

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.**

Tuesday, August 21, 1951.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Robert Nicholls) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

**METROPOLITAN ABATTOIRS' KILLING CAPACITY.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Figures released by Mr. Bowden, Government Statistician, yesterday disclosed that the number of sheep held in South Australia had increased by 688,072 in the last 12 months, the total sheep population of the State now being 10,165,098. This is only 205,467 less than in the record pre-drought year of 1943, and in 3,378,560 more than in the drought year of 1946. Prior to the disastrous drought year of 1944 there were a large number of sheep and lambs, in the northern areas particularly, that would have been killed whilst in killable condition if the Abattoirs had been able to handle them. I assume that as stocking has reached its limit, as disclosed by these figures, there will be a substantial sale of sheep off-shears throughout the State this year. Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether provision has been made at the Abattoirs for the killing and handling of the additional quantity of sheep which may be expected?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The Abattoirs are well equipped to handle a considerable number of sheep and lambs, provided they can get the necessary labour. The equipment is adequate to handle considerably more than it has in any year since the time mentioned by the honourable member, when there were considerable numbers coming in because of drought conditions. Should that position arise again, provided the necessary labour is available, I am sure that the Abattoirs will be able to handle considerable numbers. I can get from the Abattoirs Board the killing capacity per day provided all chains are fully manned, and will bring that information down for the benefit of the House.

**COUNTRY RAIL CAR SERVICES.**

Mr. HEASLIP—An article in today's *Advertiser* states that fast and comfortable air-conditioned diesel rail cars and trailers will be introduced soon on five South Australian country lines as part of the large-scale modernization of South Australian railways passenger and freight services. The Railways Commissioner, it is reported, said yesterday that the new rail cars would be placed on the Moonta, Morgan, Burra, Spalding and Victor Har-

bour lines. I point out that Gladstone is also on the broad gauge system. Twelve months ago I received information from the Deputy Railways Commissioner that it was regretted that the staff position was such that the department has been unable to restore the normal Gladstone line services, but hoped to do so in about three months or possibly earlier. I ask the Minister of Railways whether, in allocating the new rail cars, due consideration will be given to the Gladstone line which, I think, is one of the worst country services in the State?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The question of allocating plant, be it mobile or otherwise, is not one that comes before the consideration of any Minister because under the Act it is the responsibility—and a very onerous responsibility—of the Railways Commissioner to use it to the best advantage. I am sure he will do that, but I will bring before him the representations made by the honourable member and bring down his reply. I have always found the Commissioner anxious to meet the wishes of honourable members respecting any particular body of railway users if he can do so without interfering with the rights of others in, perhaps, more straitened circumstances. It is a question today of perhaps trying to do too much with too little.

Mr. FRED WALSH—The article states, *inter alia* :—

The new railcars—75ft. long—will each carry 56 second class passengers and have an 18ft. long baggage compartment. Their trailer cars will each seat 32 first class passengers in rotating and reclining chairs and 34 second class passengers in rollover seats. Will consideration be given to constructing the interior of the trailer cars in the same way as rail cars, so as to provide for a greater number of second class passengers and eliminate first class, as in the suburban area, having only one class? This would tend to make the cars more attractive, as I think the same class of people travel on country lines.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—As one who has travelled probably hundreds of thousands of miles I do not think it would be correct to say that the same class of people travel on country lines. Many people travelling on country lines, say, with small children, prefer to have the privacy first class carriages allow, and pay the extra charge, and that applies to persons of all types. As far as I know, no State in Australia has adopted one class alone on its country lines and, personally, I would not favour it. However, I will take

up the matter with the Railways Commissioner, but I think it would be a retrograde step. First class carriages give a privilege to those prepared to pay for it and at the same time give the railways extra revenue.

#### LOAN ESTIMATES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The House has before it the Loan Estimates for 1951-52, amounting to about £41,000,000, with details of the amounts allocated to the various Government departments. Since the Estimates were placed before the House it was stated in the press that the Premier, in common with other State Premiers, had agreed to reduce Loan programmes by 25 per cent. Can the Minister in charge of the House say how this reduction will affect the various departments? Will the reduction be on a *pro rata* basis or will there be any formula for the spending of the money? If not, does he not think it desirable to postpone the debate on the Loan Estimates until Parliament has a firm statement on how the money will be spent?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The Government has considered the statement made by the Premier. When the Under-Treasurer returns on Thursday further information will be received, but in the meantime I consider it is necessary that the debate on the Loan Estimates should continue.

Mr. STEPHENS—In view of the 25 per cent reduction decided on at the Premiers' Conference, can the Minister of Lands say what the position will be, seeing that the Treasurer has already fixed the amounts for the various departments? Some departments will get reduced amounts, and members do not know what they will be. In fairness to the Treasurer and the members who have spoken, does not the Minister think that the Loan Estimates now before us should be withdrawn and fresh Estimates introduced in the light of the altered conditions?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—That question is similar to the one asked by Mr. Macgillivray. I feel that the debate can proceed, because after all when it comes to the carrying out of the works the availability of materials will greatly determine which can be carried out. I think we can assume that they will be carried out on a *pro rata* basis, and in view of that we can honestly debate the Loan Estimates.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Nearly every member has a special interest in some Government department. Obviously I am interested in the lines dealing with irrigation and drainage. The Treasurer has estimated that the department handling these works will spend £845,000,

and has allocated so much for drainage, seepage, electrifying pumps and so on. It would be futile for me to debate these lines knowing that there is to be a reduced expenditure of about £200,000. I do not know how it will be determined. In the circumstances how can I intelligently discuss the present Loan Estimates and vote on the subsequent Bill? In view of the important principle that Parliament should discuss and finally allocate expenditure of public money, I suggest that the consideration of the Loan Estimates be postponed until we have a firm statement from the Treasurer as to how the money will be allocated. As the member for Port Adelaide suggested, new Loan Estimates should be introduced.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I think the Premier stated clearly before the recent announcement about reduced expenditure that it was not expected, nor was he optimistic enough to think, that all the works would be carried out in this financial year. It is not the Government's intention to pass the Bill, but I think we can continue with the debate.

Mr. LAWN—Is it the Government's intention to bring down revised Loan Estimates and, if so, will it not be a waste of time to debate the present Estimates?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I do not think it will be a waste of time to continue the debate. The Under-Treasurer will return to Adelaide on Thursday, when we will be able to get further information. If it is necessary to reduce the amount of the Loan Estimates that can be considered when the Bill is introduced, but I think the debate can be continued.

Mr. STEPHENS—A few days ago the press reported that the 25 per cent reduction would not affect the amount proposed to be spent through the Housing Trust. Can the Acting Leader of the Government say whether that is his Government's policy, and, if so, will that also apply to the amounts set down for advances for homes and the construction of hospital and school buildings?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I would hope that the Government would do everything possible to keep the amount provided for advances for homes at its present level. However, that matter will be discussed when the Under-Treasurer returns.

#### DAIRYING INDUSTRY.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—An article in today's *Advertiser* states:—

The decline in dairying is reflected in a fall of 31,340 in the number of cattle to a total of 432,801. The number of dairy cattle fell from 203,166 to 183,979.

Has the Minister's attention been drawn to the article, and if so, has the Government any policy for getting back into the dairying industry increased numbers of cattle to enable it to be placed on a better footing?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—Statements have also appeared in the press about the price of butter, which has a material effect on the dairy cow position. The Premier, in concert with the Premiers of Tasmania and Western Australia, agreed that there should be a price rise of 1s. a pound in the price of butter to assist in correcting the position, but unfortunately the New South Wales and Queensland Premiers have not seen eye to eye with him and are holding up the position. The Prices Ministers will discuss the question at the Prices Conference in Perth on Friday next, when it is hoped that the recalcitrant States will see the error of their ways and fall into line in order to do what the honourable member desires, namely, build up the dairying industry again.

#### SHORTAGE OF REFINED SUGAR.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Minister of Lands any further information about supplies of raw sugar, particularly relating to steps that have been taken by the Colonial Sugar Refining Co. Ltd. to overcome the possibility of a shortage which might occur during the annual shut-down of the works at Glanville?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have received the following letter from Mr. C. C. Layton, manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Co. Ltd., under yesterday's date:—

In the Assembly on 8th inst. the Premier replied to a question on the supplies of refined sugar. At that time our head office was already making arrangements for a parcel of refined sugar for shipment from Brisbane to South Australia, and has been successful in securing space for 500 tons of refined sugar on the *Cycle* due to reach Port Adelaide about the middle of next month. Subject to any untoward developments in the meantime, it is expected that this sugar should ensure that current quota percentages will be maintained during the fortnight's closure of Glanville refinery for the employees' holidays. This closure has been forced on us because the shortage of labour prevents the rostering of annual leave throughout the year.

#### SHORTAGE OF PHENOTHIAZINE.

Mr. HAWKER—I understand that there is a great shortage of phenothiazine for the treatment of worms in sheep because of the New South Wales floods and also because of a break-down in the manufacture at the Industrial Chemical Industries works. Will the Minister of Agriculture get in touch with the Federal

authorities and see if some arrangements can be made to import phenothiazine until the lag is overcome?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I have not been informed of a shortage of phenothiazine, but I know its importance to the lamb raising industry particularly and will bring the matter under the notice of the authorities to see if sufficient supplies can be made available.

#### LOADING OF WHEAT.

Mr. McALEES—Is the Minister of Lands in a position yet to give any additional information on the question I asked on August 15 about the carting of wheat from Paskeville to Port Adelaide when it could have been loaded at Wallaroo?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have received the following report from Mr. A. C. Wilson, acting general manager of the South Australian Harbors Board:—

The State Superintendent of the Australian Wheat Board has advised that because of a shortage at Port Adelaide wheat had to be urgently carted there from Paskeville to supply a vessel loading for overseas. The vessel concerned could not load at Wallaroo. It happens at times that the Australian Wheat Board, at short notice, is offered space in vessels loading at Port Adelaide only. It takes full advantage of these offers and if wheat is not available at Port Adelaide it is obtained from elsewhere. At the present time vessels are not available to load at Wallaroo the quantity of wheat that is behind the port. Vessels which load wheat at Wallaroo and other outports come on to Port Adelaide to load not only salt, but fruit, flour, tale, grain and sundries in the course of a regular trade connection which is maintained between Port Adelaide and New Zealand. This applied in the case of s.s. *Cheltenham*. At times salt, like wheat, may be in short supply at Port Adelaide or be urgently wanted for space offered at short notice and this has to be carted from Price for shipment.

#### BRICK MANUFACTURERS LTD.

Mr. HUTCHENS—In a question on July 25 the member for Port Pirie said that he had been informed by the Returned Servicemen's League that there is no supply of bricks in Port Pirie for the building of war service homes, and that the only bricks used in Housing Trust contracts today are those manufactured by the contractor himself. On August 14 the Minister of Lands replied that the Port Pirie brick works are owned by Brick Manufacturers Ltd., an association of various manufacturers in Adelaide with Mr. Tom Hallett as managing director, and that the Adelaide management decided that as Mr. O'Loughlin was manufacturing his own bricks

he should no longer be supplied with bricks. In view of the Minister's statement and the allegations made in the Address in Reply debate regarding Brick Manufacturers Ltd. and shareholding companies, will the Government fully investigate such allegations before approving of further financial aid to Brick Manufacturers Ltd. and shareholding companies?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I will obtain a report on the matter.

#### PROCEDURE AT INQUESTS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—There was a report in last Saturday's *Advertiser* and also in the *News* of last Friday, under the heading of "Counsel leaves inquest," that Mr. E. B. Scarfe, counsel representing the Commissioner of Police, withdrew from an inquest on Friday after a brush with the Deputy City Coroner (Mr. P. Teesdale Smith). Will the Minister of Works get a report from the Attorney-General with a view to preventing, if possible, a recurrence of this? Is the Commissioner of Police to be represented at such inquiries by the Crown Law officers, and when inquiries are held is it the duty of those officers to get information with a view to a just verdict being reached?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will refer the question to the Attorney-General, and speak to him thereon, and bring down his reply at the earliest possible date.

#### CEMENT PRODUCTION.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the attention of the Acting Leader of the Government been drawn to a report in this morning's *Advertiser* under the heading "South Australian Cement Needs More Capital"? Can he say whether the company mentioned in that report is that which has been given some financial backing by the Government to enable it to develop its plant so as to increase its output. If so, is the Government to be involved in the further financial backing of the company in order to meet the additional cost mentioned in the report?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have not seen the report, and I do not know to which company it relates. I will get a report and let the honourable member have it.

#### CREAM SUPPLIES.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Minister of Agriculture an answer to a question which I asked on August 14 relating to cream supplies?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The chairman of the Metropolitan Milk Board reports that there are two classes of cream being sold on the Adelaide market, scalded and separated, and that the former has a thicker consistency than the latter owing to the treatment it undergoes. Regular testing of cream being sold in the metropolitan area has been carried out by this board for some time, and of 99 tests made eight were over 40 per cent and under 50 per cent, whilst the remaining 91 were over 50 per cent. The only standard for cream that existed prior to the gazetting of the recent regulations fixed the butterfat standard of cream at 35 per cent. The new regulations raised the standard for cream to 40 per cent. However, the Metropolitan Milk Board is responsible only for the cream as supplied to the wholesalers who in turn sell to the retailers who come under the control of the Metropolitan County Board. The chairman of the Metropolitan Milk Board goes on to say that cream must comply with the standards laid down by both the Metropolitan Milk Board and the Metropolitan County Board, and that the Milk Board regulations deal with the standard of cream supplied to wholesalers but that the standard of cream sold by retailers is a matter for the Metropolitan County Board.

#### SHORTAGE OF DIESELENE.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—When I was in the north-eastern part of my electorate last week-end I learned that several important plants used by contractors on mechanical dam-sinking were immobilized as a result of a shortage of dieselene. Will the Acting Leader of the Government inquire whether this shortage is temporary only or of a permanent nature due to a failure of overseas supplies? If permanent, can he say what steps could be taken to see that portion of the quantity being received in South Australia is made available to carry on this important work in pastoral areas?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I will take up this important question with the authorities concerned and bring down a report.

#### SCHOOL OF FARM ENGINEERING.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Has the Minister of Agriculture a reply to my recent question on the proposal to establish a school of farm engineering in South Australia?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I discussed this matter with the Principal of the Roseworthy Agricultural College, Dr. McCulloch, who was aware that such a school had

been established at the Hawkesbury Agricultural College in New South Wales, which school had been carried out through the good offices of New South Wales tractor firms. The principal said that the directors of tractor firms in Adelaide to whom he had spoken had not been enthusiastic about the proposal, because the firms were more than fully engaged in current maintenance difficulties, and particularly, they said, because they were not contemplating anything that resembled a competitive display. Roseworthy students take a thorough course in tractor maintenance as a section of the subject Farm Engineering, which is part of the Diploma in Agriculture course. It is considered that the care and maintenance of tractors is an engineering rather than an agricultural problem. At the moment it would not be practicable for us to carry out such a school.

#### FUNERAL CHARGES.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES—Has the Acting Leader of the Government a reply to my recent question regarding the control of funeral charges?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The Prices Commissioner reports as follows:—

Funeral services are controlled under the Prices Act, 1948-1950. However, the Prices Branch has had very few complaints in respect of this service. There are several difficulties with the control of such a service; these are:—

- (a) The requirements of individual families vary from funeral to funeral, thus making the fixation of a standard charge almost impossible, e.g., caskets, mileage, coaches and cemetery charges, etc.
- (b) Complaints are lodged some considerable time after funeral has taken place thereby making it impossible to check details of the coffin fittings, etc.
- (c) Only two inquiries received during the past two years and these were of a very minor nature which resulted in small adjustments being made. Specific overcharges are difficult to determine, due mainly to the complex nature of the services involved.

The amount of £35 was fixed as an allowable deduction for funeral expenses. All costs have increased considerably and it is respectfully suggested that consideration be given to revision of the allowance.

#### ADVANCES FOR HOMES.

Mr. CHRISTIAN (on notice)—

1. What circumstances are regarded by the State Bank Board as constituting "great hardship" under section 42 (5) of the Advances for Homes Act, 1928-1935?

2. Would danger to health attested to by medical evidence be accepted as "great hardship"?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The State Bank advises:—

1. There is no formula for dealing with applications for waiver of the 10-year clause under the Advances for Homes Act, 1928-1949, but the board deals with each case on its merits, bearing in mind that, to comply with the provision of the Act, an applicant must prove that "great hardship" would be inflicted upon him if consent was refused. The board could not grant consent merely for the convenience of the borrower or only to enable him to take the opportunity to improve his financial or economic position.

2. Generally, yes.

#### MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION.

Mr. Quirke for Mr. STOTT (on notice)—

1. What qualifications entitle an applicant for motor vehicle registration to the concession allowable by the Motor Vehicles Department on primary producers' vehicles?

2. If an applicant for registration holds a sharefarming agreement, but does not own the land, is he entitled to a primary producers' registration for his motor vehicle?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The replies are:—

1. A commercial motor vehicle owned by a primary producer can be registered at a reduced fee if the owner satisfies the Registrar that such motor vehicle will not be used on roads for carrying His Majesty's mails, goods or passengers for pecuniary reward, or for carrying goods in the course of any trade or business other than that of a primary producer.

2. A person who is working land not owned or leased by him, and is working as a principal independently of instructions from the owner of the land, and receiving a share of the crop in return for the right to work the land, is accepted as a primary producer. A person who is working land owned by another person, and who is subject to the directions of the owner of the land, and who receives a share of the crop in lieu of wages for his labour, is not accepted as a primary producer, and any motor vehicle owned by him is not registered at a reduced fee.

#### MYXOMATOSIS IN RABBITS.

Mr. Tapping for Mr. McKENZIE (on notice)—

1. Is the Minister of Lands aware that many housewives refuse to purchase rabbits on account of fear of the disease myxomatosis which is being spread amongst rabbits?

2. If so, is it the intention of the Minister to have steps taken to prevent this inhuman treatment of rabbits by prohibiting the future use of this virus?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Press publicity to the effect that all rabbits treated for export and sold locally by firms engaged in the business in Adelaide are subject to Commonwealth Government and local board of health inspection has had the effect of nullifying the myxomatosis scare, and local sales are now normal again. Publicity given by the C.S.I.R.O. to the effect that there is no risk of the disease being transmitted to man or any native or domesticated bird or animal has also restored the confidence of the public in the purchase of rabbits.

**JUSTICES OF THE PEACE IN COURT CASES.**

Mr. WHITTLE (on notice)—What is the usual procedure adopted by the court authorities in arranging for justices of the peace to assist in hearing cases at the following courts:—(a) Adelaide; (b) suburban; (c) country?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The replies are:—

(a) Adelaide.—When justices are required to sit in this court it is the invariable practice for an officer of this court to advise the registrar of the Justices' Association of the number of justices required. Arrangements as to the detailing of particular justices are then

left entirely in the hands of the Justices' Association by virtue of a long-standing arrangement with the association.

(b) and (c) Suburban and Country.—Clerks of court arrange for justices to attend court from justices in their districts, but in some cases where the court is likely to sit for a long period it is understood several clerks contact the Justices' Association for the supply of justices.

**MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ON COMMITTEES.**

Mr. DUNKS (on notice)—

1. How many members of Parliament are on the following committees:—(a) Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works; (b) Parliamentary Committee on Land Settlement; (c) Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation; (d) Building Advisory Committee; (e) Industries Development Committee?

2. What are the salaries of the members of each of these committees?

3. What expenses are paid to the members?

4. How many times during the year ended June 30, 1951, did each of these committees meet?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The following table gives the information desired:—

Committee.	Salaries.	Travel Expense Rate.	Meetings.
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (7 members)	Chairman £400 p.a. Members £250 p.a.*	30s. per day outside State. 15s. per day inside State.	1950-51— Metrop. . . . . 76 Country (including 30 days' absence) . . . 17 .. 93
Parliamentary Committee on Land Settlement (7 members)	Chairman £400 p.a. Members £250 p.a.	30s. per day outside State. 15s. per day inside State.	1950-51 . . . . 14
Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation (6 members)	Chairman £100 p.a. Members £50 p.a.	None up to present. (On rare occasions when inspections are necessary, cars are provided for members.)	1950-51 . . . . 15
Building Advisory Committee	No Members of Parliament are on this Committee.		
Industries Development Committee (4 members)	Chairman £250 p.a. Members £200 p.a.	30s. per day outside State. 15s. per day inside State.	1950-51 . . . . 33

\* To a member residing beyond a radius of twenty (20) miles from the General Post Office, when travelling to Adelaide to attend a meeting (provided the journey is not also for the purpose of attending a sitting of the House of which he is a member)—10s. for the forward journey only.

### ADVANCES FOR HOMES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Minister of Lands) moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—

That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Advances for Homes Act, 1928-1949.

Motion carried. Resolution agreed to in Committee and adopted by the House. Bill introduced and read a first time.

### HOMES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Minister of Lands) moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—

That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Homes Act, 1941-1950.

Motion carried. Resolution agreed to in Committee and adopted by the House. Bill introduced and read a first time.

### CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 16. Page 365.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Frome—Leader of the Opposition)—The Bill amends subsection (3) of section 65 of the Constitution Act by increasing the Ministers' salaries pool from £10,750 to £14,250 a year. The new total gives an average of £2,375, but the amounts which individual Ministers will receive from the pool is not disclosed and one can only guess what the proportion will be. If we accept the assumption that the Premier will receive £3,000 it will leave £2,250 for the five other Ministers. Personally, I see no reason why the Ministers' salaries should not be specifically set out, as is the case in most States. This brings me to a point relating to our own legislation on this and kindred matters. There is a complete lack of uniformity in the legislative provision for salaries of members of Parliament, Ministers and so on, resulting in a considerable degree of confusion. It would be better if the general conditions for all Parliamentary salaries were set out under one Act, preferably not the Constitution Act. We have the Payment of Members of Parliament Act setting out the salaries payable to members, whereas the salaries of Ministers are fixed under the Constitution Act. I feel that the Constitution Act is the wrong legislation to fix the salaries of Ministers; all the salaries associated with

the working of Parliament should be fixed under one Act, namely, that relating to the salaries of members of Parliament. It would be an advantage, too, if the salaries were related to the same cost-of-living index, varying automatically, without the necessity for frequent legislative amendment. If we did this we would be adopting a sounder principle of granting allowances to members of Parliament who undertake additional work, as required. They could be granted in accordance with a defined principle, showing the amount a member would receive as a Minister, a member of a committee, or for any other purpose associated with Parliament's working, and the cost-of-living adjustment could apply to both the salary and the allowance. That would be the only way of achieving substantial justice.

Section 65 provides for the appointment of six Ministers, the smallest number in any State, and obviously inadequate. We had six Ministers when the population of South Australia was less than half what it is today and the volume of administrative work probably less than one-third. It should be recognized that every Act of Parliament placed on the Statute Book increases the administrative responsibility of some Minister of the Crown a certain degree, sometimes to a considerable degree. I have in mind one particular series of Acts. Parliament, in an attempt to solve the question of housing the people of South Australia and improving the conditions of those who were inadequately housed, has in recent years passed legislation relating to the establishment of the Housing Trust, and provisions of the Homes Act and other related measures, all of which have enormously increased the Ministerial responsibilities of the Premier, who has undertaken the administration of those statutes. Similarly we have had legislation relating to the orderly marketing of primary products which falls, in the main, under the administration of the Minister of Agriculture. I could continue to recite a long list showing that there is complete justification for increasing the number of Ministers, and I think it a pity that the opportunity was not taken to accomplish this when the general revision of allowances was being made. Subsection (3) of section 65 provides that the total salaries bill shall not exceed a certain amount. I think it should be provided that the salaries shall be a certain amount, subject, as I said before, to adjustments in respect of the cost of living. That

is all I desire to say on the Bill and in view of my reference to the fact that we could well do with more Ministers I consider we are justified in passing this measure to enable the amount prescribed to be paid to the Ministers of the Crown. I support the second reading.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES (Torrens)—I am not opposing the Bill, and I am not for one moment suggesting that the work done by the Ministers does not justify an increase in their salaries in view of the depreciated value of the pound. At the same time, having the convictions that I hold concerning the danger to the community caused by inflation, I must express my sincere regret that the Government has seen fit to introduce this Bill. Those of us who can live on our incomes should not ask for more at present, and I feel very strongly that we should try to give a lead to the public by asking for as little as possible, provided the amount of emolument received is sufficient to meet ordinary and proper needs. I shall not delay the passage of this Bill, but I feel so strongly on the general position that it would be cowardly if I allowed the Bill to pass without making those few comments.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (Chaffey)—I can well appreciate the views of the member for Torrens because he has expressed himself, with other members on the Government benches, very freely on the matter of inflation. If I believed, as apparently he does, that this increase of salaries would add to our inflationary problem I would support him, but I think there is little connection between the increases of salaries mentioned in this Bill, and in another on the Notice Paper, and the present inflationary trend. As I see it members of Parliament including Cabinet Ministers, trades unionists, professional men, and every section of the community have been allowed a certain standard of living, which was equated by a specific sum of money at any given time. During the course of the last year in particular the money allotted to professional men, Cabinet Ministers, trades unionists, and others has not been sufficient to keep that standard of living intact, so, logically, I think, all sections of the community desire an increase in salary in order to retain the standard of living that has been allotted to them. That it now takes more money tokens is no reason why that increase should not be faced. The member for Torrens, doubtless in all sincerity, is confusing two important matters; financial measures and productive effort. Although there is a connection between the two they are not related in the way

that he and other Government supporters believe. For example, in the depression years industry was in a position to flood every store and market place throughout the Commonwealth with goods and the people were unable to get them simply because there was insufficient money in circulation, and the money was not put into circulation to allow them to work for it. That is why the Minister of the day had the self-admittedly miserable task of handing out 4s. 9d. a week as a dole; it was deemed cheaper to keep people unemployed than to put money into circulation, although we could have solved then most of the problems facing the world today, especially in respect of building schools, hospitals and houses. We have exactly the same position today in reverse. The whole problem is still a monetary one. I do not want to go into it at great length at this juncture because public debate is not a very good way to convince anyone that money is at the root of this trouble, since people have fixed and preconceived ideas on it. All I say is that the Minister or member of Parliament who is going to get an increase of salary is in exactly the same position as the trade unionist; it is not increasing his standard of living; he is simply retaining it, and I think it would be a very sad day for Australia, and industry generally, if we adopted the policy we had in the 30's of reducing the money in circulation and thereby consuming less goods. That was the slogan then and it is the slogan of members on the Government benches today because they do not understand the problem. I support the measure.

Mr. WHITTLE (Prospect)—I do not desire this Bill to go through without some measure of support from this side. Realizing the very important work performed by Ministers of the Crown I have felt for some years that their emolument was inadequate, and I feel sure that those sentiments are shared by most members on this side. As the only comment from this side has been one rather of regret that the necessity has arisen, I think something should be said in complete justification of the opinion expressed by the learned Judge, who went into this matter and assessed the increases on the basis of services rendered to the State. Most members will agree that a tremendous amount of detailed work is required of Ministers of the Crown. Members of Parliament themselves devote a considerable part of their time during the recess, as well as while the House is sitting, in working for their constituencies and this can be multiplied enormously as applied to Ministers. Therefore this Bill

is fully justified and I am sure that sentiment is shared by most of the members on this side.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment; Committee's report adopted.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS moved—

That Standing Orders be so far suspended as to enable the Bill to pass through its remaining stages without delay.

The SPEAKER—There being a dissentient voice, there must be a division. I appoint the Minister of Lands teller for the "Ayes" and Mr. Dunks teller for the "Noes."

As there is no member to tell on the "No" side, under the Standing Orders the division is off, and the motion is carried.

Bill read a third time and passed.

#### SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 16. Page 365.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Frome—Leader of the Opposition)—This is a simple Bill to amend section 12 of the Supreme Court Act in order to increase the salary of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court from £3,000 to £3,750 per annum, and the salary of the other judges from £2,500 to £3,250 per annum. The amending Act in 1947 increased the salary of the Chief Justice from £2,500 to £3,000, and the salary of the other judges from £2,000 to £2,500. The percentage margin between the salaries of the Chief Justice and the other Judges has been reduced. In 1936 it was 25 per cent, but under the Bill it will be less than 16 per cent. The previous margin should have been maintained. A good many years ago the Chief Justice received nearly twice the salary of the other Judges, and in view of the importance of this office, and the fact that he frequently has to carry out the duties of Lieutenant-Governor, there is much to be said for the margin being maintained. I do not say that the other judges are overpaid under this Bill, but the salary of the Chief Justice should have been increased to a greater extent. The Bills increasing salaries fixed under special Acts are the result of a decision by the Government that the salaries should be investigated by Mr. President Morgan, of the Industrial Court. I take it that his recommendations have been accepted by the Government, and it is not for me to question the decision, but as there is no cost of living adjustment in the present proposals, and if the inflationary trend continues, it may be necessary to frequently

introduce legislation to increase salaries fixed under special Acts. Other highly paid civil servants receive automatic cost of living adjustments. I support the Bill.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—I agree with some of the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition, particularly his references to the Chief Justice. Of all the offices in the State there is none so important as the one occupied by the Chief Justice, who has to interpret the law as passed by Parliament, and when the necessity arises to preside over appeals by litigants. His duties are onerous. The present occupant of the position not only admirably carries out the duties, but adorns the office. Sir Mellis Napier is held in the highest esteem by all who know him, but the merits, or demerits if there are any, of whoever occupies the position should not be considered when the salary is fixed. In South Australia we are happily situated in that when the time arrives our Chief Justice can admirably carry out the duties of Lieutenant-Governor. The present occupant of the office has all the necessary qualifications. The Leader of the Opposition said that in the past it had been the practice of Parliament to maintain the margin between the salaries of the Chief Justice and the other Judges. If that margin had been maintained in these proposals it would have meant an additional expenditure of only £250, and I would have gladly supported it. The Government referred the matter of salary revision to an eminent authority, and no doubt it is more or less bound to accept his recommendations.

Mr. Christian—Is it not an anomaly that a member of the judiciary should fix the salaries of other judiciary members?

Mr. SHANNON—I shall come to that later. If I had been a member of the Ministry I would have done what the Government has done and accepted Mr. President Morgan's recommendations. It is not possible for a private member to move for an increase in Government expenditure; therefore neither the Leader of the Opposition nor I can move to vary Mr. President Morgan's recommendation regarding the Chief Justice's salary. I would heartily support a salary of £4,000 for him and if this salary were paid it would maintain the margin between his salary and that of the other judges. Mr. President Morgan, an eminent lawyer and a man who is held in high esteem by his colleagues, had the difficult task of assessing the worth of men in high positions. It may be said that it was a little embarrassing for him to deal with the salaries of men who

occupy positions similar to the one he occupies. If that is true, and he felt in any way that he was in an invidious position, it might have been wise to refer the matter of salary revision to another authority. I would have favoured that. I believe that judges hold possibly the most responsible position in our democratic system of government. Respect for those who interpret the law makes it possible for democracy to function. Only a small number of those in our economic life are professional people and of them only a small percentage are in the legal profession. If in future it becomes obvious that something should be done towards increasing the judges' salaries, my suggestion is that the question should be referred either to a gentleman, or a panel of gentlemen, in no way associated with the legal profession. I support the second reading, knowing that the judges are worthy of the additional emolument suggested.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES (Torrens)—I would not have risen but for the honourable member's suggestion, which I hope the Government will not consider. It would be most improper for somebody not in the legal profession to recommend salaries for the judges, because at some time he might appear before a judge as a litigant. The only person who could properly recommend the salaries of the judges to the Government and Parliament would be one who is in a judicial position removed from the judges upon whose salaries he was commenting. I have every faith and confidence in Mr. President Morgan. He is a man of sound judgment and has done an immense amount of good for the State. The Government was wise in committing the question of judges' salaries to him. It was the only thing which could have been done in the circumstances, unless it was to appoint a person of judicial capacity from another State. To suggest that the question should be submitted to a person who at any time might be a litigant in a court appearing before a judge is something unworthy of consideration.

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

#### AUDIT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 16. Page 366.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Frome—Leader of the Opposition)—This is another of the group of Bills introduced to give effect to adjustments required to salaries fixed under special Acts and to bring them into line with salaries to

which automatic adjustments apply. The Bill amends section 6 of the Act, the effect of the amendment being to fix the Auditor-General's salary at £2,300. His present salary is £2,158, so that the increase proposed is £142. This appears to correspond roughly with marginal increases determined by the Public Service Board for the Public Service generally since 1946. In 1946, on the appointment of the present Auditor-General, who was formerly Deputy Taxation Commissioner for South Australia, the Act was amended to provide that the Auditor-General's salary should be "at such rate as the Governor fixes." Prior to that amendment his salary was prescribed by the Act and fixed at £1,100. At the same time the Act was amended to provide that the salary should not be altered during his tenure of office.

In 1949, however, this additional provision was amended to the effect that the Public Service Board could determine "that additional salary, of such amount as the board deems just, having regard to alterations in the cost of living and in the salaries paid to officers of the Public Service generally, shall be paid to the Auditor-General as from such day as the board fixes." Any such additional salary was to be subject to subsequent decisions of the board—up or down. Variations of the salary up or down as a result of a recommendation of the board could not have the effect of reducing the Auditor-General's salary below the amount fixed at the time of his appointment in 1946. In the proposed amendment the Act returns to the principle of a fixed salary unaffected by cost of living or marginal revision adjustments. The Bill repeals the proviso beforementioned. The history of this particular legislation indicates a fundamental confusion. In effect, the proposed amendment standardizes the Auditor-General's salary at £2,300; but whereas salaries paid to some other public servants at the same level are subject to cost of living and marginal revisions, the salary of the Auditor-General will not be so subject. This is unfair to the Auditor-General if further cost of living and marginal revision adjustments take place upward, and unfair to the State if they take place downward. The same principle applies to the Commissioner of Police under the proposed amendment of the Police Act.

It is conceivable that salaries of subordinates could rise so that the Auditor-General would be prejudiced, and the Act would have to be amended again to correct the anomaly. The principle expressed in the 1949 proviso as

regards adjustments recommended by the Public Service Board is sound, provided that some basic principle is expressed in the Act. The proposed increase in the Auditor-General's salary to bring it into line with the salaries of other highly-paid and competent public servants rendering efficient and meritorious service to the State is worthy of the support of this House, and I therefore support the second reading.

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

#### LAND SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 16. Page 366.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Frome—Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill differs entirely from the three Bills already passed this afternoon, because, in a period when we are engaged in raising salaries under various special Acts in order to compensate to some extent their recipients for the reduction in the purchasing power of money since the original salaries were fixed, here we are setting out to reduce the salaries of the members of a committee which I consider a very important if not the most important committee appointed by this Parliament. However, as the proposed salaries have been fixed in accordance with the formula to which I have already referred, I can have no quarrel with Mr. President Morgan's advice to the Government; but I think the Government could have made better use of the services of this committee and perhaps thus avoided the necessity of reducing the salaries of its chairman and members. If they had done so, I am confident that the beneficial results accruing would have compensated us many times over for the small sum to be saved by this reduction in salaries. When the original Act was introduced I visualized that this committee would grow into a committee somewhat similar to the Federal Public Accounts Committee which operated whilst I was a member of the Federal Parliament. That committee had wide powers to initiate and conduct investigations into the expenditure of the Commonwealth, the manner of keeping public accounts, and the presentation of Budget papers and the other forms in which public accounts were submitted to Parliament. Whilst I was a member of it it conducted lengthy and exhaustive inquiries into these questions.

The settlement and proper use of South Australian land is a matter of paramount impor-

tance. Serious consideration should be given to amending this Act so as to clothe the committee with greater powers to enable it to conduct inquiries and, subject to certain principles, to initiate inquiries into all the subjects associated with land settlement, soil conservation, occupancy of holdings, and so on. I believe that, if that were done, we could co-ordinate the activities of the various inter-departmental and expert committees dealing with land development, land husbandry, soil conservation, and a number of subjects I have already mentioned. There is nobody who can act as a liaison between those committees and this Parliament and also as a watchdog of public interest with regard to their work. In making that statement I do not discount the valuable work being done by those committees; but I realize that some experts tend to view a problem from the purely scientific aspect rather than from the utilitarian aspect. I remember that not many years ago one of our experts went through my constituency and condemned a large portion from Cockburn southwards as being in an almost hopeless condition. It was in a bad state at that time because of the ravages of one of the worst droughts in the history of white settlement. The expert said that no amount of fostering would ever restore that country to anything like its original state. I passed through that area last week-end and, although I have known it for over 30 years, I have never seen it looking nearly as good as at present. The saltbush which the expert said could not be restored is growing more thickly than the oldest inhabitant in the area can remember—it would be impossible to pack another bush into a given area.

Mr. Christian—Nature does a good job sometimes.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes. This condition is due to the fortuitous advent of the number of good seasons following a disastrous drought during which stock holdings were reduced to almost vanishing point in some instances. These good seasons have synchronized with the rise in wool values and greater returns to the pastoral industry which have enabled stock owners in that locality to make more money than previously whilst carrying fewer stock. I am appalled at the continuing drift from the land in our good rainfall areas inside Goyder's line. Last week-end the press referred to the Government's proposal to develop a further 25,000 acres of the Coonalpyn plains region. The Government is to be commended for that scheme, but it will be years

before any substantial volume of production accrues from it, during which period a considerable amount of capital expenditure will be required. Whilst that land is being developed, improved farms in many parts of the State inside Goyder's line are being sold at high prices to adjoining landholders, who are the only people who can afford to pay today's land prices. The result is a gradual re-aggregation of land which will eventually prove a greater menace to closer settlement than the very large estates which some of us can remember from our boyhood days. Our production from this land will have to be increased substantially within the next few years if our growing population is to be fed. I shudder to think what will happen if in four or five years' time the population has reached its expected proportions and we experience a drought and a depression simultaneously. Hungry people will march out of our huge and overcrowded cities, which are becoming an incubus on our nation, in a search for food from land which, because of monopoly, is not being used to its fullest advantage. These are some of the problems which the Land Settlement Committee might investigate, perhaps in association with the other committees I have mentioned and perhaps co-ordinating the results of their investigations, thus bringing about the maximum use of land for the production of foodstuffs whilst maintaining its fertility. We want a form of land husbandry in this country which will teach our people to look to the land as a means of sustaining family life in the countryside and national life in the cities by the provision of the necessary foodstuffs, and not as a means of speculation or of getting rich quickly. Rather than diminish the status of the Land Settlement Committee by reducing the salaries of the chairman and members, Parliament should insist on giving it additional work in order to warrant it retaining its status.

The chairman now receives £400 a year and the members £250. Under the Bill the salaries of the members will be reduced by £50 and that of the chairman by £150. The members will receive a salary cut of 20 per cent, but the chairman 37½ per cent. That is an injustice to the chairman. If he was entitled in 1945 to £150 more than the members the ratio should be maintained when the salaries are reduced. I notice that the reductions are not to be retrospective. If they were they would be severe. I assume that if the Bill becomes law it will come into operation on the date of the

Governor's assent, this being the position where no specified date is mentioned for the commencement of operation of any law. I do not oppose the second reading because I realize the Bill is part of a policy which the Government has determined on, and no good purpose could be served by opposing it at this juncture. However, I hope that consideration will be given to the points I have raised so that in future more use will be made of the Land Settlement Committee.

Mr. MICHAEL (Light)—I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his remarks. He has raised several important points which are well worthy of consideration by the Government. I do not oppose the Bill, for several reasons. Firstly, I am personally interested in it; secondly, it has been brought down as a result of recommendations by an arbitrator appointed by the Government and Parliament has accepted his recommendations in other Bills; and thirdly, because of happenings during the past 12 months there is justification for Mr. President Morgan's recommendations. I entirely agree with the Leader of the Opposition that more use could have been made of the committee. Many problems associated with land settlement and usage could be investigated by the committee if it were a permanent one. The State is passing through a period of unprecedented prosperity in rural industries, but in future many problems may come before the Government and a committee such as this would be able to assist it in finding solutions. A permanent committee could accumulate much valuable information to deal with difficult problems. I think the answers given today to a question on notice could have placed the Land Settlement Committee in a false light. The following details of its meetings may be of interest:—

Year.	Adelaide meetings.	Country meetings.
1945-46 .. . . .	53	34
1946-47 .. . . .	36	28
1947-48 .. . . .	36	33
1948-49 .. . . .	32	13
1949-50 .. . . .	28	25

The number of country meetings do not include night meetings. There were many occasions when it was necessary to meet at night as well as during the day. The members have had to do a tremendous amount of travelling, much of it not easy. The committee has made about 25 trips to the South-East and has often had to leave the highways for the byways, and at times left the tracks altogether. Once it had to travel over the country by jeep. This

travelling has meant a great deal of physical effort. Although most of our good rainfall areas are occupied there is still much country that has not been properly developed. If the Government had been able to undertake work which the committee recommended there would have been much work for the committee to do. However, I appreciate that with high costs and shortages of equipment it has not been possible to carry out all those works. I express my appreciation of the very valuable support I have received from the members of the committee and the loyal way they have assisted me in solving our problems, many of which have not been easy. The investigations into the drainage of the South-East and the scheme to enable the Australian Mutual Provident Society to develop land in the Upper South-East were involved and took much time, but these undertakings will be of great worth to the State. The committee has always been ready to go to any length to get a firm grip of the problems before it. It has justified its existence and I was pleased that the Minister, in his second reading speech, said the reductions in salaries were not in any way a reflection on the work of the committee, but simply a consequence of its not having as much work to do as in the past. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned several problems which may come before the committee in the future, and although I might not agree with him on the solution of some of them, I believe that we shall have to face them. I suggest that some of the projects investigated by the Public Works Committee, particularly in regard to drainage and agricultural schemes, could be referred to the Land Settlement Committee if the Act were amended. By this means the committee's status could be preserved. There are plenty of avenues for keeping it fully occupied.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (Chaffey)—A committee known as the Agricultural Settlement Committee was appointed by the Hill Government and reported to Parliament in 1931. It reported on many subjects, including the drainage of the South-East, which has been a live problem for every Government since 1930, and probably was even before that date. That problem has been solved by the present Land Settlement Committee, although it could not have been solved without the assistance of the Commonwealth Government under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme. The Agricultural Settlement Committee also went into the problem of land development and cost of production, and it recommended that a perma-

nent agricultural committee, composed of members of both Houses of Parliament, be constituted. Members who have the interests of country districts at heart feel that a committee along the lines suggested should be established. The closest approach we have to that is the Land Settlement Committee. Propaganda was put forward at the time that, by the appointment of the committee, the mistakes following World War I. would not be repeated. Contrary to public belief, soldier settlement as such, is not one of the responsibilities of the Land Settlement Committee. The committee was appointed to inquire into and report to the Governor on any project affecting land settlement or on any question relating to the settlement, development, or working of any land referred to it by the Government. At one time I tried to have the Act amended, making it mandatory for all projects to be referred to the committee, but since the Act has operated it has been the desire of certain Government departments to exclude the committee from the control and oversight of land settlement.

When the Loxton irrigation project was submitted to the committee the Government said it was most anxious for a speedy decision. The then chairman, a member of the Legislative Council, and the secretary had a conference with responsible departmental heads and it was agreed that an interim report should be made so that developmental work could be started. The committee agreed to make an interim report on the understanding that developmental work would be referred back to it for further consideration. In the meantime somebody discovered that as the Commonwealth Government had accepted the Loxton soldier settlement scheme there was no necessity for the matter to be considered by the committee. That was a deliberate breach of faith and was the beginning of the end of soldier settlement in South Australia. Land in the South-East second to none in the State was acquired for practically a nominal sum through the efforts of the Land Settlement Committee. South-Eastern landowners have been more than generous and sold land worth £70 an acre for £12 an acre. Some of it was sold for £70 an acre at the time. For years the land remained idle, notwithstanding that pastures were more than knee deep. Had the Land Settlement Committee been functioning as Parliament hoped it would function, it would have been the watch dog for ex-servicemen, and the mistakes made by certain Government departments, no

matter how clever they might be in theory, would not have happened. I have seen houses built on blocks that have not been developed one iota and in other cases where the land was fully developed there were no houses. That has been done under the scheme propounded by the Lands Department. I have seen heaps of timber, obviously intended for house building in the South-East, warping in the summer heat.

I am proud to be a primary producer and a settler, following on World War I, and I had hoped to be of some service to soldiers from World War II. The Land Settlement Committee's efforts have been stultified through the Government's not sending matters on to it to inquire into; in fact, it seems to have prevented the committee from making certain inquiries. There appears to have been a deliberate policy of keeping the committee from "interfering" with the administration side of land settlement. If the Bill becomes law it will cost the taxpayers £10,000 for each £100 saved. The committee should not be reduced in status, notwithstanding what the Minister says. Evidently Parliament has no further use for the committee and is writing it down. The present action is a reflection on it. As pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, the need for the committee is greater today than ever. Our need for foodstuffs is of great importance. Notwithstanding all the secondary industries and monopolies which have been built up, our primary industries are of the greatest importance to the State. The Land Settlement Committee has, and still can do a lot to solve some of our most pressing rural problems. What it has done is only a tithe of what it could do if it had the opportunity. It is the reduction in status of the committee and not the salary paid to members to which I object.

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley).—I am not in disagreement with Mr. President Morgan's finding, but I cannot support the Bill. Probably because of the amount of work that the committee has to do the reduction is justified, but I oppose it because if we consent we will write down much of the work of the committee, which has rendered invaluable service to South Australia. During the years no body of men has rendered more valuable service to the State than members of various Parliamentary committees which have functioned as advisory committees on every possible feature of South Australian life. Some of the most important work carried out in South Australia has been based upon the findings of Parliamentary committees. Members have only to visualize the

invaluable work that has been done by the Public Works Standing Committee. Although that committee has been of extreme value to South Australia it could not give greater service than the Land Settlement Committee if it were empowered to report on some of the problems confronting agriculture in South Australia. The Land Settlement Committee should not be written down; rather should it be increased in status and given added powers. I served on the committee for five years. It was an education to me in as much as I came in close contact with many of the agricultural problems that confront us today. There are a thousand and one problems awaiting to be answered. If the committee was given greater powers its members would be able to earn the salary originally granted. No more important legislation has been enacted in recent years than the Soil Conservation Act, but where is the administration of it? What do we know about the way in which it is carried out? Has this Parliament any check-up on the actual necessity for the various provisions of that Act? None whatever! All we get is advice from those in authority under the Act. The problem of erosion is a very serious one. It is not simply a question of the destruction of the top soil by sheet erosion, water erosion, or anything else, but the breakdown of the very fertility of the soil itself, which is leading to a diminished yield of foodstuffs. That alone is a problem which transcends in importance everything in South Australian life. Who is inquiring into it? Are we informed on it in any particular? I have been speaking about this thing for years in anticipation of its happening, knowing, as a man on the land, that inevitably it would come about. Now we find the columns of the newspapers filled with expressions of fear at the falling off of our primary production. Today we assess our production in terms of money, and try to fool ourselves that it is greater than it was years ago because its monetary value is greater, whereas actual production is falling off. In that is a problem that would keep any Parliamentary committee fully occupied for years to come. A competent committee, which can always be obtained from a cross-section of the population as represented in Parliament, would be able to give invaluable reports to this Parliament in relation to that problem alone, and we are wasting the talents of the members of this House in not giving them the work which they are willing and able to do. For those reasons I oppose

the reduction of salaries, not because of the conditions found by Mr. President Morgan, but because the Government has failed in its duty to keep this competent committee fully employed.

Mr. CHRISTIAN (Eyre)—I too express my surprise at the provisions of this Bill. I certainly did not expect that such a valuable committee would be demoted—which is, in effect, what this Bill does. I cannot quite understand how Mr. President Morgan was able to assess the future value of this committee. Obviously he assessed the value of its work on the amount it performed in the past year, but how could he know that its work may not again be equal to that performed in the first few years of its existence? That rather puzzles me. I assume the time must come again when many other references will be made to the committee and the volume of its work will be as great as in the past. In view of the problems referred to by previous speakers I can visualize the time when the committee will again be fully occupied. If we are to assume that the salaries of its members must always be dependent upon the volume of work performed in any particular period we should apply that principle in other spheres. Why not to the judiciary itself? In any particular year when the citizens of this State were especially law-abiding and there was consequently little work for the court I assume the salaries of the judges would have to be reduced accordingly, if this principle is to be adopted. However, we do not apply that principle to judges. We say that they shall be assured of security in their honoured positions for all time. If Parliament is the supreme tribunal of this State we should not write it down, or depreciate the value of any of its members. I cannot understand the considerations which persuaded Mr. President Morgan to make this recommendation, for I had envisaged—and I hope it will still come to fruition—that this committee will be just as valuable in the years to come and that it will be given just as much work. When that eventuates are we to pass another Bill to restore the salaries of its members, or are they to continue with the salaries proposed under this measure? I do not feel inclined to support the measure because it definitely degrades the Land Settlement Committee by the reductions proposed, particularly in regard to the Chairman's emolument. He is a man whom everyone holds in the highest esteem; who has, together with the members of his

committee, rendered valuable services to Parliament and the State. As the highest tribunal in this land we can accept or reject whatever recommendations come before us.

Mr. FLETCHER (Mount Gambier)—I was one who had high hopes that this committee would eventually become a permanent body. I have studied the report mentioned by Mr. Macgillivray and I consider that had the Land Settlement Committee existed 20 years ago, when that report was issued, and been given a roving commission to visit all parts of the State, it could have rendered most valuable assistance. I am quite sure that today it would be very interesting for the Land Settlement Committee to visit the areas it has recommended for purchase and see the conditions under which the settlers are working; to assess their chances of success and, perhaps, see where the committee itself made mistakes, or where the officers of the Department of Lands may also be making mistakes. I am somewhat disappointed that the Government has not moved to make this a permanent committee, for there is ample scope for it. Like the member for Eyre, I do not feel inclined to support the Bill, not because I deprecate Mr. President Morgan's finding, but because I think the Government should have used the services of this committee more than it has.

Mr. HAWKER (Burra)—I echo the opinions of other members. It is rather a pity that we should cut down the allowance of members of this committee, and there is an aspect which should be taken into account which has not been referred to; the measure of assessment should not be the amount of work performed in a given period, but the fact that they must always hold themselves in readiness to attend to their work at any time they are called upon. They cannot count on as much free time as ordinary members of Parliament and consequently it is a great pity that their salaries are to be cut down. As another member said, the amount is very small in comparison with the committee's responsibilities.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—"Salaries."

The Committee divided on the clause—

Ayes (17).—Messrs. Brookman, Clarke, Goldney, and Heaslip, Hons. C. S. Hincks (teller), S. W. Jeffries, and Sir George Jenkins, Mr. McAlees, Hon. M. McIntosh,

Messrs. McLachlan, Michael, O'Halloran, Pattinson, Pearson, Stephens, Teusner, and Frank Walsh.

Noes (9).—Messrs. Christian, Davis, Fletcher, Hawker, Lawn, Macgillivray, Moir, Quirke (teller), and Fred Walsh.

Majority of 8 for the Ayes.

Clause thus passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**PUBLIC WORKS STANDING COMMITTEE  
ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 16. Page 366.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Frome—Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill amends section 12 of the principal Act relating to the payment of travelling expenses and provides for them to be fixed by regulation. I understand this is in accordance with a recommendation by Mr. President Morgan. The principle in the Bill is a sound one. The travelling expenses provided for in section 12 have remained unaltered since 1927 when the Act was passed. Since then there has been a considerable increase in travelling expenses of members of the committee. I was a member of it for some years and when I travelled on committee work never did I collect in travelling expenses the amount I had to spend. The present rates are 15s. a day when travelling within the State and 30s. for travel outside the State. If a member resides more than 20 miles from the metropolitan area and has to travel to the city to attend meetings of the committee he is entitled to an additional 10s. That does not mean that each day in the week he travels to a committee meeting he gets another 10s. He gets it only for the first day's travel and then has to remain in the city and pay board whilst attending other committee meetings during the week, or travel to the city from his country home each day without getting additional remuneration. The term "travelling expenses" may not be the correct one to use. Actually the travelling expenses incurred by committee members are out-of-pocket expenses for board and lodging. I am satisfied with the proposal in the Bill, and in future if it is necessary to meet increased travelling expenses it can be done without the amendment of legislation. Some consideration should be given to the salaries paid to committee members. No-one will suggest that it is not a valuable and hard working committee, and that its duties

have not increased enormously in recent years. Because of that it may be wise to consider raising the limit of £30,000 expenditure on public works to £50,000. Now if a public work costs more than £30,000 it must be referred to the committee for inquiry and report. If there were an increase to £50,000 it would remove from the committee a number of more or less routine inquiries.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—The £30,000 fixed in 1927 was equivalent in value to about £60,000 now.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, but a fair compromise would be £50,000. In 1927 when the committee was established the chairman was paid a margin of £400 over his Parliamentary salary, and members were paid a margin of £250. The Bill leaves the margins undisturbed, but a practice has grown up whereby public servants get cost of living adjustments, and occasionally there is a reclassification for the purpose of preserving original margins. Recently there was a reclassification for this purpose, with the result that some officers received a substantial increase in salary. If the chairman of the committee was entitled to a margin of £400 in 1927 serious consideration should be given to increasing the margin now to £500, and for increasing that of members to £300. However, I do not press the matter now. The Bill establishes for committee members a principle which has been applied to thousands of workers. Mr. President Morgan was asked to report to the Government on what he thought was a fair adjustment of the salaries and expenses paid to committee members. The responsibility rests upon Parliament to fix the salaries. In the final analysis we must accept the prescribed salary suggested. As the amendment of the Act relating to the method of fixing the committee's travelling expenses is fair and reasonable, I support the second reading.

Mr. CHRISTIAN (Eyre)—I support the Bill because it is certainly time that the provision relating to travelling allowances was amended to permit of the payment of a scale on present-day costs. Everyone knows that hotel tariffs have doubled in the last seven or eight years. On many of the committee's country trips the expenses allowed have not been half the actual costs incurred. The committee members have not minded that and have always been willing to bear the cost, but I think it is right that henceforth the State should reimburse them fully the actual costs involved. On the question

of salaries referred to by the Leader of the Opposition, I do not wish to comment other than to say that it is undoubtedly correct that the volume of the committee's work has increased threefold since it was first appointed, and I think the value of its services has certainly increased appreciably in that time. Originally the salary of the chairman was about the same as his Parliamentary salary, so it must have been considered at that time that the work performed by him was as valuable as what he did as a member of Parliament. To almost the same degree that also applies to other members of the committee. The recommendation of the arbitrator is that the salaries of members of Parliament be increased by £250 to £1,150, whereas the salary of the ordinary committee member remains at £250—exactly the amount by which Mr. President Morgan recommended that the Parliamentary salary be increased. I can say definitely that the work of the individual member of the Public Works Committee is quite equal in volume and in value to the work he performs as a member of Parliament.

Mr. Dunks—I think it may be more.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—Yes. The committee sits practically all the year except for about one month during the Christmas period. That is not the only measure of the value of the services performed. The problems that the members have to consider are taken home, as is the case with most people in public life. Many solutions are often found long after working hours and long after ordinary people have retired to bed. The value of the work cannot be assessed by the number of meetings attended. Apparently these matters were not considered. If we were to assess the value of the work on the basis of the value of the work of a member of Parliament, obviously committee members' salaries should have been doubled compared with what they were originally. I am not asking for that, nor did the committee ask for it, nor am I quarrelling with the assessment made, but I am merely pointing out what the position actually is so that members can form their own opinions.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—Did the committee appear before Mr. President Morgan?

Mr. CHRISTIAN—The chairman was asked to and he presented the case which the committee had arrived at. The Leader of the Opposition suggested that the value of projects referred to the committee should be increased

from a minimum of £30,000 to £50,000. That question too was given deep consideration by my committee and it was decided that it was in Parliament's own interests that public projects of any character should be referred to the committee because it could often arrive at some worthwhile solution. Consider, for instance, school buildings. Practically all these come before the committee today. One would normally say that there is not much involved in an ordinary school building and its equipment. An interesting feature was discovered when the committee inspected a school, following on our first reference on these projects. It was regarded as the show kindergarten building, it being entirely heated by gas. About two years ago, during a very cold winter and while the State was suffering the effects of a coal strike, there was no gas. All the little toddlers at this school were almost freezing to death. The committee made investigations and ascertained that there could have been installed a very scientific type of combustion stove which had been developed in New South Wales. The principle is that the stove sets up a convection current of hot air, which is then circulated through the classrooms. The heat does not go up the chimney as with the ordinary type of fire. It is the most scientific fuel-burning stove I have seen, and since then the committee has recommended that this type be adopted for all classrooms. I think it will prove a boon to school children in this State. Had it not been for the investigations of this committee I claim that we would have gone on installing gas thermostats or electric heating systems in our classrooms which in times of coal shortages or strikes would have been completely ineffective, leaving the children to freeze in the cold winters. Further, the committee found that this type of stove was much cheaper to run than either electricity or gas; so economies are now being effected. The time may come when our very much inflated currency becomes deflated again, and our pound may appreciate sufficiently in value to bring us back to where we were before inflation. Then the limit of £30,000 would not be too small. Further, notwithstanding investigations by the committee, no public work has ever been delayed because of its inquiries.

Mr. O'Halloran—How far ahead would the committee be now?

Mr. CHRISTIAN—Two or three years. I can produce a list drawn up by the committee showing the precise date of its various inquiries,

and the state of the particular works. It has been found that, although the reports had been issued two years before, some works had not been commenced at the time the list was compiled. I do not blame anyone for that. It is entirely attributable to the present lack of materials and manpower, but no blame can be laid at the door of the committee regarding any delay in the carrying out of projects into which it has inquired. There appears to me no legitimate reason to alter the conditions under which matters are referred to the committee, which is not looking for additional work, because members find their hands are very full. It is valuable to Parliament because it furnishes it with very full and adequate information on the different projects referred to it for which Parliament must provide the money. If any project is recommended by the committee, members may rest assured that it is safe to vote the money for it. That statement is no reflection on Ministers, because no Minister can possibly investigate a proposal to the last detail and assure himself of the adequacy of the proposed plan and whether any savings, improvements or adjustments can be made. It is only after that project has run the gauntlet of the scrutiny of expert witnesses that a final and sometimes modified scheme can be arrived at which is often an improvement on the original proposal. I welcome this measure, because it provides relief with regard to expenses. With regard to salaries I feel certain the members of my committee earn a great deal more than they receive today.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES (Torrens)—I support the Bill, in so far as it deals with expenses incurred by members of the Public Works Standing Committee. I think those expenses should be fixed in the way suggested by the Bill—by the Government promulgating regulations from time to time. The previous speaker, who is the Chairman of this committee, suggested in a very mild and polite way that the salaries of its members should be increased because of the increased amount of work they are doing. If that interpretation of his statement is correct, I suggest the same reasoning should have been applied by some members to another Bill passed this afternoon which reduced the salaries of members of another committee because of a decrease in the amount of their work. However, when things are different they are not the same. I greatly appreciate the Public Works Standing Committee's activities which I have watched for many years and which have been of untold

benefit to this State. The committee has never done better work than under the present Chairman.

Mr. Christian—I would not say that. We have had some excellent chairmen.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES—I was not speaking of the work of the Chairman, but said that the committee has never done better work than under its present Chairman. I have known other Chairmen who have been most industrious and painstaking in their work. We have only to look at the committee's reports to see the thoroughness with which projects are investigated. I am pleased with the elastic method of fixing expenses which has been incorporated in the Bill. It will mean that the amounts payable to members may be varied with the expenses actually incurred.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—I support the Bill in so far as it applies to expenses, but I point out that the recommendation of Mr. President Morgan with regard to committee members' salaries is unjust and does a disservice to this House. This committee was originally appointed in 1927, its functions being to investigate and report to this Parliament on projects costing over £30,000. At that time the basic wage was over £4 a week. Today it is £9 4s., an increase of over 100 per cent. Since becoming a member of this House I have heard many references to the increased work being thrown upon this committee because of the limit of £30,000. It has been suggested that today that amount is comparatively small. However, I oppose an increase in that amount because of the dangers attendant upon such an action. I believe this committee has become over-burdened. If that is the case His Honour has left himself open to criticism, because in his second reading speech on the Land Settlement Act Amendment Bill the Minister stated:—

These rates were inquired into by Mr. President Morgan and he reported that in view of the volume of work before the committee he regarded its present remuneration as too large. I think that members of the legal profession on the other side of the House would agree that precedents and principles which have been laid down from time to time and have been unchallenged should be followed. In one case Mr. President Morgan recommended a reduction in salaries because the volume of work had diminished, but every member knows that the work of the Public Works Committee has increased considerably. His Honour, therefore,

is either inconsistent in his findings or is saying in effect that Parliament over-estimated the value of the work of the Public Works Committee in 1927, for the Minister stated:—

After investigations His Honour found himself unable to say that the existing rates, namely, £400 for the chairman and £250 to each other member, were insufficient.

On questions of remuneration, whether affecting me or anyone else, I always speak without fear of press or public criticism. I know my own value and am prepared to state it, and if members have not the courage to assess their own values they cannot expect the people they represent to have much confidence in them. As Mr. President Morgan recommended a decrease in salary for members of the Land Settlement Committee he should have recommended an increase in salary to members of the Public Works Committee. Parliament should either increase the salaries which were fixed in 1927 under the Public Works Standing Committee Act or admit a mistake was then made. I do not think I would be in order in moving an amendment to increase the salaries, for financial questions are matters for the Government. I urge the Government to adjourn the debate on this Bill and allow Parliament to place its value upon the work performed by the members of the committee.

Mr. DUNKS (Mitcham)—I support the Bill. I do not think there is much need to go into the pros and cons of Mr. President Morgan's report. He concluded that the reimbursements of travelling expenses allowed to members are not high enough and decided that the Executive should adjust them from time to time. The reimbursements allowed have been too little. A great deal of work has devolved upon the members of the committee, which met 93 times between June, 1950, and June, 1951, and is composed of members of Parliament. It seems that this committee is greatly overworked because the members still have to give attention to their Parliamentary duties. I am wondering whether the work of the committee should be performed by a special body giving its whole time to examining proposed public works. I agree that the chairman is the driving force in the committee and that he has a good supporting team. The member for Eyre has carried out his duties

as chairman zealously and has had to make great sacrifices in order to look after the interests of his district.

Mr. Christian—He has a splendid team.

Mr. DUNKS—Yes, but every team needs a good leader. A great deal of work will have to be done by the committee in the future. We have before us Loan Estimates for £41,000,000 to cover many of the projects that have been agreed to by the Public Works Committee. The chairman of the committee said that some of the works would not be carried out for probably two years, but I feel that some will not be carried out for five years and, perhaps, not at all. The fact that the committee has been able to sit for 93 days in one year convinces me that the Parliamentary position we hold is only a part-time job. It would be impossible for a member to give 93 days to the work of a special committee if his time were fully taken up with Parliamentary duties. I support the Bill and congratulate the committee on its excellent work.

Mr. MOIR (Norwood)—I support the remarks of the member for Eyre, who is one of the ablest chairmen I have had the pleasure of sitting under. He is not a "Yes" man by any means and always gives members of the committee a fair go. That consideration is not always shown to members of committees by chairmen. However, every member of the Public Works Committee is asked to place his views before it. I am not prepared to try to make ends meet on 15s. a day allowance, especially when hotel expenses frequently reach 20s. or 30s. I am disappointed that Parliament itself does not fix the fees of members. The Public Works Committee inquires into projects involving probably millions of pounds, but when it comes to considering members' salaries Parliament appears to be afraid to assess the value of members. We are poor business people if we cannot do that and I feel that we have failed by asking a judge to decide the matter. Members of the Public Works Committee are entitled to the increase sought.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.39 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, August 22, at 2 p.m.