emphasise that word "imposed"—by other Ministers in being called upon to shoulder the responsibilities of the Railways and Mines portfolios, without mentioning anything else that is tagged on to him.

The Leader of this House has always sufficient to do in looking after the legislative programme, although he could possibly hold a minor portfolio such as that

of Chief Secretary. What do we find today? The portfolio of Chief Secretary is held by one of the senior members of the Cabinet in another place. To my way of thinking, the distribution of portfolios has been shocking. On the other hand, we find that in another place, an Honorary Minister is in charge of housing matters, a subject of outstanding importance at this juncture. From the point of view of the country itself, the portfolio of Agriculture is most important, and yet the Honorary Minister in this Chamber is charged with those duties.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is a most important portfolio.

Hon. G. FRASER: It has nothing to do with me, but whoever had the duty of allotting the portfolios showed very poor judgment, particularly when a full portfolioed Minister is allowed to occupy a minor position and an Honorary Minister has to carry out the duties attached to an important department. I hope we will not see such a distribution in future. From my own experience, I would say that there is ample work for 10 full-time Ministers. I hope that when the 10 Ministers are appointed, we shall not thereafter experience the delays before replies to our correspondence are received or decisions are announced in respect of matters submitted to Ministers. I certainly hope that when the two Honorary Ministers are elevated to full Cabinet rank, greater attention will be paid to the work in this respect. I have not in mind the Honorary Minister in this House.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Then that is all right.

Hon. G. FRASER: I was prompted to make that explanation when I saw the Honorary Minister becoming so restive. I trust that when we have 10 full Ministers, the supervision of departments will be such that greater attention will be given to members' requirements in this respect. Then again, I think provision should be made in the Bill to ensure that there shall be two full Ministers appointed in this Chamber. During my experience as a member of this House, I know what happened with regard to the late Hon. C. F. Baxter. I think Sir Charles Latham will agree with me there because of his own experience. For my part, I think the task he was called upon to perform in this House was too much for the late Mr. Baxter.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Hear, hear!

Hon. G. FRASER: In fact, I am convinced that much of his ill-health in later life could be attributed to the work he did while Leader of this House. If the Leader of the House is absent for one reason or another, we should certainly have another Minister of full Cabinet rank to take his place in this Chamber. On the

other hand, when Hon. H. S. W. Parker was the Minister here and he was ill, the Honorary Minister for Agriculture had to lead the House.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: And Mr. Parker had to do the same for me when I was away.

Hon. G. FRASER: Exactly.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: And he did not have such a sympathetic House!

Hon. G. FRASER: In those days the Opposition, being softhearted, came to his help on various occasions. The fact remains that we had the spectacle of an Honorary Minister being in charge of the Legislative Council. Can any member say that that is right? To my mind, the work here is a full-time job, and I do not think anyone should tolerate Honorary Ministers being in charge. If the Bill included the two provisions I have suggested, it would be greatly improved.

The Deputy President took the Chair.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [6.9]: I shall support the Bill, but I consider that if we had 20 Ministers they would still find plenty of work to do. In these days they take too much upon themselves. I believe that Ministers pay too much attention to detail. I do not believe that is a function of a Cabinet Minister, particularly if he is placed in charge of a technical department. When he receives his appointment, he is generally a layman without any experience. Possibly the Minister is called upon to take charge of a department that requires a knowledge of business, and he may be quite without business experience. If he is wise, such a Minister takes the advice of his technical officers. It would be futile if he acted otherwise.

Hon. A. R. Jones: The department should run the Minister!

Hon. L. CRAIG: And some departments should run their Ministers. To my mind, the job of a Cabinet Minister is to confine himself to policy.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: And finance.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The Minister should receive advice from his departmental officers regarding matters dealt with by his department, and it should be his job to see that nothing is done that conflicts with Government policy. To my mind, Ministers concern themselves altogether too much with small matters. I believe Ministers are much too good to the public and listen to every Tom, Dick or Harry who may want to ask questions about matters of little concern. Why cannot Ministers devote themselves to the task for which they were appointed, namely, to carry out the Government policy? It should not be their duty to go through files that have been built up over two, three or more years. If I were a Min-

ister and my departmental head could not give me the whole story in a nutshell, I would want to change the head of the department.

Hon. H. L. Roche: And you would not be allowed to do so.

Hon. L. Craig: I would certainly require a departmental head who would be able to tell me the whole story. Surely it is not the duty of a Minister to go through a file from bottom to top in order to get the story?

Hon. A. L. Loton: Would you get the right story from the departmental head?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Officers should know the proper story. If we were to appoint another four or five Ministers, it would make no difference. The duties would be spread, and Ministers would still give the same attention to detail that they do today. Mr. Fraser said that it was not right to appoint Honorary Ministers. I disagree with him. Honorary Ministers should be appointed to assist other Ministers to cope with the detailed work and help them in their tasks. In the Federal Parliament and in the House of Commons the services of parliamentary Under Secretaries are availed of and they do, in effect, what the Honorary Ministers cope with in this State. Such Under Secretaries are trained for the job with a view to their ultimately becoming full-time Ministers. For that purpose they deal with many matters of minor detail that are involved in ministerial duties.

Hon. G. Fraser: Those Under Secretaries are not in charge of departments.

Hon. L. CRAIG: And they are not in charge of departments here.

Hon. G. Fraser: They are, in effect.

Hon. L. CRAIG: But not actually. In my opinion, if more Honorary Ministers were appointed the same thing would happen in future.

Hon. A. R. Jones: That is the reason why we should not have Honorary Ministers.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Is it not a good idea to train young men who will ultimately become full Ministers?

Hon. A. R. Jones: Not Honorary Ministers.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: They are not paid properly.

Hon. L. CRAIG: They are paid.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: Parliamentary Under Secretaries are not paid, are they?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Such appointments should be encouraged because they represent the first step towards ultimate ministerial positions. It is a compliment.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: But a cheap one.

Hon. G. Fraser: In any event, it is quite different.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I believe that some of the leading Ministers of the Crown in Great Britain formerly acted as Under Secretaries before receiving their portfolios. I support the Bill and reiterate that Ministers should not concern themselves with details but more with policy. As it is, Ministers are expected to attend agricultural shows even while the session is in progress. They should resist that tendency. I know it will be said that it is part of their job and that they want to hold their seats. In my opinion, it should be an unwritten law that while Parliament was in session, Ministers should confine themselves to their parliamentary and departmental duties and not tour around the country.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. J. M. THOMSON (South) [7.30]: I support the second reading. I consider that any Honorary Minister who is doing a full-time job is entitled to be given the status of a full Minister. A question has been raised regarding the large amount of work that is being asked of certain other Ministers. Any difficulty in that direction could easily be overcome by a rearrangement of the portfolios which, I think, members will agree is necessary.

Hon. H. Hearn: That is a matter for the Premier to decide.

Hon. J. M. THOMSON: I hope we shall be assured that, after the Bill has been passed, this House will have two full Ministers. It would be a very sorry spectacle if the Bill were passed and we found that in the future we were left with one full Minister and one Honorary Minister. Therefore some assurance should be given that this will not be the case.

HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (North) [7.32]: I am pleased that the Bill has been introduced to enable the Honorary Minister for Agriculture to be raised to the status of a fully-fledged Minister. I understand that the substance of the Bill is to make his position a fully-paid one. As Honorary Minister for Agriculture, he certainly earns all he gets, and the same may be said of the Honorary Minister for Housing in another place. While supporting the principle of increasing the number of full Ministers, I should like to enter a protest against the manner in which some of the questions asked by members are answered. I have asked questions on various occasions and not with any ulterior motive in mind—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The question before the Chair is the Bill for an increase in the number of Ministers of the Crown and the hon. member's remarks are not appropriate to the Bill. I ask him to confine his remarks to the Bill.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I was referring to Ministers generally, just as other members have referred to them. If it is

impossible for Ministers to divulge the information in their possession or if they are not in a position to answer questions that are asked, I do not desire to labour the point, but I do express the hope that when the two Honorary Ministers gain their full plumage, they will be able to enlighten us a little more on subjects upon which we seek information. I should like to have known more about the composition of the North-West Development Committee referred to by Sir Charles Latham, but it does not seem possible to discuss that matter at the moment. I hope that when the Honorary Minister for the North-West becomes a full Minister, he will find time to visit the northern part of the State more often. I have no objection to his travelling by car or other means of transport so long as he gets there, sees the conditions and appreciates the difficulties under which some of the residents exist.

HON. R. M. FORREST (North) [7.37]: I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill. I consider that the Honorary Minister for Agriculture is one of the hardest working Ministers we have had for a long time. His portfolios of Agriculture and the North-West really embrace the whole of the State. He has agriculture in the South-West and there is also a considerable amount of agriculture in the North-West, especially in the Carnarvon district. Therefore, to give him the status of only an Honorary Minister seems farcical. I hope that, after the Bill becomes law, there will be two fully-fledged Ministers in this House, and that the present Honorary Minister for the North-West will see his way clear, as Mr. Strickland suggested, to pay quite a few visits to the North-West.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [7.38]: I rise very reluctantly to support the second reading. I believe that this measure involves two of the most enthusiastic members of the Cabinet. I have no intention of throwing any bouquets, but I am satisfied that the Honorary Minister for Agriculture is one of the hardest worked members of the Cabinet, and I am sure that the Honorary Minister in another place is also working extremely hard. Both of those Honorary Ministers are entitled to the monetary benefits for their work.

Although I am supporting the Bill, it is only fair for me to record my belief that the time will come, and very soon, too, when we shall be looking for opportunities to reduce expenditure. I believe that in South Australia there are six Cabinet Ministers and that State has a population of over half a million, whereas we are being asked to agree to a Cabinet of 10 full Ministers in a State that has a population of roughly 450,000.

Hon. G. Fraser: What is the difference in area?

Hon. H. HEARN: Let me make the point that South Australia has 200,000 more people than has Western Australia, and a Cabinet of six as compared with the proposal for 10 full Ministers here. Before long I believe we shall be talking economy. We should act as directors who have the responsibility of running a business, and if we did that, we would have to look into the personnel of the Cabinet to determine the members who are not pulling their weight. Had that been done, it would have been entirely unnecessary to introduce this Bill.

Hon. G. Fraser: Then why support it?

Hon. H. HEARN: I am supporting it because I believe that two of the members of the Cabinet who are in the unfortunate position of being Honorary Ministers are two of the hardest-worked men. I believe the time will come when the State will be hard pressed to afford 10 full Ministers, but under present conditions and in view of the increase in the Federal basic wage of £1 a week, who am I to deny two of the hardest worked men the salary they deserve?

HON. R. J. BOYLEN (South-East) [7.41]: I am afraid I support the Bill wholeheartedly for the self-same reasons as Mr. Hearn supports it rather reluctantly, mainly because I do not believe in the appointment of Honorary Ministers. My chief reason for supporting the measure is that the Government considers the appointment of additional Ministers would be in the interests of the welfare of the State and, if that is so, it becomes the responsibility of the State to remunerate the Honorary Ministers for the services they are rendering.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Would you have supported it had it been introduced by a Labour Government?

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: I support the Bill irrespective of the party that has introduced it. When the re-shuffle of portfolios occurred just before the beginning of this session, I was astounded to find that the Honorary Minister for Agriculture had not been raised to full ministerial rank. It has been remarked, not only in this House, but also in another place, that he is one of the hardest working members of the Cabinet and I think that he should be given full ministerial status. The fact that his health suffered as it did towards the end of last session was evidence of the energy with which he had devoted himself to his duties during the sitting of Parliament in 1949. However, the Government maintains that it would be in the interests of the State to have additional full Ministers and, that being so, they should be paid by the State and not from the source from which they are now remunerated.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [743]: I think this debate has just about exhausted the subject, but I wish to give my reasons for supporting the Bill. I think the State has reached the stage where 10 full Ministers are necessary. A Cabinet of that strength should be able to do a better and more complete job than is possible under the existing system. I hope that the State will continue to expand and develop, and that Ministers in years to come will find so much work to do that it may be necessary to consider increasing the number beyond 10. I do not object to the increase so long as the State is progressing and there is added work to keep all the Ministers fully engaged.

I am surprised at the remarks of some members who are supporting the measure with reluctance. If I felt as they do, I would unhesitatingly oppose it. All the Ministers, with the exception of the Honorary Minister for Agriculture, and the Honorary Minister in another place, will not feel too happy about Mr. Hearn's remarks.

Hon. H. Hearn: That is my worry, of course.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Well, it is not mine, but I would worry if I were one of the Ministers concerned. I think that 10 Ministers will do a better job than has been done, and that the system will be improved. If the Bill is passed I will be pleased to know that Mr. Wood, whom we all admire and respect, will receive full Cabinet rank. I am only sorry that such a measure did not go through a few years ago when the privilege would have been bestowed on Mr. Gray who, also as an Honorary Minister, did a splendid job and worked very hard.

HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM (South-East) [746]: My remarks will be short and, I hope, sweet. I am looking at the Bill from an earthly point of view. I believe a good workman is worthy of his pay. The Honorary Minister in this House is probably one of the most travelled of all the Ministers. He has, to my knowledge, been at several functions in my district, which is a long way for him to go. The same remark applies to the Honorary Minister in another place. I do not support the Bill with any reluctance at all, but wholeheartedly. I believe it is overdue. Whether, as has been suggested, the appointing of an Honorary Minister to full Cabinet rank will make his job easier, I do not know, but I do not see how it can. For the reason that a workman is worthy of his pay, I support the Bill.

Hon. R. J. Bolyen: You will finish up in the Labour Party.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [747]: I am informed that there are only a few amateurs in this world, and they are people who compete in the Olympic sports. They are proud of the fact that they are amateurs.

Hon. G. Fraser: I have never heard of an amateur politician.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I have not heard of an amateur Honorary Minister, and that seems to be the whole point of the Bill. The Honorary Ministers have always received a salary which has been taken out of the pool, so that the title is a complete misnomer. All the word "honorary" means is that they receive less than the Ministers of full Cabinet rank. It is about time the word "honorary" disappeared and we stuck strictly to English in the interpretation of our legislation. In order to make the Act read sensibly, I think the word "honorary" should be eliminated.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [749]: Before listening to the debate I considered the appointment of two extra Ministers unnecessary, but I have since changed my views. I have on two occasions said that the administration of the Department of Agriculture should be a full-time job, and so also should the control of soil conservation. Another reason why I agree that 10 Ministers would be beneficial is because I believe that the State will grow. If a Minister has to administer his portfolio in an efficient manner he will be faced with new jobs, and new departments within his Ministry will be created. It will then be his responsibility to watch and guide those departments.

I know that on one occasion a Premier of the State visited a country district, and he was supposed to know all that was necessary in order to answer any questions that might be asked of him by deputations while he was there. I remember quite vividly that the Premier, who had files and departmental officers with him, was given wrong information which resulted in his making rather a farce of what he said. If we make provision for 10 full-time Ministers, their jobs will be fewer and possibly that sort of thing will be eliminated. I do not know whether it should be a Minister's job to watch his department closely, but I think it would be.

If an officer of a business firm were put in charge of a certain section of the business, he would be responsible to his executive officers, and I think that in the same way the Ministers should be responsible to the Premier and so to the Governor and ultimately to the people of the State, to show that their departments have been run on correct lines. I support the Bill in the hope that we will have a closer study by Ministers of their departments, and more economy considered in the running of the country.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—FAUNA PROTECTION.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 12th October.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [7.55]: The Bill is rather a large one, and I secured the adjournment because I thought it might take a lot of understanding. However, I am satisfied, having looked through it, that there is not a great deal to understand about it. The Bill is for the protection of fauna in this State. I admit that I do not know a lot about our fauna, and as a city man I was surprised to learn that it was necessary to give protection to kangaroos and emus. But, having heard from our country friends, I find that these creatures, which we have always looked on as being symbolic of Australia, are pests in certain districts.

Some objection has been raised to these animals being protected, but the Bill makes ample provision for them to be dealt with if they become a pest in any part of the State. I think that is wise. Whilst I do not know a great deal about the fauna of the State, I do know a little about Bills, and running through this one I saw that old favourite of mine—severability. I am not concerned so much now about the marginal note, but the clause. It appears to me that it should be possible to have the Bill drafted in a much simpler way. The Bill states—

This Act shall be construed so as not to exceed the legislative power of the State the intention being that if any provision of this Act would, but for this section, be construed as being in excess of that power, it shall, to the extent to which it is not in excess of that power, be a valid enactment.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Clear as mud.

Hon. G. FRASER: If, with my knowledge of English, I could not make a plainer statement than that, I would be surprised. We can sit down and examine a Bill to decide what it means, but the general public to whom our Acts apply, have not the training or the time to study them as we do.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: That appears in a number of Acts.

Hon. G. FRASER: I know, and I am hopeful that we can get away from such-like working, and get down to plain Australian.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I am 100 per cent. in agreement with you.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Put up an amendment.

Hon. G. FRASER: I cannot do that off hand, but I would suggest something like this, that a measure along the lines of this Act shall operate not to exceed the powers of the State. That is the essence of what is printed here, and it is much plainer. The next clause is as follows:—

(1) Where there is inconsistency between—

(a) the provisions of this Act; and
(b) the provisions of—
the Fisheries Act, 1905-1949;

the Vermin Act, 1918-1946;
the Whaling Act, 1937; or
the Zoological Gardens Act, 1898,

the provisions referred to in paragraph (b) of this subsection shall prevail.

That means, of course, that where there is a conflict, those Acts shall prevail.

Hon. A. L. Loton: What about the Justices Act?

Hon. G. FRASER: I just mention the clause to show that this measure will not come into effect if, first of all, it exceeds the power of the State, and secondly, it conflicts with any of the Acts I have enumerated. Here we have a measure which will be an Act and will not be an Act. That might sound a little Irish, but that is what it amounts to.

Hon. L. Craig: It means that those Acts will override the measure, that it all.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is so. There are provisions in the Bill which will not come into force if any other Act overrides them. In an Act of this description we should include only those provisions which will apply. A person who is interested in this measure might study it and then do something which he thinks is quite all right, and later find that he has committed an offence against some other statute. That is something which is probably quite difficult to overcome, but perhaps some marginal note could be included to show that reference should be made to some other Act, such as the Vermin Act.

Hon. L. Craig: That is sensible.

Hon. G. FRASER: It appears to me that we should get legislation drafted in some better manner than we do now. At least the suggestion I have made is worthy of consideration.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: You lose sight of the fact that vermin are vermin in one part of the State and not in another. That is the trouble.

Hon. L. Craig: The hon. member means that there should be a reference to that.

Hon. G. FRASER: Where they clash there should be some reference. We do not want everybody in the State to be a bush lawyer and, as it were, burdened with every particular Act that affects his own district. We all know that ignorance is no excuse for not knowing anything, but we must realise that people have to make a living and have not the time to study all these Acts. But, if one Act clashes with another, or is likely to clash with another,

then some annotation should be made in the marginal notes. That would probably lead to an easier understanding by the average individual; at least more than we find today.

Then we go on a little further, to the interpretation of "fauna." I am not going to read it all, but in the latter portion it includes the words "and also includes mammals." I do not know how we bring that particular section under this Bill. I realise that I am quite ignorant on many of these matters but I am searching for information as to why it is necessary to include mammals in this Bill when we already have the Whaling Act. Naturally, one would think everything to do with mammals would be included in that Act; and if that were so, there would be no necessity for the inclusion of the word "mammals" in this Bill.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Would not a platypus be a mammal?

Hon. G. FRASER: If it is, it would be better dealt with under that heading instead of being included in this Bill. I am not too happy about the inclusion of reptiles and frogs, because I assume that the main idea of this Bill is for the protection of fauna. When it comes to protecting reptiles and frogs, I do not feel too happy about it.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: The Frenchmen protect frogs.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am a city man and all snakes are snakes to me. I will kill them when and wherever I get the opportunity and I will look at the Act afterwards to see if it is one that is protected.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I agree as to snakes, but frogs should be protected.

Hon. G. FRASER: They may be good for eradicating certain insects—

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: They are good food in France.

Hon. G. FRASER: —and things of that description.

Hon. L. Craig: What about a frog in the throat?

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not in favour of that particular portion of the Bill. We in the city are very often kept awake at night by frogs croaking in swamps and therefore I am not too happy about their protection.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: You have never been to France.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: They are useful for eradicating the mosquito.

Hon. G. FRASER: Only certain types are used for that work. The majority of the clauses in the Bill are purely machinery and are necessary if the Bill is to be passed. I understand, too, that this Bill really takes the place of the Game Act. During the course of the debate one

or two members have raised their hands in horror at the inclusion of the word "proclamation." I do not know whether there are any Rip Van Winkles here, but the word "proclamation" was in the old Game Act and occurs on two or three occasions in that measure.

The Game Act was passed in 1912 and a consolidated Game Act was dealt with in 1913. Therefore it is rather peculiar that in 1950, when a measure is brought forward to replace the Game Act and it includes the word "proclamation," we find all these objections to the inclusion of the word. No move has been made at any time during the intervening years to take out the word.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Age brings with it education.

Hon. G. FRASER: It does not appear to me to be a very sound argument against leaving the word "proclamation" in this Bill.

Hon. A. L. Loton: No measure was brought forward during those intervening years.

Hon. G. FRASER: Then why has not the hon. member brought forward legislation regarding the word "proclamation," because it has been in the Game Act since 1912 and it is in this Bill in a similar form? At the risk of being told that I am inconsistent about no move being made to alter an Act, I intend to mention one other portion that is in the old Game Act and is not in the present Bill. When I read the marginal note members will recognise the clause; but before I read it might I say that my excuse for not having moved long before now regarding that particular phase is that, being a city man, I have had no reason to do anything about the Game Act, and consequently I was not aware that this particular section was there. The marginal note is "burden of proof." The up-to-date coining of the phrase is "onus of proof," but it means the same thing.

Hon. L. Craig: "Onus" is "task or burden."

Hon. G. FRASER: This section has always been in the Game Act but the phrase has been given much prominence in recent times.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: What section is that?

Hon. G. FRASER: It is Section 13 of the Consolidated Act of 1913—"Burden of Proof." I will not read it all but Sub-section (2) states—

In every prosecution under this Act an averment in the complaint that the person charged with the offence was an unlicensed person or employed an unlicensed person, or that the native game was taken or killed for sale or barter, shall be deemed to be proved in the absence of proof to the contrary.

That, of course, puts the onus of proof on to the accused and I am pleased to see that in this amending legislation the Government has seen eye to eye with a number of my colleagues throughout Australia on that particular phase and has dropped the onus of proof, or the burden of proof clause that was in the old original Game Act. So, we have some confirmation of our attitude on a particular measure which also includes that point. It throws the onus of proof on to the Crown and not on to the accused.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Read the Justices Act.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [8.8]: I do not know that I am too happy about this Bill. On page 2 mention is made of four Acts which override this Bill, and altogether there are some seven Acts mentioned in the measure. The three others are the Police Act, the Justices Act and the Native Administration Act but it does not say whether they override this Bill or not; or whether this Bill overrides them. In endeavouring to work out just when this Bill will become effective, or when it is overridden by these other Acts, is not going to be too easy for laymen. It will need somebody to work it all out. The wardens, or whoever may be in charge, will have to have a full knowledge of every one of these Acts in order to be able to administer this legislation properly and I do not know where we will be able to get wardens who to find sufficient time to sit down and study all these other measures.

I am in a quandary as to what may happen in regard to royalties on skins. It is possible that fauna may be classed as vermin, and when we have vermin we want to get rid of it. But there is a possibility that in getting rid of this vermin we will have to pay royalties on the skins. The Bill may not be intended to be read that way but there is a possibility that it will be, and I hope that is not the intention. Another portion deals with sanctuaries. It may be possible that we declare kangaroos and emus vermin in one part of the State and in another part of the State we may create a sanctuary for these same fauna. In my opinion, vermin is vermin wherever it may be in the State and it is little use our trying to get rid of kangaroos and emus from our pastures in the northern areas if they are to have sanctuaries provided for them in some other part of the State.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Would you kill every kangaroo?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes, every kangaroo and every emu that I could put my hands on.

Hon. L. Craig: You cannot put your hands on too many.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Last year we paid for 5,000 beaks in one road district and yet if this Bill becomes law the same birds may be protected in another part of the country. What is the sense of it? If they are vermin, then let us get rid of them.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Hear, hear!

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If they are vermin they should be destroyed. This is a serious issue in the Bill—that vermin can be protected in one part of the State and in another part of the State we are trying to get rid of them.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: That is in the Game Act now.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Then it is time we got rid of it. In 1912 we did not know what a trouble these pests could be. We have learnt a lot since then—or at least I hope we have—but apparently the framers of this Bill have not. I trust the Minister will take some notice of these remarks because in my opinion it has cost the primary producers of this State a considerable sum of money in an endeavour to save their crops and fodders from the ravages of kangaroos and emus. I do not know whether members saw the report in Friday or Saturday's paper which stated that one station up north had had a drive on kangaroos and they killed 1,000 in 1½ hours. They had 150 natives on the job and not one shot was fired.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Do you know if any of them came from Albany?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That shows the extent to which kangaroos can breed in one part of the State. Every kangaroo was hit either over the head or the body and not one shot was fired.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: What about euros?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Irrespective of whether they are euros or kangaroos, they still do a lot of damage, and the sooner we get rid of them the better it will be.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I am a bit with you about emus but not so much about kangaroos.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Will the Honorary Minister have an emu and kangaroo on his badge when he becomes a full-time Minister?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: At page 12, in regard to the duties of wardens, and the authority of wardens, it states—

A warden who is not a member of the Police Force and who finds a person committing an offence against this Act may, without warrant other than the provisions of this section—
take possession and control of—
any weapon

A man might have a submachinegun or anything else and the warden may not be a particularly good friend of that person.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: They are all good.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: But they may not be. We have had instances in the past where men have been put into these positions and they have not been worthy of them.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: That might be applied to the Police Force.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: This is giving wardens the powers of police officers. I think that is wrong. Instead of their being able to take possession we should give wardens the authority to take particulars of such weapons. If the warden takes particulars of any weapons a man may have and supplies the information to the Police Force, then the police could, if the weapons are not licensed, do what is provided under their own Act. I do object to the warden, whoever he might be, taking possession of any weapon he might find around the place. I do not think it is right. These are the points I certainly do not like in this Bill. I must support the second reading, and just what action we can take in Committee remains to be seen. I do hope the Minister will give careful consideration to the points I have raised.

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

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 11th October.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [8.16]: I shall not take very long in dealing with the Bill. In the argument he put up, the Minister seemed to be worried that the effect would be to take a lot of business and finance away from the railways. If we read the Bill, I think we will find that it adds wool and other goods to everything else that a farmer produces. The number of bales of wool likely to be carted will be very few. There are not many farmers who are going to cart 20 or 30 bales of wool on their trucks and take their families to town. Most of them get their wool carted by contractors, or they place it at the nearest railway siding. I see no reason why wool cannot be included in this Bill. It will not affect the finances of this State. The question of wool seems to be developing into a political football, and I object to the planned propaganda being used at the present time against woolgrowers.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You are trying to save his money.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There is planned propaganda against woolgrowers to the effect that they are responsible for the present high prices. Nothing is further from the truth. The inclusion of wool in this Bill will only mean that the farmer is being given the opportunity and right to cart what he produces. It will not affect the coffers of the State or the finances of the railways to any great extent.

HON. J. M. THOMSON (South) [8.19]: I support the Bill because it will give to the producer the option, if he so desires, of conveying his wool to the wool store or port, whichever the case may. That is all the Bill does. We have had experience in the past of delays at various sidings throughout the State due to shortage of rollingstock as a result of the heavy demand for haulage. That has no doubt meant that the producer has, on occasion, because of these delays, suffered in consequence of a possible fall in the price of wool. To safeguard against that result, it would be very advantageous if the producer were able to convey his wool at a moment's notice.

Today many farmers are desirous of using outports for the shipment of their wool oversea. It is possible that, as a result of advice received in the country, a farmer may be able to transport his wool to a port or wool store and thus get the benefit of an early shipment. But if he is delayed, due to trucks not being available, he might miss the opportunity and, therefore, I consider he should be in a position to transport his wool himself if he so desires. When he takes his wool to the ports, or even to Fremantle, he could backload with super, which, in my opinion, is an economic point which should be considered. When we appreciate the enormous amount of money the Government has paid in the past to haulage contractors by way of subsidy, we will realise that that in itself will effect a saving to the State.

I also view with concern the tremendous damage to the roads that has been done by heavy trucks conveying super, at the present time. I consider that as a result of the very heavy loads being carried today by super trucks, we shall have to pay dearly for the maintenance of our roads and bridges, and this is one means whereby we could assist in this direction. Nevertheless, I do say that if a farmer were able to cart his wool and consequently backload with super, he would be contributing to the petrol tax as he would be using a petrol-driven vehicle. I therefore have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [8.22]: I appreciate the position of the railways, and I intend to support this Bill, but I do not think the revenue of the railways will be affected very greatly, because the farmers who cart their own wool will not be numerous. They will mostly be small farmers and it will be to the advantage of these men, particularly if they wish to consign their wool oversea. They may book on a ship for their wool to be taken oversea and find their shearers have arrived late, and, as a result, they will only have a short time to get that wool to the port. If they have to consign it by rail, they will probably miss the ship.

The same applies to local markets. A producer may wish to get his goods on to the market and may never get a railway truck. I should think the Minister for Railways would welcome a move of this kind. In the near future he will be faced with the problem of transporting some 250 tons of pyrites a day from which super. is to be produced, and I feel certain that he will require every available truck for this purpose. For that reason alone I think the Minister should uphold this view. I support the second reading.

HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (North) [8.25]: I propose to support the Bill because I think that the State Transport Co-ordination Act, so far as my province is concerned, is a hindrance and an obstruction to free trade within the State. We have had an experience lately of ships not being able to handle all the wool, and pastoralists naturally want to get their wool down to good markets quick and lively by, perhaps, sending it by road. They can do so as far as Geraldton. After that an unfortunate position arises not only for pastoralists, but also for banana growers and bean growers, as they are permitted to cart their produce only as far as the railways.

It does not matter whether the produce comes from Wyndham or from a greater distance. It still has to be loaded on to the railways. I cannot imagine what rightful claim the railways have on produce from so far away. The parent Act was introduced, I believe, in the bad old days of the depression in order to divert such trade to the railways to enable them to function and to keep men fully employed; but the position has arisen throughout the State, and particularly in the case of producers in the North Province, where it has become an obstruction.

From Shark Bay there is no transport whatever except by ship, and the lighter serving the ship has sprung a leak and is now beached in shallow water. When the residents of Shark Bay require stores they are sent to Geraldton by rail and have to be picked up from there. A fishing company with a refrigerated truck is transporting its fish to Perth. This company is not allowed to cart anything back. Supplies have to be sent to Geraldton and collected from there. It is indeed a strange position in which these people are placed. They get fined for carrying their goods in trucks, whereas in England one gets fined for running around with empty trucks because of the petrol shortage.

The Minister for Transport: They can always get permits.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Not so long ago a truck load of bananas broke down and missed the train—

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Bananas do not have wool on them.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I think this Bill is pretty broad. It deals with an Act to amend the State Transport Co-ordination Act. However, this truck broke down and notwithstanding representations from Westralian Farmers, Ltd., which firm, I think, owned the truck, and also from the secretary of the local road board in Carnarvon, permission was refused, in spite of the perishable nature of the consignment, for that fruit to be carted through to Perth.

The Minister for Transport: Bananas are always brought down to ripen here. They are not injured by having to wait a day or two.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It all depends on the climatic conditions. Bananas standing in any covered wagon in the sun, or anywhere where there is no free circulation of air, deteriorate quickly. They do not ripen but blacken. They go what is termed "soapy." There was a considerable loss on the consignment to which I have referred. Permission to cart goods is not always freely granted.

I have had experience of trying to obtain these "free" permits, as they are termed, for bean trucks returning to Carnarvon. Permission is granted for beans to be taken down in order to get them to the market crisp and fresh, but the trucks must return empty. They can pick up what they like in Geraldton, but they must travel 300 miles empty. I made representations to the Transport Board for permission for the carriage of such things as housing materials, fencing, and such like, back from Perth, but it was not freely given. Permits were hard to get and, on top of that, a fee of 15s. per ton was charged for the privilege. There is nothing free about that!

The main objection to the granting of a permit for carting housing materials and farmers' requisites was that there had been a strong protest from the Midland Railway Company. That is what I was informed in a letter from the Transport Board. It is an extraordinary position that an English railway company should be able to stand in the way of farmers in the North Province who want to send something to Perth by trucks or to have something taken back. Such goods must be carried on the Midland Railway Company's line or else on the Government line, which goes a long way round. I do not think that the State Transport Co-ordination Act was ever intended to impose such far-flung restrictions as that.

People who live away up in the North and have battled for years to make a living are sick and tired of irksome controls and of having, when an emergency arises, as a result of which they need to have something brought from Perth or taken to Perth, to obtain permission or else have that commodity raided. I cannot for the life of me see what contribution either

the Government line or the Midland line has made to the settlement or the development of the North and North-West.

The Minister for Transport: Transport by rail is cheaper than by road.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Then the railways should have nothing to worry about.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I am not worried about that. There are many growers who would patronise the railways all the time, except perhaps for two hot months of the year. But there are still many who want to have their fruit despatched by road, because, although rail freights may be cheaper, they are not very much cheaper; and, by having the fruit come right through by road, the growers would be in a position to let it hang longer on the plantations so that it would mature better and have a finer flavour. The advantage thus derived would in all probability compensate the growers for the extra cost of freight by road.

It would appear that the Act requires overhauling in regard to its operation in districts which have nothing to do with the railways. People living in the North have to contribute to the State finances by way of taxation, and then they are forced to use the railways to transport their produce, and do this in order to keep functioning railways which really give them no service whatever. The only line in the North Province is 110 or 112 miles long and runs from Port Hedland to Marble Bar. The Government intends to remove that line as soon as the water main has been extended to Port Hedland, notwithstanding protests from pastoralists, mining interests and everybody else in the North. Yet those very people are asked to contribute to the cost of, and are forced to use, those lines when no shipping is available.

This trade was actually put in the lap of the Midland Railway Company as a result of the war. In those days shipping could not serve the whole of the North, but merely part of it, as only a couple of ships were left. Consequently road transport had to be used from Geraldton northwards. Geraldton was not selected from choice. It was a matter of petrol rationing and conservation. For that reason, goods were railed to Geraldton and picked up there. That saved an extra 600 miles of transport by road, 300 miles to Perth and 300 miles back again. Since the war ended, shipping has not built up again on the coast sufficiently to enable goods to be carried for the Gascoyne district. But the railways have claimed the transport of commodities to and from that port.

During his speech the Minister said railway freights are cheaper than the cost of haulage right through by trucks. But that would not be the case if the storekeepers, publicans, etc., in the North were allowed to

cart their goods back from Perth. All the goods that go to Carnarvon are railed from Perth to Geraldton and then transported by the banana trucks. I am not pressing for that; it is a matter for the interests concerned, and they have not objected or raised the point. I am speaking broadly on the unfairness of the application of this Act to anybody living hundreds or thousands of miles from railway lines from which they have never received a service and which could not possibly have contributed in any way to the settlement of those areas. The trouble is that the Midland Railway Company has also a monopoly of road transport. It is the only licensed carrier of goods and passengers up and down that route. If, as has been suggested, the North of this State, beyond the 26th parallel, were given to the Commonwealth Government, the Transport Board could not then prevent free trade. But just because that area forms part of Western Australia, this Act interferes and is really a hindrance to people in the North Province who desire to trade freely.

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [8.39]: It has been said that, in writing a treatise on photography, one may assume the existence of the sun. In like manner, I would have thought that in surveying the development of Western Australia, one could reasonably assume the right of a producer to carry his own goods in his own vehicle, whatever those goods might be. My approach to this Bill is on that broad general principle. It is simply a question of getting right back to first principles.

The Act at present gives the producer the right to carry livestock, poultry, fruit, vegetables, dairy produce or other perishable commodities or wheat or oats from the place where they are produced to any other place in a vehicle owned by the producer. It is simply a question of allowing a producer to carry his own produce, whatever it may be, in his own vehicle, from his own place to some other place. In my judgment that is a right that should not be denied to any producer in respect of any produce. Why wool was omitted in the first place I do not know; but I am not greatly concerned with the reason, because I feel that, whatever it was, it was not logical. I therefore support the Bill.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Suburban) [8.41]: I have warned the sponsor of this Bill that it has a dangerous future inasmuch as, if it is carried, the effect will be that all pastoralists will be able to bring their wool down in those big trucks which they have on their properties, whereas at present they take it to Meekatharra or to stations on the railway line in the Murchison. This Bill will give them the right to bring all that wool down by trucks and to take back all their fencing materials, wire, etc., on the return journey, together with other commodities that might be required for the production of the wool.

That is all right in one way; but if it is agreed to, it will only be a matter of time before the freight rates on all commodities will have to be increased in order to maintain the railways, or else the railways will have to be eliminated. If the railways are scrapped, we will have to build proper and stronger roads. I understand that the carriage of wool is a payable proposition for the railways, and at present the freight is one that the producers can easily afford to pay. There is no hardship involved in the carriage of wool by rail.

On the other hand, this practice adds to the income of the railways and so permits more reasonable rates to be charged on other commodities. If the big bulk commodities are to be carried other than by the railways, something else will have to take their place in order to produce revenue; because, as has been pointed out from time to time, the railways are really subsidised by the taxpayers, the majority of whom are in the metropolitan area. That means that when the people in the metropolitan area begin to realise that the railways, which were established to serve the country people, are not paying—

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: How would you get on if the railways did not bring stuff down here?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: That is what I say. As a result of this measure, it will be coming down by trucks. I am only pointing out the danger—and I see a real and serious danger—in this Bill. I see no objection to the farmer bringing his utility down to the city and carting some of his own produce in it, but when we consider the big pastoralists in the North carting their wool down by road, it becomes a serious proposition. It is probably a matter of economics as to whether it is cheaper to cart by road or by rail, but if we have big station wagons carting wool by road direct to Perth, the extra maintenance of our roads will involve enormous expense.

Wool from properties outside Meekatharra or Kalgoorlie would probably be carted direct to Fremantle. I have great sympathy for the farmer who may wish to bring an odd bale of wool to Perth in his vehicle when he is coming down on holiday, but even then I do not think it would make much difference to him. I understand that if such a request for permission is made, it is invariably granted, but in any case, as a matter of economics, it would make very little difference to the farmer. Especially as we are considering such a high-priced commodity as wool, I do not think the amendment would be wise, under existing conditions.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South) [8.47]: I support the Bill because I have long held the view that nothing has contributed more to the inefficiency and ineptitude of the Railway Department, and its indifference to the welfare of the public who are forced to patronise it, than the artificial

protection extended to that department by the operations of the Transport Board. It has always been beyond my comprehension why wool should have been excluded from the commodities that the producer, owning his own vehicle, is allowed to carry.

It is all very well to talk of permits, but unless one had two or three members of Parliament and perhaps a Minister on one's side, there would be little chance of getting such a permit. While it is true, as Mr. Parker said, that stations might—and I think only "might"—elect at times to cart their own wool to the seaboard, they would also in all probability cart station requirements back with them. Why should they not do that? If we cannot extend more encouragement to such people than we have in the past, we deserve that the population of our outback should continue to fall. It is ridiculous for a man to bring a heavy truck empty to Perth in order to take back a load of something or other from the metropolitan area.

I do not think that there are many woolgrowers at present worrying much about carting their own wool to the metropolitan area or to the outports, except in special circumstances. With the present labour position and the worry of maintaining a property, the average producer is quite prepared to have the railways cart his wool, or would be if the department made a reasonable attempt to give efficient service. It takes about a week to get a railway truck, nowadays, and another week for the loaded truck to get to the metropolitan area. When one wants to send wool to an outport such as Albany, to be loaded for the London wool sales, unless one can be sure of having a truck there a week before the ship sails there is not much prospect of getting the wool on board.

There was one case recently where a man could not get a railway truck to carry his wool to Albany and he therefore made other arrangements, which involved breaking the law, and the wool was transported by road. The result is that the wool is now on its way to the London sales and if that man had not done what he did he would have had to wait for another ship to arrive in November. Mr. Watson expressed very well the fundamental principle that the primary producer who is the owner of a vehicle should be allowed to cart his own produce, if he so desires. In some of the Great Southern areas one can today see the ridiculous spectacle of trucks built for the cartage of bulk wheat being sent in to load wool for haulage to the metropolitan area and huge trucks subsidised for the carting of wheat are knocking the roads to pieces with loads of 15 or 20 tons.

Similarly super, is going by road in the same sort of vehicles and is subsidised to the extent of 4d. per ton mile, which is

more than any loss the railways would suffer if 90 per cent. of the State's producers carried their own wool to Fremantle. In spite of that, railway trucks that should be carting the super. out to the country and bringing bulk wheat back are being sent out to load wool. It is farcical and I do not think we will ever get far with the rehabilitation of our railways while this artificial protection is continued. My own experience of this permit system, which is supposed to be so readily available, is that an application to cart wool is considered to have no merit at all.

The Minister made reference to something that took place a couple of years ago, but I think there were special circumstances at that time—a shortage of coal or something of that nature—and it was not long before the railways prevailed on the Minister to have those permits refused. Apart from those in such areas as Dale, which is not served by the railways, there is little possibility of the average producer getting a permit to cart his wool to Perth in his own vehicle. The Minister may be able to cite some extraordinary case where in recent times such a permit has been granted, but I very much doubt it.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: He cannot do so, as he has already spoken.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Mr. Parker warned us of the danger of freight increases that might result from this measure. I say those increases are certainly coming, because of the rehabilitation of our railways—this public service that ought to be—which are getting still further into debt. It is inevitable that we must soon be faced with proposals for increases in freight but I question whether the primary producers should be asked to stand such increases. In dealing with matters of railway finance and over-capitalisation the most careful consideration should be given to the question before further burdens are placed on those who are providing the freight for the railways.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: What about the consumer?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: He has to pay also, in certain areas, and he will pay indirectly on a lot of stuff, whether or not he lives in the country. I think this amendment is something that should have been dealt with long ago. The producer does not mind paying railway freight today, but he does resent the stranglehold that is placed on any competition with the railways and that is being used as a cloak for the inefficiency of the administration of that department.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [8.55]: We have heard a relay of speakers—with one exception—in support of the Bill. I think that the hon. member who sponsored the measure did a most unwise thing because,

although it contains only a small amendment to the Act it would have serious repercussions on the railways and it is wrong, ethically, because an amendment of this character should be made only as a matter of Government policy after careful investigation and consideration of its effects.

Hon. L. A. Logan: What is wrong with its being introduced by a private member?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: No-one has mentioned that the producer, bringing his bales of wool to the ports, would be paying only half the license fees paid by his competitors. If the farmer wishes to be placed in the same position as others in this regard, he should pay the same fees. The point, however, is that by depriving the railways of wool freights, particularly when wool is at its present high price, we would be making a serious mistake and I do not think that at this juncture the House should countenance such a revolutionary departure. One would imagine that there was a Labour Government in power and that it was being attacked by the Country Party, whereas in fact we have a Liberal-Country Party Government and, if this amendment is practical, why should not the Government have introduced the Bill?

Hon. L. A. Logan: Why should a private member not have introduced this Bill?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I think it is a mistake and, although I have every sympathy for the farmers, and appreciate Mr. Strickland's contribution to the debate, I believe that if a primary producer gets a permit to cart bananas, fish or anything else to the metropolitan area, it is ridiculous to expect him to take his vehicle back empty. That should be adjusted.

The Minister for Transport: It is a special concession.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We must realise that the Bill would have serious repercussions on the railways and I think any member with a sense of responsibility should hesitate before voting for it. I will vote against the measure.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [9.0]: I was about to move the adjournment of the debate until tomorrow but it seems that the wish of the House is to finish it and come to some conclusion. I have been attempting to correlate some figures with respect to the railway services, but, nevertheless, I can use them at some later date because I have been, and am still, endeavouring to see the railways put on to a sounder economic basis than in the past.

This measure has done one or two things, at least. Firstly, it must have shown to the Government the need for an overhaul of the State Transport Co-ordination Act. The statements made by Mr. Strickland are such that they should

be investigated without delay. In a country with wide open spaces such as ours and with its need for expansion it is puerile to think that motor trucks can travel 300 miles or more and then by regulation are compelled to return empty. That is just sheer stupidity.

The Minister for Transport: They are granted a permit to bring special perishable goods down, but it would be uneconomical to the State to allow those trucks to return loaded.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I still maintain that it is utterly stupid and it makes it perfectly clear that the whole transport system could bear an investigation from which the State must profit. There are certain other aspects about this measure which are of interest. As the Honorary Minister for Agriculture has said, there is a duty on the individuals of the State to preserve our railways and in order to do so we may have to inflict some restrictions on movement of goods by individuals. It always seems to me extraordinary that in times of depression we can make a concession to one or more sections of the community and carry goods at an absurd cost and then, when times are good, fail—because of, shall I say, lack of political courage?—to restore those charges to their true figures.

Any one section of the community cannot have it both ways. One cannot have concessions and then ask that there should be no restrictions. I consider that we should look at the whole question from the point of view of whether, in getting rid of restrictions, we can also agree that some of the existing concessions must go. It is useless to say that we can deprive the railways of profitable transport, and then expect them to continue to transport the rest of it at a loss. I make the appeal that the whole question of the railways and the cost of transport both to the consumer and the producer in these times when the economy of the State has completely altered, should be given a close and thorough review.

From the figures I have been attempting to gather and which are still incomplete I understand that freight such as superphosphate is still being carried at only a small proportion of the actual cost to the railways. Is there any justification for that at the moment? It does not appear so in the light of the prices which producers are now obtaining for their products. I have always found that if I am in trouble and I approach the bank for an overdraft, I have a duty to the bank to return that overdraft once my difficulties are overcome.

I do not care which section of the community it is, but any section which obtains a concession because it is in difficulties should have an inherent obligation to return some payment for the benefit of such a concession enjoyed in times of hardship.

Today the tendency seems to be to get something down to a low level and then fight to keep it there. One would think that we are a people divided; that some of us are of a different nationality almost, because we live in different sections of the State. We will never be a nation whilst that sort of thing persists.

We must get down to the stage when we think more of the State than we do of sections or of ourselves. I was most interested in the address given by Mr. Halliday on his return from Great Britain in which he said that he was greatly struck with the democracy existing in the Scandinavian countries and particularly in Denmark where every person had a pride in his job and it did not matter what he did because he regarded it as something done for Denmark. We must drop a lot of secondary interests which have grown up within Australia and look at the question from the aspect of the State and the Commonwealth as a whole. I would seriously suggest that this Bill has made it perfectly clear that the members of this House view the whole question of transport of products and passengers in the metropolitan areas as one which should come under review in order to put the transport system on a sounder basis.

In other words, we should look at it in the light of paying for a service rendered instead of expecting various sections of the community to pay for something which the service is handling at a loss. The railways are continuing to give a large proportion of its services today because of sectional pressure; because of the fact that we have not learnt to realise that we are one people in one State. Whilst I am not going to oppose this measure I do sincerely trust that the Government will give early consideration to the whole question of transport. The State Transport Co-ordination Act should undergo a complete review and consideration should be given to the question of whether the whole of our economic set-up relating to the railways should be entirely altered, especially in view of our present economic conditions.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [9.8]: I think the member who introduced this measure was ill-advised because if he looks at the section of the Act which he seeks to amend I think he will agree that the farmer is getting a pretty fair deal. I say the member was ill-advised because in his own enthusiasm he will possibly, with actions such as this, destroy many of the benefits and concessions which farmers enjoy today.

Hon. H. L. Roche: They do not get many today.

Hon. G. FRASER: There is always a chance of killing the goose that lays the golden egg and there are quite a number of commodities that are carried on our

railways today at a loss. Here is a commodity that can be carried at a profit; one of the most profitable that the railways can transport.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Which are the ones they carry at a loss?

Hon. G. FRASER: There are certain times of the year, when concessions are granted, when several commodities are carried at a loss.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Name some.

Hon. G. FRASER: Super is one.

The Minister for Transport: There is loss on the carriage of all produce, wheat and all grains.

Hon. G. FRASER: There are quite a number of them. One cannot accept concessions on some commodities and then, when the railways are making a profit on others, ask for further concessions on those also and thus deprive the railways of any opportunity of running at a profit. It has to be one thing or the other. If we are going to allow the carriage of some commodities by road then the railways must be put on a profitable basis and farmers made to pay full freight charges with no concessions whatsoever.

This Bill puts only one aspect. I suppose next session another country member will put forward another aspect and so we will find that the railways will be left with the carriage of goods on which no profit is made at all. So, instead of the hon. member's enthusiasm tending to assist his farming friends it will probably impose a hardship. Also, whilst he may be successful in getting the Bill through this Chamber, it will receive scant attention in another place.

Hon. A. L. Loton: It will not be the first one.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not think he will achieve anything by getting it through this House. The hon. member has ventilated his grievance and members generally have suggested that we should alter the State Transport Co-ordination Act, so I think he would be well advised to withdraw his Bill. If he perseveres and gets away with it, I think he will find that instead of being of benefit it will be a detriment.

On motion by the Honorary Minister for Agriculture, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 17th October, 1950.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Education, (a) as to teachers	
In remote localities	1236
(b) as to handcraft allowances	1237
Tuberculosis, as to incidence amongst migrants	1237
Housing, (a) as to tenders for prefabricated homes	1237
(b) as to War Services Homes Act	1237
North-West, as to tabling Development Committee's minutes	1238
Rent increases, as to applications to Fremantle Court	1238
Hospitals, as to nurses' quarters at K.E.M.H.	1238
Railways, as to departmental report	1238
Bills : Stamp Act Amendment, 1r.	1238
Electoral Act Amendment, 3r.	1238
Health Act Amendment, 3r.	1238
Prices Control Act Amendment (Continuance), 3r.	1238
Roads Agreements Between the State Housing Commission and Local Authorities, Com.	1238
The Fremantle Gas and Coke Company's Act Amendment, 2r.	1236
Bush Fires Act Amendment, 2r., Com.	1241
Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment, returned	1241
Supply (No. 2), £7,000,000, returned	1255
Acts Amendment (Allowances and Salaries Adjustment), 2r.	1255
Railways Classification Board Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report	1262
Fruit Tree Standards, Message 2r.	1262
Plant Diseases Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report	1264
Bulk Handling Act Amendment, 2r.	1264
Superannuation, Sick, Death, Insurance, Guarantee and Endowment (Local Governing Bodies' Employees) Funds Act Amendment, 2r.	1264
Annual Estimates, Com. of Supply, general debate	1257

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

QUESTIONS.

EDUCATION.

(a) *As to Teachers in Remote Localities.*

Mr. HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Education:

In view of the fact that many teachers in lonely, distant country centres suffer considerably because of the complete lack of amenities in such places, will he give consideration to the granting of what might be termed "remote allowances" to the teachers concerned?

The MINISTER replied:

The matter of granting "remote" allowances to teachers appointed to distant country centres is receiving consideration. Though at the present time teachers