

Mr. J. Hegney: The Government will have to increase the salaries in order to get them.

Mr. BOVELL: I do not mind how much the salaries are increased, but they must be obtained if the dairying industry is to develop as we hope it will.

Hon. A. H. Panton: They are not available.

Mr. BOVELL: Further, it will be seen from answers given to my questions that the number of licensed surveyors employed by the Department of Lands and Surveys at the 30th June, 1939, was seven and the number at the 30th June of this year had declined to four. People are anxious to take up land and there are probably approximately 1,600 applications awaiting surveys. With the limited number of surveyors available, it will be impossible for these people to get their land and develop it. More surveyors are urgently needed.

The member for Middle Swan interjected that it would be necessary to increase the salaries being offered. I quite agree with him. It is important to the State's welfare that we obtain the services of these qualified men and they should be offered sufficient financial inducement not only to obtain them but also to retain them in this State. This is a matter that the Premier might well bring up at the next Premiers' Conference. We do not want the several States to be competing one against the other for the services of qualified officers. Some overall policy should be adopted by the States so that when qualifications are equal, the salaries shall be equal, and those salaries should be adequate. Unless we obtain the services of qualified staff to assist our agricultural industry and its development, we shall find ourselves in a hopeless position.

Mr. J. Hegney: Veterinary officers were actually brought here and the salary was not high enough and they had to provide their own cars; so they moved on elsewhere. Some went to Singapore.

Mr. BOVELL: That is what I have been trying to emphasise and I thank the hon. member for his interjection. One other matter to which I wish to make brief reference is the timber industry. Several members have stated that timber is being exported from this State at the expense of the local building programme. Members, however, should appreciate that there must be reciprocity in trade. Ships that bring goods required by us arrive here fully laden, and I should say, though I have no definite figures, that one out of four returns to the Eastern States in ballast, which plainly indicates that we are receiving more than we are giving. Close co-operation between the States is needed in regard to the commodities they have to offer us and those we have to offer them. There is another aspect that

should be borne in mind: the waterside workers of Busselton and Bunbury are dependent mainly upon the shipment of timber for their livelihood. If export supplies are to be withdrawn, an economic hardship would be imposed upon those workers, which would be grossly unfair.

The member for Bunbury spoke of the need for providing amenities for workers in the timber industry. These men gave sterling service during the years of war and in the post-war period, and there has been no serious industrial trouble amongst them. They put their shoulders to the wheel and provided the requisite timber that was so urgently needed. It does one's heart good to visit a timber mill in the South-West and see the energy that these men put into their work. With the member for Bunbury, I hope it will be possible to provide some amenities for these workers, many of whom are living under very primitive conditions. This would be only fair to a body of men who have played such a vital part during the years of war and since.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [5.53]: I wish to join with other members in offering congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on your reappointment to the Chair, and I wish to thank members on both sides of the House for the kindly welcome extended to me. I also wish to thank the electors of Geraldton for having done me the honour of returning me to this Parliament. I am deeply conscious of the honour conferred upon me and appreciate the responsibility that the position entails. I can only hope that at all times I shall be able to do my best to serve the interests of the people of the Geraldton electorate and of the State generally.

Tonight we have heard members from the south-western portion of the State dealing with that territory and speaking of the things that ought to be done there. We in the northern agricultural areas consider that we have not been treated quite fairly by Governments over the years, and I hope that in future some of the matters represented by members from those parts will receive attention. One of the great requirements of many parts of the State, and particularly of the northern agricultural areas, is water. Over a period of some months we have heard of the disabilities being suffered by settlers in various parts of the State through lack of adequate water supplies. I earnestly ask the Government to take immediate steps to improve the water supply position at Geraldton. This entails an improvement of the catchment area at Wycherina, an enlargement of the holding tank and an increase in the size of the mains from the reservoirs, as well as amenities for workers at the pumping station.

About three years ago certain materials were provided to build homes for water supply workers at Wycherina. Those

materials have not been used but are still lying on the ground. Those men are suffering disabilities in their living conditions and we consider that this position should be remedied as soon as possible. I should like the Government to continue with the boring operations to ascertain the quantity of water available at a depth in the Northampton area and at Howathara, Waggrakine, Utaccara and Narngulu. If water can be provided in those parts, it will materially assist the settlers and also aid the policy of decentralisation, of which we hear so much and which we fervently hope one day will be brought about.

The other evening the member for Moore mentioned the scheme in the Gingin Brook area to serve Wongan Hills and Midland areas. I heartily endorse his remarks and agree that some definite plan should be put in hand as early as possible. Meanwhile the requirements of the Geraldton district, which I have stated in brief outline, should be attended to immediately.

I also ask the Government to establish a research station at Geraldton for the benefit of the gardeners, particularly those engaged in the tomato-growing industry. This industry was the means of bringing into the district a sum of £300,000, which is quite a lot of money for a district of that size. That amount included a large sum from the Eastern States and also payment in gold from the Singapore area. All possible assistance should be given to the people engaged in the industry, and research officers should be stationed there to assist them to combat the various diseases to which the tomato plant particularly is subject.

An improvement is needed in the school facilities and the recreation grounds attached to the schools in the Geraldton district. The Northampton school has no decent recreation ground, and I ask the Government to proceed with the levelling of the site that has been selected in order that the children attending that school may have a decent recreation ground. The Geraldton high school is an excellent institution, doing very fine work, and caters for children who come from far distant places, some as far away as Wyndham in one direction and Wiluna in the other. The school is sadly overcrowded and, considering the work it has done and will be called upon to do in future, we ask that it be enlarged in order that the increased inflow of children may be adequately catered for.

We also ask for a speeding up of the building programme in connection with Government rental houses; and an improvement in the supply of building materials generally, particularly in connection with jarrah, jarrah fittings, door frames and things of that nature. Consideration should be given, where possible, to the use of local materials such as our stone and bricks. I believe that the use of those materials would lessen the demand on the

timber, etc., of the South-West. We also ask that a less costly home be built for the workers in the lower income groups. We would like to see reintroduced the workers' homes system as we knew it pre-war. That system was one under which a £5 deposit was made, and every fortnightly payment of rent meant so much paid off the house, and not as the present scheme is. We would like that to be instituted as soon as possible to allow those desirous of owning their homes to do so.

The extension of the main roads programme in the district generally, and the Northampton-Carnarvon road in particular, should be proceeded with. That road serves a useful purpose in assisting to open up our vast North-West, but at times, after rains, large portions are practically impassable. We believe that the road is of such importance that it would warrant a grant being made by the Federal Treasurer, or being asked for by our State Government, so that it could be made an all-weather road as far as Carnarvon for the time being.

There should also be an improvement in the port facilities at Geraldton. We do not get the amount of shipping that we think we should. Perhaps something could be done about that at a later date, but the facilities generally for handling cargo are crude. They are the same now as when the wharf was first put there, except for the addition of tractor equipment which was introduced in the last few months. That is worked as a shunting engine, and that is about all it is used for.

We ask for improvement in the district hospitals. We would like to see the Government do something in the way of establishing our regional hospital. Some years ago officers made a survey of the site selected by a committee, but since that time nothing has been done. If the Government intends to go on with the construction of a regional hospital for this vast area, I ask that it make land available so that the ground can be levelled in preparation for the time when the hospital will be built. We are far from the metropolitan area, and we have not the proper facilities to treat urgent cases. We think it is a vital necessity that our regional hospital should be established.

Another question, that of abattoirs at Geraldton, has agitated the minds of the primary producers and also the householders in our district for a number of years. I believe that some years ago a committee was formed and it presented a report, and a site was actually selected for abattoirs in our district. I would like to see the Government do something in connection with the establishment of abattoirs and freezing chambers in Geraldton so that the primary producers could use them to handle their stock in the flush season instead of having it left on their hands for the lean periods.

Another important industry in our district that I hope the Government will give assistance to—it is an old industry, and yet a new one—is the lead mining industry. I suppose it is one of the oldest industries in this State. It was allowed to lapse for a period of years because of the low price of base metals. In the last few years, however, we have seen the price of base metals rise to a great height. Today there is a certain amount of activity on the fields but, as it is of only a small nature, the prospectors and small mineowners experience a great deal of difficulty. I believe that to put the lead mining industry on a sound basis would require very little assistance in the first instance, but it would be an industry that would be valuable not only to the Northampton and Geraldton districts, but to the State and the Commonwealth in general.

I believe, in conclusion, that we should, wherever possible, assist in a policy of decentralisation. I think that one of the worst things that can happen to this State is what has happened in the Eastern States, and that is for the State to become top heavy by the centralisation of all its industries in one portion of it. It should be a vital policy of any Government, and of every member of this Chamber, to help anyone who is trying to decentralise industry.

On motion by Mr. Totterdell, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.7 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 10th August, 1950.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Public Service, as to car mileage subsidy to officers	176
Government employees, as to number	177
Machinery parts, etc., secondhand, as to control and prosecutions	177
Licensing Act, as to prosecutions	177
Housing, as to policy of granting permits	177
Roads, (a) as to assistance to Northampton Road Board	178
(b) as to Northampton-northwards section	178
(c) as to Merredin-Bruce Rock section	178
(d) as to widening Canning Highway	178
Abattoirs, as to erection at Geraldton	178
Hospitals, as to visiting fee for pensioners	178
Education, as to Guildford School grounds	178
Bulk handling, (a) as to bin, Grass Valley	179
(b) as to bins, Quelagetting and North Cunderdin	179
Traffic, as to removal of underground conveniences	179
Address-in-reply, sixth day	179
As to leave to continue	183

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

QUESTIONS.

PUBLIC SERVICE.

As to Car Mileage Subsidy to Officers.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Premier:

(1) How many State officers are subsidised on a mileage basis for the use of their own cars on Government service?

(2) What are the mileage rates (metropolitan and country) applying?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Not known. Each department and instrumentality has authority to authorise the use of officer-owned cars on State business.

If desired, a return will be prepared from information to be obtained from departments, etc.

(2) The mileage rates applying at the present time are—

Mileage Travelled Each Year on Official Business.

Metropolitan Area—

1—5,000 Miles:

Over 12 h.p., 6.4d.; 12 h.p. and under, 5d.

5,001—10,000 Miles:

Over 12 h.p., 4.6d.; 12 h.p. and under, 3.7d.

Over 10,000 Miles:

Over 12 h.p., 3.7d.; 12 h.p. and under, 3d.