

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, June 27, 1951.

The House met at 11 a.m. pursuant to Proclamation, the Speaker (Hon. Sir Robert Nicholls) presiding.

The Clerk read the proclamation by His Excellency the Governor's Deputy (Sir Mellis Napier) summoning Parliament.

After prayers read by the Speaker, the House, in compliance with summons, proceeded at 11.5 to the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Governor's Speech. Honourable members returned to the Assembly Chamber at 11.47 and the Speaker resumed the Chair.

NEXT DAY OF SITTING.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) moved—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, July 24, at 2 p.m.

Motion carried.

NEW MEMBER FOR FLINDERS.

Mr. Glen Gardner Pearson, to whom the Oath of Allegiance was administered by the Speaker, took his seat in the House as member for the district of Flinders in place of Mr. R. W. Pearson, resigned.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

The SPEAKER—I have to report that, in compliance with summons from His Excellency the Governor, the House attended in the Legislative Council Chamber, where His Excellency was pleased to make a speech to both Houses of Parliament of which I have obtained a copy and now lay it upon the table.

Ordered to be printed.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended the House to make appropriation of the sums set forth in the accompanying Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure by the Government during the year ending June 30, 1951, for the purposes therein stated.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Gumeracha—Premier and Treasurer), having obtained the suspension of Standing Orders 43 and 44, moved—

That the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider further Supply being granted to His Majesty.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood—Acting Leader of the Opposition)—At this stage, Mr. Speaker, as Standing Orders allow, I bring under the Government's notice a most important matter affecting South Australia. It has

been mentioned in the press, but the Government has not heeded the warnings given. For some time members of the Opposition have pressed for more than one Parliamentary session each year. We are confronted today with many major problems which must be ventilated by members of the Labor Party. The matter to which I wish to refer normally comes within the ambit of Government supporters, particularly those who represent rural areas. It is strange that I, as Acting Leader of the Opposition during the absence of the Leader, who represents a country constituency, should have to introduce it in the interests of the people. I refer to the position of the dairying industry. In last night's *News* a tribute was paid to that industry through a cartoon depicting a fairy story. In February last, while on an organizing tour in the South-East with the member for Hindmarsh, not connected with the dairying industry, I was given to understand that there was a sharp falling off in dairy products and that milk production had been reduced because certain ex-servicemen, who had been allotted land under the soldier settlement agreement, had given up dairying. A number of these settlers, who had been allotted dairying blocks in order to produce milk, which would be used ultimately for butter manufacture, have disposed of their dairy herds and taken up sheep and fat lamb raising. With the present high wool prices every inducement has been held out to them to leave dairying and go in for wool.

The seriousness of the position was brought forcibly under my notice at Penola, where I was informed that there was every possibility of the Penola butter factory closing its doors. How many people today, unless they are regular customers, can walk into shops which normally sell butter and obtain their requirements? The Government has not met its obligations to the people in this regard. My interest was increased a little later when a Mr. O. J. O'Grady referred to the decline in the industry and said that because he could not get labour he had been compelled to disperse with his dairy herd. This morning I listened to the Governor's Speech but it did not mention any attempt by the Government to overcome the difficulties facing the dairying industry. In the first edition of the *News* of Thursday, February 22, last, there appeared a reference by me to Mr. O'Grady's statement. I do not know why it appeared only in the first edition. Perhaps it was due to a shortage of newsprint. I said on that date that an

improvement in the dairying industry in South Australia could be accomplished only by calling the State Parliament together so that the Government could amend the Industrial Code as a first step towards giving the industry the right to approach the Industrial Court to get an award. Almost universally throughout Australia the 40-hour working week is recognized. The dairying industry, under a National Security Regulation, had an award in 1943 whereby £6 15s. a week was paid to an employee for a 56-hour working week. No opportunity has been given to the dairymen to have their case reviewed. Two other industries had awards under National Security Regulations and when they appeared before the two Conciliation Commissioners dealing with those industries they were told that their cases could not be considered, but since then they have applied to the industrial tribunal and had their awards adjusted to comply with present standards. The Government has rejected the overtures of the Opposition to amend the Industrial Code. At the moment I regret I cannot ask a question on the matter of amending the Code in the interests of the dairying industry, because we have not yet reached question time.

Mr. Stott—That would not affect a Federal application.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—A Federal application in this industry is as far away as are the North and South Poles. The Government could amend the Industrial Code and to do it an interstate dispute would not be necessary. It could amend two sections of the Code to give dairymen the right to approach the proper authority to get an award for their industry.

Mr. Fletcher—Would that produce butter and milk?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Until they can get labour the problems of South-Eastern dairymen will remain as serious as they are today. I believe dairymen in the hon. member's district, like dairymen in the hills, are paying wages to their employees higher than are considered in the compilation of the returns for their products. Until dairymen can get an award which is recognized constitutionally they will be in difficulties. The *News* of Saturday, March 3, 1951, contained a leading article which concluded as follows:—

The whole problem of the dairying industry is important enough to engage the attention of the State Government, and inquiries should be conducted to discover the cause of the industry's difficulties and supply the remedy.

In that article the *News* unsuccessfully tried to draw the attention of this Government to this vital matter.

Under the heading of "South Australian Senator Sells Herd" the *Mail* of Saturday March 31, tells how Senator E. W. Mattner, of Balhannah, had to dispose of his herd because he had been hit by the present dairy prices. The Senator, whom I congratulate on his appointment as President of the Senate, is reported as having said that one of the causes of the drift from the dairying industry was the unwillingness of the sons of dairy farmers to work on their fathers' properties. That indicates the state of emergency existing in the industry: fathers cannot provide decent wages and conditions for their sons who work with them. Is it not time this Government took notice of some of these things and acted for the benefit of the public of this State? It should do so instead of advertising what it is going to do in some particular area after a scheme has been submitted to the Public Works Committee. The re-organization of the dairying industry is necessary to encourage the people who have to work on the land.

Senator Mattner went on to say that another factor in the hills dairying area was the price being obtained for subterranean clover seed. He said that from 1s. 3d. a pound received for subterranean clover seed before the war it had risen to 6s. a pound. It is possible for a farmer to make more than £150 an acre each year from clover seed. I wonder whether this was the determining factor which persuaded the South Australian Senator to dispose of his dairying herd so as to give him sufficient land to return that income from each acre sown with subterranean clover irrespective of the consequences to the dairying industry.

The Minister of Agriculture is reported in the *News* of June 7 as saying that Australia would be going all out to supply its own butter needs, let alone exporting it. He said that appeals had been made to the dairy farmers not to switch to other production, but that this was hardly a positive approach. He advocated a full examination of the problems of the dairying industry, including rising costs and the terms of the dairy employees' award. Therefore, it took until June 7 after my statement late in February for the Minister to even consider the matter.

The fundamental point is the necessity for an award for the dairying industry. The Minister would sit behind his colleagues and offer no real inducement which would benefit

employees engaged in the industry. On the opening day of the session the Government can make all the promises in the world; but when it comes to the real hard facts of this industry they are silent. His Excellency's speech contained nothing coinciding with the Minister's statement. Why cannot the Government alter the present setup of the Industrial Code so as to provide for these workers? Is it just a question of kite-flying to make believe that at some time, but in the Government's own time, it will consider the advisability of an award to cover the dairying industry? In view of the importance of the occasion today I ask leave to continue my remarks at 2 p.m.

Negatived.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—One lives to learn of the extraordinary happenings that take place in Parliament. It would have been becoming to extend to me the courtesy I desire. The dairy industry must be placed upon a competitive basis, at least equal to the standards prevailing in other industries. I am not interested in this matter from the price angle; I leave that to those who are competent to handle it. I have the greatest admiration for the South Australian Prices Branch and pay a tribute to the Commissioner and his staff. We are confronted with other factors affecting the dairying industry.

Mr. Moir—Did the Prices Branch do a good job in fixing the price of potatoes?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I will have sufficient to say about that question later. Further, there will be on the next Notice Paper a question bearing on potatoes. It seems that the growers of potatoes have adopted the Communist doctrine of sabotaging the industry. The greatest sabotage in industry that I have known took place recently when certain growers stood four-square and said they would not supply the metropolitan area because they wanted an increase in the price. They committed sabotage by withholding supplies from the public and, I believe, said they would consign them to New South Wales and prevail upon a conference about to be held for an increase in the price of the commodity. What happened? They forgot there was a Creator who sent bountiful rains, and as a result the potatoes, I understand, remain in the ground. Prominent members of the Government took steps to order supplies from Tasmania.

I have before me an article which appeared in the *Herald* of June 19, 1951. Under the heading of "Taste Change Cuts Butter

Supply" it states that Australia is short of butter because milk output has not increased and there are more people to consume it; and because a higher percentage of milk is being consumed in the form of ice cream and cheese. It indicates that Australia produced 1,254 million gallons of milk in 1939. The article goes on:—

Then came the war. Labour drifted from the farms. In 1949 total milk production was the same. But in the 10 years from 1939 to 1949 the distribution of milk changed. This table, in percentages, shows where the milk went and where it goes now.

	1939.	1949.
Butter	82	65
Cheese	3	8
Condensed milk	2	7
Fresh milk, ice cream, etc.	13	20

Notwithstanding that we have had a 10-year inflationary period we are only producing the same quantity of milk today as in 1939. We have passed through a raw time and, with a greatly increased population, are still confronted with the question, "How much further can we boost the production of milk?" The other part of my case concerns the activities of certain wholesalers in Adelaide. Information I have indicates that they are getting a large margin of profit. An investigation into the processing of condensed milk has not yet been made. Last session I referred to certain happenings in this direction. Had my remarks been heeded the dairying industry would have been placed on a footing second to none in South Australia, but the Government, through weight of numbers, said "No, this shall not take place." The article continues:—

This involves social problems. The dairy farmer must be offered a good financial return; amenities must be provided to compensate for the drudgery and hardship peculiar to dairying.

Mr. Whittle—What price would you fix for butter?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I am not called upon to act as a Prices Commissioner.

Mr. Whittle—That is the fundamental in the matter you are discussing.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—We have a State Prices Commissioner, and, until 1948, had a Federal Prices Commission. Mr. Whittle wants to know what should be the base price, but we have to get down to what is a fair butter-fat price. We got more stability under Federal price control than we have today under State control. Portion of a letter I received

recently regarding the subsidy payable on processed milk products states:—

Since then State Prices Commissioners have refused to advance local prices to cover the increase in the price of milk to the farmer.

Notwithstanding that, certain increases have been agreed to for manufacturers of processed milk. I understand it is the desire of butter manufacturers to have the butter price increased by 1s. 1½d. a pound. Does that mean that if the Prices Commissioners agree to representations made on behalf of the manufacturers the public will have to pay the added cost? The Commonwealth Government desires that a certain subsidy shall be paid. The Commonwealth Government is carrying on a subsidy which was originally provided by a Labor Government. If the Prices Commissioners agree to an increase of 1s. 1½d., which will be passed on to consumers, how shall we arrest the drift in our economy and how soon will there be an application for a further increase in the basic wage to meet the added charge? Will the Commonwealth Government agree to increase the subsidy on butter? Will the Treasurer, when he attends the next Loan Council meeting, be told, "Go back and tell South Australian consumers that it will be necessary for them to pay the extra 1s. 1½d.?"

Sitting suspended from 12.50 till 2 p.m.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—If the dairying industry is to be placed on a basis comparable with other industries the Industrial Code must be amended to enable the industry to get an award. Consumers wonder where they will get their next butter supplies. At present they can get second grade butter at a slightly cheaper price. The last time that type of butter was available was in the depression years. The Government has not given the necessary time and attention to all matters appertaining to the dairying industry. There should be a complete investigation by Commonwealth and State Governments into the economics of the industry to bring it more into line with the wool industry. This would have an important bearing on soldier settlement, and the provision of some taxation relief. In areas where cream or butter production is a part time occupation, generally carried on by the farmer's wife, the income so derived should not be considered as earnings of the farmer for taxation purposes. It is public knowledge that inquiries have been made recently by taxation officials in certain parts of the State where farmers have bartered butter for

groceries. The result has been that more cows have been sold for beef. The position is becoming intolerable. Why should there be so much inquiry in this way? Second grade butter, which many people did not know was produced, is available. More first grade butter should be produced and if we allow the dairying industry to go by the board we shall be in difficulties.

There should be an immediate investigation into the price paid to dairy farmers for processed milk. Information should be obtained about the cost of this processing and the profits derived by the manufacturers. Last session I sought an investigation into these two matters. This morning I gave figures showing the quantity of milk production which is processed into condensed milk, showing an increase of about five per cent. The Metropolitan Milk Board set-up provides that 2s. 5½d. a gallon is paid for milk forwarded to the city for human consumption. There are times during the year when the quantity fluctuates. It may fluctuate by from 35 per cent to 80 per cent. For the remainder of the milk, which is processed, 1s. 4d. a gallon is paid. The producer gets 1s. 4d. a gallon, but how much does the manufacturer get? I am content with a fair margin of profit to the manufacturer, but the producer should get a better return. I argued this way last session, and my views have not changed. I have made four important points which merit the consideration of the Government in an attempt to place the dairying industry on a sound basis. I read in the *News* last night the fairy tale that the dairying industry had gone out of existence. I hope that will never eventuate. I trust my remarks, both in criticism and in constructive suggestion, will be heeded.

Mr. TAPPING (Semaphore)—I welcome this opportunity to bring under the notice of members matters associated with problems on the Port Adelaide waterfront. I do not claim to be an authority on this subject, but I have lived in the district for many years and have been a shipping clerk. I know something of the problems which exist now and which have existed for some years. It is difficult to understand why so many men in high positions in this country see fit from time to time to castigate the waterside workers who, in my opinion, have done an excellent job. During the war they worked day and night, and as a result many are now lying under the soil. They gave of their best to the nation and similar service is being given today without,

in my opinion, serious interruption. Senator McLeay has told us through the press that he proposes to bring out from England a Mr. Bastin, a Port of London authority, to advise us. I feel that to be unnecessary because we have in Australia and in our own State men with the highest qualifications. The men who were capable of preparing the Greater Port Adelaide scheme should be competent to carry out an inquiry into the causes for the slow turn-round of ships. They have evolved a plan involving the expenditure of millions of pounds and when it is brought to fruition we will be extremely proud of it. Therefore there is no need to bring men to this country to tell Australians what to do. Admittedly, we should learn where we can, but while we have our own men of such high quality it is needless to bring others from abroad to advise us.

It is strange that the Federal and State authorities are at variance; there is no co-ordination on the problem on the slow turn-round of ships, which affects all ports of Australia. On the one hand the Federal Government is to bring Mr. Bastin out from England; on the other, our Premier has already appointed Mr. Bishop, the Auditor-General, a commission to ascertain what can be done to overcome the problem. If a common effort were made to find a solution it would be better from the national standpoint. It is unfortunate that Senator McLeay, in particular, has so often condemned the waterside workers as being dominated by the Communist element. I know these men and the executives of their union, and I know their political colour. The executive of the committee consists of 10 men, only one of whom is a Communist. The others are loyal to the ideals of the Labor Party and to South Australia, and I say without fear of contradiction that they are not dominated by Communists. Some of the men have been in the industry for 30 to 35 years.

Mr. Moir—That is the executive. What about the men?

Mr. TAPPING—I assert that 98 per cent of the waterside workers are not members of the Communist Party; that is beyond question.

Mr. Shannon—I am prepared to accept that, too.

Mr. TAPPING—Although the Communist bogey has been brought into the conflict on the water front in South Australia, as it has been in other States, I wish to make it abundantly clear, from my personal knowledge and association with these men, that they are conscientiously out to discharge and load boats

as expeditiously as possible. The Premier told us through the press recently that he desired the working strength of the waterside workers to be raised to 1,850. I remind him that in 1945 there were 1,177 men in the industry at Port Adelaide, and from time to time the organization has been approached by the stevedoring and other authorities urging that the manpower be increased in order that the greater number of steamers coming to Port Adelaide may be dealt with expeditiously. The waterside workers have always acceded to those requests. There may have been some delay in arriving at that decision, but ultimately they have always agreed to take in the number of men considered desirable. Today there are 1,694 men in the union and the Premier says he wants 1,850. It is, however, entirely wrong to overload an industry, and I shall attempt to prove that it is not so much a question of manpower as of improved harbour facilities to bring our port into line with modern requirements, as has been done in the Port of London and American ports.

I will concede for the moment that it may be desirable to enlist the services of further men but, in view of the well-known manpower shortage, it must be agreed that if more men are introduced into one industry other perhaps equally important industries must be deprived of men. All the large industries in this State are crying out for labour—firms such as General Motors-Holdens or the Adelaide Cement Company. We find in the *Advertiser* daily two full pages of advertisements for men for various occupations. I have made an analysis of the former occupations of the last batch of 180 men admitted to the waterfront industry. I find that quite a number came from the Railways Department, and it is almost impossible to separate the waterfront and the railways in degree of importance to the community. Some of the new men were transport workers—men who drove trolleys and tractors and so forth—so if we continue to do what the Premier recommends we will simply be taking from other important industries men they can ill-afford to lose.

There is too much overlapping of authority on the waterfront. We have three organizations trying to conduct the shipping at Port Adelaide. Firstly there is the Harbors Board which allots berths, and it is doing an excellent job. It has no control, however, regarding the availability of labour. That is the duty of a second committee known as the Labor Allocation Committee, which consists of

representatives of employers, employees, and the Stevedoring Board. This body decides how many men are required for the vessels berthed at Port Adelaide and Outer Harbour. If that were all the position would be ideal, but there is a third committee known as the Priority Committee. This committee has the right to direct manpower to what are called "urgent boats." This committee consists of representatives of the shipowners, without any representation from either the Harbors Board or the waterside workers, and we often find that after an allocation of labour has been made to one boat the men are transferred to another. Overlapping of such magnitude is entirely wrong and something should be done either to abolish the Priority Committee or to provide for representation of employers and employees upon it—men who know the business and who would make the allocations fairly and squarely.

One of the troubles underlying the problem is the fact that our wharves are not up-to-date; for a number of years some of them have been in a state of decay. I do not condemn anyone in particular for this state of affairs for during the war our sole aim was to win the war and public works, perforce, were a secondary consideration. The effect has been to throw Harbors Board plans years behind schedule, but I bring the matter before the House to show that the watersider is not the villain he is often alleged to be. Let me give a little more detail regarding the wharves. Corporation Wharf has been in a sad state of repair for the last five years. About 10ft. to 15ft. is in total collapse and cannot be used to berth a steamer. In its normal condition it could accommodate a vessel of 3,000 tons capacity. Darling Wharf at Birkenhead, which could accommodate a ship of 5,000 tons capacity, because of its state of disrepair, could possibly accommodate a ketch but certainly not a steamer. Howard Smith Wharf is undergoing repair. It is capable of accommodating a 6,000 ton steamer, but cannot be used. Queen's Wharf is in the course of reconstruction. It could accommodate a 10,000 ton steamer. The Harbors Board has done an excellent job in completing a new wharf here, but as the wharf shed is not yet available the berth cannot be used for general cargo. Part of Birkenhead Wharf is unsafe. Members may have read in the press last week that whilst a lorry was being driven over it its rear wheels went through the decking. If something is not done in the near future this wharf will not accommodate ship-

ping. Many years ago the Port Dock, which accommodated two steamers, was filled in with soil and now serves an excellent purpose for the reception and dispatch of timber. In all that is six wharves which cannot take ships now, so members will understand why some vessels have to wait at the Semaphore anchorage. It is true that within the last 12 months a company started operations in Port Adelaide to provide tow motors, and horses have been completely eliminated from the wharves.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—How many steamers can be berthed at Port Adelaide today?

Mr. TAPPING—Eighteen. The tow motors are doing an excellent job, but unfortunately the trucks containing cargo dragged by them from the shed to the wharf are of an obsolete type. Some of them have been in use for 25 years.

Mr. Stephens—Some for 40 years.

Mr. TAPPING—Frequently the pin which keeps the wheel on the axle drops out and the cargo is tipped over, causing delay. Such matters, although perhaps minor as regard costs, tend to hold up discharge and loading.

Mr. Whittle—Could not this matter have waited for a month until the debate on the Address in Reply?

Mr. TAPPING—This House has not met since November. Since then the position has been aggravated by unfair condemnation of the waterside workers. This is the first chance of bringing this matter to the notice of this House and of the public. I make no apology for bringing it up today. Some people have said that the slings used in the discharge or loading of the cargo do not carry enough; but the weight of the sling is determined by an authority and must not exceed a certain tonnage, for reasons of safety. The waterside workers have always loaded their slings in accordance with the demands of that authority.

Some months ago with other members of Parliament I inspected a ship, *Eastern Saga*, at No. 16 berth. That ship had brought 5,000 tons of Japanese cement and 2,500 tons of Japanese iron. Both of those commodities were urgently required for our home building projects; but unfortunately about 40 man-hours were wasted in unloading because the cement was packed in brown paper bags. Thirty per cent of it needed rebagging, with consequent delay. Although we may make allowance because of that delay, overseas ship-owners in London who are talking about by-passing certain Australian ports cannot. South Australians do not desire to hold up

any ship; but allowance must be made for these happenings. People in other parts of the world, including London, should know something of our disabilities in Australia.

The greatest disability in the turn-round of shipping is the overstowing of cargo. For many years this has taken place, but because of the shortage of shipping transport today the position has been accentuated. On June 14, 1951, the *New Zealand Star* was at No. 19 berth. It brought about 3,000 tons of cargo to Adelaide; but before that cargo could be discharged 500 tons of cargo intended for Melbourne but which had been placed on top had to be discharged, placed upon the wharf, and reloaded after the discharge of the Adelaide cargo. The 17 men comprising the gang had to work 21 hours discharging and reloading the overstowed cargo. On June 15 the *Dunedin Star* had to discharge 600 tons of overstowed cargo and reload it after the discharging of the cargo for this State. This unnecessary discharge and reloading cost much money and valuable time, and is one reason for the delay of ships and one of the main reasons why no-one should castigate the waterside workers without first apprising himself of the full facts. Recently the *Pioneer Star* was delayed for 50 hours because overstowed wool had to be discharged and reloaded. Such things have been going on for a long while. Another ship, the *Sarpedon*, had to discharge and reload 1,200 tons of lead, which caused a delay of many days.

With regard to the question of manpower on the waterfront, the *News* recently contained the following paragraph:—

A special Commonwealth investigating officer who has made a survey of the port, has reported to the Federal Government that the Port Adelaide wharves are undermanned and that there has been a shortage of labour at Port Adelaide on every working day this year.

Some time ago the Stevedoring Industry Commission decided that waterside workers not required to work on a particular day but who attended for work would be paid 12s. attendance money. Although the Commonwealth investigating officer was reported as having said that there had been a shortage of labour at Port Adelaide on every working day this year, I have figures relating to May and June of this year which disprove his statement. For the week ending May 21, 1951, 26 men received attendance money at the rate of 12s. per day; for that ending May 28, 76 men; for that ending June 4, 37 men; for that ending June 11, 75 men; and for the week ending June 18, 44

men. Those figures rebut the contention of the Commonwealth investigating officer. They are authentic and based on the actual amounts of attendance money received by the men because there was no work for them when they attended.

Mr. Colin Anderson, Director of the Orient Line, after looking at Australian conditions, said in Adelaide recently that our turn round in Australia is about two degrees slower than in other parts of the world. When one considers the up-to-date ports in Britain and America, that comparison leads one to conclude that our waterside workers are doing a sterling job.

The *Advertiser* of June 5, 1951, reported Captain T. Wilson-Cameron, Master of the British steamer *Heronspool* as saying that the steamer was unloaded surprisingly fast by watersiders at Port Adelaide when the ship discharged prefabricated houses, motor cars, cement and other general cargo from the U.K. last month. I am prepared to accept the captain's opinion and assure the House that such an effort by the waterside workers was not a special one, but typical of their performances over many years.

The June edition of the *Monthly Summary of Australian Conditions* issued by the National Bank of Australasia Ltd. contained the following paragraph:—

Shipping Problems.—With the constant congestion of shipping at Port Adelaide many problems are facing leaders of Government and industry. Badly-needed materials often lie a week or so at the anchorage. To help in alleviating the position, 109 new members are soon to be admitted to the Waterside Workers' Federation, bringing the membership strength up to 1,694. When facilities at Port Adelaide are improved to meet the growing trade, and when additional labour is available, the turn-round of ships is expected to improve.

That statement has two aspects: firstly the lack of facilities, and, secondly, the need for additional labour. The wharves must be brought up-to-date to accommodate another nine or ten steamers. Then the waterside workers will be prepared to give more men to do the job. However, on the information I have received, we have today enough waterside workers in Port Adelaide to handle the ships if we had sufficient berths and facilities to do the job.

We should not condemn but rather co-operate as much as possible. This is a national problem. The closer together we can bring the employer and the employee on the waterfront, the better it will be for South Australia and the British Empire generally.

Mr. STEPHENS (Port Adelaide)—I do not desire to treat this matter in as much detail as the hon. member for Semaphore. I followed him closely throughout and many matters put by him should be examined fully by a Committee of Inquiry. However, many of those people blaming the waterside workers for the slow turn-round of shipping do it only for the purpose of hiding their own faults. If a proper inquiry were held into this matter some people would get it "in the neck"—and it would not be the waterside workers. Years ago I worked on the wharves and drove trolleys carting the goods away from the sheds on the wharves. For many years as Secretary of the Drivers' Union I was connected with the carting to and from the ships and also worked on them. Other people besides the waterside workers have been blamed for the slow turn-round, for example, the Harbors Board and the seamen. The Government has appointed a civil servant to inquire into this matter. Although every member of the House and the public generally have the greatest respect for Mr. Bishop, I still think the onus should not be put on one man, a public servant, to give a finding on other public servants, nor should he be called upon to condemn the action of other Government departments. The work should be delegated to someone outside the Public Service. The Government should appoint a Supreme Court Judge and two assessors to go into the matter, and then allow the shipping companies, the Harbors Board, and the waterside workers' organization to examine the statements of witnesses. Some may think that is going too far, but the position is so important to South Australia that it is well worth-while appointing such a committee.

The first subject of inquiry should be, "Is there a slow turn round of ships in Port Adelaide?" To ascertain that it would be necessary to compare the position here with that in other ports of the world. Mr. Tapping mentioned that last week the captain of a ship said that the waterside workers at Port Adelaide worked faster than those in any other port of the world. Commander Symonds, who was in charge of practically all shipping in South Australia during the war, has done more for shipping in South Australia than all the shipping companies together. If a shipping company came to him requesting priority he would say what was to be done, and that would be the end of it. The companies knew him too well to question his action.

Mr. Dunks—You think we want a dictator down there?

Mr. STEPHENS—If we ever have a dictator I hope it will not be the hon. member. I have heard him say that the Government should buy all the businesses which don't pay and let the taxpayer bear the cost, but as soon as a business became profitable he contended that it should be passed over to private enterprise. We do not want that kind of dictatorship. I attended the farewell to Commander Symonds, who eulogized the waterside and other workers at Port Adelaide. He said they often worked until almost exhausted. On occasions he received urgent messages to get certain work done and before the men had had reasonable rest they would be asked to volunteer to get ships away, and never once during his whole term had they refused. He said that South Australians should **take their hats off** to the waterside workers for what they had done. Now, we find people rushing to the papers and condemning the waterside workers. Their statements are either deliberate lies, or are made by people to hide their own faults. It amounts almost to criminal action.

Some years ago I brought before the Government an injustice which had been done to men on a vessel at Port Adelaide. I had to fight the case which involved two vessels, the *Nelcebee* and the *Gerard*, and it took me some time to persuade those in authority that the men were in the right and the company concerned in the wrong. The Government eventually agreed with me and the Marine Act was amended and the men were paid damages. The *Nelcebee* recently ran on the rocks, and if the Government fails to do something about the waterside position it will also be on the rocks!

If the committee of inquiry ascertains that there is a slow turn-round of ships in South Australia, the next question to be decided is, "How can the position be improved?" We need not stand here and criticize certain people for what has been done. I could criticize some of the shipping companies and the Priority Committee for giving priority to friends. When men could have been employed to work on overseas vessels they were not allowed to do so, being held in reserve for certain companies. Such action results in benefit not to South Australia, but to the companies. An inquiry would reveal that waterside workers were not responsible for the slow turn-round. There should be greater co-operation between the shipping companies, the Harbors Board, and waterside workers. The workers are doing their bit.

It has been said that the 40-hour week is the cause of the slow turn-round. That is wrong. It does not affect the position because most waterside workers work a 50-hour week. In the same breath the critics say that the position is due to a shortage of men. I admit that at times there is a shortage on the waterfront, but that applies at peak periods in the railways and the tramways and to the abattoirs during the lamb slaughtering season. When there is a labour shortage we cannot expect any transport system to meet full demands. Mr. Tapping referred to the out-of-date plant on the waterfront at Port Adelaide and said that some of the trucks were used 20 years ago. More than 40 years ago I worked on the wharves and some of the trucks then in use are still operating. The men refer to them as the trucks with bent axles and square wheels. It is a disgrace that they are still in use; they retard the quick handling of cargo.

I recently visited New Zealand and observed the facilities provided for waterside workers. They use travelling cranes in loading and unloading vessels and this results in a quicker discharge and loading. I have known a vessel to be held up not because of lack of wharf accommodation but lack of shed accommodation. When a shed is filled with cargo it is no use permitting another vessel to unload until that cargo has been removed. Often, owners leave the cargo in a shed until it suits them to remove it, as this saves storage costs elsewhere. In the railways if a truck is left beyond a certain time a demurrage charge is made; that is quite right. The Harbors Board should impose a heavy charge on people who make use of wharf sheds for storage purposes.

Mr. Dunks—Has that not been done to some extent?

Mr. STEPHENS—Yes, but it is not enforced as it should be, or the charge is not high enough to induce them to remove the cargo. I have been told that some consignees wait until others have removed their cargo so that they would have a freer access to their goods. Sometimes they find that another cargo is either in front or on top of their cargo and cannot get it out. That results in big delays. I remember the time when there were no wharf sheds at Port Adelaide, and if that were the position today I am sure there would be no complaints about congestion, because the goods would be removed and not

allowed to remain in the open. Some people have taken advantage of the position to the disadvantage of incoming boats. Sometimes at the wharves you will find pianos stowed 10 or 12ft. high. They are stowed on top of other cargoes, such as washing machines, and this practice causes delay. The member for Semaphore referred to the over-stowage of cargo. When cargo for other States is stacked above South Australian cargo it has to be taken off before cargo for this State can be discharged, but the worst feature is that people publishing statistics of cargo handled only state the number of tons landed and loaded in South Australia. They ignore the double handling caused by over-stowage; the waterside workers are never given credit for that.

If the Premier allows Mr. Bishop to inquire into delays at the waterfront he should give him enough assistance to conduct a thorough examination. He should not expect one man, who holds an important Government position, to conduct an inquiry unaided. It is hardly fair to ask the head of one Government department to criticize the head of another Government department.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—That is the Auditor-General's duty.

Mr. STEPHENS—I think he has enough to do without the responsibility of inquiring into the waterfront position. If he has sufficient time to inquire into this matter he is not fully employed as Auditor-General today. On the other hand, if he is fully employed he will not have enough time to conduct the inquiry. A judge of the Supreme Court could be appointed for the purpose.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—Are not judges of the Supreme Court fully employed?

Mr. STEPHENS—We could release one from the bench, but we cannot relieve the Auditor-General of his position. I hope a proper inquiry will be conducted because the waterside workers have nothing to hide, but there are other people who have something to hide. Members opposite do not give waterside workers credit for doing the right thing. If we allow members of this House and the public and press to criticize these men when they are doing the right thing they may be driven to doing the wrong thing. Be fair to these men and give them the inquiry they are seeking. The people of South Australia should know the true position and waterside workers should not be continually blamed unjustly.

Mr. McALEES (Wallaroo)—I have been associated with waterside workers all my life. It is easy for people to blame waterside workers for the slow turn-round of ships, no matter what the actual causes may be. These men are an easy target for criticism. They take the blame and say nothing. Last week I was at Port Adelaide and saw timber being loaded into a ship. I was told it was being sent to Western Australia, and it seemed to me ridiculous to ship timber to Western Australia when South Australia was so short of it. Subsequently a statement appeared in the *Advertiser* stating why this timber was being shipped to Western Australia. The Government should not blame the waterside workers for delays when bad management by the ship-owners and the stevedoring companies is the cause.

It was suggested some time ago that in order to relieve the congestion at Port Adelaide timber ships could be discharged at Port Pirie and Port Augusta. I told the Premier that some of those ships could be unloaded at Wallaroo because all the facilities required are at that port. The timber could be unloaded into 50-ton trucks and railed to Adelaide in 4½ hours. The Premier replied that rolling stock might not be available and that there had been a hold-up in Wallaroo the previous week. I did not know anything about a hold-up and made inquiries at Wallaroo. The men there did not know what I was talking about. It seemed that a British Phosphate Commission boat had come into the port after two other vessels had been fully manned. If these two vessels had released six winchmen the phosphate boat could have been discharged without delay. The Premier said he did not blame the waterside workers in any way. The cause of that hold-up was the bad management of those controlling labour in Wallaroo.

When I went on to the Wallaroo jetty I found hundreds of bags of wheat standing on their ends. I asked why they were not in the ship and was told there had been heavy rain and the wheat could not be put in the ship because it was damp. The men were told to pick out the dry bags and load them into the ship. I told them they were being blamed for the delay. I then inquired why the trucks had not been covered with tarpaulins or sheets, and was told that they were unobtainable. I blame the Government for not supplying sheets to cover the wheat. For every sheet used the Government gets 12s. and two are used on each truck, so it is profitable for the Government to provide them.

Sometimes trucks from Victoria come to Wallaroo. When trucks are hired sheets should be supplied and a charge made for them. South Australian trucks should also be supplied with sheets. Although they may be loaded with wood one day they may have superphosphate or wheat or barley in them another day. Work is frequently held up through gangs having to wait for shunters to bring in a long rake of trucks to a ship. Extra shunters could be put on to keep the gangs employed.

Work has never been held up at Whyalla since waterside workers there became members of the Waterside Workers' Federation, yet it is claimed that the federation is Communist controlled. There was always trouble with Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited before the men joined the Waterside Workers' Federation, but there has not been one hour's hitch since. I trust that the waterside workers will have ample representation at the inquiry to be held by the Auditor-General and that it will not stop at the offices of shipowners. Waterside workers welcome an inquiry more than anybody.

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—I support the remarks of members of the Labor Party. Never in my life have I encouraged anything but the best efforts of workers in the interests of the nation and if I were convinced that the waterside workers did not give of their best I would not have risen to speak. The member for Semaphore went to much trouble to place the true facts about the waterfront position before the House. The vast majority of waterside workers at Port Adelaide and other ports in South Australia are advocates of a continuance of the Australian way of life. I join with previous speakers and waterside workers generally in expressing resentment at the allegations which have been made. I do not agree that their ranks could be strengthened; those who make the allegations against the men have not taken the true facts into account. Recently, a number of men were added to their ranks in Port Adelaide, almost all of whom came from other sections of the transport industry, so much so that road transport had a further reverse in manpower, slowing up work in another direction and creating a bottleneck.

Recently, 190 men were medically examined for work on the waterfront. One hundred and thirty were passed as fit, but only 111 finally accepted. The job of waterside worker is not cherished by all men, nor can the industry be looked upon as a worker's paradise. The

member for Semaphore spoke of the number of men who were paid appearance money and referred to the suggestion that an additional 150 could be admitted to the federation. If the position which operated in May and June at Port Adelaide is to continue, with the additional men offering for work, 10 per cent of them would be unemployed. It is an interesting point. I clearly recall the views expressed by a professor much spoken of in another Parliament who said that the solving of the economic problem in Australia was in the formation of a 10 per cent unemployment pool. That makes me wonder whether the advocacy for the admission of more men to the Waterside Workers' Federation is not part and parcel of a policy for creating unemployment. The position should be investigated to ascertain whether this advocacy is not only an attempt to create an unemployment pool, but to create discontent amongst workers in Australia so that claims that waterside workers are following along Communist lines might appear to be correct. All the causes of the slow turn-round of ships in ports cannot be laid at the doors of the workers. Shipowners have no need to show so much concern nor make such a noise about turn-round. A few moments ago I received information from an Adelaide shipping office that during the past 12 months freight schedules have been adjusted and a 40 per cent increase made. This charge is passed on to consumer goods. In the final analysis in the great majority of cases, the workers pay. However, they are sufficiently intelligent to realize that any refusal on their part to give of anything less than their best must react on them. The waterside workers have been unjustly charged.

Mr. DAVIS (Port Pirie)—I regret that this matter has had to be discussed on the opening day of Parliament, but members of the Labor Party have been compelled to put the matter in its true perspective. We have not had an opportunity of discussing the position in Parliament since last November. I join with earlier speakers in their defence of waterside workers and resentment at statements which have been made, as there is not a more honest group of men. Notwithstanding, when anything goes wrong the onus is always thrown on to the workers who have rendered yeoman service to South Australia. Frequently it is claimed that the 40-hour week is to blame for the alleged slow turn-round of ships, about which I am greatly concerned.

The Government has not made sufficient efforts to obtain a faster turn-round by using

all available ports. Places like Port Pirie, Wallaroo, and Port Augusta could be used more extensively. If that were done the turn-round would be much faster. According to press reports it is not the fault of waterside workers that the turn-round of ships is slow, but lack of shipping facilities. On many occasions we have found that there are insufficient berths for ships. Everybody knows that the longer a ship takes on a trip the more the cost of goods is increased. Recently a timber ship which arrived at Port Adelaide was re-directed to Port Pirie and a report I received showed that it was unloaded in record time. Port Pirie is the most suitable port outside Port Adelaide. Three rail gauges enter Port Pirie and no matter what type of cargo a vessel is carrying it can be delivered to any town in the northern part of the State without delay. I do not think anybody can point to one Communist in the ranks of waterside workers at Port Pirie. I have worked on the wharves and I know the conditions under which waterside workers operate. Some people make silly statements about these workers because they have no knowledge of the working conditions. Recently mechanization has taken place on the Port Pirie wharves. Now cranes and grabs are used, whereas previously the work was done with shovels and forks. No general cargoes go to Port Pirie. The loading of lead, wheat, and ore is the main work. Port Pirie could be a central port for shipping purposes. It is foolish to unload goods from ships at Port Adelaide and then rail the goods to northern parts of the State. It would be far better to unload them at Port Pirie, and it would not mean extra charges. The Government has not done its duty to the State, so far as the waterfront is concerned. All ports available should be used to bring about a quicker turn-round of ships. I welcome the inquiry into the operations on the waterfront. It will show that the waterside workers are not responsible for the slow turn-round. I hope the Government will consider the matters brought forward by Opposition members.

Mr. RICHES (Port Augusta)—I join with other members on this side who have spoken about the waterfront position. In today's *News* there is a reference to a report to be presented to Parliament today by the Harbors Board. I do not claim to know the waterfront conditions at Port Adelaide, but I give a categorical denial to what may be construed from the report, so far as some outports are concerned. The waterside workers

at Whyalla and Port Augusta have a creditable record. They work right round the clock and over week-ends to get ships loaded and unloaded. There is an arrangement whereby the Port Augusta waterside workers go to Whyalla to assist the waterside workers there. The arrangement has brought about the greatest co-operation between the men. The waterfront at Port Augusta has never provided full-time work. The men have had to seek other work between the arrival of ships. They are willing to forego that work in order to assist the waterside workers at Whyalla. I would like to see that spirit fostered, but it will not be fostered if we continue to have statements like the one I have referred to in the *News* today.

When the Premier replies to matters raised by Opposition members today will he indicate what provision the Government has made for making a financial grant to the Flying Doctor Service on Eyre Peninsula for the year ending June 30? The matter of financial assistance has been brought before the Premier by way of deputations and correspondence, and Mr. Christian and myself referred to it when the Estimates were discussed last session. The Premier promised that consideration would be given to the request. I know that he has called for details of the service, which has given so much satisfaction. I believe he is sympathetic in his approach to the request, but only two days are left before this financial year ends and the people who operate the Flying Doctor Service have no indication that they will get financial aid. I have glanced through the Supplementary Estimates but cannot find a line providing for any financial assistance. The House was told 12 months ago that the service was losing over £5,000 a year, that it has not been subsidized to the extent of one brass farthing from any Government or semi-Government institution, and that the nurses manning the hospitals in the outback are doing so for £3 10s. a week plus keep. Every one of them is double or triple certificated, and can get a more remunerative position as matron in a larger hospital. The fact that they do not seek these higher paid positions shows they have a fine conception of their duty to people in the outback. They are giving a service of which this State should be proud. It is greatly appreciated by the people closely associated with them.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—I appreciate the opportunity to associate myself with previous speakers on the waterfront position and to

refer to the important matter of Adelaide's ambulance services. I intended to discuss the matter at length, but the Governor's Speech indicated that the Government intends to take action to improve the ambulance services in Adelaide. I commend the *News* for the campaign it has waged since November 15, 1949, to June 22 last. It has consistently advocated a review of the present ambulance set-up and suggests something sponsored by the Government. We should have a service of which we can be proud. When the Government considers the matter it should bear in mind that there should be a central headquarters for the proposed re-organized service, an adequate number of standard vehicles, a service properly financed, an easily remembered telephone number, and a service provided by industrial concerns for their employees. I am at present appearing in Arbitration Court proceedings and one proposal submitted is that employers, particularly of large concerns, should provide a proper medical service. Firms employing 1,000 or more men should have a full-time medical officer, and should have a properly equipped casualty centre staffed with qualified nurses, with an ambulance available. During May last evidence was submitted in the court disclosing that a few months ago a man working within a few miles of Adelaide met with a serious accident and had to be taken from his place of employment to the Royal Adelaide Hospital on a tray on top of a lorry. When the lorry was coming up the Port Road as fast as it could, about 35 miles an hour, it did not receive the right-of-way from other conveyances on the road because the injured workman on the tray could not be seen. If the man had been in an ambulance he would have got to the hospital more quickly. He had a broken jaw, a fractured leg and concussion, and two of his mates were on the tray holding him down to prevent jolting and to mop up blood flowing from his head. This is a state of affairs which occurs from time to time. At present injured workmen are taken to hospital for attention by lorry or motor car. In framing the legislation the Government should consider the points I have raised. When this matter was before the Arbitration Court in Adelaide last month the employers claimed that it was the Government's responsibility and not theirs. In Adelaide there are about 10 ambulances, some obsolete. Two belonging to the Police Department are to be put on the reserve list, to be used only in

extreme emergency. Other cities with a population about equal to Adelaide's have 40 modern ambulances equipped with two-way radio, and I hope the Government will seriously consider the compelling of large industrial establishments to provide ambulances so that injured workmen may have adequate transportation available without having to rely on public ambulances.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (Chaffey)—I should not like this occasion to pass without having something to say in this most interesting debate; interesting, not only because of the subject matter, but because it appears that at last private members are taking exception to the rigid, cast-iron control of the Executive. If anyone thinks that is an exaggerated statement I suggest he look through *Hansard* to see what took place in this Chamber on November 1 last year, in the closing days of the session. Private members—and that includes supporters of the Government—had before the House matters of great importance and I have always been led to believe that the very essence of democracy, the very essence of our Parliamentary system, was free and open debate, with the opportunity for every member to discuss any subject matter accepted by the House, so that his views can be thrown into the common pool in order that, out of full discussion, something of benefit to the State and the Commonwealth in general may emerge.

How have we been proceeding in this Parliament under the control of the Premier and his Executive? Matters accepted by the Government can be discussed, but if a subject is brought forward by a private member and it is not acceptable to the Government it gets the scantiest consideration. I have taken out a list of subjects, and it will probably surprise even the Premier when he finds what has been done in this so-called free Parliament. At that time there was before the House a motion dealing with the settlement of ex-servicemen on the land. I content myself by simply mentioning the fact that that was a very important matter to the State of South Australia and to ex-servicemen in particular. We had a Constitution Amendment Bill. We had a motion for the setting up of a committee to co-ordinate building activities—and housing is still one of our greatest problems. We had a debate dealing with the Premier's so-called satellite town near Salisbury, another matter of great importance to the future of South Australia. We had a Lottery and Gaming Act Amendment Bill. We had a motion dealing with the decentralization

of industry, so that we could implement some of the statements made by the Government and get industries out into the country. There was a motion before the House in respect of an Adelaide City Council by-law dealing with zoning. We had a Country Factories Act, a Constitutional and Electoral Act Amendment Bill, an Early Closing Act Amendment Bill, a Lotteries and Charitable Purposes Bill, a motion dealing with the supply of water to a Berri settler, brought forward by myself, and a Scaffolding Act Amendment Bill. That list covers a wide ambit of subjects and all of it was disposed of in one day. Members were forced to vote without even having the opportunity to put their views on record. If that is the Premier's idea of democratic Government I entirely disagree with it. We are told that there is only one political party in Russia—the Communist Party. Although we may have two or three parties in South Australia, because of the way control is exercised rights are given to only one—the so-called Liberal and Country Party.

This debate is, in effect, a revolution against the control of the executive and the way it is stultifying the efforts of every member who comes into this place with an honest and sincere desire to do the best he can for the State. He is not allowed to do it under the present regime.

I am not prepared to say anything about certain matters raised by other speakers, especially those dealing with waterfront problems, but I would compliment them on their efforts. However, I do wish to say something on behalf of our primary producers because evidently no member of the so-called Country Party is to be allowed to speak. I suppose I should compliment the new Government Whip. We are told that new brooms sweep clean, and certainly the new Whip has control of his Party because, although most serious and damaging statements have been made about primary producers, so far not one member of the Country Party has been allowed to defend them. The Acting Leader of the Opposition has rendered good service indeed in bringing before Parliament the needs of the dairying industry, although I am not in accord with everything he said.

Mr. Shannon—Does the honourable member think his Party is?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I am not a Party man and probably the honourable member knows better than I do, but he has rendered

a service by bringing this matter before Parliament because it is one of the most important problems South Australia has to solve. I speak with some degree of feeling because, as one concerned in the dried fruit industry, I was placed in a very similar position only a short year ago. Fortunately, by adopting some of the methods I will suggest be adopted for the dairying industry, the dried fruits industry escaped some of the worst effects of Government interference. Our primary producers throughout the State are extremely perturbed. I was surprised to see in the May issue of the *Journal of the Department of Agriculture* the attention given to the dairying industry at a conference of branches of the Agricultural Bureau. An excellent address was delivered by Quentin M. Davidson of the Beetaloo Valley Branch, which I read long before I knew that this debate was to take place. I was much impressed by the address because I realized that here was a man talking of a subject which he knew at first hand and, in passing, I commend it to supporters of the Government. He dealt with the long hours, the ridiculously low returns, and the slaughter of practically irreplaceable dairy cows. This is probably the most important aspect of the subject because, while a dairy herd can be slaughtered in the matter of hours, it takes as many years to build it up again, and under present conditions dozens of the best dairy herds in the Commonwealth have been slaughtered. I have seen hills districts newspapers announcing the sale of from 50 to 80 first class Jersey cows. Imagine what that means to the dairying industry; first class dairy cows are relegated to become second class beef, for the Jersey cow is probably the least suitable of all our stock to become butcher's meat. However, it has been forced on the dairymen because they have no alternative unless they are willing to use their wives and families as slave labour and jeopardize their own health. The speaker concluded an excellent address by saying:

It is also to be hoped that the decline in dairying at present so evident will be arrested and that the industry will go on to establish greater production records than ever before. Can Australia afford to neglect dairying in 1951? I would answer: Definitely not!

The tragedy is that it is being neglected; our best dairy herds are still going to the slaughter house; everyone is talking and no one is doing anything. The responsibility for doing something is the Government's and the Government of South Australia could do

it if it so desired. Its only desire, however, is to give cheap food to the city and to that end the primary producer is being exploited.

Not only did the speaker mentioned have something to say about the problems of the dairy industry, but others were concerned about it. A motion put forward by the Mid-North branches—

That this conference views with alarm the decline in the dairying industry and urges the Government to substantially increase the price for dairy produce

was referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture. This problem is not confined to Mid-North. The same worry permeated the thoughts of dairy farmers in the lower South-East, who moved that the Government be requested to encourage the dairying industry. They also resolved that the matter be included on the agenda for the April meeting of the Standing Committee on Agriculture. Although that action was resolved on in April, nothing has been done since this became a live problem, and there is no indication that anything will be done in the months to follow.

The man quoted in this journal admits that he is responsible to the people of the State to produce the necessary food. The Acting Leader of the Opposition mentioned a gentleman of very high standing in this State, and one whom we could reasonably assume would have a very great sense of responsibility, as having disposed of his dairy herd; he finds it impossible to carry on under present conditions. It is not altogether a question of wages or conditions in the industry, because workers cannot be obtained today even though offered higher wages than those prescribed by a Court Award. I make no apology for disagreeing with the Acting Leader of the Opposition on this matter.

It is not important that we agree on all matters when we put our case, but it is important that we should be able to discuss a matter freely and frankly, every man being permitted to put forward his views. After discussion we will probably get somewhere. We will get nowhere by Government supporters sitting dumbly in their places refusing to play their part in the working of this Parliament. Their inaction is a betrayal of their responsibility to the people of this State.

One of the problems confronting us is how to get the dairying industry back on its feet and into full production, which everybody agrees should be done. This has been done in Great Britain under more difficult conditions than we have in South Australia. It has been done

by an active policy of subsidies in the first place. *The Leader* of June 20, 1951, contains an account of how the incentive price has lifted the milk yield of the United Kingdom. Before the war Great Britain was practically dependent on the importation of milk and milk products, mainly from Holland; but Great Britain saw that to be a self-supporting, independent country, the first step would be to look after the food supplies of her own people. She set about this responsibility in the most excellent manner as the article shows:—

Probably the most important factor leading to the phenomenal increase in milk production in the United Kingdom was the payment of an incentive price to farmers, said Mr. E. F. Voysey, general manager of the Producers' Co-op. Distributing Society Ltd., who recently visited Britain. Milk production in the United Kingdom rose from 530,000,000 gallons in 1935 to 1,884,000,000 gallons last year. Average price to suppliers was 2s. 10½d. per gallon, including all bonuses, last year. Dairy farms were highly efficient and intensely mechanized. Full priority was given to everything pertaining to farming, especially dairying.

It is no wonder that the writer says the increase is phenomenal. Milk is becoming a rarity in South Australia. It is practically disappearing in the form of milk and milk products from the table of the ordinary person; yet we find Great Britain with its tremendous population of over 47,000,000 increasing its production by means of subsidies. The British Government not only subsidizes the product, but has done everything possible to see that supplies were kept up to dairy farmers. The article continues:—

Dairying predominated in England and Wales, and in 1949 dairy cattle totalled 4,600,000. Production had grown steadily owing to increased demand, remunerative guaranteed prices and provision of special feeding stuffs for calves. Increasing output was in part due to various measures being applied to increase health of herds and to improve livestock, and encourage better management.

That shows the care with which the British Government encouraged the supply of milk for its people. Not only was a guaranteed price given for the product and the necessary machinery and implements made available, but feed for young stock was made available to ensure a continuous supply of stock to farmers.

Our problem in South Australia is comparable with that which confronted Great Britain. There it was overcome despite more and greater difficulties than we are facing here. Great Britain has more than six months of severe winter weather in which the stock must be housed and hand-fed, involving tre-

mendous expense. We may have a short period of hand-feeding, but generally we are not faced with their problems, which they have overcome by concentrating on them, realizing that they must be solved.

I do not know whether this Government looks on this problem as one of high priority; but it seems to me it is sitting back waiting for somebody or something—either the Commonwealth Government or some fortuitous circumstance—to solve it. I suggest this Government should also have subsidized the dairy farmer to keep up the supply of milk and milk products. I have a personal grievance, for in our household on the River Murray we have three adults. Lately, when we inquired about our butter supply, we were told we could have ½ lb. for that week. If the coalminers go on strike because they cannot get butter, we should go on strike, too, for no-one can get butter under the present set-up, as it is not being produced. Rationing is no answer; we should produce it. No-one can keep producing anything, whether butter or any secondary product, at a loss. A time comes when, under the laws of the land, anyone producing at a loss goes bankrupt. The wise man stops long before that takes place. If the people of South Australia and the Government want milk, butter, cheese, and other milk products, the only way to get them is to make their production payable. I advocate a vigorous policy of subsidies in the first place, for it is too late now to take ordinary steps of levelling out by the law of supply and demand. We have destroyed so many of our first class dairy herds that it would be impracticable to get a supply of milk by leaving those laws to function at present. There must be a policy of subsidies, and then all controls should be lifted.

I was glad to hear the Acting Leader of the Opposition, a man engaged in secondary industry, say that the price to the producer should be increased. I go further and say that price control should be lifted, for as soon as an occupation is made profitable people will engage in it, and when the dairying industry becomes payable, more people will keep dairy cows. When it was not profitable, people destroyed them. I speak with first hand knowledge of this matter, for the dried fruit industry was handicapped practically out of existence by Government controls. It was not until those controls were lifted that consumers got dried fruit. It will be produced in decent quantities so long as it pays the grower to produce it,

and under no other circumstances. The removal of price control will leave the matter to balance itself out. We will then solve the problem facing Australia today, and this valuable foodstuff will be produced.

A number of years ago this Parliament passed legislation to prohibit persons producing more than a certain tonnage of the butter substitute, commonly called "margarine." At that time the legislation was justified and probably would be still if the people could get butter. However, if they cannot, there is no justification for keeping this legislation on the Statute Book. When in Queensland a few years ago I was discussing dairying with a New South Wales dairy expert and he said that the time was not far distant when for butter production cows would be eliminated. That seemed to me an extraordinary and revolutionary statement. He said Queensland could produce peanuts in practically unlimited quantities and from them could be manufactured butter for all requirements. He considered that such butter would be as good if not better than the average made from butter fat. I do not know whether that is true, although I believe there is a great deal of truth in it. If we cannot make the dairy industry function, we must allow the introduction of a substitute, and I believe the substitute I have in mind to be as wholesome and nutritious as butter and that it would be acceptable to the big majority of the people.

I take exception to one statement by Mr. Frank Walsh regarding the potato growing industry. I must say something in defence of an extremely hardworking section of our primary producers—the potato growers. I have not grown potatoes commercially, but know enough about the position to realize that it is one of the most laborious forms of production. One reason I do not grow potatoes is that the work is too hard, and I respect this hardworking section of the community. To say that they are imbued with a communistic ideology is absurd. I think that Mr. Walsh was, at that stage, perturbed by the interjections from the Government benches and lost control of his thoughts, otherwise I would have been annoyed. The potato growers have done exactly what the trade unions have done, and what I would do. It does not pay to keep on producing at a loss. If the worker does not get sufficient return for his labor he goes on strike. When it does not pay the grape grower to dry his product he sells it to the wineries, but when it pays him to dry

it he will do so. Therefore, if it does not pay the potato grower to employ labor to gather his crop he refuses to grow them. In the country consumers were paying far higher prices for potatoes than growers were asking. I know of potatoes being sold at 3s. 3d. for 7 lb. This is all because we have Ministers of the Crown who cannot make up their minds in the interests of primary producers. Their only concern it to provide a cheap breakfast table for those in the metropolitan area, the primary producers being allowed to stew in their own juice. Because they refuse to go on producing at a loss there are members who say they are Communists. Not one member of the Liberal and Country League has been allowed to say a word in defence of primary producers. If the Premier and his Executive think that they can stultify the free expression of opinion in this place they are quite mistaken. A whole list of amendments of Bills placed before this Parliament last session was scrubbed off in one day, members being forced to vote on things on which they could not express an informed opinion. We hear talk of Communism. I sincerely believe that if Democracy fails it will only fail because of weakness within. I contend there is a grave weakness in this Parliament, because members are not allowed to express their opinion as they are paid to do. If they are not prepared to do that, they should leave it to somebody else who is not afraid to do so. I would advise those on the Government benches to take the position in their own hands and defy the Executive.

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley)—I disagree with the remarks of the Acting Leader of the Opposition regarding potato growers. I consider that the wholesale reduction in primary production will in the near future necessitate the importation of foodstuffs into Australia—that is, if the present drift persists. At this stage I do not intend to give reasons for the drift, but will do so in a later debate. If primary production continues to recede, malnutrition will be a very real problem in this country. Under natural conditions full and plenty should be produced for all. I need only mention one item of primary production, namely, wheat. Wheat production per acre in South Australia is now less than it was 30 years ago, and that notwithstanding the tremendous expenditure on methods of production. Production has fallen not so much quantitatively as per acre. The position is alarming. There is a difficulty in getting

sufficient people to produce the necessities of life. Today there is a real difficulty in getting sufficient land, and for people engaged particularly in dairying, to remain on the land. Recently properties which were used for dairying have been sold, and they are never likely to be used for that purpose again because they have been re-aggregated into larger holdings. The owners have gone over entirely to sheep, and sheep men normally do not concern themselves with cows. That is one of our basic problems. We have not sufficient men on the land, and the number is growing smaller and smaller. In addition, the number of holdings is growing fewer because of re-aggregation. Those two basic problems remain to be solved.

Many holdings in Australia are too large. The history of other countries proves that where the land is held by a few people automatically there is a reduction of production. One sees the opposite picture in places like Denmark, Holland, and Italy. Actually Italy produces more wheat than Australia. That is because it is produced on small holdings. The economic solution in Australia is to give the small holder a price for his commodity which will enable him to live on his property. That has been done in other countries, and there is no reason why it should not be done here. I remember when a Bill was before the House to establish a potato board and every member voted for it.

Mr. Dunks—The honourable member is wrong.

Mr. QUIRKE—Well, I voted for it and for one reason—because it included a clause which provided the Bill would only become operative if the growers voted for it. However, I warned that the activities of any board would organize potatoes out of existence. That is happening and will continue until potato growers are given an open go on the market. There should not be any control over potatoes in view of the hazards of production from seasonal conditions, disease, and other factors. The first step necessary to get potatoes back on the tables of the people of South Australia is to abolish the Potato Board. The price should rise or fall according to the size of the crop. If we have a bumper crop in one year in all probability the next will be light and any low prices as a result of a heavy crop would probably be compensated for in the following year as a result of a light crop. The law of supply and demand, of which we hear so much but which we do everything possible to prevent

operating, is the only factor which should fix the price and sufficient potatoes would then be forthcoming. If we continue on present lines we will bring about malnutrition, if not starvation.

When the population of Australia reaches 10,000,000 our wheat production will not be sufficient for one bushel to be exported, but I will not be sorry to see that. We cannot continue to export food from this country without putting back anything into the land except imported superphosphate. Every city is a parasitical aggregation of people. The contemplated sewerage scheme for Victor Harbour is an example of our disgraceful methods. It is proposed to discharge sewage into the sea, although some of the most highly qualified men in this State are warning the Government against it. The Halifax Street incinerator is a blot on the city of Adelaide and should never be allowed to function as it is today. Year after year thousands of pounds worth of valuable material is being burnt, whereas it should be returned to the land. Apart from New South Wales, all States in Australia are wasting refuse, while other countries are employing it to advantage. Food production depends on how we treat the land. Many people think that the land is a machine and that by putting certain elements into it it can turn out foodstuffs, but it does nothing of the sort. Until we re-orientate our methods of food production we shall get less and less from the land and soon have no foodstuffs for export.

Mr. Macgillivray—Then how shall we keep our cities going and supply the people with pianos and motor cars?

Mr. QUIRKE—I deplore the exportation of our fertility to buy pianos. Countries have been ruined by exporting too much. Notwithstanding the cheap labour in the West Indies, the people there are almost starving because of the violent export programme. They are a tremendous problem, not only to their own foolish Governments but to the United States of America. Any of the factors I have mentioned would provide ground for a speech in this House and at the right time and given the opportunity I shall make a speech on every one of them.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—The member for Stuart raised the question of subsidies being paid to the Flying Doctor Service. When this matter was raised last year during the debate on the Estimates, I told him it was not the policy

of the Government to subsidize denominational bodies as such, but that I would have an investigation made of the Flying Doctor Service and, if it was shown it was rendering a service which would normally be the responsibility of the Government, a subsidy would be provided. An investigation was held and three recommendations were made. A grant of £250 was provided on the Estimates for the Tarcoola hospital. It was recommended that an additional £2,000 should be granted to assist in a building project there. The Government adopted the recommendation and the money has been paid. In regard to two hospitals, one in the Murat Bay district council area and the other in Le Hunte district council area, recommendations were that £500 should be granted to each, provided the councils contributed similar amounts. Those subsidies have not been paid, as the Murat Bay district council requested that the matter be held over until the coming financial year because it had budgeted for the year and had not provided for further payments. Normally, with a subsidized hospital the council concerned contributes a certain sum. I will check up on this, but I understand there was no specific recommendation with regard to the Flying Doctor Service. The recommendations were made in regard to the hospitals associated with that service.

The member for Semaphore ably put his case before the House, but I assure him I have never expressed a view on the merits of the work being done by our waterside workers compared with what they did before the war or that done at any other ports in Australia. I have no knowledge of how effective or ineffective their work is at Port Adelaide, but I have asked a most competent authority to inquire into the waterfront position because of a letter I received from Mr. Whitfield, the secretary of the local branch of the Waterside Workers' Federation, and numerous requests for an inquiry. I have asked Mr. Bishop, the Auditor-General, to make a full investigation of the many factors which could be leading to a slow turn-round of ships, and I have no doubt that he will conduct the inquiry competently. Unless we can overcome our waterfront problems South Australia will be faced with a serious dislocation of its industries, resulting in considerable unemployment, not arising from any shortage of jobs or money but because of the lack of materials necessary to carry out the works for which labour and finance are available. As an illustration of how undesirable it is that

a port should be given a bad name, persons engaged in the building industry have frequently complained that they could not get timber from Western Australia and that as a consequence a severe hold-up was feared. I negotiated with the Western Australian Premier because difficulty was experienced there in getting the necessary rail freight to bring timber to the ports. I arranged with him that certain rail restrictions should cease. I then communicated with the Minister for Shipping and Transport, Senator McLeay, asking that two ships which had gone to Western Australia and were to return to South Australia in ballast should bring timber. About 6,000,000 super feet of timber for South Australia was banked up in Western Australia. The first ship refused to bring any timber to Port Adelaide. The second agreed to do so, but only if the South Australian Government, through the Director of Building Materials and the industry, would agree to pay up to £400 a day for waiting time at Port Adelaide. Under those unusual circumstances we persuaded the ship to bring 2,000 tons of its capacity of 6,000 tons to South Australia.

Take another example. A timber merchant in South Australia had purchased about 10 million super feet of timber in the United States for shipment from San Francisco. We have not been able to arrange for a second ship with the shipping firm, which said that under existing circumstances it could not send ships to Port Adelaide. Recently we had a steel famine in South Australia. About 30,000 tons of steel were piled up on Port Kembla wharves. Every shipping firm we got in contact with said it was not prepared to bring vessels to Port Adelaide, but through the good offices of Senator McLeay and the chairman of the Shipping Board, Mr. Cyril Dewey, we received a steel consignment.

Following on these things a survey of shed accommodation and berthing facilities at Port Adelaide was made by the Commonwealth Deputy Director of Navigation, Captain F. R. Miller, who had made surveys of other Australian ports. On June 5 he inspected working conditions at every wharf at Port Adelaide and Outer Harbour. He found that on that day nine berths at Port Adelaide were unoccupied; men employed totalled 1,502. He states that no attendance payments were made for the day. If the 1,696 men were available, as stated by the honourable member, there would have been attendance payments for 194 men. All the men offering, 1,502, were just sufficient to work the port, minus the nine berths. On June 7,

five berths were unoccupied and there was insufficient labour to fully man the *River Loddon*, the timber boat from Western Australia. In his report Captain Miller set out the berths and the number of men required to work them. He said that deep-water berths Nos. 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 were available at Port Adelaide, each with a water depth of between 30ft. and 32ft. Four berths at Outer Harbour had a water depth of 33ft., making a total of nine deep-sea berths. Captain Miller states that it would take five gangs to work each berth, a total of 45.

He adds that there were light-draft berths Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, 14, and 15, and berths D, E, F, G, and H (a total of 13) having a depth of between 22ft. and 27ft. of water. He states that it would be necessary for four gangs to work vessels at these berths efficiently, a total of 52 gangs. There were three intermediate berths, Nos. 10, 11, and 12, each with a depth of 28ft. These would require four gangs, a total of 12. He says that for small craft, berths were available at Copper Company wharf, with a depth of 18ft., Musgrave wharf, 23ft., and Sugar Company wharf, 19ft. For these three berths six gangs would be required. He reports that 115 gangs would be required to work all the berths. He adds that five gangs would be required as relief for holidays, making a total of 120 gangs for Port Adelaide. He says that 16 men make up a gang. Thus when the port is fully occupied it takes 1,920 men to work it. This report has been made by a most competent authority and provides for berths, as stated, to be worked in accordance with the standard he considers necessary. Members will note that, with an effective strength of between 1,500 and 1,700 men, there is insufficient to work all berths when occupied.

Mr. Duncan—Have all berths ever been filled?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—For months all berths at Port Adelaide have been filled and sometimes ships have had to wait five or six days after berthing before they could get the necessary labour. We have also had a fleet of vessels at the Semaphore anchorage. Mr. Stephens said that recently there had been empty berths at Port Adelaide and that no attendance money had been paid. That is correct. That was because no annual leave is taken during the winter months. I do not think that the 1,696 men, as mentioned by Mr. Stephens, are available. There is some doubt

as to whether we can call on that number, I believe that there is some wastage in the number quoted by him. Although the total strength is shown as 1,696 my information shows that they are, in fact, not all available when a call is made at any particular time. If for no other reason, a percentage would be absent sick. If the port is fully occupied the number of gangs to efficiently work it, according to Captain Miller, is about 1,920 effective men, not 1,500 effective men as mentioned.

Mr. Stephens—Is that for a peak period or ordinary time?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It is the number required when the berths are occupied. We are in the slack period at Port Adelaide at the moment. For months prior to this slack period six to 10 ships were lying at the anchorage. Freight rates are adjusted according to the effectiveness of discharge. This delay was costing the community between £700 and £1,000 a ship a day. I had the figures taken out and found that unless a ship had special priority it was not unusual for it to be held up six, seven, or eight days before unloading started.

Mr. Stephens—Because of labour shortage?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Because every berth in the harbour was occupied. Five boats were not being worked and another five were waiting at the anchorage. My knowledge of harbour activities is much less than that of men who have been engaged in them all their lives. Although other matters require attention, the fact remains that we are definitely short of waterside labour at Port Adelaide.

Mr. Stephens—How many ships would be in port if all berths were occupied?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Including Outer Harbour, 28.

Mr. Stephens—Would that be for a normal period?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The volume of goods coming to this port warrants an increase in the berth accommodation beyond the present capacity of 28 ships. The Public Works Committee has recommended an increase in the present berth accommodation. Shipping at Port Adelaide should have the highest priority.

Mr. Stephens—Surely it must be a peak period when 28 ships are in the port.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have enumerated the berths. The Adelaide Steamship Co. has a berth which it occupies only three days a week. Since last Christmas we have frequently had as many as 10 ships outside waiting discharge. In addition, there have been

five inside which could not be worked. I agree that the difficulty does not concern only one section. The overstocking of goods is becoming a serious matter. In some instances cargo for South Australia has had to go to New South Wales to be unloaded because of overstocking. In another case half the cargo had to be moved before the workers could get at the South Australian goods. I am not quoting my own figures. They were supplied by Captain Miller, Commonwealth Deputy Director of Navigation.

Mr. Tapping—Where will you get the additional labor you say is required?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—That is a matter which should give us the least trouble. The honorable member was very solicitous about workmen for the railways, but I do not complain about the few railway men who were taken to work the ports. Unless we can work our ports efficiently the State is doomed, industrially and agriculturally. Port working must have the highest priority. Overseas ships have plenty of work to do. Freight rates have been thrown out of balance through the Korean incident. As an illustration, when we commenced importing South African coal the freight rate was 40s. a ton. Now it is about 165s. a ton, and still no ships are available to bring us South African coal. To get ships to come here we must see that unloading is done efficiently, and until we do we will be in difficulties with our supplies. We can bring overland at exorbitant rates a few tons of galvanized piping and things like that, but ships are necessary to bring such goods from overseas. The policy of the State should be to see that our port and the work in the port are as efficient as possible. When we get this ships will bring goods here instead of by-passing our ports. At present we have extremely good unloading facilities at the Osborne gantries. As a result we get Newcastle coal landed there 10s. a ton more cheaply than the same kind of coal is landed at Melbourne, with 700 miles less to travel by sea.

A number of difficulties are associated with the dairy industry, but they are not the immediate cause of the present butter shortage. I believe it is due to butter exports being continued longer than was advisable, taking into account seasonal conditions. The export authorities wanted to do the best they could for the Old Country. South Australian merchants became concerned about the continuance of these exports because it left insufficient

butter to meet Australian requirements. Two or three representatives of manufacturers waited on me; Mr. Osborn was one of them. I communicated with the Minister for Commerce and pointed out the serious position which would arise if butter exports were not limited. Action was taken and there was an immediate reduction in exports from all States, with the exception of tinned butter going to the tropics. That action should have been taken earlier.

Mr. Riches—Is any butter going from South Australia to New South Wales today?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I should say that there is not very much, but there is no law against its going there. Normally at this time of the year we import large quantities of butter from Victoria. Under the Commonwealth Constitution there must be freedom of trade between States. I agree that all is not well with the dairying industry and several factors are responsible for it. The first is that the previous Commonwealth Government guaranteed dairymen cost of production, plus certain margins, for five years. That cost of production was to be determined according to a survey made each year in June. I will not go into the facts of the survey because I am not competent to do so. The State Government was not consulted about its basis. I believe a Joint Advisory Committee has a lot to do with it. It comprises a number of dairy farmers and civil servants, but again I am not competent to say much about the representation. I believe the scheme has been carried out in accordance with the arrangement. The first time it came officially under the notice of State Governments was when a request for an increase of 3d. a pound was made. That was slightly more than a year ago when a conference of Prices Ministers was held in Brisbane. We requested further information from the Commonwealth Government and it was not immediately forthcoming. Some discussion took place between the prices authorities and the Commonwealth Government, and the Government eventually announced that the 3d. a pound increase would be made available by way of subsidy. The same has applied in respect of every increase recommended since; the Commonwealth Government has automatically carried the increase by increasing the subsidy.

A new survey has been made and the industry has asked, I believe—I am speaking only from secondhand information—for 1s. 1½d. a pound increase, although the Joint Dairy Committee

is more likely to recommend some figure between 8d. and 10d. That, however, has not yet come before the State Prices Ministers. Whether the Commonwealth Government will pay that by way of subsidy or whether it will ask that the increase be passed on in the price, I do not know. However, I believe that the Commonwealth Government will hold that it is unrealistic to pay such enormous subsidies. Let it be clear that I have no knowledge of what the amount will be. I have heard two suggestions, but only of the vaguest character. It is clear, however, that the industry cannot satisfactorily carry on unless some increase is made. Members opposite have no doubt heard criticism by the trades unions of the quarterly adjustment of the basic wage on the ground that it is always lagging a quarter behind. How much more justification has the dairyman for complaining when he is lagging at least a full year!

These are matters which have never come within the scope of State Governments and, replying to a question raised by one member, I would say that it is not within the power of a State Government to subsidize production. That is specifically forbidden by the Constitution. That is, no doubt, one reason why the Commonwealth Government and the dairying industry arranged this matter between them. No doubt a fairly hard bargain was driven. It probably did not allow for a 40-hour week, which, in my opinion, is the biggest difficulty facing the industry. Dairying is a seven day a week job and not an industry which can be worked on a five-day roster. With all the alternative employment available on a 40-hour week basis dairy farmers will have the greatest difficulty in securing labour, or even in persuading the younger members of their families to continue to be associated with the industry. Where a change-over can be made to the more profitable wool industry it is obvious that we cannot have a lag of 12 months before adjustments of price are made. However, these are facts which have not been brought about by my Government. This is an arrangement made by a Federal Government and it is being continued by a Federal Government. I believe that the ventilation of this matter has served a good purpose because it enables me to know that, when the question of price adjustment comes up, I will have the support of members opposite in taking the necessary action.

Motion carried.

In Committee of Supply.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Gumeracha—Premier and Treasurer)—The Supplementary Estimates now before the House make provision for further payments during this financial year amounting to £287,446. During the year the Government approved of *ex gratia* payments being made to widows of two constables who died before the commencement of operation of the Police Pensions Act Amendment Act, 1950, which provided for lump sum payments to be made to widows of members of the force dying after the passing of the Act on the 30th November, 1950. In the two cases set out in the Estimates the constables died a few days before the passing of the Act and the widows therefore were not entitled to lump sum payments. The Government, however, approved that payments be made as though the widows were entitled to such under the Act, and the authority of Parliament to make *ex gratia* payments amounting to £1,400 was anticipated so that payments could be made to these widows immediately. During the debate on that Bill the Leader of the Opposition asked me whether widows' cases were included, and I assured him that they would be if the matter arose.

A further *ex gratia* payment was made in lieu of a refund of part motor registration fee, as the person concerned was not entitled to registration at reduced fee at the time the car was registered. Within a short time after registration the owner of the car was classified by the Repatriation Department as totally and permanently incapacitated, and had he been so classified when registering the car would have been entitled to registration on the payment of half fee.

Mr. Riches—Do you have to take this procedure in future?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—On a strict interpretation of the law, possibly the Government need not do it, but the Government has always held the view that cases like this should be placed before Parliament. In view of the circumstances of the case, and that the man was an ex-serviceman, the Government decided he should be given a refund of half registration fee and Parliamentary authority was anticipated. An *ex gratia* payment was also made in respect of an unclaimed totalizator dividend which, had it been claimed one day earlier, would have come within the provisions of the Lottery and Gaming Act. The amount concerned was 18s. 3d., and payment has been made in anticipation of Parliamentary approval.

Provision has also been made on the Estimates for an *ex gratia* payment in lieu of long service leave to an officer of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department, who retired from the service prior to long service leave being approved by His Excellency the Governor. Under such circumstances payment can only be made if approved by Parliament, and the amount necessary to make this payment, £102, has been included in these Estimates. Several of the institutions which receive annual grants from the Government have felt the effects of the acute rise in prices. The Government has investigated the financial position of these institutions and has decided to make the following additional grants for the financial year ending 30th June, 1951:—

Adelaide Children's Hospital—towards working expenses of the hospital, £30,000; and a special grant of £22,000 towards further accommodation for poliomyelitis patients.

Home for Incurables—£8,000 has been provided for working expenses.

Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science—£10,000.

The Mothers and Babies' Health Association working grant has been increased by £10,000; and £2,000 has been included for a grant towards the Infant Welfare Nurses' Training School. The Queen Victoria Maternity Home, which is the largest maternity home in the State, and has always to be available for urgent cases, has been granted a further £10,000 towards working expenses. The maintenance grant of the Whyalla hospital has been increased by £2,000. A further subsidy of £750 has been included for the Northcote Home Preventorium. A citizen committee has been formed to make arrangements for decorations and entertainment during the visit of His Majesty the King next year. The sum of £12,500 has been provided in these Estimates as a Government grant towards the committee's costs.

IV. Treasurer and Minister of Immigration—Miscellaneous.—*Ex gratia* payments are provided for in connection with caretaking and insurance of the Wallaroo grain alcohol distillery. The building and plant at Wallaroo were purchased from the Commonwealth Government on the condition that the State obtained a suitable industry for Wallaroo, and negotiations were taken up with Kangaroo Plastics Limited with this end in view. Whilst this company was endeavouring to establish an industry, arrangements were made for them to look after the building and plant, and the

amounts provided on the Estimates cover expenses incurred in connection with that arrangement. The amounts to be paid, totalling £552, were investigated and recommended by the Auditor-General and the Under Treasurer. The amount to be paid to Kangaroo Plastics Limited represents expenses paid by that company during the period of the arrangement. The other two amounts are £318, which is payable to the Southern Union Insurance Co. of Australia Limited for the insurance premium due to that company for insurance cover, and £153 for wages due to Mr. F. J. McLeod, who was the caretaker at the distillery.

Since the establishment of the Woomera Rocket Range arrangements at the Ooldea Mission for aborigines have not been satisfactory, and during the year the Government decided to transfer the aborigines from the Ooldea Mission to a locality where those unable to work will be better cared for, and facilities will be available to train the younger members of the tribe in pastoral pursuits. To carry out these arrangements the Government has decided to purchase a pastoral lease owned by Yalata Limited. The Government has decided to acquire Yalata Station on the West Coast by purchasing the whole of the shareholding of the company—in all 45,030 ordinary £1 shares fully paid. The purchase price of the shares is £68,108, and arrangements have been made to make settlement on the 29th instant.

Mr. Riches—Does that amount include the purchase of livestock?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It includes everything. By buying all the shares in the company we are taking over the whole of its assets.

VII. Minister of Education.—Education Department, £27.—A scholarship of £200 sterling was awarded to T. R. G. Harper last year but the Crown Solicitor subsequently advised that under the regulations to the Education Act the value of this scholarship was limited to £200 Australian. The regulations were subsequently amended to increase the amount of travelling scholarships to £250 Australian, and the amount now provided on the Estimates is to cover the exchange from the granting of the scholarship until the amending of the education regulation.

Miscellaneous.—To meet moneys required by the University Council due to increasing costs and expansion at the University of Adelaide, the Government approved of an additional grant of £90,000 towards the running of the University this calendar year. Further provision will be made on the Estimates for 1951-52 for the

balance of the amount required for the calendar year. The council of the University will review its budget and inform the Government of its requirements for the remainder of the year. A sum of £10,000 has also been provided towards expenses of management of the South Australian School of Mines. This increase is necessary in view of the continued rising costs of salaries, wages and materials.

IX. Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Forests—Miscellaneous.—For the same reasons as applied to other institutions, that is, rising costs, it has become necessary to make further provision of £10,000 to carry on the Waite Agricultural Research Institute.

These are all amounts provided either to meet some unusual circumstance requiring Parliamentary approval or to meet increased costs in some of our important public institutions. I do not think members will find difficulty in supporting any of them.

II. CHIEF SECRETARY AND MINISTER OF HEALTH.

Police Department, £1,400; Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department, £102—passed.

Miscellaneous, £107,250.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Acting Leader of the Opposition)—I appreciate the Premier's explanation of the Supplementary Estimates. If the provision of a further £2,000 for the Infant Welfare, Nurses Training School is to finance the training of nurses, my only comment is to express the hope that such a scheme will prove successful in the interests of all concerned. In respect of other items under the heading "Miscellaneous," it would appear to me that this further provision is necessary because of ever-increasing costs. Last year in a debate in this House I suggested that this increase in costs could be met by either higher taxation or increased hospital charges. If the latter course be adopted, those we desire to help may be deprived of that assistance. The staff of the Queen Victoria Maternity Home must be commended for its splendid work done over the extraordinarily busy period of the past 12 months; yet the amount we are asked to provide for that institution is not large, having in mind that extraordinary work. It is regrettable that further provision must be made for the care of poliomyelitis victims, to whom I extend my deepest sympathy. I hope that we will soon be in a position where no further increase in this grant is necessary and where there will be a reduction in the numbers being treated.

Mr. RICHES—I have received letters from my district informing me that certain indigent persons and old age pensioners have been charged heavily for treatment at the Whyalla Hospital. Can the Premier say whether that hospital is expected to give treatment to pensioners on similar conditions to those available in hospitals elsewhere?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I understand there is no formal agreement between the Minister of Health and the Whyalla Hospital, but that the Whyalla Hospital does not turn any case away from its doors. Even though patients are unable to pay, I understand they are treated but not charged. This hospital has never been a hospital in the subsidized hospitals group, but is run on a slightly different basis from other hospitals. If the honourable member will give me details of the particular case he has in mind, I will take it up with the Chief Secretary to see whether it is in accordance with the general arrangement he has with the Hospital Committee.

Line passed.

IV. TREASURER AND MINISTER OF IMMIGRATION.

Miscellaneous, £559—passed.

VI. MINISTER OF WORKS.

Aborigines Department, £68,108.

Mr. RICHES—All those interested are profoundly grateful to the Government for its action in acquiring Yalata Station. Those responsible for selecting the site and negotiating for its purchase have rendered an excellent service to the State, and I believe that Parliament will have reason in the near future to be grateful for the action taken.

Line passed.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

Education Department, £27; Miscellaneous, £100,000—passed.

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF FORESTS.

Miscellaneous, £10,000—passed.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 1.

The Supplementary Estimates having been adopted by the House, an Appropriation Bill for £287,446 was founded in Committee of Ways and Means, introduced by the Treasurer and read a first time.

Second reading.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Gumeracha—Premier and Treasurer)—This Bill appropriates £287,446 of general revenue for the

purposes set out in the schedule to the Bill. This schedule contains the same information as the Supplementary Estimates. It has been included in the Bill so that there can be no question that the *ex gratia* payments contemplated by the Government have received Parliamentary approval. I move the second reading.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood—Acting Leader of the Opposition)—As information has already been supplied by the Treasurer in reply to questions by members of the Opposition, it is not my intention to delay the Bill any further.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

Later the Bill was returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

Sitting suspended from 6 p.m. till 7.30 p.m.

REPORTS OF PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

The SPEAKER laid on the table the following reports of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, together with minutes of evidence:—

- Duplication of the Nangwarry case mill.
- Findon primary school.
- New primary schools.
- Mount Gambier new primary school.
- Extension of Osborne coal handling plant.
- Purchase of photogrammetric equipment.
- Ardrossan bulk wheat bin.
- Naracoorte new high school.
- Currie Street cargo shed extension.
- Mile End diesel electric locomotive depot.

Reports ordered to be printed.

REPORT OF TRANSPORT COMMISSION.

The TREASURER laid on the table the final report of the Royal Commission on State Transport Services, together with minutes of evidence.

Ordered to be printed.

SUPPLY BILL No. 1.

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended the House to make provision by Bill for defraying the salaries and other expenses of the several departments and public services of the Government of South Australia during the year ending June 30, 1952.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Gumeracha—Premier and Treasurer)—I move—

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider a Supply to be granted to His Majesty.

Mr. RICHES (Stuart)—No grant was provided for the Flying Doctor Service in the Estimates passed last year or in the Supplementary Estimates passed today. I do not think the Premier would expect me, in the light of representations that have been made, to be satisfied with the answers he gave me this afternoon. What are the Government's intentions in this matter? I hope there will be a further opportunity later this evening, if necessary, to speak at length on this subject, in view of the representations made and the promises given when the Estimates were before the House last session that the Flying Doctor Service would be treated similarly to another Flying Doctor Service. At this stage we are entitled to know the Government's mind on the applications that have been made. Will the Treasurer indicate whether he is prepared to come to the assistance of this organization, which is in dire financial stress, and is rendering splendid service to many people in out-back areas?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I thought I cleared up the matter for the honourable member this afternoon. When this matter was before the House last year I said, on the Estimates, that it would be submitted to the Advisory Council and its recommendation adopted. I thought my answer would have satisfied any member, especially considering that Parliament had voted £250 for the service, a supplementary grant being made under Governor's warrant for an extra £2,000, and another £1,000—

Mr. Riches—It is totally different work altogether.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If the honourable member will read his remarks in *Hansard* on the matter last year he will find he put all those things in together.

Mr. Riches—I asked for a grant for maintenance of the service.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I understand that the Bush Church Aid Society gives medical attention in the districts mentioned by the honourable member. I told him I thought it was undesirable to make grants to religious organizations, except for some specific work which the State would be obliged to provide in any case. No other part of the State has work for the Flying Doctor Service that Mr. Riches is asking the Government to subsidize. The other Flying Doctor Services are used as

emergencies and do not come within the ambit of a regular routine service. When the matter was referred to the committee, which was appointed by Parliament, it made certain recommendations to the Government.

Mr. Macgillivray—Who are the members of the committee?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The committee was appointed following an inquiry which was made at the instigation of the member for Stuart.

Mr. Riches—Has the committee recommended against a grant for the Flying Doctor Service?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No. The committee recommended three grants, the first being for the Tarcoola hospital, where an amount of £250 was agreed to by Parliament.

Mr. Riches—That was for maintenance.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The honourable member is incorrect; it was for the establishment of a hospital.

Mr. Riches—No.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I understand that that part of the work has been done and that the whole £2,000 has been collected.

Mr. Riches—That is for the hospital.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—As regards the two other hospitals in the circuit served by the society the committee recommended that a £500 grant be made to each, subject to the councils in the area raising a similar amount, which is in accordance with the general practice in other parts of the State. One council signified that it was prepared to raise £500 and, in due course, will get the grant recommended. Another council asked that the matter be deferred until this coming year, when I think it will provide its contribution. As far as Flying Doctor Services are concerned, I repeat what I said previously—that the Government has been advised by its own medical officers that if the service is doing something that is paid for by the Government in other places and will make a recommendation stating the amount involved the Government will place a sum on the forthcoming Estimates. I will refer the matter again to the committee and if it decides that it is not in accord with the treatment meted out to other districts and does not recommend the grant the Government will not include anything on the Estimates. The Government will not subsidize denominational organizations, as such, but will pay for services that are equal to those given general effect to and in accordance with what is provided in other places. The Government will pay on the same basis as in other places.

Mr. Riches—What about the year just closed?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If the committee recommends that a supplementary grant be made the Government is prepared to place a line on the Estimates.

Mr. Riches—Will you arrange for me and representatives of the Bush Church Aid Society to appear before the committee?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not think it is usual for individuals to appear before the committee, but I have no objection to that, in fact, I will ask if it can be arranged.

Mr. Quirke—What alternative medical attention to that given by the flying doctor is provided in the area?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The medical attention is of the type I have set out, which is being heavily subsidized. The Wudinna, Murat Bay, and Tarcoola hospitals are in the area.

Mr. Riches—And the Cook and Penong hospitals.

Mr. Quirke—Are there not other doctors in the area, apart from the flying doctor, to serve these hospitals?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—As far as I know there are no other doctors there. The Flying Doctor Service is additional to the normal hospital services in the district. Other districts on Eyre Peninsula have exactly the same medical service, but without the flying doctor.

Mr. Riches—In all other places they get a subsidy.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government's advice is that the service could be given. If there is a back lag I shall be happy to help.

Motion carried.

In Committee of Supply.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I move—

That towards defraying expenses of the establishments and public services of the State for the year ending June 30, 1952, a sum of £5,500,000 be granted; provided that no payments for any establishment or service shall be made out of the said sum in excess of the rates voted for similar establishments or services on the Estimates for the financial year ending June 30, 1951, except increases of salaries or wages fixed or prescribed by any return made under any Act relating to the Public Service, or by any regulation, or by any award, order, or determination of any court or other body empowered to fix or prescribe wages or salaries.

Mr. RICHES—The following words in the motion prevent the Government from assisting the Flying Doctor Service I have mentioned:—

Provided no payments for any establishment or service shall be made out of the said sum in excess of the rates voted for similar establishments and services on the Estimates for the financial year ending June 30, 1951.

I hoped that the Treasurer would indicate that the Government would investigate the claims placed before it in connection with the Flying Doctor Service operating from Ceduna. The Government has been supplied with the number of calls answered and the services regularly given. I assure members that if they could see the service rendered they would readily carry a vote of appreciation of the tremendous amount of voluntary work done in the interests of keeping people happy in their duties in outback areas. The Treasurer has said that a committee has inquired into the matter and has recommended raising the grant from £250 to £2,000. The £250 was voted to the Tarcoola Medical Fund Committee.

The CHAIRMAN—The honourable member is not in order. He is now referring to something mentioned in the House that has nothing to do with this Committee. He will have an opportunity to bring the matter up when the Estimates are before the House.

Mr. RICHES—If I am out of order now I shall bring the matter up later.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will have an investigation of the matter made by a competent authority and before the Estimates are prepared I will discuss the matter with the honourable member so that he will know what the Government has in mind. It desires to give a service and to provide a sum of money for a service rendered, but when new ground is broken the Government must see where it leads to.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Will the amount set out in the motion carry on the services of the State until the Estimates and the Auditor-General's report are received?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It will carry on the services for about two months. It is a larger amount than was included in the first Supply Bill last year. The amount then was £4,000,000. Since that time there have been increases mainly in salaries and wages. It is hoped to have the Estimates ready within two months but I doubt whether the Loan Council will have set and essential information have

been made available to have them completed within that time. It may be necessary to bring down a supplementary Supply Bill in about seven weeks. The present Bill is in accordance with the usual custom of granting two months' supply.

Resolution agreed to, adopted in Committee of Ways and Means, and agreed to by the House.

Bill introduced by the Treasurer and read a first time.

Second reading.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—(Gumeracha—Premier and Treasurer)—This Bill makes provision for the issue and application of £5,500,000 for the Public Service of the State for the financial year ending June 30, 1952. Due to rapid increases in salaries, wages, and other costs, £5,500,000 will be required by the Government to carry on for about two months, when further supply will be sought pending the introduction of the Estimates and Appropriation Bill for the year. This Bill also provides that payments to be made under it shall not exceed last year's Estimates, except that increases in salaries or wages fixed by prescribed tribunals are authorized to be paid by the Treasurer out of moneys voted under this Bill. It is in the usual form and I move the second reading.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages without amendment.

Later the Bill was returned by the Legislative Council without amendment.

AWARD FOR DAIRYING INDUSTRY.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—On April 10 of this year I accepted an invitation to attend a meeting at Macclesfield arranged by certain dairymen, whom I believe represented a dairying area. During the evening the meeting carried a resolution requesting the advisory committee of the dairymen's organization to wait upon the Government with a request to have the Industrial Code amended for the purpose of giving dairymen the opportunity to apply to the Industrial Court for an award to cover their industry. Has the Premier received any intimation from the advisory committee of that organization regarding that request? If not, is it the intention of the Government to introduce legislation this session amending the Industrial Code so that primary industries may be included within its scope?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No such request has come to my notice, nor, I believe, has one been forwarded. The second question has not been raised by the dairymen; therefore I have not sounded out my colleagues on it.

BORING FOR COAL IN SOUTH-EAST.

Mr. FLETCHER—Last week-end the Australian Broadcasting Commission stated that drilling was being undertaken in the Comaun district near Penola in an endeavour to locate a brown coalfield which is believed to be in the vicinity. Is the Premier in touch with this undertaking, and, if so, can he indicate the possibilities of a coalfield being discovered in that area?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—In one or two places in the South-East coal has been found over a period of years, but the seam was very deep. Although it was hard black coal, the depth and character of the seam did not make it an economic proposition. However, in discussions with the Department of Mines and the Minister of Mines I have been told that a theory is held that this seam might persist underground and might in some places turn out to be worth examining. The boring is purely exploratory, not to find brown but bituminous coal. I understand the result of the work has been rather favourable in as much as a thin seam of about three feet has been encountered. However, the boring has not been continued to base rock, so the evidence is not yet conclusive. It is purely and simply "scout boring" to ascertain the possibilities of finding bituminous coal at depth adjoining the Victorian border.

PROSECUTIONS UNDER MARKETING OF EGGS ACT.

Mr. DUNKS—When the Marketing of Eggs Act came into operation, I understood that the responsibility was on the owner of more than 20 adult hens to sell his eggs only to an agent of the board. While the House has been in recess, I have noticed that two producers have been prosecuted for selling eggs to a storekeeper and I was surprised that the storekeeper was also prosecuted and fined for purchasing the eggs. Can the Minister of Agriculture say under which section of the Act that was made possible?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I will inquire into the matter and bring down a report.

FREE MILK FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN.

Mr. STEPHENS—I understand that the State Premiers and the Prime Minister have discussed the supply and distribution of free milk to school children. Can the Premier say whether any agreement has been reached?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Negotiations have been carried on with the Commonwealth Government and I am happy to inform the honourable member that complete agreement has been reached, and the agreements have been signed. The last point at issue was cleared up some 10 days ago, but for a considerable time the department has known that agreement would be reached and has been making plans to commence the distribution of milk. I believe an attempt will be made in the near future to commence distribution.

CORNSACK SUPPLIES.

Mr. HEASLIP—Conflicting statements have been made by responsible people about the supply of cornsacks for the coming harvest. Some say that plenty will be available, others say the reverse. This is most confusing to primary producers. Can the Minister of Agriculture throw any light on the question?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—For some time there was grave doubt about the cornsack position. Difficulties arose largely as the result of differences between the Governments of Pakistan and India. Those differences were settled so far as jute was concerned, with the result, I understand, that there will be plenty of cornsacks available for the next harvest provided the ship transporting them arrives in time. I understand that there is at present no anxiety in the minds of the officers of the Wheat Board who are responsible for bringing cornsacks here. The only question is whether the ship will be held up for any reason.

PUBLIC SERVICE HOURS.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I saw in the press some time ago that the Government, by regulation, had reduced the working hours in the Public Service from 38 to 37½ hours a week. I was surprised to learn that anyone worked such short hours and more surprised that the Government should reduce that short working week. Can the Premier say whether this reduction in working hours is limited to the Public Service or whether we can take it as an earnest of the Government's desire to reduce the working hours of all other workers in industry?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—This matter arose out of a request by the Public Service Association to be placed in the same position as the Public Services of the Commonwealth and of the other States. The South Australian Public Service has been working longer hours than any other in Australia and much longer than the average of the Public Services. I believe the association made its request because of transport factors. The bulk of workers in the city finish work at 5 p.m., but public servants were finishing at 5.6 p.m. and as a consequence were in a somewhat difficult position in regard to transport. The Government, after considering the recommendations of the Public Service Commissioner, authorized a finishing time of 5 p.m., which is in accordance with the practice in similar occupations in the city.

PRICES OF DAIRY PRODUCTS.

Mr. MOIR—In view of the continued selling of dairy cows at high prices for slaughtering, will it be possible at an early date to grant to dairymen a reasonable increase in the price of their commodities to prevent the further disposal of herds, which is resulting in milk being scarce for human consumption as milk and for manufacture?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes, to this extent, that a survey has been made by the Commonwealth Joint Dairying Industry Advisory Committee and I understand recommendations for increases in the prices paid to dairymen are at present before the Commonwealth Minister for Commerce and Agriculture. As far as I know, he has not yet released information as to the amount recommended and it has not yet been determined whether dairymen will get increases resulting from an increase in the price of butter or whether from an increase in the subsidy paid by the Commonwealth Government. I believe they will get something, probably as a result of a rise in the price of butter, but undoubtedly there will be substantial increases as far as butter and cheese milk are concerned. In regard to milk for human consumption, I think the dairymen themselves believe that they have been fairly treated by the Milk Board.

GASIFICATION OF COAL.

Mr. FRED WALSH—On numerous occasions recently I have had brought under my notice the poor quality and the low pressure of gas supplied in the metropolitan area. I am not unmindful of the small quantities and poor

quality of black coal coming to South Australia, but I am mindful of the urgent need of correcting this position. This can be done, in my opinion, by the utilization of our low-grade coal deposits. Experiments in other parts of Australia and other parts of the world have proved that this can be done successfully. The success of the Electricity Trust has shown that the State is the most competent authority to undertake such a project as the gasification of our coal deposits. I ask the Premier whether consideration will be given to the production by the State of gas from our low-grade coal or whether the Government will take over the plant and assets of the South Australian Gas Company in the same way as it did those of the Adelaide Electric Supply Co. Ltd.?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government has no intention at present of carrying the honourable member's suggestion into effect. It is possible to make gas from many types of commodities, even from low-grade fuels, but they will only make gas of a low quality. The Victorian Government has carried out much experimental work of this nature and the South Australian Government has had a number of experiments undertaken by the same authority in Victoria in regard to South Australian coal. The results of those experiments, in my opinion, were not satisfactory enough to prompt my Government either to advocate that the Gas Company use our low-grade coal supplies or that Parliament should authorize the Government to undertake the work.

The South Australian Gas Co. has been carrying on under great difficulties. It has done much more than any other gas authority in Australia in installing additional plant, and gas rationing has been unnecessary because of the fine technical work done by officers of the Gas Company. They have installed water gas retorts, using low-grade fuels and coke and large quantities of oil to try to maintain service to the community under almost impossible conditions. If members desire I can arrange for them to inspect the plant and see the work that has been done to provide a good service to the public. I pay a tribute to Gas Company officers for their excellent work. Under the Gas Act a regular survey is made by the Chemistry Department into the quality of the gas. On only one occasion have tests shown it to be slightly under the standard required. More often it has been above the standard required; in some cases, substantially above it.

Mr. Fred Walsh—What effect on pressure would the lowering of the standard have?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I am not aware of the basis on which the pressure standard is fixed, but I will take up the question of maintaining higher quality gas pressure.

HOSPITAL CONTRIBUTIONS BY COUNCILS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Is it the intention of the Director-General of Medical Services to recommend any alteration in the annual contributions by councils towards hospital maintenance for the financial year 1951-52? If so, can the Treasurer say whether it will be an increase or decrease on the sum required for the current year?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Preliminary figures supplied by the Director-General came under my notice recently. An increase will be required from councils, but it will not be proportionate to the increase in the amount provided by the Government. Members are aware that there has been a sharp rise in costs of all hospital services.

FREE TRANSPORT FOR PENSIONERS.

Mr. LAWN—Has the Government given or will it give consideration to the question of free railway transport for pensioners? Will the Premier also approach the Municipal Tramways Trust to see if the same concession can be provided by it?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government has considered the matter. I point out that it provides transport, where necessary, to enable pensioners to obtain medical attention. The Government does not provide transport in other cases, nor is it proposed to make that innovation. It is impossible, with rising costs, to provide an unlimited free service.

FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE.

Mr. QUIRKE—In the event of the Bush Church Aid Society being unable to continue the flying doctor service which, I understand, is not denominational in service rendered, can the Premier say what doctors who are practising at Cook, Tarcoola, Penong, Wudinna, and Ceduna would be able to take up the duties of the flying doctor if he is forced to discontinue the existing service?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will obtain a report on the matter.

TRAMWAYS TRUST INQUIRY.

Mr. MOIR—Can the Premier say whether a specified time was set for the tabling of the

report of the committee of inquiry into the Municipal Tramways Trust's undertakings?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No. The scope of the inquiry, which was requested by the trust, is fairly extensive and it is impossible to say how long the committee will take over it. Doubtless it will expedite the hearing.

EIGHT-MILE CREEK SOLDIER SETTLEMENT AREA.

Mr. FLETCHER—On visiting the Eight-Mile Creek soldier settlement area last week I noticed a lot of re-growth on some of the blocks. Can the Minister of Repatriation say what is the Government's future policy towards assisting settlers where the re-growth has definitely got out of hand?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—When the matter was reported to me a few weeks ago I visited the area and found that there was some re-growth, most of it having appeared since that type of country had been cleared. As the area is considered a developmental one, the department is meeting the cost of clearing. The new growth, known as cutting grass, has little stock food value. We are paying settlers to clear the grass so that they will derive an income through the re-growth. Some settlers have begun clearing the cutting grass on their own initiative and are doing an excellent job. I have not the slightest doubt that the grass will eventually be cleared to the benefit of settlers.

TIMBER FOR COFFINS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Is the Premier aware that there is a grave shortage of suitable timber for the making of coffins? Undertakers' requirements at the moment are 40,000 super feet. Will he endeavour to make available timber urgently needed by them?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I think this shortage arises out of the general timber shortage. I mentioned this afternoon that it is due mainly to the difficulty of getting timber ships to come here. Very large quantities of Tasmanian and Western Australian timber have been purchased and are awaiting shipment. I fancy the Tasmanian timber is used by undertakers. I think 14,000,000 super feet of timber is held in Tasmania at present because of the lack of shipping. I have been trying to arrange shipping and I shall continue to press for it. Timber cargoes are unattractive today and we are finding the greatest difficulty getting ships. However, two ships are planned to load in Tasmania and probably they will provide some relief for undertakers.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT.

Mr. LAWN—Earlier the Premier told Mr. Macgillivray that the Government had granted a reduction in working hours to public servants following a request to be given similar conditions as the Commonwealth public servants. Is he aware that trade unionists in this State are desirous of obtaining the same workmen's compensation benefits as are enjoyed by workers in other States, and that they also suffer certain disadvantages compared with workers in those States? Will the Government consider this matter?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Governor's Speech indicated that a Bill would be introduced by the Government to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act. The Act has been compared with the Acts of other States and because of the rapid change in the value of money the Government believes that some of our provisions need considerable modification. The Leader of the Opposition also proposes to bring down a Bill on the matter, so this session we shall have two Bills dealing with workmen's compensation.

COAL POSITION.

Mr. DUNNAGE—Will the Premier indicate the present coal position, whether the Government intends to continue importing South African and Indian coal and, if so, whether the importations will be subsidized by the Commonwealth Government?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The general coal position is not nearly so good as it was three months ago when we had built up substantial stocks, about 130,000 tons, which we hoped would maintain services satisfactorily through the winter months. The position has deteriorated rapidly for two reasons: one is that we have not been able to get ships to bring overseas coal here, and the other is that there has been a considerable diversion of New South Wales coal from South Australia to other States because we had stocks here. I have informed the Commonwealth Minister and the Coal Board that further diversions must result in the rationing of some of our services. The utilities most adversely affected are the Commonwealth and State railways. Our difficulty is big coal. We are slightly better off for small coal because our power station can use Leigh Creek coal. Three shipments of African coal have been arranged. A large quantity of coal has been purchased from Africa and India, but we have had difficulty in arranging shipping. I believe Victoria has had a windfall in connection with ships from

India and it will help us, for coal going to either State automatically assists the other, because it means a diversion of New South Wales coal. If the position is closely watched by the Coal Board it will be possible to carry on without rationing. If, however, the Coal Board diverts coal from South Australia and we get less than our quota of 7.96 per cent of production we shall be in difficulties.

COUNTRY TRANSPORT SERVICES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Now that the Premier has assured the House that good things are happening for civil servants and that good things will come to the workers in secondary industries, will he help people living in country areas, not by passing new regulations, but by lifting some existing regulations, especially those that control transport, so that country people can transport goods from the country to the city and *vice versa*? Transport is the life blood of our country areas, but they are at present cramped by regulations which are not in the best interests of their development.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Today I tabled the final report of the Royal Commission on State Transport Services. I have not had time to study it but I believe it makes an important recommendation in connection with transport co-ordination. I assure the honourable member that Cabinet will give early consideration to the recommendation. It is essential that our transport services should be properly controlled.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIRE BRIGADES.

Mr. MOIR—Does the Government intend to consider Government contributions to fire brigades this year, and to give some relief to local councils?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The matter of fire brigade contributions by the Government will undoubtedly be considered. I do not believe it will be possible for councils to get relief in the sense that they will not have to meet increases in costs. I believe the Government will be prepared to stand its proportion of the increases, but it will not provide relief so that councils will not have to meet their proportion.

TEMPORARY HOMES AT BEDFORD PARK.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Recently I was informed that the Chief Secretary had requested the Director-General of Medical Services to inquire into the possibilities of

using certain portions of the Bedford Park hospital grounds for the erection of temporary homes by the Housing Trust. Can the Treasurer say whether the Government intends to proceed along those lines?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No decision has yet been reached on this matter but a recommendation has been received by the Government from the Housing Trust that a portion of the land unsuitable for hospital purposes should be made available to the Housing Trust for the erection of temporary houses. That request, together with an accompanying report which is strongly in favour of the land being made available, is now being considered by the Government.

PURCHASE OF BUILDING BLOCKS BY HOUSING TRUST.

Mr. DUNNAGE—Can the Premier say whether the Housing Trust is still purchasing land for the erection of new homes? If so, has he any idea of the number of blocks now available for the building of Housing Trust homes in the metropolitan area?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The trust is purchasing suitable land, when it is offered at reasonable prices. I have not the precise figures regarding land held by the trust, but I know that it holds considerable areas. Although some of it requires much development, it will undoubtedly be used ultimately for housing.

YEAR BOOKS FOR TOWN CLERKS.

Mr. MOIR—Will the Premier take up with the Chief Secretary the question of supplying town clerks with copies of the Year Book,

which was the practice prior to the war, as that book contains valuable information for the use of councils?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will have the question examined.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

Sessional Committees were appointed as follows:—

Standing Orders—The Speaker, Messrs. Macgillivray, Moir, and O'Halloran.

Library—The Speaker, the Hon. S. W. Jeffries, and Messrs. Stephens and Tapping.

Printing—Messrs. Brookman, Clarke, Duncan, Michael, and Riches.

The Legislative Council notified its appointment of sessional committees.

JOINT HOUSE COMMITTEE.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD moved—

That it be an order of this House that, in view of the creation of the Joint House Committee under the Joint House Committee Act, 1941, a Sessional House Committee be not appointed under Standing Order 404.

Motion carried.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD moved—

That a committee consisting of Messrs. Clarke, Dunnage, Pattinson, Pearson, and the mover be appointed to prepare a draft Address in Reply to His Excellency the Governor in reply to his Speech on opening the Parliament and to report on Tuesday, July 24, 1951.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 9.57 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, July 24, at 2 p.m.