

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 12th October, 1950.

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

QUESTIONS.

SUPERPHOSPHATE.

As to Manufacture at Esperance and Sulphur Supplies.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN asked the Honorary Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Has any consideration been given to the prospect of establishing superphosphate manufacturing works at Esperance?

(2) Would it not be more economical to bring phosphatic rock to Esperance and manufacture superphosphate there, than cart the pyrite ore to Albany, Picton, the metropolitan area and Geraldton, hundreds of miles, instead of to Esperance, only 125 miles?

(3) If the answer to question (2) is in the affirmative, would the Government give consideration to the manufacture of sulphuric acid from pyrite ore at Norseman where these deposits exist, or at Esperance?

(4) Have the economics of transport been considered?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Not at present.

(3) This will be investigated.

(4) The whole matter is now under consideration.

I may add that the matter of pyrites is causing considerable concern. I have arranged for an interview with Mr. Cuming of Western Australia and Mr. Cuming of the Eastern States next Tuesday to discuss the matter. I shall also take it up at Norseman in ten days' time, and perhaps the hon. member will be present at that discussion.

GASCOYNE RESEARCH STATION.

As to Finances and Control.

Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Honorary Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What was the amount of profit or loss made at the Gascoyne Research Station during each year from 1945 to 1950?

(2) Under whose direction and control are experiments carried out on the research station?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) 1945, profit nil, loss £35 17s. 3d.; 1946, £4 11s. 1d., nil; 1947, nil, £283 0s. 7d.; 1948, £444 19s. 10d., nil; 1949, £1,263 18s. 9d., nil; 1950, nil, £567 8s. 6d.

(2) Superintendent of Horticulture.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

1. Mining Act Amendment.
Transmitted to the Assembly.
2. Western Australian Government Tramways and Ferries Act Amendment.
3. Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act Amendment.
Passed.

BILL—PUBLIC SERVICE APPEAL BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland—in reply) [4.40]: During the course of the debate, Mr. Fraser raised a couple of points which I said I would check and deal with when replying. The intention is that whenever any permanent position in the Public Service within the automatic range is raised to a class above the maximum of that range, it shall be declared vacant, if the occupant of the position has not passed the Public Service promotional examination.

As members know, all permanent officers in the service within the automatic range, proceed by annual increments to a maximum salary which they receive when they reach 27 years of age. This maximum is at present £559 per annum. Any temporary officers appointed to positions to which the automatic range applies, also proceed by annual increments to this maximum, irrespective of their age. No officer can be appointed to a position classified above the automatic range unless he has passed the promotional examination or an approved equivalent. It will be seen, therefore, that if a position within the automatic range were raised, by appeal or otherwise, above the automatic range, and the occupant had not passed the promotional examination, it would be unfair to other qualified officers if he retained the position.

The proposal, therefore, in such cases, is that the position be declared vacant immediately, and advertised in the "Government Gazette." Until such time as it is filled, the previous occupant will remain in it and will receive the higher rate of salary. When it is filled he will be placed in another position within the automatic grade, of which there are plenty available in the service, and revert to his previous salary. Should a position within the automatic range be raised to a higher classification, and the occupant be qualified by examination, then there will be no necessity to declare the position vacant, and the occupant will continue in it.

Then again, Mr. Fraser was also concerned as to the period that might elapse before the position was filled. I am assured by the Public Service Commissioner that there will be no delay, and immediate steps will be taken to gazette and fill any such position. This amendment is necessary in the interest of fairness to qualified public servants, and to reserve the higher ranks of the service for persons who have fitted themselves by courses of study. The amendment is requested by both the Civil Service Association and the Public Service Commissioner. I trust the position is now quite clear to the hon. member.

Hon. G. Fraser: Yes, thank you.

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 previous day.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South) [4.45]: The objectives of most of the clauses of the Bill are quite worthy, but I take exception to the protection of kangaroos and emus except when a proclamation is issued for their destruction. In the North, kangaroos are a menace at all times, and to ask anyone there to give consideration to them, by way of protection, is going to the extreme. Owing to the action of the Protector of Game in the last few years, kangaroos in the more settled areas in the southern part of the State have become a minor menace. The trouble is not the amount of feed they eat, but the quantity they destroy by hopping over it, and the way they break fences.

The emu can be, and is, as big a menace as the kangaroo. Some three years ago the emu in the southern portion of the State was declared a protected bird as it was claimed it would be of value if tourists could see it. Well, that might be all right in theory, but not in practice. I would far sooner have to get rid of the first half dozen emus than have to tackle them when their numbers had

grown to thousands. We can remember when the Army was called out some years ago to destroy emus in the Walgoolan area—but that experiment was not very successful. That shows how the emus can become a pest.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Some people wanted to protect them there.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Those are two aspects of the legislation to which I take exception. I do not like the provision in the Bill that all notices are to be made by proclamation. Whilst I am not very keen on regulations, I would far sooner have a regulation than a proclamation. I am hopeful that when we deal with the Bill in Committee, the word "proclamation" will be deleted from as many places as possible.

I notice also that the Bill provides that a person who is a native according to the interpretation of "native" in the Native Administration Act can take game only for the purpose of food. I do not know whether that means that a native cannot get a permit to destroy game. I would like the Minister to give some information on that. The Bill states—

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Act a person—

Who is a native according to the interpretation, "Native" in section two of the Native Administration Act, 1905-1947, may take fauna—

upon Crown land or upon any other land, not being a sanctuary, but where occupied, with the consent of the occupier of that land,

sufficient only for food for himself and his family.

If a man wishes to employ natives to destroy game, they should be entitled to get a permit.

Hon. L. Craig: A station owner can give them permission to destroy as much game as they like; but without permission they can destroy game for their own use.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Only for food.

Hon. L. Craig: That is, without permission.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I read it otherwise. My interpretation of it is that the native can take game for his own food only on Crown land or on property where he obtains permission from the owner. However, the Minister might be able to clear up that point. There are many smaller marsupial animals within the State such as the wombat, the opossum and the spiny anteater which have become almost extinct, because of the entry of the rabbit and poisoning by the use of phosphorous. If sanctuaries can be established where these smaller, and in most cases, harmless animals can be cultivated and reared, I feel sure that the objectives of the advisory board will be achieved. But, I certainly do not like the protection of kangaroos and emus all over the State.

There is another point about this Bill. It seems to be mixed up with many other Acts of Parliament. When one reads through the Bill one finds that there are references to the Fisheries Act, the Vermin Act, the Whaling Act and the Zoological Gardens Act. As well as that, if this Bill is passed, we will have the Fauna Protection Act, and they are all mentioned in the Bill.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: You have it all wrong.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: No, I have not.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: You should be glad that these Acts are there because they will override this Act, if it is passed.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: If anyone wants to go through this Bill he will have to refer to all the other Acts to see which is the overriding one. Thus, to interpret the law a person will have to check back on all these other Acts, and I think this is the first Bill that I have seen where so many other Acts are mentioned as being overriding Acts of the particular Bill being discussed.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: All the other Acts can override this one.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: The Vermin Act is one.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Yes, but it is necessary to consider all these other Acts in order to obtain an interpretation.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: That is very easy in regard to vermin.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Yes, I know that, because anything declared vermin under the Vermin Act will not have the protection of this Bill. But it would be difficult to discover what a man could do under the Justices Act, for instance, unless he referred to the Justices Act.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: This would not protect grasshoppers or any other vermin.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: No, anything declared vermin under the Vermin Act—such as rabbits, emus or kangaroos—does not come under the protection of this Bill. I am clear on that point. But all these other Acts are mentioned, and they are overriding Acts. It states that if this Bill clashes with any of the Acts previously referred to, then those Acts override the Fauna Protection Act.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Take whaling, for instance.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: It would be difficult to connect this up with whaling.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It would be very confusing, reading this in conjunction with the Whaling Act.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: We might even have to consult Mr. Parker about the Justices Act or the Police Act, for example. That

is the only exception I take to the Bill, but there seems to be this overriding power of the other Acts intermingled with the proposed carrying into operation of this Bill. There is another matter and that is the mention, in several places, of the word "proclamation."

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: How often does that occur?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: On page 8 it states—

Except to the extent which the Governor declares by Proclamation pursuant to the provisions of this section all fauna is wholly protected . . .

Then, at line 12 on the same page it states—

and for these purposes may from time to time by Proclamation declare . . .

Again at lines 18 and 19 it states—

The Governor may from time to time by Proclamation, vary the provisions and operation of a Proclamation promulgated pursuant to the power conferred upon him . . .

In about 20 lines the word "proclamation" occurs four times. If the Honorary Minister would like, I will endeavour, during the rest of the afternoon, to try to find out how many times the word "proclamation" occurs in the Bill.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: You do not like the word?

Hon. A. L. LOTON: No, I do not.

Hon. H. L. Roche: All Ministers do.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: There seems to be something in that, but I am sure all members of this House are not very keen on the word. That is all I have to say on the Bill and I give it some blessing but will try to put it in order for the Minister during the Committee stage.

On motion by Hon. G. Fraser, debate adjourned.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [4.55] in moving the second reading said: In submitting this important Bill for the consideration of the House, I crave members' indulgence while I recapitulate events which led up to the introduction of the measure. As members will be aware, the first Cabinet under Responsible Government was appointed on the 29th December, 1890, and comprised five Ministers.

I feel it is of interest to relate that those five gentlemen were Hons. J. Forrest, C.M.G. (Premier and Colonial Treasurer), George Shenton, M.L.C. (Colonial Secretary), Septimus Burt, Q.C. (Attorney

General), William Marmion (Commissioner of Crown Lands), and Harry Venn (Commissioner of Railways and Director of Works)—all men whose contributions towards the progress of this State were of no mean order, and whose names may be observed perpetuated in various parts of the metropolitan area.

These were stirring, halcyon days. The young colony with its meagre population of 46,000 people was beginning to emerge from its teething troubles and was on the eve of vigorous developments. Soon the Coolgardie and Hannan's goldfields were to be discovered, thousands of acres were being alienated annually and the production of wheat, sheep and cattle was expanding steadily. The previous decades had been tedious and difficult. Development had been hampered by the shortage of labour and what progress had been achieved was at the cost of great effort and considerable self-sacrifice.

Then came Responsible Government, Western Australia being the third Australian colony to be granted this privilege. The application of local knowledge to local conditions met with immediate success, and posterity honours our first Ministers who laid the foundations of our present contented and well-organised community. It is of interest to members of this House to note that one of the three delegates appointed to visit England and assist in the passage through the Imperial Parliament of the Enabling Bill for Responsible Government was Mr. S. H. Parker, Q.C., later to be Sir Stephen Parker, M.L.C., Colonial Secretary, and subsequently Chief Justice, the father of our colleague, Hon. H. S. W. Parker.

In the first Parliament under Responsible Government there were 15 members in the Legislative Council and 30 in the Assembly. The five Ministers were responsible to a population of 46,300 persons, one-twelfth of the people for which today we have only three more Ministers. An additional Minister, making six in all, was appointed in 1894, the Mines Department being created in that year, with Hon. E. H. Wittenoom, M.L.C., as the first Minister for Mines. The other portfolios were Premier and Treasurer, Attorney General, Commissioner of Railways, Commissioner of Crown Lands, and Minister for Education—two fewer Ministers than at present, with far less than the onerous duties of today, to govern 82,000 persons, one-seventh of the population of 1950. The membership of the Legislative Council had by now increased to 21 and that of the Assembly to 33.

No further increase in the number of constitutional Ministers was made until 1927, but the principle of Honorary Ministers, or Ministers without portfolios, as they were then termed, was first adopted in 1901 by the then Premier, Hon. George

Leake, who appointed two Ministers without portfolios, Hon. Adam Jameson, M.L.C., later Commissioner of Crown Lands in the Transvaal, and Hon. Walter James, afterwards Sir Walter James, K.C.M.G., who later became Premier and subsequently Agent General. Since then the only Ministries without at least one Honorary Minister were the Throssell Government which existed for three months only in 1901, and the Mitchell Government of 1930-1933, in which Hon. Sir Charles Latham was Deputy Premier and Minister for Lands, Immigration and Health.

As I have said, the number of constitutional Ministers remained at six until 1927 when the then Premier, Hon. F. Collier, introduced a Bill to increase the number to eight. This received the whole-hearted support of the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Sir James Mitchell, who agreed that there was far too much work for six Ministers and that the use of Honorary Ministers was not sound. The Bill passed through the Legislative Assembly without further comment, and opposition in the Council was negligible.

Turning to the present Bill, the Government's experience since it was elevated to power in 1947, has made it apparent that two more constitutional Ministers are necessary. Cabinet is fully in agreement with the Leaders of the Government and the Opposition, who emphasised in 1927 that the principle of Honorary Ministers in control of departments was undesirable. The Honorary Ministers of the present Government, as were others before them, are fully engaged and have the actual, if not the constitutional, responsibility for the administration of the departments under their control.

It is unquestionable that the work of government could not proceed satisfactorily without the assistance of the Honorary Ministers, and they are entitled to be recompensed for their services, which, as members are well aware, is of a full-time nature. It is not equitable, either to themselves or to the portfolioed Ministers, that the Honorary Ministers should have to share the allowances made available under the Constitution for eight Ministers. The cost to the State of providing two more Ministers would be negligible, and the work of government would benefit. At present an Honorary Minister, although exercising complete jurisdiction over his departments, cannot sign statutory documents, which must be referred to a portfolioed Minister who is nominally in charge of the departments. This is cumbersome and a waste of time for all concerned.

There are difficulties inherent in the administration of this vast State that are not met in smaller and more closely populated communities. Our far-flung boundaries, our distant settlements, our lengthy

lines of communication, our primary industries and our expanding secondary industries all call for a degree of administration that is peculiar to Western Australia. Since the Constitution was amended in 1927 to provide for eight Ministers, I do not believe any member will disagree with my contention that the functions of government have grown substantially. I might state that, prior to the increase in 1927, there were six constitutional and three Honorary Ministers engaged on full-time duties.

The work of a Minister entails far more than attending Cabinet meetings and sitting in his office. It is essential that he sees at first hand the machinery of his departments and this requires a considerable amount of travel, which is responsible for the absorption of much of a Minister's time. He must also endeavour to pay attention to the requirements of his constituents, and this to a busy Minister presents certain difficulties. I do not hesitate to say that the work of government in this State requires the full-time services of 10 Ministers, and it is only equitable that each of those Ministers should be adequately compensated for the exacting responsibilities that he is prepared to shoulder on behalf of the people of the State.

In regard to the numerical strength of the Ministry, it must be remembered that although the Constitution was amended in 1927 to provide eight portfolioed Ministers, each Cabinet since then, with the exception of the Mitchell Ministry of 1930-33, has found it essential to utilise an Honorary Minister, and for the past three years two Honorary Ministers have been necessary.

The tremendous developments within the State since 1927 are exemplified by the following facts which I shall place before you, Mr. President. Our population has grown by 157,000, or 40 per cent.; Consolidated Revenue and expenditure from Consolidated Revenue have almost trebled themselves; the value of output from industrial establishments has been more than trebled; the total area of land under crop has grown steadily, as has the production of livestock; the output of gold is once again showing an upward trend; 50 per cent. more coal is being produced than in 1927, and continual improvements in this regard are expected; the total value of both our imports and exports has been quadrupled.

There is not the slightest doubt that in the past 23 years the functions of government have expanded substantially. The work of practically all departments has increased to a large degree and, with the growth of industry and production, it has been found necessary to create new departments, such as the State Electricity Commission, the Public Trust Office, the State Housing Commission and other

smaller undertakings. Then we have departments whose operations have increased greatly in the past two decades, such as the Departments of Industrial Development, Education, Works and Water Supply, Health, Native Affairs and others.

There is the very likely possibility that considerable attention will have to be given to the matter of civil defence, which the Commonwealth proposes to treat as of great importance. This will mean probably that there will be a State Minister controlling this matter. In addition to those I have referred to, the work of all departments has increased with a corresponding addition of responsibility to all Ministers. An indication of the increase in work of government is provided by a comparison of the number of persons employed by the Government. In December, 1933—earlier figures are not available—the total of Government employees, including the Public Service, railways, trusts, trading concerns, etc., was 28,240. By June, 1950, this had risen to 35,049, an increase of 25 per cent. in 17 years. This is indicative of the growth of work by the Government, all of which increases the responsibility of Ministers. In case members fear that the greater number of Government servants means a growth of bureaucratic influence, I would like to point out that both in 1933 and at June last the proportion was one in 16 to the population.

A comparison with other States is of interest. New South Wales has 16 Ministers, including one Honorary Minister; Victoria has 12; Queensland has 11; South Australia has six—none of these States having Honorary Ministers—and Tasmania has six portfolioed and three Honorary Ministers. It is obvious that if Tasmania, with its size and compactness, requires the services of nine Ministers, then Western Australia, with the difficulties inherent in its great size and scattered population, is entitled to the services of 10 Ministers. Comparisons with other States are, however, difficult and not likely to prove productive. It is necessary that we gauge our requirements by the demands made upon our Ministers, and this is the true criterion.

An indication of the increase in the work of the Government is provided by a comparison between the Expenditure Estimates of 1926-27 and 1949-50. There is a considerable disparity, even allowing for the difference in the value of money. The Estimates for 1926-27 amounted to £9,780,000, against a total of £23,510,000 for 1949-50. A review of some of this proposed expenditure is of value. It was estimated that in 1926-27, £4,832,000 would be spent from the General Loan Fund. The figure for 1949-50 was £12,262,000. A comparison of the individual items is of interest. These are as follows:—

	£	£	£
	1926-27	1949-50	Increase
Departmental	140,034	151,250	11,216
Railways and Tramways	1,052,223	3,379,657	2,327,434
Harbours and Rivers . .	233,285	890,197	656,912
Water supply and sewerage	589,080	1,351,423	762,343
Development of goldfields and mineral resources	105,175	185,944	80,769
Development of Agriculture	2,123,750	847,863	1,275,887 (decrease)
Roads and bridges, public buildings, etc. . .	329,300	750,000	420,700
Sundries	259,500	1,171,384	911,884
Electricity supply	Nil	3,534,529	3,534,529
	£ 4,832,347	12,262,247	7,429,900

Members will note the greater Expenditure Estimate in 1926-27 for Agriculture. The bulk of this however, was allocated to group settlement. Governmental expenditure also shows a vast increase, £2,436,000 being allocated for 1926-27 compared with £8,900,000 for 1949-50. Some of the items making these totals are also of interest. In 1926-27, £605,438 was allocated to Education as against £1,908,596 in 1949-50. Other amounts were—

	1926-27.	1949-50.
	£	£
Agriculture	84,570	303,307
Public Health	32,974	745,430
Mining	78,059	208,778
Lands	72,689	230,705
Police	211,502	550,179

I trust that my remarks will assist members to reflect upon the necessity of increasing the number of constitutional Ministers. This Bill is not the result of an idle whim. The Government has brought it down because experience has shown the amount of work to be done by Ministers and the drain that it exerts on their nervous and physical energy. It is incontestable, too, that with the influx of migrants and the opportunities of progress in this State, the work of government cannot but increase. I can assure the House that there is ample work for 10 full-time Ministers. So far as finance is concerned, the extra expenditure will be negligible, and the responsibilities shouldered by the Honorary Ministers justify their promotion.

It has been pointed out that South Australia has six Ministers compared with our proposed 10. Perhaps the matter is one of each State managing its own affairs, and maybe it would be impertinent for us to say that any State would be better or worse off if it did exactly the same as another State. It may be asked, however, whether South Australia is the one State that is right and the five other States are wrong. I unhesitatingly say that the administration of departments in this State is a full-time job for each of the 10 Ministers. I would direct attention to the fact that Western Australia has a considerably greater mileage of railways than has South Australia. It is true that South Australia handles roughly the same total amount of business from the point of view of value.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The railways are in much better condition.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: That is so; but Western Australia's greater mileage presents a bigger problem in administration. With regard to mining, I do not think anyone will pretend that South Australia can be compared with Western Australia so far as the volume and importance of mining activities are concerned. Another point is that, quite a number of years ago, South Australia decided, rightly or wrongly, to transfer the northern half of that State to the Commonwealth. In Western Australia we have the administration of the North-West which constitutes a problem that South Australia does not have to handle. In all the circumstances, I suggest that the time is overdue for the step proposed to be taken. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Suburban) [5.19]: I have pleasure in supporting the Bill because I appreciate that, with things as they are at present, Ministers cannot get around the country as they should. They have too much to do in their offices, which is wrong. I regret that the Bill does not provide that two full Ministers shall be appointed in this Chamber. I believe that is absolutely essential. I recollect that an increase in the number of Ministers was made previously on the understanding that there would be two full-time Ministers in this Chamber.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Have there ever been?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: No; but I thought there was an understanding that there should be. I am one who has always been opposed to Honorary Ministers.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Why call them honorary?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Exactly! It is entirely wrong. Moreover, it is a misnomer. Until recently, when we amended the Constitution Act, I had grave doubts whether an Honorary Minister was not debarred from sitting in this House if he received any remuneration. Honorary Ministers perhaps do not receive remuneration, but they do receive some compensation, if I might put it that way.

Hon. E. M. Davies: They do not receive that from the Treasury.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: It does not matter where it comes from, provided they are remunerated for some public work. Let me give an example. When I was a member of another place, I was engaged by the Crown to conduct a prosecution at the request of some people who had been robbed. I was not permitted to take any fees—it did not matter where they came from—because I was acting for the Crown.

If I had done so, the work would have constituted an office of profit under the Crown, no matter who paid. So I have had grave doubts whether an Honorary Minister might not perhaps be prejudicing himself as a member of Parliament by accepting such an appointment. However, I am pleased to say no-one has tested the point and I trust nobody will.

I hope that we will not have any more Honorary Ministers, but that all those holding portfolios will be full-time Ministers and that they will be able to carry out completely the duties allotted to them instead of some of them having to refer so many things to nominal Ministers. We have, for instance, a Minister controlling the Agricultural Department; but he is not the Minister for Agriculture. Yet, under the Act, it is necessary for the Minister for Agriculture to sign various documents; with the result that we have the anomaly of the Minister for Lands in another place being nominally the Minister for Agriculture and Hon. G. B. Wood in this House actually being the Minister controlling the department. It is very wise for the Government to put an end to that state of affairs. I trust that members will give full support to the Bill.

It is said that South Australia is able to get along with six Ministers. It may be that they are quite happy about it, but Ministers there certainly have not the great distances to travel which confront Ministers in this State. Again, on account of the conditions existing between the Commonwealth and the States, Ministers have to travel to the East a good deal. All that those in South Australia have to do is to jump on a train in the evening, do their work the next morning, and return the following day. They can go backwards and forwards to Melbourne, Sydney or Canberra with the greatest ease. That cannot be done in Western Australia, although there are aeroplanes.

We cannot expect a Minister to leave here at night, travel to Melbourne by aeroplane, do his work the next day and catch the plane back to Perth. No man's physique could stand up to that. He would be run down and in ill-health in a short time. In South Australia it is a different proposition. A Minister can get some rest in the train. That is not possible travelling in an aeroplane at night. It is a wise step the Government has taken to provide for 10 full-time Ministers, and I support the Bill.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Gray, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £7,000,000.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 5.27 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 12th October, 1950.

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

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Increase in Freights and Fares.

Hon. E. NULSEN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What percentage increase generally on railway freights has been made since 1947?

(2) How much has railway freight increased on superphosphate, per ton, per mile, and what is the percentage increase since 1947?

(3) What is the increased freight on wheat per ton, per mile, and per centum?

(4) What is the percentage increase on railway fares, first class and second class respectively, since 1947?