

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, August 22, 1951.

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

SHORTAGE OF DIESELENE.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Minister of Lands any further information to give in reply to my question of yesterday about the reported shortage of dieselene in the north-eastern part of my electorate?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Fortunately the shortage was only temporary. I have received the following report on the matter:—

An approach to some of the major companies has elicited the following information:—Dieselene is only a trade name for distillate fuel. There has been a definite shortage over a short period due to a slight upset in tanker schedules and lack of storage supplies, but it is not anticipated that this will happen again in the near future. At present there is no shortage.

**WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT
AMENDMENT BILL.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN, having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1932-1950. Read a first time.

HOUSING POLICY.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—I move—

That in the opinion of this House, in order to co-ordinate all activities for the provision of urgently needed homes not only in the metropolitan area but also in the country, under one administrative head, a department of housing under the control of a Minister with no other departmental responsibilities should be established and that a building advisory panel consisting of representatives of the Institute of Architects, Master Builders and Building Trades Unions should be appointed to advise the Minister as to the best methods to employ in the mobilization of building resources, the utilization of labour, the control of materials, the expansion of production of essential basic materials, and if necessary, the importation of materials in short supply.

As a result of certain evidence I obtained I have placed three bricks, selected at random from between 8,000 and 10,000 delivered on a job, on a table in the interviewing room under the House of Assembly stairway. The motion before the House is not a new one. Members of the Labor Party are still intensely interested in the housing of our people and believe that if the motion is carried it will assist the Government in solving

the immediate housing problem. A Minister of Housing, without any other departmental duties, is required today more than ever. Labor members do not feel that it is their responsibility to say how many members should be in the Cabinet but consider that if we are to ever overtake our housing shortage and make materials available for other buildings such as schools and hospitals, a building advisory panel is urgently needed. The Minister of Housing should be responsible to Parliament; the advisory panel could co-ordinate the supply of materials and advise the Minister, who, in turn, would direct the co-ordinated services. I do not think anybody will challenge the effectiveness of directed services and the allocation of materials following on the establishment of the Penfield munitions factories. They were erected through the co-ordinated efforts and voluntary assistance of people primarily engaged in the building industry. These efforts stand as a perfect illustration of co-ordination in the building industry. A few years ago I asked why the Government had not sought the assistance of the South Australian Builders and Contractors' Association in connection with its building programme. Recently it entered into negotiations with the association for the erection of 100 school buildings before the commencement of the first term in 1952, but after a report had been submitted to the Minister of Education he said that the matter had to be referred to the Premier for approval. Later the Premier told Parliament that it was Government policy to call for tenders for the work, but I do not think sufficient tenders will be received for the necessary buildings to be erected by 1952. If that happens, there will be insufficient accommodation at schools for new children and for those transferring from primary to secondary education. If this motion is not carried a responsibility will rest upon Liberal and Country League members to approach their leader to implement a policy which will ensure the erection of the necessary school buildings. I do not know whether they have the right to approach their leader in this way, but in a democracy it should be possible. The Government must do all it can to have those 100 school buildings erected by 1952. We often wonder why not enough people enter the teaching profession, but more would do so if better amenities were provided for teachers. At some schools the teachers have to wait for the children to leave the classroom before they can find room in which to have their lunch.

Better amenities are provided in other industries, and that is another reason why there is a shortage of teachers. Despite this, the Government takes no notice of suggestions by Opposition members for providing more school accommodation and better amenities for teachers. The Commonwealth Government has always sought the assistance of the South Australian Builders and Contractors' Association in the erection of Commonwealth buildings. If that assistance is good enough for the Commonwealth Government, why is it not sought by the State Government? No-one can say that the Commonwealth Government, with the assistance of the association, has not made a success of the erection of buildings at the Woomera Rocket Range. In his Address in Reply speech Mr. Riches paid a tribute to the standard of the buildings and the workmanship put into them. The association has a labour pool upon which it can draw, and this is always a great help. By using that pool the association assisted the Commonwealth Government in building hostels for migrants. In the Address in Reply debate the member for Hindmarsh called the attention of the Government to its lack of provision of basic housing requirements. He said there was a brickyard in Croydon with plant capable of a weekly production of 110,000 bricks. At one time I interviewed representatives of the Brick Manufacturers Association with regard to this brickyard, which has now gone over to the production of earthenware pipes. They assured me then that they were contemplating applying to the Industries Development Committee for financial assistance to re-open that yard, and admitted that only £500 would be required to put the Hoffman kiln there in perfect condition so as to produce 100,000 bricks a week. What has the Government done about this matter? It has made loans for the purpose of increasing brick production in another place, while here was a ready-made set-up capable of producing 100,000 bricks a week for the next 20 years. Did this Government have the interests of the State at heart in allowing this brick kiln to be sold to Earthenware Industries Ltd., a concern in which most of the shares were held by brick manufacturers? Who are the Government's advisers on home building who countenanced the overnight transfer from brick production of this asset? That Hoffman kiln has been demolished, yet we are told that over £40,000 will be lent to another company so that a kiln may be erected in another locality.

The terms of this motion envisage that there will be an advisory panel of people with a

knowledge of building, particularly home building, who will co-ordinate their efforts in advising a Minister who will be responsible to Parliament. Is our home building programme in its present condition because this Government has become a one-man band? It is disgraceful that the Government must publicize its efforts through bulletins issued by the South Australian Housing Trust. There is a need for a review of the brick industry generally. Most brick manufacturers are still living in the 1930-33 period, possibly because they were caught with a certain quantity of bricks on hand in the depression created by the Commonwealth Government of that time and its advisers, of whom the principal was Sir Otto Niemeier. Members who inspect the sample of bricks I have mentioned will see what I mean by "quick production irrespective of quality." For every million bricks made in any brickyard a liability in the form of a pughole is created. A brickyard is a wasting asset. It may be that our taxation laws should be revised so as to give inducement to brick manufacturers to produce more. At present the peak production for this State is 48,000,000 per year, whereas in 1926 the standard was 80,000,000. Brick manufacturers are either still living in the early 30's or are being bitten by our taxation laws. Whatever it may be, it is of national importance that an investigation be made, hence the desirability of appointing a Minister of Housing with no other departmental responsibility. Much has been said by various members about labour problems in the building industry. The member for Onkaparinga said:—

Many more schools and hospitals are required in South Australia, but the bricklayer only lays 300 bricks a day. If he lays more he is called a scab and a pacemaker. Years ago the average tradesman could lay 1,000 or 1,200 a day and not turn a hair.

I refute those statements. What is his authority for saying that a bricklayer only needs to lay 300 bricks a day, and who calls him a scab or pacemaker if he exceeds that number? His was a deliberate misrepresentation of the position.

Mr. Shannon—I admit that it was a deliberate statement, but not a misrepresentation.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Not one of the honourable member's statements that I quoted was correct. Bricklayers are averaging on some types of homes 675 to 700 bricks a day per man from foundation to topping.

Mr. Dunks—Are they daily paid men?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—They are working for wages and are not under an incentive

scheme. They are receiving the wages prescribed by the Arbitration Court, but I do not know whether they are getting anything above those rates. If members would look at the samples of bricks those men have to use they would wonder how they could even lay 300 a day, the rate suggested by the member for Onkaparinga. On other types of homes being erected in the metropolitan area they are averaging 550 to 600 a day. When the Thousand Homes Scheme was under way bricklayers were able to average 900 a day on account of the design of the buildings.

Mr. Dunks—Then the member for Onkaparinga was not far wrong when he said they could lay 1,000 or more a day.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The type of building in the Thousand Homes Scheme is not being erected today, so bricklayers cannot lay as many bricks per day. People today demand bigger openings in their homes for windows and doors. More plumbing is required and more corners are specified, thus reducing the bricklayer's speed. To say that bricklayers lay only 300 bricks a day is utter nonsense, unless they are compelled to use materials even inferior to those I have displayed in the interviewing room. Over a job they usually average 550 to 600 from foundations to the top of the walls, including pointing and dwarf walls. The member for Mitcham said that bricklayers could lay 1,000 a day. Bonding, such as a Flemish bond, is generally specified in a 14in. solid wall. This does not need the same careful attention as the normal garden wall bond used in the construction of homes today. I believe even the member for Mitcham, if the front lines were put in, could grout in more than 1,000 bricks a day on that type of work. I refute the suggestion that building tradesmen are responsible for high costs. This Government has an obligation to the people of the State, and instead of saying that bricklayers are sabotaging the industry and are responsible for the high cost of the erection of houses it should take its share of the responsibility. The Government should immediately appoint a Minister for Housing to assist in meeting the State's basic housing requirements.

The Housing Trust, as the Government's agent, issues quarterly building figures. The Government gave it unlimited powers to build, let and sell homes, and to purchase land and even houses, if required. Moreover, it could make gifts or grants to people in necessitous circumstances to build homes. As the Government's agent the trust bought timber from another State and a sawmill to get timber

for home building. It would have been better had the Government gone into brick production and, instead of allowing a kiln to go out of existence, taken it over. Last session the member for Onkaparinga said that the high cost of homes was the result of the lowered output by building tradesmen. That is a deliberate mis-statement of fact. Let me illustrate the rising cost of bricks. At one period builders had freedom of choice in selecting bricks but today only three classes are manufactured. Brick prices are controlled by the Prices Department, but no mention is made of standards or quality. I know that instructions were issued to brick manufacturers to make wire-cut bricks, dry them as much as possible before burning them and, so long as they were not hot enough to set the lorry alight, deliver them on the job. In July, 1949, outside bricks cost £8 12s. a thousand at kilns; today the price is £11 13s. 6d. The price of inside bricks in 1949 was £7 17s., as against £10 19s. today. Special clay bricks cost £9 7s. in 1949, but now the price is £12 9s. Shale bricks come in the £12 9s. category, being hand-picked and selected for colour and pattern to meet requirements. The Prices Department has allowed an additional charge for delivery, which varies according to the distance of the site from the kiln. If the bricks have to be stacked by the driver a further 5s. a 1,000 is allowed. Brick prices have been on the up-grade during the past two years. Although the member for Onkaparinga blames building tradesmen for the high cost of homes it is the high cost of bricks that has added so much to the cost.

It is absolutely necessary to fix a standard for all bricks. It is the Government's responsibility to protect people who put money into house building and see that they obtain bricks of fair standard and quality. A standard has been set up for cement bricks and blocks, but there is no obligation on brick manufacturers to conform to it. The only time that the standard can be checked is when bricks are used in council areas where the building officer selects certain bricks and if they do not conform to the standard he can prevent their use in home building. But who bears the expense of the test? It is the individual who makes the request, the manufacturer getting off scot-free. Home builders are not protected in any way, but my motion will prevent the vicious practice by unscrupulous builders of fleecing people of their money. Imported timber adds to the cost of home construction today. At the latter end of 1948 timber freight was £15

per standard, the trade name used in the building industry. It really refers to the quantity of timber, measuring 1,980 sup. ft. or, as roughly calculated in the trade, about 2,000 sup. ft. The latest freight figure obtainable is £62 10s. per standard. The shipping line concerned has stated that it has no desire to handle any more timber at that price. Baltic flooring is used extensively in home building. Early last July the price of flooring boards measuring 6in. x $\frac{3}{4}$ in. was 92s. 6d. 100 lineal or running feet. The price today is 125s. 11d. Baltic flooring of $\frac{3}{4}$ in. thickness, the type normally used by the Housing Trust, cost 79s. 7d. per 100 lin. ft. early in July, but today the price is 107s. 1d. Early in July the price of deals in solid for joinery was 171s. 6d. per 100 sup. ft.; today's price is 236s. 10d. Oregon for home construction cost 140s. 3d. per 100 sup. ft. early in July, but today's price is 184s. 8d. The price today of imported galvanized iron is £195 a ton, and the local price is £50, provided the local material can be obtained.

All of this has an effect upon home building costs, and it is useless for Parliament to pass legislation designed to assist the building of homes by allowing a little more to be spent on them. The Housing Trust has published a pamphlet of its achievements in home building, but more should be done, and through the trust the Government should carry out a more vigorous programme towards providing homes for those who require them. Many people have invested their life savings, and also incurred a debt of about £2,000, in the purchase of homes, without giving any regard to whether they would be large enough for them within a few years. They had to take whatever was offering. Now some of those people want additional rooms constructed, but the Building Materials Office tells them that they cannot get burnt red bricks and must use substitutes. When this is done, the appearance of the home is spoilt, and its value considerably reduced. More red bricks should be produced. If a home is constructed of red bricks additions to it must be of red bricks, and in order to get them the owner must be given a No. 1 priority. Two or three years ago we did not visualize that the Government would approve the construction of emergency homes. We have them now, and if their erection is continued our housing standard will be reduced considerably. It is said that if we did not have emergency homes people would have to live in tents. That is true, and it is another reason why every consideration should be given to the building of more homes. Must we wait

until the Premier returns before there can be a full debate upon this matter? Must Liberal and Country League members await his return before being allowed to speak and try to refute statements I have made? Two or three years ago people approached the Premier for approval to build emergency homes. It was said that if they were built they would be demolished in 10 years, with better homes taking their place. If the present Government runs true to form more than 10 years will elapse before those emergency homes will be demolished. We have pitiful housing conditions today. In one case a young married couple with two children and the mother of the wife sleep in one room. In another case a man was living with his wife, mother, and three children in one room and sharing a kitchen, while three of his children were living with his relatives; yet he could not get an emergency home. What has the Government done to relieve this position? In another case a young couple with three children were living on a front verandah, the house being occupied by his parents and 12 boarders; yet they have been told they may qualify for a Housing Trust unit in the near future. Those examples are typical of the general housing position for which this Government is responsible. The criticism levelled at South Australian building operatives is unjust. I hope that if a Minister of Housing is appointed he will be responsible only to Parliament.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS secured the adjournment of the debate.

BETTING CONTROL BOARD RULE: MINIMUM BET.

Mr. TAPPING (Semaphore)—I move—

That paragraph II. of the amendments of rules of the Betting Control Board made under the Lottery and Gaming Act, 1936-1949, on November 30, 1950, and laid on the table of this House on June 27, 1951, be disallowed.

Some members may feel that this motion is petty, because an amount of only one shilling is involved; but I base my case entirely on moral principles. If Parliament allows this regulation, it will say in effect that it agrees to an extension of gambling. Frequently I have heard members on both sides of the House complain that too many facilities for betting are being provided for South Australians. In this instance we find that the minimum bet has been increased by 100 per cent. Last November Parliament passed legislation which provided for a tax of 2½ per cent on winning bets. In November the press reported that the Betting

Control Board had promulgated a regulation which in effect interfered with the minimum bet. In November the punter on the flat could legally invest 1s.; but since the promulgation of this regulation he must invest at least 2s., and if he wishes to place a both-ways bet, he must invest 4s.—2s. for a win and 2s. for a place. This is entirely wrong in principle.

I do not complain about the practice in the other enclosures. For years grandstand punters have been unable to invest less than 5s. However, as entry to that stand costs 12s. 6d., the grandstand patron can afford to invest that amount. The person who pays 4s. to enter the Derby stand can afford to invest 2s. each time he bets with the bookmaker. My motion is concerned only with the punters on the flat—those people who follow the sport, not with the intention of making money from it, but because they have chosen racing as their hobby or amusement, as other people have chosen football or cricket. They want to invest a shilling merely to add interest to their days' outing. The move by the Betting Control Board will debar those people from making that investment. The following is an extract from a letter to the *News* on Monday last which confirms my contention:—

People who go to races should be able to wager whatever they wish. The proposed reduction would be particularly welcomed by women who like to have a bet on each race, just for the interest, but now have to lay out 14s. to do so on seven races.

If people are to be forced to invest more than they can afford this Parliament will be encouraging an undesirable practice by suggesting that people should gamble more than they can afford to. The result may well be that some tradesmen's accounts will remain unpaid. In assessing the basic wage the Arbitration Court takes no account of a person's investments on horse racing. To compel a person to invest more than he can afford is morally wrong.

I understand that some bookmakers object to this motion, but I do not apologize for it because of that. I attend race meetings as a free South Australian and I will not be dictated to by anybody. My contention is based on the dictates of my own conscience, backed up by the opinions of a cross-section of the people I represent. Although the minimum bet today is 2s. on the flat, there may soon be another move by the Betting Control Board for an increase to 4s. Parliament should tell the Betting Control Board that it objects to this type of regulation. I have in mind particularly the Victoria Park racecourse, where people may enter the flat without paying because it is

parkland property belonging to the Adelaide City Council. Because of its central position many people go there who do not attend other courses not so conveniently situated. Many people going on to the flat attend only for the afternoon outing, investing a shilling merely to add interest to their outing. However, this regulation debars them from that pleasure. Not only monetary considerations bear on this matter. A person who has thousands of pounds but who desires to go on to the flat to see the horses run may wish to invest only 1s. He should not be debarred from doing so.

The Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation carefully considered this matter, and the hearings were long and protracted, the matter being adjourned on eight or nine occasions. Each member had the opportunity of putting his case. Mr. Alexander, Secretary of the Betting Control Board, gave very fair evidence. He based his case on the fact that the minimum bet was introduced consequently upon the imposition of the winnings tax last year, and indicated very definitely that the minimum was increased to 2s. because it would mean that in almost every case the patron backing a winner would be subject to taxation on his winnings. He said that bookmakers' betting sheets had disclosed beyond doubt that the number of 1s. bettors was very small. Those statements are really contradictory, because on the one hand he points to increased income from the winnings tax but on the other says that under the old regulation most people invested 2s. and generally paid tax on their winnings. In effect he admits that the activities of the 1s. bettors are trivial and insignificant.

Mr. O'Halloran—Did he indicate that there had been a reduction in betting taxation after the winnings tax legislation became operative?

Mr. TAPPING—No. He said that a 2s. minimum bet would prevent the practice of some people of splitting their bets. Many desire to back three or four horses at 1s. in order to have several horses running for them. The board is apparently concerned about this, believing that if it can force people to bet on one horse only there will be a greater chance of more betting taxation being obtained. The action of the board is a challenge to the freedom of the people. Although most people attending race meetings can afford bets of 2s. or more we have a duty to consider those in the minority who cannot afford such bets. They are the people I am concerned about.

We were told last year that by the end of 12 months a sum of about £450,000 would have been received from winnings bets taxation, based on a tax of 6d. in the pound. The Government and racing and trotting clubs were to benefit. From December 1 last to June 30 the amount of £342,287 was received, proving that the estimate will be greatly exceeded.

The SPEAKER—Any debate on taxation is outside the scope of the motion.

Mr. TAPPING—I merely point out that because the winnings taxation revenue is so huge there is no need to consider obtaining revenue from the person who can only invest 1s. on a horse. Like other members, whenever social matters are before the House I receive circulars from some reform league or society stating that members of Parliament should do their best to minimize gambling or drinking. I pay a tribute to those organizations who believe they are working for the welfare of society, but when there was a Bill before the House for the extension of racing days these organizations did not raise their voices, nor even when the proposal to increase the minimum bet from 1s. to 2s. was brought forward. The points I have raised are those at issue. I have not canvassed any members about this motion, but have asked them to vote according to their own opinions. I ask them not to treat it as a political matter because I was not prompted by the Labor Party to introduce the motion. Members on this side of the House have a free hand on social matters. I put the motion entirely as a matter of principle.

Mr. FRED WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON CONSOLIDATION BILLS.

The Legislative Council intimated its concurrence in the appointment of a Joint Committee on Consolidation Bills.

BUSINESS AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

TRESPASSING ON LAND BILL.

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS, having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to make further and better provision for the prevention of trespassing on land, and for purposes incidental thereto. Read a first time.

PAYMENT OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 16. Page 367.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Frome—Leader of the Opposition)—A member must speak with some diffidence on this measure because he is personally concerned, but I say without any inhibitions that it is warranted. There have not been any increases in the salaries of members of Parliament since 1948 but, as everyone knows only too well, a substantial increase in the cost of living has occurred since then. This increase probably bears more onerously on members of Parliament than on most citizens because the cost of accommodation has increased enormously during the past few years. In my electorate in some instances it has doubled and in many others has increased by 75 per cent. Members representing country electorates need to do much travelling, but even metropolitan members have to travel throughout the State in order to make themselves familiar with conditions in the country which may be affected by legislation brought before the House. Whilst travelling a member of Parliament does not save a comparable amount on the cost of maintaining his home. If one looks at the salaries paid to members of Parliament in other States one is forced to the conclusion that the increases proposed are not over-generous, although they may be just. I have not the latest figures of salaries paid in all States, but a private member of the Commonwealth Parliament is paid £1,500 per annum and the cost of certain expenses is defrayed, which assists members when they are away from home. In New South Wales the minimum is £1,375, and in Victoria the base rate is £1,050 for a metropolitan member and country members receive an additional £100. The Victorian figures are subject to cost of living adjustments and I understand that the minimum now is over £1,200.

In Queensland the minimum is £1,375, but again country members receive some travelling allowances according to the distance of the electorate from the capital and its size. The base rate in Western Australia is £1,000, plus £50 for country members whose electorates are more than 50 miles from Perth. The Western Australian figures are also subject to cost of living adjustments and I understand that at present the base rate is over £1,200. Tasmania has a varying scale according to the area of the electorate and the distance from Hobart.

It ranges from £850 to £1,050. The Tasmanian Government intends to introduce legislation to provide for salary increases based on the cost of living figures. Under the Bill South Australian members will still have the second lowest salary in the Commonwealth, and when Tasmania adjusts her figures the South Australian salary may be the lowest. I have no hesitation in supporting the Bill.

The recommendation that members' salaries should be increased came from the same source as the recommendation that other salaries should be increased under the Bill before members yesterday. The Government asked Mr. President Morgan, of the Industrial Court, to submit a report and he recommended the proposed increases. That recommendation agrees with the almost universal practice in South Australia in fixing other salaries and wages and must commend itself to all right-thinking people. The Bill will amend section 4 of the Act, raising members' salaries from £900, £950 and £975 respectively to £1,150, £1,200 and £1,225. It will also amend section 5 by raising the allowances of the Speaker of the House of Assembly and the President of the Legislative Council, the Chairman of Committees and the Leader of the Opposition from £400, £200 and £300 respectively to £600, £250 and £500. Private members' salaries were varied in 1948, when an extra £50 was granted to a member whose constituency was more than 50 miles from Adelaide and £75 to those whose electorates were more than 200 miles. The increases granted in 1948 were on the assumption that members who represent distant and large electorates have greater expense than one who represents an electorate closer to Adelaide, and of a lesser area. It was, in effect, a recognition of the principle adopted by some States of granting members certain travelling and expense allowances. That is a more just method of payment because when a member's salary is increased he automatically becomes taxable and does not receive the full amount provided. A large part of the increase is paid in taxation, whereas expense allowances are not subject to taxation. I was recently told by members in other States that they do not seek further increases in salary but an increase in expense allowances. In Queensland every member gets an allowance of £1 a week, known as a postage allowance, with which to purchase stamps and pay for telephone calls, telegrams and other incidentals associated with representation. It is proposed to increase that allowance rather than grant a general salary increase.

When speaking yesterday on the Constitution Act Amendment Bill to provide increased Ministerial salaries I said it would be better if we established a standard salary, determined on a proper basis, and then provided for cost of living adjustments, either up or down, as is done in Victoria and Western Australia. If the cost of living continues to rise—and it is rising rapidly at the moment—we will find that at no distant date it will be necessary to face up to a further adjustment. All Parliamentary salaries and allowances should be included under one Act and not under various Acts. Salaries should definitely not be dealt with in the Constitution Act. The Bill before us is warranted and I am pleased with the reception it has been accorded by the general public. I travel extensively in the country and have not met one person who has criticized it adversely. I have not heard many comments; the few I have heard have been favourable and in one or two instances it was suggested that the amount was insufficient. I believe that the almost universal approbation with which the proposal has been received is because it has been based on a recommendation from the source that is used to fix all salaries and wages in this State, and for that reason commends itself to all right-thinking people outside. I support the second reading.

Mr. DUNKS (Mitcham)—It does not give me any great pleasure to speak on the Bill. I think that twice previously I objected to provisions for increases contained in other Bills. It is really a personal matter when we have to make a decision on our own salaries. Certainly the decision will follow Mr. President Morgan's report. Some members probably do not know me very well, but those who have been interested in me during my commercial life know that I have always been more anxious to give than to receive. I believe that during the whole of my life I have received less remuneration than I thought I was entitled to because I considered that my job was service and that I should not ask for more remuneration, although at times I know that had I demanded it I would have got it. The Bill provides, among other things, for an increased salary to the Speaker, and I do not disagree with that. The Speaker, because of his responsibility, is entitled to the sum mentioned. I think that when the salary of the Leader of the Opposition was increased from £400 to £600 I referred to his onerous duties and said I thought he was entitled to much more than an ordinary member. I still agree with that,

and feel that the present increase should be made. I stated that the Leader of the Opposition analysed every Bill which was introduced by the Government, and in the days when the Hon. R. S. Richards was Leader of the Opposition I think he spoke on practically every Bill introduced. Although the member for Frome has been Leader of the Opposition for some time I think other members of his Party have taken over the debate on certain Bills. Every Leader of the Opposition, whether he be Labor or Liberal, has a responsibility somewhat analogous to that of the Premier of a State, because he is required to take an active interest in all Bills introduced. He must meet members of his Party, talk the provisions of Bills over with them and at times may have to convince them that his attitude is correct.

In these days of Party politics the responsibilities of the rank and file member are not nearly so heavy as in the days before the Party system. To a large extent our decisions are made for us today. If we are good boys we agree with them and do as we are told. At times I regret that I have a will of my own; it would be much easier to say "Yes" and not "No." When we have a will of our own we get worries and troubles; it would suit me much better, both mentally and otherwise, if I sat down and did not make a speech. We have not the responsibility of making decisions today.

Mr. Macgillivray—That does not apply to Independent members here.

Mr. DUNKS—For 16 years I was a member of Unley City Council. We met every Monday night, either in committee or open council, for four or five hours without fee or reward. Probably members will not agree that the work that devolves on those actively associated with councils is greater than the work members do here. The weakness about our Parliamentary system, in my view, is that there is no definite responsibility on a private member, nor is there any responsibility on him to attend here day after day. When he does attend he can walk in the front door of the Chamber, sit in his place for a moment, and then walk out the back door and have his name recorded as being in attendance, just as the man does who sits in his place all the afternoon. We hear much talk about the work done by members. I know that some work hard, but others do not. There should be a rule that members must remain in their seats

and pay attention to the debates instead of roaming around the building. Being a member of Parliament is not a full-time job.

Mr. Davis—Speak for yourself.

Mr. DUNKS—All right. I can give my business at least six hours each day when Parliament is sitting and eight hours when it is not sitting.

Mr. Macgillivray—That would not apply to country members.

Mr. DUNKS—I have definite views on this matter. I get out of bed each morning at 6.30 and I am in my office at about 7.30 arriving at Parliament House at 11 or 11.30. I am always available if anyone wants to see me. I can always be found in my place when Parliament is sitting and I do not wander around the building. I could make some observations about what some members do from time to time when they consider they are on Parliamentary work. I have some leisure moments and I could stay away from Parliament House and do something else. I can please myself what I do. No-one can truthfully say that being a member of Parliament is a full-time job from the beginning to the end of the year. Last year Parliament sat on 51 days. I will not given any names but during last session "A" was absent on 11 sitting days "B" 11, "C" nine, "D" 11, "E" 12, "F" seven and "G" seven.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Why not name them?

The Hon. M. McIntosh—The Premier was absent a lot during last session but no-one can say he did not earn his salary.

Mr. DUNKS—The Premier is in a different category. He controls the affairs of State because he is leader of the Government.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Someone carries on for him when he is away.

Mr. DUNKS—When he is absent another Minister must look after affairs of State, and it seems logical, in view of that, that the deputy leader of the Government should receive a greater remuneration for his work.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—We do not do it that way. We share and share alike.

Mr. DUNKS—I represent a mixed community. I represent people at Unley Park, who live in big homes and may be regarded as the intelligentsia. I also represent people at Colonel Light Gardens, and they are mostly workers. I also represent people at Belair, Eden Hills and Blackwood and they are mostly in the gardening business. My area extends

at least 12 to 13 miles and I have to use my motor car from time to time. This is the best paid position I have had in my life. If I could have received my present salary 30 years ago I would have been happy. I have been brought up in a hard school. My point is that being a member of Parliament is not a full-time job. Electors are told that a member has not a minute to spare and that people are always on his doorstep waiting to see him. Perhaps I am peculiar, but that does not apply to me. Mr. President Morgan has for some unforeseen reason suggested that the salary of the Chairman of Committees should be increased by £50 a year.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Why not take it?

Mr. DUNKS—If members agree that the man who occupies the position of Chairman of Committees should get £250 a year in addition to his Parliamentary salary that is all right, but I will not take the extra £50. I shall hand it back to the Government, and that is not just bravado. At present members get £900 a year. Metropolitan members are well rewarded, considering the other emoluments they get. Other States increase the salaries of members of Parliament by lifting the base wage. I am connected with a number of industries. No doubt some members will try to find out in which industries I am interested, but what I have achieved has been achieved with my hands and with people who were prepared to work for me. I found employment for them and made profits. I am not ashamed of it. In the industries with which I am connected every time the base rate has been increased for workers under the Industrial Code I have demanded a similar increase for the staff. If the Bill is passed I will not accept the full increase to which I am entitled. I will accept only the increase in the base wage because I think that is all I am entitled to.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—If there were a big increase in the base wage next year, on your proposal you might get in salary more than other members.

Mr. DUNKS—I cannot follow that remark. I am prepared to accept the basic wage increase from 1948 to the present time. If the base rate goes down, will legislation be introduced to reduce the salaries of members?

Mr. Fred Walsh—It has been done before.

Mr. DUNKS—Yes, under a Premiers' Plan, with which many members did not agree. The salaries of members of Parliament should be dealt with in the same way as other States

deal with them. When the base wage rises the salaries of members should be increased. Let us look at the position of members when Parliament is not sitting. Members, and even country members, tell me that their expenses then are the same as when Parliament is sitting.

Mr. Shannon—The expenses then are greater because a member spends more time in his district.

Mr. DUNKS—It is easy to say "Yes" and I have been told that there are things that a member must do. I have been told that he must contribute money to certain things, but he does not have to do it if he does not want to. He says he will become unpopular if he does not contribute, but if he cannot afford it why does he contribute? Why does a member spend time on unnecessary things if he has no time to spare? During the last two weeks the chief subject of debate in this House has been inflation and members have come forward with ideas to overcome it. The Prime Minister called a conference of all sections to try to find a solution. There has been talk of price fixing and wage pegging, which even among the Labor Party once seemed to be popular. It is opportune for members of Parliament, whom the people expect to be leaders in the community, to set an example in the midst of all this discussion.

Mr. Hutchens—I assume from what you have said previously that the time is never opportune.

Mr. DUNKS—I have never said that. Among the people with whom I come in contact I find a great deal of criticism against the proposed increase. The general criticism is, "You are talking about all these restrictions, including wage pegging, and yet members of Parliament have decided to increase their own salaries."

Mr. Fred Walsh—No-one from this side of the House suggested wage pegging.

Mr. DUNKS—During the debate I believe I heard one member say he favoured price fixing even if it meant wage pegging. I do not believe that the addition of £50 or £75, according to the distance they live from the city, is a sufficient addition to the salaries of country members. There should be some other method of payment fixed while they are away from their residence and particularly while away from their business, because during their absence someone must be employed to look after their affairs. That does not happen

to the same extent to metropolitan members. A better method than adding £50 or £75 to country members' salaries according to the distance they live away from the metropolitan area would be to pay them so much a day travelling expenses while they are in attendance at the House.

Mr. Lawn—What about when members have to go round their districts?

Mr. DUNKS—Every member has to do that. They could do it while Parliament was not sitting.

Mr. McAlees—On Sundays?

Mr. DUNKS—That would not hurt them. A way should be found of paying them travelling expenses, or some other method adopted as mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. The amount should not be taxable. It would be some reimbursement to them for their travelling expenses and would not be considered an increase in salary. I will vote for the second reading because I hope that in Committee some notice will be taken of what I have said. If the Bill is not amended on the lines I have suggested I will oppose the third reading. I repeat that I will not accept the increased payment proposed for the Chairman of Committees, and will only accept the figure representing the increased cost of living since 1948, and will hand the remainder back to the Government.

Mr. HAWKER (Burra)—In 1948 a committee was appointed to consider the salaries of members of Parliament and a fairly substantial increase was recommended, which I supported on the grounds mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition during this debate. Since the President of the Industrial Court was asked on this occasion to go into the question the international position has deteriorated considerably. Inflation is world-wide and everyone in political life in Australia says it is one of the worst things we have to fight. I agree that members of Parliament should be well paid, and perhaps the amount suggested in 1948 was not commensurate with the work they do. The work of a member does not begin and end on sitting days. He has to make himself familiar not only with the needs of his district but with other matters of importance to the State. We have heard much about checking inflation and suggestions of wage pegging, price fixing and limitation of profits. As members of Parliament we should at this juncture be prepared to make some sacrifices ourselves. I agree that the Leader of the Opposition has a tremendous job to do

if democracy is to function as it should. I also agree that the Speaker should have his salary increased because his responsibilities are more than just sitting in the Chair and keeping order. The same applies to an extent to the Chairman of Committees, therefore I have no quarrel with clause 4 which deals with these members.

We have legislation to deal with price fixing and this has helped to force people out of the dairying industry. Rents are also fixed by legislation and the increase since 1945 has been only 5.2 per cent. If for the good of the community it is considered that rents should be pegged for people who have invested in houses to help them during their old age, and as we have passed legislation to restrict the profits of certain industries in order to benefit the State as a whole, it is an inopportune time for members to raise their salaries. Although no doubt this Bill will be passed I do not propose to take any increase. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I have not heard in my district one word against the rise, but I feel that while we have on the Statute Book certain restrictions on incomes we should not increase our own salaries.

Mr. DAVIS (Port Pirie)—I support the Bill. I had no intention of speaking until I heard the last two members. I do not suppose either would care one iota if he received nothing as a member of Parliament, because both hold other positions and I suppose both are financially independent of their Parliamentary salaries. I disagree with Mr. Dunks when he says that the increase is too high and that some members of Parliament do not work very hard. If he knew the true position he would know that country members do a lot of work, not only while the House is sitting, but every day. Every day I am approached by someone for assistance in their problems. Not a week passes but I must visit Adelaide to attend to some official business. Expenses incurred by country members are as heavy during the recess as when the House is sitting. Living away from home costs me about £4 a week. I agree with the member for Mitcham that greater consideration should be given to country members, because they must meet heavier expenses than metropolitan members. I agree with the member for Burra that the number of sitting days has no bearing on members' salaries, because they must live all the year round. If members were paid only for sitting days, some of them would have to seek work elsewhere during the recess. I believe in the

principle of one-man one-job. I have never held more than one job in my life. I hold honorary positions, three of them very important ones which actually cost me money. It costs a member of Parliament more to live than it does a worker in industry. The member for Mitcham said that members could please themselves whether they made donations to bodies in their districts; but people look to members to give a lead to all movements taking place in their districts. If any movement starts in my district I am generally approached for some advice or even with a request that I shall sponsor the whole show. Support of these movements costs money. I never knew there were so many sporting bodies in Port Pirie until I became a member of Parliament. Although members are allowed a deduction of £100 for donations by the Taxation Department, that amount cannot cover the calls made upon them, not only in their own districts but also from other districts, for financial assistance.

The member for Mitcham told us what he had done for his employees and said he had applied the basic wage increase to the salaries of his executive officers; but in doing that he was only doing the right thing. He should recognize that members of Parliament are entitled to the same consideration. I support the Bill.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—I am pleased to see there is no serious opposition to this Bill. Unlike one previous speaker I will not have 2s. each way on it but shall declare just where I stand. Parliament last approved of an increase in members' salaries in 1948. In May, 1948, the basic wage was £5 11s. a week, and in August, 1948, it was £5 14s. The salary fixed for members in that year was £900. In May, 1951, the basic wage was £8 11s., and today it is £9 4s. a week. This represents an increase of £3 10s. since August, 1948. The application of the 55 per cent increase in the basic wage between May, 1948, and May, 1951, would bring members' salaries up to £1,395, and the application of the 61.4 per cent increase between August, 1948, and the present time would bring them up to £1,452 12s. Therefore, Mr. President Morgan's recommendation has not even equated members' salaries in accordance with the percentage of basic wage increases.

It is recommended that the extra allowance for certain country members be left at £50. If that allowance had been equated in

accordance with the 55 per cent increase in the basic wage it would be fixed at £77 10s., and if in accordance with the 61.4 per cent increase it would be fixed at £80 14s. One member will be given press headlines because of his refusal to take the extra salary. I have seen similar statements published before; but after a time the members who have made those statements have changed their minds and accepted the salary. That may apply in this case. I hope the press publishes the full statement of the member for Mitcham to the effect that he would not take the full increase but only that part of it representing basic wage increases. Since August, 1948, the basic wage has increased by £182 a year. The Bill proposes an increase of £250. Therefore, the member for Mitcham, whilst saying that he would not accept the rise, will take all but £68 of it. He may take the rest later if he so desires.

Mr. Stephens—That is a very cheap advertisement.

Mr. LAWN—Yes, and I hope the *Advertiser* and the *News* will quote the figures I have given and not only the statement of the honourable member. I support the Bill.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—It is proper that members should express their views on such a measure as this. No more proper method of dealing with this very vexed question could have been adopted by the Government than to refer it to Mr. President Morgan, who has been able to reach a decision in a judicial atmosphere right outside the hurly-burly of Parliament. If members so desired they could have stated their case with regard to their salaries and expenses as members to the President. Therefore, whatever opinions may be held by honourable members with regard to the President's findings, they are in duty bound to abide by his decision. In certain instances where they have expressed themselves against his decision it seemed to me they were querying the umpire's decision.

Mr. Dunks—The House did not appoint Mr. President Morgan.

Mr. SHANNON—The member for Mitcham was a party to this method of salary fixation. Although they did not select Mr. President Morgan for this job members wisely agreed that some fairly independent and competent person should be given this task. This is not the first time such a course has been pursued. One of our own judges, who had previously been a member of this House, was selected

by a Government in another State to investigate the salaries of members in that State. That supports my contention that the person chosen in this case was entirely suitable.

Mr. Hawker—Nobody is questioning that.

Mr. SHANNON—The honourable member questioned the learned Judge's decision.

Mr. Hawker—He does not make the decision.

Mr. SHANNON—He certainly decided the amounts for the various positions referred to him for consideration of members of Parliament. I shall query some of the data upon which the honourable member arrived at his conclusion. Mr. Dunks said he was prepared to accept the cost of living adjustments. On my calculations this figure is slightly less than the sum quoted by Mr. Lawn, as I make it about £174; however, the difference is insignificant. Adopting—as I think we have the right to adopt—the practice of the Civil Service of giving *pro rata* increases on the understanding and in the knowledge that the higher salaried officer has increased costs of living brought about by virtue of the standard he has to maintain in his higher office, and applying the ratio that we should apply between the basic wage and our own, we find that the former is roughly half that of a member of Parliament.

Mr. Dunks—Are those marginal differences automatically put on without reference to the board?

Mr. SHANNON—Yes. They are quarterly adjustments which, I understood the honourable member to say he was meticulous in applying even to those not under awards. I am dealing now with what happens in the Civil Service and I want to draw attention to what would have been the case had Parliament decided that members should also enjoy quarterly cost of living adjustments. We would then have been in the happy position of enjoying an additional £350 a year. If the member for Mitcham wants only that and not the £250 I do not blame him; he is not writing himself down as much as I thought he was.

Mr. Dunks—Do not mislead the House. I do not thank the honourable member for the suggestion.

Mr. SHANNON—I am about to make another for which the honourable member may thank me, for I think it is one he ought to adopt. Mr. Hawker was charged by the member for Adelaide with "Having a couple of bob each way." Frankly, I cannot see why the umpire

is half right and half wrong. If the time is inappropriate, if we are experiencing the troubles that he discussed as reasons why back-benches should not have any increase, surely the same argument applies with equal force to all the officers of Parliament, to all the judges on the Supreme Court bench, and all others whose salaries Mr. President Morgan has suggested we should increase. I am not querying the honourable member's honesty, but I think he has taken a particularly personal view of this. He said, in effect, that £900 a year is fair compensation for the work he is doing in Parliament.

Mr. Hawker—Who said that?

Mr. SHANNON—I am trying to read the honourable member's mind, to read between the lines to find the basis for the honourable member's reasoning in accepting one-half of the judgment and rejecting the other, for it seems to me that he has not applied the same basis of reasoning to the one set of circumstances that he did to the other, and that therefore he must be looking at it from a personal point of view. If that is true I can understand it and perhaps it is reasonable from his angle, but I would submit that it is hardly fair to certain members—I do not happen to be one—who are practically dependent on their Parliamentary salaries for subsistence. It is only fair that every member should take into account the circumstances of other members as well as his own. I shall conclude with another suggestion: both the member for Mitcham and the member for Burra have suggested that they will not take the increase. That being so there are worthy institutions to which the money could be devoted, and it would be a much better gesture—indeed a fitting gesture feeling as they do—if they donated the money to those institutions. That would do just as much good, or more, as their refusal to take it, as their mite would increase the vote which Parliament usually makes.

Mr. MOIR (Norwood)—I wish to make it clear from the outset that I consider that members of Parliament were entitled to this increase 12 months ago. There is no doubt that city as well as country members have to meet considerable expenses, but at a time when we are talking about reducing the Public Service to the tune of 10,000 this is not, perhaps, an opportune time to increase our own salaries. Twelve months ago I doubt whether any member in this House would have opposed it, and there would have been no talk outside about

it. Some members say they have heard nothing, but I do not have to go into my own district to hear it, for right in King William Street I heard three people discussing the subject, and I was told by another person who was travelling on the Glenelg tram that he heard someone say, "Just fancy Playford taking another £1,000 increase. We have to go to court and fight like — to get a few shillings, and the other jokers in the House are getting £250 for nothing." I make no threats or promises about not accepting the increase, but I will continue to do as I choose with the money I receive. If I wish to give it away in my own district I will do so. A country member is entitled to more than a city member, as he has to leave his farm or business and stay in the city three or four days a week, whereas city members, after attending and being marked present, can take a little time off to attend to business. Although I do not say that members do not

deserve this increase I am a little perturbed about its coming at this juncture, when we are talking of cutting down the Public Service, and pegging prices and wages. I would have liked this matter to be postponed for 12 or 18 months. If we get an increase before wages are pegged we will not feel the pinch, whereas other peoples' wages may be pegged on their old rates. I am particularly pleased to note that the Ministers and yourself, Sir, the Leader of the Opposition, and country members are to get increases and I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Mr. HEASLIP secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.45 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, August 23, at 2 p.m.