

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.**

Tuesday, September 4, 1951.

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

**DEATH OF HON. E. A. OATES.**

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Yorke Peninsula—Minister of Lands)—I am sure that all members in this Chamber, like myself, are deeply moved at the passing of a very great friend of all of us. I refer to the late Hon. E. A. Oates. Since his sudden passing on Sunday I have heard many expressions of endearment concerning the late gentleman, but, after all, he was one that endeared himself to all people, and because of that we are all deeply moved at his death. It was my privilege, before the honourable gentleman entered Parliament, to work with him in country areas, and what a great man he was! What a great worker! What a great thing to have working with one a man of his calibre! Later I had the privilege of serving with him on the Land Settlement Committee, and there again he did yeoman service. With these few remarks it is my wish now to move—

That the House of Assembly expresses its deep regret at the death of the Hon. Edgar Alfred Oates, M.L.C., and requests the Speaker to send a letter of sympathy to Mrs. Oates, and that the sitting of the House be suspended until 2.30 p.m.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Frome—Leader of the Opposition)—I second the motion, and join with the Minister of Lands in the feeling references he made to the passing of our late friend. The honourable gentleman was a member of another place for many years and by his many sterling qualities endeared himself to all members of Parliament. He was a man of strong convictions and held high principles to which he was loyal at all times and under all circumstances. He served the State of South Australia in the industrial movement, before being elected to this Parliament, where he gave to the affairs of the nation the same competent unswerving service he had given to the industrial movement in his younger days. Perhaps many people do not know the amount of voluntary effort he put into the cause of education, and particularly into the school committees' organization, of which he was president at the time of his death, and on whose behalf he attended without fee or reward many interstate conferences. We have lost a friend, but his widow and family have lost a

devoted husband and father, and our sympathy goes out to them in full measure in their great bereavement.

Members carried the motion by standing in their places.

*Sitting suspended from 2.9 p.m. until 2.30 p.m.*

**SUPPLY ACT No. 2.**

His Excellency the Governor, by message, intimated his assent to the Act.

**SOLDIER SETTLEMENT ON YORKE PENINSULA.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—During the past few days a statement has been made regarding the proposed development of an area of 50,000 acres on southern Yorke Peninsula. Can the Minister of Lands say whether it is intended that that land should be developed for soldier settlement, and whether it will be the subject of inquiry and report by the Land Settlement Committee?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—It is expected that land will be purchased in that area for soldier settlement. Before that is done, the proposal will be inquired into by the Land Settlement Committee. A soil survey of the locality has been made and there is a considerable area suitable for settlement. Officers of the department have made a survey of the area with regard to the possibility of purchase, and I am pleased to say that a number of owners in that locality are prepared to consider selling for the purpose proposed.

**HOUSING TRUST LOANS.**

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Acting Leader of the Government say at what rate of interest the Housing Trust borrows money from the Government or any other lending institution?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The honourable member kindly indicated yesterday that he would ask this question, and I have been able to ascertain from the Housing Trust that it borrows at current rates, mainly at the present time 3½ per cent.

**SEARCH FOR OIL AND COAL IN SOUTH-EAST.**

Mr. FLETCHER—Has the Minister of Lands a reply to the question I asked last week regarding the search for oil and coal in the South-East?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have obtained the following report from the Acting Director of Mines:—

The investigation into oil prospects in the Lower South-East is to be a joint report by Mines Departments of Victoria and South Australia. The South Australian portion has been finished for some weeks, but the Victorian portion is not yet finalized. No work has yet been undertaken by the company granted a prospecting area. The company geologist visited Adelaide and the South-East last week and perused departmental records, reports, etc.; a report on his recommendations is expected shortly. The deep bore to search for coal in the Comaun area has been delayed at a depth of approximately 300ft. for several months owing to shortage of drillers. It is anticipated this work will recommence eight weeks hence.

#### EGG BOARD HANDLING CHARGES.

Mr. TAPPING—Today I received a letter from a poultry farmer operating in the Seaton Park area who complains that with each rise in the basic wage the Egg Board increases handling charges against the producer. Will the Minister of Agriculture inquire whether these handling charges can be eased, particularly in view of the present falling egg prices?

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

#### POLIOMYELITIS: TREATMENT OF PARALYSED PERSONS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—It has been reported to me from a number of sources that the conditions at the Northfield hospital for those suffering from paralysis following on poliomyelitis are quite unsatisfactory. I understand that a number of hot baths are necessary under the present treatment of paralysis patients, and as a number of those patients are quite rigid it is not possible to immerse them sufficiently. I also understand that, because of staff shortages and the large number of patients, the services of volunteers must be secured to bathe these patients. Recently, I understand, volunteers attending the hospital were unable to carry out their duties because there were not enough wheel beds available, because of the condition of the baths I have mentioned and because the hot water system failed—this being a not uncommon occurrence. The lights as hung in the rooms are a great disadvantage to the patients who are compelled to lay flat on their backs. The lights must be used for most of the night because older and senile patients must be cared for in the same rooms as those occupied

by patients recovering from poliomyelitis. Will the Acting Leader of the Government ask the Minister of Health to call for a report on the statements that are in circulation and, if they are found to be correct, will action be taken to supply sufficient suitable equipment so that patients may receive the best possible treatment, thus shortening their period of suffering and reducing the expenditure incurred in their treatment?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I will take up this question with the Minister of Health. I assure the honourable member that everything possible is being done at the hospital with regard to the treatment of these patients. Though there may be a shortage of some of the things necessary for their benefit, the Minister concerned is doing everything possible to secure supplies. As one who has suffered from the disease, I can say there is a great difference of opinion as to the correct treatment for it.

#### PRICE CONTROL.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Has the Acting Leader of the Government a reply to my question of last week regarding the possibility of local government bodies being exempt from price control?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have received the following report from the Prices Commissioner:—

Goods sold and services supplied by local governing bodies freed from Commonwealth Prices Control on 29th May, 1947, and 11th August, 1947, respectively. However, under State Price Control, in case there is still an impression that all activities of municipal bodies are subject to control, I have to state that they are not, unless they are manufacturers, traders, distributors, retailers or suppliers of any declared goods or services, in which case they would come within the ambit of the Prices Act. This also applies to all State departments. Except in very isolated instances, the local governing bodies have always co-operated and no difficulties have occurred except in one case where there has always been a reluctance to supply the required information. Although it is the function of Parliament to decide, it is respectfully suggested that there can be no discrimination between individuals or bodies, as to whether the lines they handle are or are not, subject to price control.

#### CHELTHENHAM SUBWAY.

Mr. STEPHENS—I have received the following letter:—

I have been asked by men working at Finsbury to draw your attention to the bad state of the pedestrian subway at Stroud Street, Cheltenham. This subway is under water 4in.

to 6in. deep every morning and it is not pumped out until late in the morning, and not at all at the week-end. It causes great inconvenience to users. The position is now becoming dangerous, as many people are breaking down the wire fence and going over the top of the subway, as it is nearly always impassable. I trust that you will bring this matter before the proper authorities.

I inspected the subway this morning and found that the letter correctly sets out the position, although the water was not quite 6in. deep as it had been pumped out prior to my going there. However, I could see where the water had been. The downpipe from the roof of the subway runs down into the cement track and water seeps into it. I met several local residents who pointed out that the position had been bad every day during the recent wet weather. Children had to either walk through the water and then sit in school all day with wet feet, or cross the railway line, which is a dangerous practice at any time. I met people who said they ride their bicycle through the water and met others who usually cross over the railway line. I noticed where the fences had been broken down, as stated in the letter. I inspected other subways in the vicinity, and at one near the Alberton station the authorities have tied a rope to stop people from going across. Pedestrians can use the level crossing gates when they are open. Will the Minister of Railways take this matter up with the department, have an inspection made of the subway and get a report? I should be pleased to accompany the railway officers on any inspection.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The honourable member has made a full explanation of the position and I am sure it will not be necessary for him to arrange any inspection; but the question occurs to me whether the subway is the responsibility of the Railways Department or the local council.

Mr. Stephens—It is on railway property.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Apparently it is under railway property. However, I will ascertain who is responsible in this matter and if a remedy can be applied without stopping some more essential work it will be done.

#### SULPHUR FOR VINEYARD DUSTING.

Mr. BROOKMAN—I understand that it is hard to get sulphur for dusting vineyards. Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether the company which will work the Nairne pyrites deposit will produce sulphur for this purpose?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The Acting Director of Mines has supplied me with the following report:—

The produce from Nairne is iron sulphide which does not lend itself to the production of elemental sulphur economically. The iron sulphide will be used solely for the production of sulphuric acid, but the use of this acid will lessen the demand for elemental sulphur from overseas, so that the comparatively small requirements for orchard dusting, etc., could be easily met from the imports.

#### ROAD GRANTS TO COUNTRY COUNCILS.

Mr. STOTT—Owing to the recent bountiful rains many country roads in district council areas are in bad repair, and many councils find it difficult to maintain their macadam roads. Will the Minister bring this matter before Cabinet with a view to making larger grants to councils, particularly those in country areas, so that they can keep roads already constructed in good order?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Generally speaking, the position is that the councils have more money than they can expend on road repairs. Many have unexpended balances from year to year; some of them have even greater amounts unexpended than their annual grant. If further sums are required by any councils they can only be made available at the expense of some other council, because every penny of revenue from the petrol tax rebate, registration fees, and so on, is appropriated for roads. The main roads fund has now been depleted of its unexpended balance. During the war period there was a considerable amount of unexpended balance, but we are now spending annually about the amount we receive into the fund. Every case is treated on its merits. If the grant to one council is increased it can only be done at the expense of another. I have been saying to the councils that they should obtain sufficient plant and get on with the job, and I am sure that Parliament will not fail to appropriate the necessary sums. At the moment it is not a question of more money but mostly of councils' inability to carry out the work. If the honourable member has any exception to this rule I will be glad to take it up with him.

#### TRAMWAYS TRUST INQUIRY COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

Mr. MOIR—Following on the report made recently that the Municipal Tramways Trust had erected wire for trolley buses but had later altered the route, thus costing the trust £25,000, can the Minister of Works state when

the report dealing with the finances and administration of the trust will be made available to the House?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—As Minister of Works I will direct the question to the chairman of the committee and bring down a reply as soon as possible.

#### CHEMISTRY LABORATORY, ROSE-WORTHY COLLEGE.

The SPEAKER laid on the table the final report of the Public Works Standing Committee on a new chemistry laboratory at the Roseworthy Agricultural College, together with minutes of evidence.

Report ordered to be printed.

#### TREATMENT OF INEBRIATES.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Minister of Lands any reply to my question of August 23 about the care of inebriates?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I took up the matter with the Director-General of Medical Services. As it deals with an individual case, if the honourable member will supply me with further particulars I shall be pleased to obtain further information for him.

#### EIGHT-MILE CREEK FLOODING.

Mr. FLETCHER—Has the attention of the Minister of Repatriation been drawn to a report which appeared in the Mount Gambier local newspaper that some settlers at the Eight-Mile Creek area have had to remove their floor coverings because of floodwaters covering their floors?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Unfortunately the report is similar to other reports from the district and is not quite correct. I have received the following report from the Lands Development Executive following on a statement in the *Border Watch* of August 25 last :—

The Executive has had the matter investigated by Assistant Supervisor Rodda, who states, "There is absolutely no signs of any house on the area having been flooded or of floodwaters even threatening to rise into any of these buildings. Investigations showed that the only possible source of the paper report was on section 635, hundred of Caroline, allocated to E. Thomas. It was discovered that the strong winds during a heavy downpour had forced some rain under a door and wet portion of a carpet."

#### ADULTERATION OF TEA.

Mr. TAPPING—Has the Minister of Lands a reply to my question of August 29 about allegations that certain firms were adulterating tea with permanganate of potash?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have received the following report from the Director-General of Public Health:—

The regulations under the Food and Drugs Act state that tea shall not contain any foreign matter and it shall comply with the standard fixed by the Minister for Trade and Customs. The complaint about the presence of permanganate of potash in tea seems to come round in cycles. The only case known to this department was in loose tea in 1947. The woman concerned had lost the packet and did not know when the tea was purchased. Only a small amount of permanganate of potash was found in this tea and it would not have proved injurious to health. Various samples were taken at that time and all complied with the regulations. Eleven samples of various teas were purchased on Friday last and the report of the analyst states that they are all first class teas and did not contain any foreign matter.

#### EGG PRICES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—For some time I have been perturbed about what was likely to happen to South Australian egg producers because of the Egg Board's action in reducing egg prices when all costs were being increased. I said that if it continued eggs would soon join potatoes and onions and be in extremely short supply in the State. That statement is supported in today's press by the chairman of the Egg Board, Mr. Anderson, who said:—

If the drop in production continues within two years it will be doubtful whether South Australia will have any surplus for export.

Replying to a question by me on August 23 the Minister of Agriculture supplied a statement showing the number of cases of eggs exported. Will he extend the statement to show the number of eggs handled by the board, the number sold in South Australia and the Commonwealth and the number put to other uses so that we will have, as nearly as possible, a complete understanding of what is happening to South Australian egg producers?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I will endeavour to get the information from the chairman of the Egg Board.

#### MILK AND CREAM PRICES.

Mr. MOIR—Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether the Milk Board has under consideration an increase in the prices of milk, cream and other products under its control following upon the increase in the price of butter?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I have received no information from the Milk Board that it is considering the matter, but I will make inquiries.

## VEGETABLE GROWING AT LOVEDAY.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I was approached at my home at Barmera last week-end by the secretary of the Loveday Vegetable Growers' Association, who said that Loveday vegetable growers were unable to make any plantings of vegetables this year because the Irrigation Department could not guarantee a water supply. The Minister of Irrigation knows that settlers have been established there since the 1930 depression and have worked hard to ensure vegetable supplies for the metropolitan area, at the same time stabilizing the Loveday and Barmera areas. Will he use every endeavour to see that ample supplies of firewood or other fuel is supplied for the pumps and give an assurance to vegetable growers that it will be safe to go on with plantings? Growers in the areas are greatly perturbed about the position because they have no assurance about future plantings.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The position at Loveday has become difficult because of a firewood shortage and the Electricity Trust's inability to obtain sufficient wire cable to take power to the district. The Irrigation Department has been active in the matter and to overcome the position has obtained 80 tons of Leigh Creek coal for testing purposes. Also oil-burning tests will be made and extensive arrangements are being made to secure more wood. The Government has approached the Highways Department with a view to improving the condition of the Wentworth Road. We are doing everything that is humanly possible to keep up fuel supplies.

Mr. Macgillivray—The settlers want an assurance.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I am giving the best possible assurance I can, that we are trying in every way possible. I feel certain that the steps we are taking will be successful and that we shall be able to secure a type of fuel which will enable irrigations to be carried out.

## MR. DUNKS' PARLIAMENTARY SALARY.

Mr. STEPHENS (on notice)—

1. What salary was collected by the member for Mitcham (Mr. H. S. Dunks) as a member of Parliament for the year ended June 30, 1951?

2. What was the amount collected by the Chairman of Committees (Mr. H. S. Dunks) for the year ending June 30, 1951?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Pursuant to the Payment of Members of Parliament Act, 1948,

Mr. H. S. Dunks received the following amounts for the year ended June 30, 1951:—

1. As member for Mitcham, £900.
2. As Chairman of Committees, £200.

## ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR.

Mr. FLETCHER (on notice)—

1. What was the cost of constructing and reconditioning that portion of road recently completed between Bordertown and Naracoorte?

2. Was that road built for the use of heavy traffic?

3. What was the cost of reconditioning the road between Moorlands and Coomandook?

4. Is it the intention of the Highways Department to bituminize this road this year?

5. What is the estimated cost of repairing the highway between Taillem Bend and Bordertown?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Commissioner of Highways reports:—

1. £255,000.

2. This road was built for the type of traffic which (normally) could be expected to use same. If it is required to cope with the rapid increase in weight and numbers of heavy vehicles it will need strengthening which, having regard to the lack of plant and labour, can only be done at the expense of other roads.

3. Including re-aligning and reconditioning—£33,000.

4. If this length is to continue to carry the numbers and weight of vehicles at present using same, its base will have to be strengthened before it is bituminized.

5. General maintenance of this road will be continued and strengthening will be undertaken on various sections as opportunity offers. For this reason the cost of repairs is not assessable at present, but would be considerable as unless heavy traffic is considerably reduced it will require repaving on almost its entire length of 136 miles to the Victorian border. Under present conditions of traffic and costs, the final cost would not be less than £1,250,000.

## AMENDMENT OF ELECTORAL ACT.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (on notice)—Is it the intention of the Government to introduce legislation during the present session to amend the Electoral Act to provide for—(a) all applications for postal votes to be received not later than 6 p.m. on the Thursday preceding the Saturday on which the election is held; and (b) the hours of polling to be 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—This matter is under investigation.

**PLEURO-PNEUMONIA IN CATTLE.**

Mr. FLETCHER (on notice)—

1. How many cattle have been quarantined for pleuro-pneumonia in the South-East of South Australia during the recent outbreak?

2. How many stock have been destroyed owing to this outbreak?

3. From what part of the State did the affected cattle come?

4. Were these stock purchased by private individuals from the owners or were they bought through stock firms?

5. Have all stock purchased from northern districts of South Australia for agistment in the South-East been liable to quarantine?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The replies are:—

1. Two hundred and forty-nine (249) on three (3) properties.

2. Sixteen (16) have died or been destroyed.

3. From the Abattoirs market, Adelaide, where they were introduced from the northern pastoral areas of South Australia, many of them carrying Northern Territory firebrands and earmarks.

4. The cattle were purchased through stock agents at the Abattoirs market, Adelaide.

5. No, but cattle for agistment are held under restrictions. These are—(a) cattle for agistment from north of a definite line extending from Port Augusta in an easterly direction to the New South Wales-South Australian border, just below Cockburn approximately, have to have a permit to cross south of the above line; and (b) the owner has to declare that the cattle were free from symptoms of pleuro-pneumonia for the previous 90 days and that they have not been in contact with any cattle showing symptoms of pleuro-pneumonia during the previous 90 days prior to crossing south of the line. (c) If cattle are purchased by graziers for agistment, a "Grazier's permit" is issued to the purchaser. On each permit are printed instructions stating—

Cattle from time they are purchased until they reach their destination must not contact other cattle. On arrival at destination they must be isolated from neighbouring herds, and when necessary, a buffer zone 10ft. wide must be maintained inside fences adjoining neighbours, or roads along which cattle may pass. Cattle held under permit must not be removed without the written permission of an Inspector of Stock or the Chief Inspector of Stock.

**SALE OF BUTTER TO GREAT BRITAIN.**

Mr. DUNKS (on notice)—

1. What is the term of the contract existing between the Federal Government and the British Government for the sale of butter?

2. When was it signed?

3. What is the price per pound to the British Government?

4. What is the retail price to the consumer in Britain?

5. Is there any loss to Australia under the contract?

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

1. The term of the overseas contract expires on June 30, 1955.

2. February 18, 1949.

3. The price to the British Government for choicest butter for the year ended June 30, 1951, was 339s. 4½d. per cwt. Australian currency (equals 3s. 0.36d. per lb.). The price for the current year has not been announced; negotiations are still in progress.

4. From May 20, 1951, the retail price to the consumer in Britain was 2s. 6d. per lb. with a subsidy of 8½d. per lb. Prior to that date the price was 2s. with a subsidy of 1s.

5. The British contract price of 339s. 4½d. per cwt. referred to above is subject to a rise or fall of 7½ per cent under the terms of the contract, and it is understood that the Australian Government is seeking an increase in excess of 7½ per cent to bring the price to the cost of production. Therefore, unless the Australian Government is successful, exports of butter to Great Britain will not return the cost of production. For some years Australian consumers have been buying their butter at a price below the British contract price and the Commonwealth Government has been subsidizing this consumption.

**BUILDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**

MR. DUNKS (on notice)—

1. Is there a committee which advises the Government on the best methods to be employed in building dwellinghouses in the city and country?

2. If so, how many times did it meet during the year ended June 30, 1951?

3. Who are the members?

4. Do they represent any particular organizations?

5. Do they advise on the mobilization of building resources, the utilization of labour, the

control of materials, the expansion of production of essential basic materials, and the importation of materials in short supply?

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

1 to 5. No.

#### ST. MARGARET'S HOSPITAL: TREATMENT OF SICK.

Mr. MOIR (on notice)—

1. Is the Minister of Lands aware that at St. Margaret's Hospital at Payneham there are a large number of mentally sick patients?

2. Has the hospital been sold to The Infantile Paralysis Welfare Association Incorporated of South Australia?

3. Is the Hospitals Department in a position to take care of a large number of patients at short notice?

4. If not, what arrangements are being made for their further treatment?

5. Is it the intention of the Government to subsidize The Infantile Paralysis Welfare Association Incorporated of South Australia to assist in its work of after-treatment of poliomyelitis patients discharged from the Royal Adelaide and Children's Hospitals?

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

1. Some weeks ago there were approximately 40 patients in the hospital, of whom perhaps four or five would be suitable for detention in a mental institution.

2. Press reports indicate that St. Margaret's hospital at Payneham has been sold to the Infantile Paralysis Welfare Association Incorporated of South Australia.

3 and 4. Patients certified for admission to a mental hospital are admitted accordingly.

5. The Government already provides treatment and after care as recommended by the Poliomyelitis Advisory Committee.

#### EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TRANSPORT SERVICES.

Mr. GOLDNEY (on notice)—What was the cost of transport services of the Education Department during the financial years ended June 30, 1950 and 1951?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—For year ended June 30, 1950, £129,175 13s. 8d.; for the year ended June 30, 1951, £154,120 3s. 4d.

#### LOAN ESTIMATES.

Grand total, £41,166,000.

In Committee.

(Continued from August 30. Page 498.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—There is much merit in the Leader of the Opposition's contention that members have not got before them all the information they should have in relation to the proposed Loan expenditure. In our railways there are at times serious breakdowns in locomotives, of which we have several classes. We should consider having a system whereby new boilers are on hand to immediately replace worn-out boilers so as to have the engines back on the job without delay. Now when an engine breaks down six to nine months elapse before it is repaired and returned to the track. Last year I mentioned that the Housing Trust was paying 2 per cent for the money it borrowed for home building. Today the Minister of Lands told me it is now paying 3½ per cent; yet it charges 4 per cent on advances for the purchase of homes. Each time I have asked a question on this matter I have received a different reply.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—The Housing Trust does not advance money for the purchase of homes.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I say it does.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—That's news to me.

Mr. O'Halloran—It was news to me too when I heard it.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Section 29 of the South Australian Housing Trust Act reads:—

- (1) The trust may sell any house belonging to it to any tenant of the trust or to any person to whom it could let that house.
- (2) The sale may be either for cash or on credit, and subject to any terms and conditions which the trust thinks proper.

Members are probably under the impression that the trust does not finance the purchase of homes.

Mr. Quirke—It has been doing so for some time.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—Such finance may be arranged under the Homes Act.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—This matter is too important to ignore. I have never received a real reply to my speech on it last year. I have seen a copy of a contract signed by the chairman and the secretary of the Housing Trust and the husband and wife purchasing a home.

Mr. Whittle—Was that home built by the Housing Trust under contract?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I believe that the trust has a system under which it calls for tenders from builders to build homes for it, and then signs up a contractor to erect homes at a certain figure.

Mr. Whittle—Isn't that a contract?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Possibly, but it does not accord with the recent reply by the Treasurer regarding Government policy on the erection of school buildings. I believe the trust calls its system of calling tenders a contract system; but there appears to be a ceiling rate fixed by the Housing Trust in its negotiations with builders. I am particularly concerned about homes erected for the trust by a firm known as the Peak Construction Company which came from England to establish itself in this State as a home builder. The company erected timber-frame homes at St. Mary's for the Housing Trust, but there is not sufficient equity in them for intending purchasers to obtain adequate loans from the War Service Homes Division. Even under the Advances for Homes Act purchasers cannot obtain more than 90 per cent of the valuation of the lending institution. If ex-servicemen cannot obtain advances from the War Service Homes Division I should think they would be treated like civilians and be allowed to borrow money under the Advances for Homes Act, but the maximum that can be advanced is £1,500. The important point is that the lending institutions put a valuation on the house in making advances; they do not necessarily advance 90 per cent of the actual cost of the house. I have stated on other occasions that the Housing Trust can borrow money at 2 per cent, and I have never been corrected, but I was informed in answer to a question this afternoon that the trust borrows money at 3½ per cent. I know of an ex-serviceman who had only his war gratuity of £160 15s. to put down as a deposit. The cost of the house he wanted was £1,690, leaving a balance on the cost, not the valuation, of £1,529 5s. The agreement provided that this man shall pay to the trust weekly instalments of £1 15s. and that this instalment shall be applied firstly in payment of interest at the rate of £4 per centum per annum on the amount of the purchase money outstanding. What a great concession to an ex-serviceman! The Housing Trust can borrow money at 3½ per cent but charges the ex-serviceman, or any other person, 4 per cent. What is the difference of ¾ per cent for?

Mr. Quirke—Administration costs, I suppose.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Why should not an ex-serviceman be able to borrow money from lending institutions at 3½ per cent, the present recognized interest rate?

Mr. Macgillivray—Where does the Housing Trust get its money?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I do not know. On June 28, 1950, I said:—

I understand that the trust can borrow money at a low rate of interest; I think about 2 per cent. Is the trust to be allowed to lend that money at 4 per cent?

Mr. Quirke—The trust borrowed much money from the Savings Banks at 1½ per cent to build houses.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Then that makes the position worse. Was the money for the purpose of building houses or to make advances to people purchasing homes?

Mr. Quirke—Probably some of each.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Then the cost of administration of the Housing Trust needs investigating. Originally the homes at St. Mary's cost £1,350, but with rising costs they now cost almost £2,000. Is the Housing Trust excluded from the provisions of the Advances for Homes Act? I believe the trust has greater powers under its Act than any other body I know of, and it charges ¼ per cent more than any other recognized lending institution under the Homes Act.

Mr. Macgillivray—Do you say that the purchaser of a Housing Trust home cannot apply under the Homes Act for an advance of 90 per cent of valuation?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—No, but that in some cases the trust does not finance people who desire to purchase one of its homes. When an ex-serviceman approaches the Housing Trust to purchase a house he is told, "You are an ex-serviceman. We recommend you to go to the War Service Homes and obtain an advance." If the person is a civilian he is told that there are other channels from which he can obtain an advance, such as the State Savings Bank, the State Bank, the S.A. Public Service Superannuation Fund and the Commonwealth Bank. Purchasers, I believe, have to pay a fee to the lending institution for a valuation of a property. Under the Advances for Homes Act they can obtain an advance of £1,500, but have to find the difference between that and the purchase price.

Mr. Quirke—If the valuation is £1,800 does a person have to pay the difference between £1,500 and £1,800?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Yes. Irrespective of the cost a lending institution wants its own valuation of the property. Advances must not exceed 90 per cent of the lending institution's value, except in the case of war service homes, where an ex-serviceman can borrow the maximum of £2,000. The State Bank is unwilling to make many advances to purchase houses erected in the St. Mary's area. I know of one instance where a purchaser had to find more than £500 deposit. I am keenly interested in this matter and am not on my own in that regard. The member for Torrens intimated that he believed the Housing Trust did not make advances for people to buy homes erected for it.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—That is correct.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The Housing Trust's agreement to purchase is almost identical with the agreement under the Advances for Homes Act. Clause 5 of the agreement provides that the trust can, at the expiration of each 10 years of the term of agreement, vary the interest rate on the sum outstanding.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—What is the interest rate?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Four per cent. The agreement states:—

The said instalment shall be applied, firstly, in payment of interest at the rate of £4 per cent per annum and the balance of the purchase money outstanding shall, as the case may require, at such rate of interest as is fixed pursuant to clause 5 of this agreement, and (2) in the payment of the purchase money.

The agreement in the case in question is signed by the secretary and chairman of the trust and the two joint purchasers.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—What length of time is stated?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The agreement provides that the amount borrowed, £1,529 5s., shall be repaid in 30 years. If the Housing Trust is to be a lending institution Parliament should know. Had the trust carried out the purpose for which it was first created—to build houses for letting—there would have been a greater number available for distressed families. Had the State Bank been allowed to build homes for sale and the Housing Trust only for letting there would have been two complete housing organizations which could act as agents for the Government. Had the Government taken notice of members of the Labor Party and created two divisions for home building we would not have had the apathetic approach to the brick manufacturing industry that we see today. If I cannot obtain the information I desire on this matter I

shall ask questions about the number of houses built for sale and purchased and the amount involved. Why should we give the Housing Trust the right to advance a greater sum than any other lending organization registered under the Advances for Homes Act? Parliament is entitled to know these things and I trust that the information desired will be forthcoming.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES (Torrens)—The Loan Estimates do not, even to the extent of one penny, affect works in my district. None of the loan money is to be spent in the Torrens electorate and so I cannot be accused of being a parish pump politician. My main concern today is inflation. The Estimates bear eloquent, melancholy and even tragic evidence of a state of inflation. The Loan Estimates for the year ended June 30, 1949, totalled £14,000,000, and for the year ended June 30, 1950, £21,000,000, an increase of 50 per cent. The Estimates we are considering today have increased by 100 per cent over last year's. We know that the same principles apply with Government expenditure as with private expenditure, and Loan money, public or private, has to be repaid, together with interest. This adds to receipts and expenditure, and so the thing goes on like a snowball until ultimately, if we are not careful, we shall be completely submerged. Loan Council figures show that after the 25 per cent cut New South Wales received £64,000,000, Victoria £56,000,000, Queensland £22,500,000, South Australia £28,000,000, Western Australia £16,500,000, and Tasmania £15,000,000. The total was £202,000,000, a colossal sum for a population of about 8,000,000, and £64,000,000 more than in the previous year. In addition, over £80,000,000 will be required for semi-Government and local government undertakings. That makes a total of about £300,000,000, after the cut has been made. It is a matter which demands our attention and we must decide whether the works covered by these Loan Estimates are of such a nature as to justify the expenditure. Costs of all works have risen steeply, and are still rising steeply. We are practically certain that before the end of the year the basic wage will rise to £10 a week, which will add tremendously to the cost of public works. The Treasurer said that the average wages paid for loan works for the year ended June 30, 1951, was 20 per cent higher than for the previous year, and that in the present year it will be 30 per cent higher than last year. This makes us wonder what will be the end and whether Australia can

afford it. All the £28,000,000 granted to South Australia by the Loan Council will not be spent in the State. Much of it will be used in paying for materials purchased overseas. We do not know how much will be spent here and how much overseas. It is gratifying to have the Government's assurance that the works programme will not in any way interfere with home building. I have quoted cases to show that every effort should be made to accelerate the building of homes. I again urge that the greatest accommodation should be obtained by the Government for the money spent on home building. The Government should call a halt to the construction of houses for sale. We can build many more houses for letting than for sale. I appreciate the great desirability under ordinary circumstances for people to possess a home.

Mr. Fred Walsh—The trust is departing from the original policy by building homes for sale.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES—Yes. I was a member of the Government when the policy was introduced. When the radical step by a Liberal Government was taken the idea was that a number of houses should be built for rental purposes, more as an object lesson to builders that houses could be built and let for one week at a rental equivalent to one day's wages. The Government should consider seriously whether the time has not arrived to build more houses for letting. I was amazed at Mr. Frank Walsh's revelation this afternoon that the Housing Trust has been selling houses on terms. It has advanced money for the purchase of homes. If a builder builds a house and sells it on terms it is the same as lending money on the security of the house. The honourable member produced documentary evidence, and if it is being done on a large or small scale Parliament has been kept in ignorance of what the trust has been doing. If the honourable member does not put a question on the Notice Paper dealing with the matter I shall see that one is put there. I give way to no-one in my admiration of the work done by the trust, but it should take Parliament into its confidence if it has adopted a new policy of selling houses on terms. The Treasurer's pronouncement that the best way to attack the present inflationary tendency is by having more efficient production will be welcomed by all of us. Whether that is the best way to deal with the matter at present I am not prepared to say, but it is certainly a counsel of perfection for which we should all strive. In this debate one or two

members have referred to the influence of Communism on the increases in costs of production. In one of the Sydney daily papers on August 14 last there appeared the following report:—

Red Hand in Rail Stoppage Move.—An order by overseas Communists had inspired Communists in New South Wales railways work-shops to organize a 24-hour stoppage last Friday, the State president of the Australian Railways Union, Mr. J. A. Ferguson, M.L.C., said yesterday.

From what I read, Mr. Ferguson is on the Left in politics.

Mr. Macgillivray—He is a Labor man?

Mr. Fred Walsh—He is the Federal President of the Australian Labor Party.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES—Yes, and New South Wales President of the Australian Railways Union. The report continues:—

Mr. Ferguson was addressing the State Council of the Australian Railways Union. He said he had received a copy of a directive from the Trade Unions Internationales of Rail and Air Transport Workers, a department of the Communist-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions. The directive, issued in Bucharest (Rumania) on April 21, had urged transport unions to struggle, demand, protest and demonstrate over improved living and working conditions.

Probe Ordered.—The Australian Railways Union council decided later to order the State executive to investigate the activities of shop stewards and area committees. It felt that the executive should expose how the Communist Party used, politically, the activities of these committees. The council also decided that, if Australian Railway Union representatives were connected with these committees, they would be suspended. Mr. Ferguson said the World Federation of Trade Unions attempted to work its political directive through the Communist-controlled New South Wales Central Council of Railway Workshop Committees, which called a stoppage for last Friday. When this attempt failed the council tried to get the Communist-controlled Amalgamated Engineering Union to call the stoppage. Trade unions and the New South Wales Labor Council challenged the right of the Australian Engineering Union to organize a stoppage. The central council then made the request to shop stewards and area committees, who were composed of the same personnel as the shop committees and were influenced by the same political directives.

Incidentally, the Central Council of Railway Shop Committees called the stoppage to support claims for weekly pay instead of fortnightly pay, additional sick leave, and an industrial allowance, but it cancelled the stoppage on the Thursday. I quote that to show that foreign-directed Communism is attempting to dislocate industry in Australia. I pay a tribute to the Australian Railways Union

for not accepting the directive from Bucharest and for calling off the stoppage. The report shows that there is no doubt that Soviet Russia is attempting to undermine and sabotage Australian industry.

Mr. Quirke—There has never been any doubt about it.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES—Many people deny it from time to time. We have the direct evidence of Mr. Fred Walsh that Mr. Ferguson is the Federal President of the Australian Labor Party; he is also the New South Wales President of the Australian Railways Union. Whilst this Communist influence is at work we can expect continuing rises in costs of production. Therefore, it is the duty of every patriot in Australia to do his or her part in whatever move is taken to control the Communist Party and to stamp out Communist influences. There has been a lot of wobbling and squabbling in certain quarters over the referendum which is to be held shortly. I call upon everyone who has at heart the danger of this ever-increasing rise in the cost of living to at least tackle one of the influences which is encouraging that rise. The large amount of £11,550,000 is to be voted for the Electricity Trust. As this is practically a Government department, this expenditure should be subject to the same investigation as that on any other public work. Can the Minister say whether items not bearing the words "loan to" are grants?

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Any grant would come out of revenue. These amounts are loans.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES—I cannot see why the words "loan to" have been omitted from the item "Leigh Creek Coalfield, £742,000."

The Hon. M. McIntosh—That amount is for the administration of the field.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES—As the Government has in the past made straight-out gifts for the Leigh Creek undertaking, members are justified in assuming that that amount is not a loan. However, I accept the Minister's assurance that it is.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—It is a debit against the field.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES—Is the amount to be shown as an asset in Government accounts?

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Yes.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES—I am glad to know that, because the Electricity Trust has a grave responsibility in developing the Leigh Creek coalfield. The trust is doing a magnificent job, but members of this House should

be taken into the confidence of the Treasurer on all these financial matters. The sum of £1,100,000 is to be voted for school buildings. These buildings should not be constructed too elaborately, as the style of school architecture is continually changing. When I had the privilege of being Minister of Education the department was often embarrassed by the magnificence of buildings erected 50 years ago. Nobody can forecast the style of school buildings in 50 years' time. Immediate steps should be taken to build the schools necessary to house our children.

Mr. Christian—Substantial aluminium schools will cost almost double those of brick.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES—Then bricks should be used.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—We cannot get them.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES—I have been a member of a hospital board for many years, and for a long while we have been trying to find out why it is necessary to house the nursing and domestic staffs on the hospital premises. The only reason we have been told is that it has always been done.

Mr. Shannon—In some country towns accommodation is difficult to obtain.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES—Possibly, but I cannot see why in the city and in towns such as Port Pirie, Whyalla, or Mount Gambier, some of the staff should not live at home. Their hours are regular and they could go to work the same as people in other vocations. I realize that matrons like to have their staffs under their control, especially probationers who may have to attend lectures after coming off duty. However, scores of girls working in city and suburban hospitals have homes in the metropolitan area and would be happy to live in them. Something should be done in this regard so as to reduce the tremendous expenditure on hospitals. The proposed Mount Gambier hospital of 210 beds is to cost over £1,000,000. Members should pause a moment to think where such heavy expenditure will lead us. The fact that we are dealing with such big sums is no reason why we should not be critical of expenditure of this nature.

Grand total, £41,166,000, passed.

The SPEAKER—The question before the Chair is that the resolution approving of the expenditure be agreed to by the House.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Mr. Speaker, am I in order in supporting the resolution approving the expenditure of £41,166,000 when, in fact, I know that amount will not be spent?

Mr. SPEAKER—I think the honourable member would be in order in agreeing to this resolution. Subsequently he will be able to express any other opinion on the Loan Bill.

Resolution agreed to by the House.

#### PUBLIC PURPOSES LOAN 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 authorize the Treasurer to borrow and expend moneys for public works and purposes and to enact other provisions incidental thereto.

Motion carried.

In Committee.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I move—

That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to authorize the Treasurer to borrow and expend moneys for public works and purposes and to enact other provisions incidental thereto.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I desire more information about this resolution. The House has been asked to pass legislation which will cost the taxpayers of this State a sum never before envisaged in the history of South Australia. I understand that the Premier has stated that he would be prepared to reduce the amount of £41,000,000 originally proposed under the Loan Estimates by 25 per cent. Before we pass legislation of this kind we should know what we are doing. Apart from the fact that the dignity of Parliament is at stake, we have been told that if our democratic system is to continue it can only be done through the Parliamentary system. We hear much about the attacks made on democracy by the Communists. I believe that Communism cannot smash democracy. Democracy cannot be smashed from without: it can only be white-anted and smashed from within the democratic system itself. Every time we as elected members of Parliament and representatives of the people pass legislation to spend millions of pounds without knowing what we are doing we do more to defeat democracy than all the Communists in Australia can do. I take strong exception to being asked to pass legislation in this manner, and even now ask the leader of the House to say what we are being asked to vote upon and how the money will be allocated between the departments. I ask that progress be reported at this stage.

The CHAIRMAN—I think the honourable member is a little out of order. The Loan

Estimates have been considered and the Minister is now merely asking leave to introduce a Bill and say what is to be done under that Bill.

Resolution agreed to and adopted by the House. Bill introduced and read a first time.

Second reading.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Yorke Peninsula—Minister of Lands)—This Bill is based on the Loan Estimates which have been dealt with by this House. Clause 3 defines the Loan Fund, and the moneys that shall be paid into that fund. Clause 4 authorizes the Treasurer to borrow £38,666,000. I point out that this State's share of the borrowings authorized by the Loan Council up to June 30, 1952, is £28,000,000. This Bill will operate until the Public Purposes Loan Act for 1952 is assented to (see clause 9), which will probably be October or November, 1952. Therefore the borrowings authorized by this Bill cover a period of at least four months beyond June 30, 1952. During this four months it is estimated that the Loan Council will raise at least one public loan, and perhaps two, to finance the works programme of the State. It is therefore essential for the Treasurer to have the authority of this Parliament to accept this State's share of such loans.

Clause 5 deals with the issue and application of moneys from the Loan Fund, and authorises the Treasurer to vary the amount for any work or purpose if the amount set down in the schedule is insufficient, provided that expenditure does not exceed the total money mentioned in the schedule. Clause 6 authorizes the Treasurer to borrow moneys required to repay advances authorized by the Governor pursuant to the Public Finance Act and set out in the Second Schedule to the Bill. Clause 7 authorizes the Treasurer to borrow, and issue from the Loan Fund, moneys required to meet discounts, charges and expenses incurred. Clause 8 provides for the use of other money in the Treasury if the money in the Loan Fund is at any time insufficient to meet the cost of works or purposes, provided that money so used shall be repaid as soon as the Loan Fund has sufficient money to make the repayment. Clauses 9 and 10 deal with the duration of this Act and its date of commencement. I commend this Bill to members and move the second reading.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Frome—Leader of the Opposition)—I am pleased that the discussion on the Loan Estimates was lengthy and that a

number of members voiced opinions similar to mine that Parliament, before being asked to authorize the borrowing of such a huge sum, should have more information about what was done with the Loan moneys authorized to be spent last year. We have received no replies from the Government on this matter other than an interjection by the Minister of Works that we would get all the relevant information when the Auditor-General's report was presented to the House. Even if all the information required is contained in that report it will be presented too late to be of any use in considering this Bill.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—If we waited until the Auditor-General's report was presented we would be well into the financial year and have no authority to expend money from Loan funds.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Even if we waited until the crack of doom we would not get the information from the Auditor-General's report. I perused his last report and it contains practically no information relating to the dispersal of Loan funds. Many members requested more information during the debate on the Loan Estimates.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—There are balance-sheets in the Auditor-General's report.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, but no details of how the sums voted for the various items were spent or why the sums voted for certain items were not spent. Until about 1945 it was the practice of the Treasurer, simultaneously with or before the presentation of the Loan Estimates, to present a return showing the various items of Loan expenditure for the past year and the amounts appropriated and spent on each and why certain sums voted had not been spent or were exceeded. I do not oppose the Bill because I appreciate that Parliament is largely responsible. Apparently since 1945 it has been prepared to accept the existing position, but it should not continue to do so. I ask the Treasurer to consider, before next year's Loan Estimates are presented, the revival of the practice whereby a Parliamentary Paper is issued showing the progress of expenditure on works under various heads so that members will have the information they have sought during the course of this debate. I have every hope that the request will be acceded to.

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley)—Practically every member who has spoken on the Loan Estimates has sought further information. The Minister has made his second reading speech but the

only member in the House who has a copy of the Bill is the Leader of the Opposition. It is fantastic to expect any member to thoroughly analyse what the Minister in charge said in the few minutes he devoted to the measure. Members should have the opportunity of reading and inwardly digesting his remarks, but apparently they will not be given the opportunity and the expenditure of £41,000,000 will be agreed to. I do not know the meaning of clause 9 and cannot be expected to interpret it from the Minister's few remarks. It is not right that the Bill should be introduced in such a manner. I ask leave to continue my remarks.

The Hon. C. S. Hincks—No!

The SPEAKER—An objection has been raised.

Mr. QUIRKE—I call for a division on the matter, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER—Leave must be unanimous and if it is not leave cannot be granted. The honourable member has the right to continue his remarks now.

Mr. QUIRKE—I have no matter on which I can continue at the moment, Mr. Speaker. The Bill was handed to members as the Minister was making his second reading speech. That makes its introduction a farce and I do not stand for that. As objection has been raised I have no desire to continue, uselessly, to occupy the time of the House with remarks that are not relevant to the Bill.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (Chaffey)—I support Mr. Quirke's remarks. We are simply making a farce of Parliamentary procedure. Time is essential if we are to give a considered opinion on the spending of the tremendous sum involved in the Bill. Members have complained about inflation and said that large sums should not be spent on public works, yet the Government is discreetly silent on how and when the money will be spent. Those who are trying to make our Parliamentary system worth something want to explain to their constituents how the £41,000,000 is to be spent. Like the member for Stanley, I have not the ability to deal with the matter now as the Bill was placed in my hands only in the last few minutes. Apparently Government supporters will vote for the Bill because the Government has decided that it must be passed. They are like a flock of sheep being driven into a pen by a dog. Clause 3 provides for the establishment of a loan fund which shall consist of:—

- (a) Any money standing to the credit of the loan fund account in the Treasury at the commencement of this Act;

- (b) all money received after the commencement of this Act by the Treasurer in repayment of advances made, or money expended, out of money borrowed under any Act;
- (c) all surplus revenue applied after the commencement of this Act to loan accounts in accordance with section 30 of the Public Finance Act, 1936-1947;
- (d) the money borrowed under this Act.

The essential factor is that a huge sum of public money is to be spent, of which workers and primary producers will be called upon to find a large proportion. Government supporters apparently are like a lot of driven animals.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member must not reflect upon a decision of the House.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I am not reflecting on the decision, Mr. Speaker; I may be anticipating one.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member must not do that. The decision is not determined.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—It is considered with intelligent anticipation, Mr. Speaker. I have not watched Government supporters for 13 years without knowing what they are likely to do. If I were a betting man I would wager on what they are likely to do on this occasion. What do paragraphs (c) and (d) mean? I challenge any Government supporter to give a detailed account of them.

Mr. Christian—We have had the same provision in other Loan Bills.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The Leader of the Opposition pointed that out. At one time we were told how the different items were arrived at, but we are not told that any longer.

Mr. Christian—We have nothing to report on as regards paragraph (c).

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—That is true. Why is it in the Bill?

Mr. Christian—We might have something.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Yes, and pigs might fly. Take clause 4 which states:—

The Treasurer may arrange for the sum of £38,666,000 to be borrowed on behalf of the State in accordance with the financial agreement.

Apparently that represents the figure which was agreed upon at the Treasurers' recent Melbourne meeting. Has £2,000,000 of Loan money already been expended?

Mr. Christian—It is a credit.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—That is my assumption.

Mr. Clarke—It could be repayments of loan and not necessarily expended loan money.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—An accomplished accountant, the honourable member apparently knows all the answers, but he appears to be the only one who does. Why does he not inform the House, because of his specialized knowledge, what is involved? If it was an agricultural, horticultural or viticultural matter I would feel bound to express an opinion, as I have been interested in these matters for years. We find a chartered accountant and others who are supposed to know about this type of legislation sitting down and saying nothing. One is forced to the conclusion that the information they could give would not be satisfactory to the Government. Evidently we are going to spend £38,000,000 which seems to leave about £2,500,000 in kitty somewhere for some particular purpose. Where and when the money is to be spent, if ever, is entirely outside the knowledge of the House, which has to authorize this Bill. It is most deplorable that we, the elected members who are looked upon as the watchdogs of democracy, have to pass legislation about which we know nothing. In the schedule we find reference to various Government departments to whom the moneys are allotted. What we do not know is whether that money will be spent on the projects for which it has been earmarked. When the Loan Estimates were before us last year certain moneys were advanced to the Irrigation and Drainage Department, one item being £27,000 for the Loveday-Nookamka supply pipe main and raising the supply basin at Loveday, and this year £10,000 is to be made available. This work is in my district and I pass the area referred to at least once a month, and as far as I know not one bit of work has been done. As the member for the district, and one who should have an intimate knowledge of this work, I know nothing about it and I do not suppose there is one member of the House who does not find the same state of affairs existing in his district.

It has been suggested by the members for Eyre and Light that I am biased against the railways, but that is not correct. I have the greatest admiration for the railways provided they are used properly, but not when they are used as at present, when certain work could be done more effectively and cheaply by road hauliers. We have been told that the road hauliers could not cope with the wheat harvest. I have never suggested that the railways should be starved, but have contended that the

road hauliers have played a most important part in shifting the wheat harvest and other products. That has been proved in recent weeks in Mr. Christian's own district. When I was in Western Australia recently I took the opportunity to check up with what that State did in shifting wheat to the seaboard.

Mr. Christian—There method is by no means economical.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I know that, but is it economical to have wheat laying at the sidings for weevil to eat? Does not that happen in the honourable member's district? In Western Australia 450 motor trucks are engaged in hauling wheat from country sidings to ports. Geraldton has 80 trucks, Bunbury 45 and North Fremantle 325. From November 1, 1950, to May 25, 1951, a total of 325,000 tons was hauled to the ports. Although total figures are not available, the rates paid are 5½d. per ton mile for transport to North Fremantle and 6½d. to the ports of Bunbury and Geraldton. There is no Government subsidy on the transport of wheat by road, the cost of haulage being borne firstly by the Australian Wheat Board, which passes on these costs to producers throughout Australia by deducting them from the proceeds of sales. The Transport Board merely licences the operators to transport wheat in accordance with the provisions of the Transport Act, and also recommends the rates to be paid for such haulage. Practical details of all operating arrangements are under the direct control of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. That shows that road hauliers can and do play a most important part in the transport of wheat if permitted, but in South Australia they are not allowed to do so. I believe Mr. Christian pointed out that weevil had eaten much wheat.

Mr. Christian—The railways were unable to cart it.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—That is so. Often the railways have a complete monopoly of transport. In South Australia a road haulier cannot handle wheat or anything else unless he gets a licence from the Transport Control Board. The Minister of Railways often complains about the little revenue the Government received from road hauliers. If that is so, the Government will have to meet its responsibilities in that regard. To the best of my knowledge, with one exception this House has never turned down a proposition for increased rates of road transport. I believe the Hon. S. W. Jeffries about 12 years ago asked that diesel vehicles should

have a special tax placed on them, but this was refused. In Western Australia the licence fee payable by those licensed to cart wheat is at the rate of 6s 8d. per month per registered ton. The fees are usually payable quarterly, so therefore a vehicle registered to carry 10 tons would pay £10 each quarter. One hears the criticism that road hauliers destroy the roads. That is not their fault, but that of the Highways Department for not constructing the roads strong enough. I would not worry much about it if I could see any hope that the Government would do something about it. To use a colloquialism, we find the Government supporters putting the boots into road hauliers on every opportunity and moaning that they cut up our roads. I should like to know where South Australia's economy would have been were it not for them. When a railway strike occurs, and that is rare, the road hauliers do the job and they are told what wonderful work they are doing. A week after the strike is concluded you will find these same people in the courts being treated as criminals for doing the same thing they were lauded for doing during the strike. The Transport Control Board is the biggest handicap to the development of South Australia and a bottleneck in the stream of progress. We cannot progress if transport is to be limited to the railways, which cannot cope with the work demanded of them. We must develop other means of transport. At present our roads are asked to carry loads from 20 to 40 tons when only a few years ago the heaviest loads on those roads was 10 tons. The result is that the roads are breaking up and the Government and its supporters condemn the road hauliers and not the road system.

We might just as well try to stop the inflow of the sea as to try to stop the increase in road haulage. Today we see loads of 20 to 40 tons; in a few years we will see loads of 70 to 100 tons. We should not blame, but organize road hauliers so that we will get the benefit of their work. The tragedy of the road transport system is not the quantity of goods carried, but the number of large trucks and trailers travelling empty. I visualize the time when we shall have a more intelligent Government than we have today, and then the people who have goods to send from one State to another will put them in depots, knowing that road hauliers will pick them up and transport them to their destinations, and the road hauliers will know that they will have goods

available for their return journey. Now the road haulier has to charge a freight rate to the destination of the goods and add something to cover his return journey. That is not economical for our road transport system. The position can be overcome if we realize that our road hauliers are entitled to a fair deal. I have advocated for heavy traffic the laying of concrete tracks alongside bituminous roads. I understand that the Government has acquired a strip on either side of the road between Adelaide and Gawler, and it would be easy to keep the bituminous road for light traffic and have concrete strips on either side for heavy traffic. It is said that the cost would be high, but it would be money well spent when materials become available. We should introduce a policy of constructing roads which will stand up to heavy traffic. Our Highways Department at present is outmoded. From the Minister of Lands I would like some information about the proposed expenditure of £10,000 on the settlement on the land of discharged soldiers following the 1914-18 war. There is a tendency for Government officers to keep themselves in a job. The £10,000 is to be spent on an item which should have been wiped out long ago. In these days if we give a Government officer an empty room and a kerosene box, within a year we find that he has established a department. We cannot do anything about that, because after Parliament has approved expenditure we do not know how it is spent. I oppose the Bill because it is entirely out of order.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 10 passed.

First schedule.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—In my speech on the Loan Estimates I referred to the purchase of 14 pancake-type engines for the conversion of rail cars. Can the Minister inform me whether they will be used on the 5ft. 3in. or 3ft. 6in. gauge lines?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Railways Commissioner informs me that the pancake-type engine can be applied to either 5ft. 3in. or 3ft. 6in. gauge cars. He has not yet determined where they shall be used, but, speaking broadly, it will be where the traffic is heaviest. They are high-powered engines and can be used most profitably in the multiple-type articulated car rather than in individual cars. The allocations will be made according to the circumstances at the time the engines arrive.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Can the Minister of Lands explain the item of £10,000 for the settlement of 1914-18 soldiers on the land, to which I referred when speaking on the Loan Estimates?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—There are still a number of properties under the 1914-18 scheme under the control of the department and it is necessary to provide for repairs to buildings, fences and so forth.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—When discussing the Loan Estimates I raised queries on items which I chose at random, asking what progress had been made and what amounts spent. Has the Minister of Works that information available now?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Dealing first with the railways, the total railway vote was £1,700,000 and the amount expended £1,900,000, the excess, of course, being covered in the Supplementary Estimates. The honourable member asked for information regarding railway cottages. Last year £150,000 was provided for new cottages and the actual expenditure was £245,000 for which 156 new cottages were built, although one cannot divide the number of houses into the total amount and say that each house cost so much, because they are at various stages of completion. If there are any other items on which the honourable member would like more information I shall be glad to supply it tomorrow if he will seek it by way of question.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—In the Loan Estimates there is an amount of £350,500 for the purchase of land by the Harbors Board. What is the Government's policy in regard to the purchase of areas to the east of the Port River and adjacent to the rifle ranges, namely, the inundated areas on which so many New Australians are housed in shacks and temporary dwellings? Does the Government propose to compensate these people adequately and undertake their removal to more suitable areas?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The position is laid down very strictly in the law relating to compulsory acquisition of land. Apart from the general law the Harbors Board has had authority to purchase certain areas, including the land referred to. To date the purchase of land by voluntary negotiation has far exceeded out anticipations and no steps have had to be taken to acquire land compulsorily. Should that be necessary, of course, and the parties fail to agree it becomes a matter for arbitration, and in assessing the value of a property I am sure the court will consider all

factors. The Government wants to make it plain that the general policy is a long range one; most of that land will not be immediately acquired and we only want to ensure that it will be available when needed. The greatest leniency will be extended to those people who have purchased properties, and even those with temporary homes, which should not have been allowed in many cases, and cannot be regarded as permanent. I am sure the honourable member can rely upon the Harbors Board to extend the greatest clemency to these people in regard to replacement when the time comes; however, that will be some time hence because it will be amongst the later and not the earlier benefit schemes.

Mr. Christian—I think you would have to extend them something more than clemency. The land was subdivided without proper inspection having been made.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I do not concede that. The subdivision was endorsed by the Port Adelaide council.

Mr. Christian—And by the Town Planner without proper inspection.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Town Planner's duty in the past has been more or less to see that a plan presented to him for approval was drawn to scale, told the truth in regard to egress and ingress, adequately provided for width of streets, recreational facilities and so forth, but the local council was the governing factor in relation to the suitability of the land, its liability to inundation, etc. The council having approved, the Town Planner gave his consent as a matter of course and there cannot be any obligation upon him to see that every block offered for sale in South Australia is free from inundation, as otherwise he would soon have one of the biggest departments in the State. If the Town Planner has been involved in any mistake, the Government through the Harbors Board will see that justice is done to these people.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—I cannot accept the Minister's statement that the Town Planner has not a definite responsibility. The regulation which I quoted recently states that the Town Planner shall assure himself that land to be subdivided is not subject to flooding. In this case that precaution was not taken. The Town Planner is a government officer and the Government must shoulder the responsibility to those hundreds of New Australians who did not know this land was unsuitable for sub-division and who were taken down by our own people. If such a grave

injustice has been done to these people the Government must assume the responsibility not only of adequately compensating them but also of seeing that they are housed in a more suitable area.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—These people possibly paid low prices for that land, perhaps because it was subject to occasional inundation. The case of these people will be considered most sympathetically. Much land has been already voluntarily acquired by the Government. The Harbors Board has acted with discretion and wisdom and will continue to do so. The Government does not wish to deprive any man of his rights, even for the benefit of the community as a whole.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I assume the amount of £742,000 provided for the Leigh Creek Coalfield will be spent during the current year. I was not very happy when control of this field was handed to the Electricity Trust, and I am even less happy today. Control of the field should have been left with the Engineering and Water Supply Department, because at that time we were handing over what appeared to be the sole source of heat and the only coal supply in South Australia to the trust, an organization created by this Parliament for the purpose of generating electric power. If, as may happen, some other organization desires to establish a power plant in this State, under the existing set-up it must purchase its coal from the Electricity Trust, which may be its competitor. Can the Minister of Works indicate the total expenditure up to the present on the field from both loan and revenue sources?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—That information appears in the Auditor-General's report.

Mr. O'Halloran—It is not available for the year 1950-51.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The amount in the Loan Estimates is made up as follows:—Building £38,000; housing (including water and sewerage) £160,000; roads and railways £17,000; Aroona Dam £400,000; power house £76,000; machinery, excavators and plant £51,000.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Does the amount provided for the construction of the dam at Aroona represent its total cost? If not, what will it be?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I think that would represent the major portion of the total cost. However, costs are increasing almost hourly. The original estimate was rather less than £400,000.

Mr. SHANNON—Can the Minister of Works say how much money will be required to complete the Port Augusta power station, after the amount allocated this year, £11,550,000 has been spent?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I am afraid I cannot give any further information in regard to the coming year than the details supplied in the Estimates. The amount that can be expended depends largely upon the materials that can be obtained. The member for Eyre asked for details about the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline, but I am afraid if the ship malingers on the waters the figures I have given will be a long way out. I have details on how the money was spent last year, which may be an indication of what the future holds. These figures followed closely on the amounts set out. If the member for Onkaparinga can assess the cost of the Port Augusta power house he is the only man who can. Today we received quotations for the supply of steel from Europe, America and Australia, and the Australian price is one-third of the European, which is twice as much as the American.

Mr. Shannon—Is there any estimate for the total cost of the power house?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—In making such an estimate we hope for the best of conditions. I have not been supplied with that estimate, but will try to obtain it for the honourable member. However, estimates today do not mean very much. We must take what is offering and pay the price. Whenever the Government received high quotations and hesitated someone jumped in and the next price was even higher.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The estimated expenditure of £5,150,000 for the Housing Trust for war-time and post-war housing is “to enable the trust to proceed with homes in the metropolitan and country districts,” but in the second schedule the amount of £1,000,000 is provided. Will any of the £5,150,000 be made available by the trust to assist purchasers of homes?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I think the Housing Trust does on rare occasions make a sale by way of a purchaser making an advance or getting a loan. The purchaser may pay a certain amount of the price and the trust perhaps finances the purchase of homes to some extent. I do not think the trust ever advances the whole amount. I would be pleased to get any other information the honourable member requires.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—In the case I referred to this afternoon 90 per cent of the cost of the house was advanced by the trust. Will any of the £5,150,000 be used by the trust for financing purchasers of trust homes? Under the heading “South Australian Housing Trust—War-time and Post-war Housing” there is an item in the Loan Estimates, “Expenditure, less credits to loan account from cancelled securities as at June 30, 1951, £9,465,758.” This Bill provides £5,150,000 to enable the trust to erect homes in the metropolitan and country districts. I take it that this amount is entirely for the erection of homes, but is the amount of £1,000,000 appearing in the second schedule to enable the trust to advance money to purchasers? How does the trust make money available to purchasers of homes, and where is that money provided?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The Minister’s reply about the £10,000 provided under “Miscellaneous” for the settlement of discharged soldiers on the land gives little information. Exactly the same sum appears on the Estimates year after year for the same purpose. I doubt if any money has been spent on the maintenance of reverted properties.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The honourable member has drawn my attention to this matter before. It is true that there have not been many reverted properties, but money has been expended on them to put them in order for resale or reletting. However, I will let the honourable member have full details of the amount that has been expended.

Mr. QUIRKE—A sum of £1,200,000 is provided for the State Bank for “Advances for Homes.” The present advance of £1,500 is unrealistic in relation to present day costs. I understand that the amount is to be increased to £1,750, which is also inadequate. The advance today is limited to 90 per cent of the valuation of the lending authority. The valuation of homes which have been built for years is extremely conservative and bears no relation to the value that is placed on these houses by the sellers. Apparently the valuation by the lending authority is based on the statutory limitation of £1,500. Does the £1,200,000 take into consideration the question of any increase in the statutory advance to be made available?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Yes. There is a Bill now before the House and that amount is included.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Will the Minister bring down a statement showing whether any

money spent on a reverted property before it is re-allotted to a new settler is charged against the incoming settler or not?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Yes.

Mr. QUIRKE—An amount of £150,000 is provided for loans to producers. Can the Minister say who are taking advantage of the Act to that extent? Is there a demand from co-operative organizations to the extent of £150,000 a year?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The estimated amount is made up as indicated on page 7 of the Loan Estimates. It is for the construction of and additions to cold stores, and includes advances for the construction of the fishing boat being made by Haldane Bros. at Port Fairy.

Schedule passed.

Second schedule.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—An amount of £1,000,000 is provided for the South Australian Housing Trust. Is some of that amount to be set aside by the trust to meet additional costs arising out of the use of imported materials?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—An amount of £850,000 is shown as a loan to the Electricity Trust of South Australia. The trust is not under a Minister and the Government has no control of the way it spends the money. The House has already agreed to advance £11,550,000 to the trust, and that is a lot of money for the small South Australian community to provide.

*Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Can the Minister explain the significance of the words "Electricity Trust of South Australia—Loan to"? The trust is not a Government department, but a semi-Government one. What is the significance of the words "Warrants issued pursuant to subsection (2) of section 32b of the Public Finance Act, 1936-1947, as amended by the Public Finance Act, 1949"? Why is the amount of £850,000 included in the second schedule instead being included with the item for the trust in the first schedule?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The two sums of money in the second schedule are covered by warrants issued by the Governor in the last financial year pursuant to the Public Finance Act, which provides that any warrants issued shall be set out in the next Public Purposes Loan Bill, and that is being done in this

measure. The Treasurer is given Parliamentary authority to borrow money covered by Governor's warrants and he is then enabled to replace the money used under the authority of the warrants.

Mr. Macgillivray—The £850,000 has been advanced already?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—That is the position. Section 32b of the Public Finance Act states:—

(2) Where—

(a)

(b) there is an Act appropriating money for an authorized loan work, but the amount appropriated is insufficient for the complete carrying out of the work,

the Governor may by warrant authorize the Treasurer to advance any public money not exceeding the amount stated in the warrant for the purpose of the carrying out or continued carrying out of that authorized loan work.

That means that any money available can be used for the particular loan works. The section also states:—

(3) When money has been advanced under this section the first Public Purposes Loan Bill introduced after the advance is made shall contain a provision authorizing the borrowing of the amount of money so advanced, and its application to the loan work for which it was advanced.

That is what the Bill does. The section goes on:—

(4) When such a Bill is passed the amount of money thereby authorized to be applied to the loan work for which the advance was made, shall be applied to recoup the public money out of which the said advance was made.

(5) This section shall apply in relation to authorized loan works authorized by any Act whether passed before or after this Act.

Both amounts have been almost exhausted, and that is why it is necessary for an early passage of the Bill.

Mr. QUIRKE—I have the greatest admiration for the work of the Housing Trust but as so much has been said about its operations it is necessary for the position to be cleared up. I will not attempt to do it, because I think it should be done by the trust. There is a difference between the private person purchasing a home through the trust and the returned soldier who purchases one under the War Service Homes Act. The private person when buying a house valued at £1,900 has to pay a deposit of about £350 before being considered a reasonable proposition under the Advances for Homes Act, whereas the returned soldier may borrow up to £2,000 and may not

need to furnish any deposit. The trust does assist in financing the purchase of homes, particularly people with a large family, and only a small amount to put down as a deposit. I know a number of estimable people who have been helped in this way, and the trust is to be congratulated. If the rate of interest is 4 per cent, there can be no cavil at that because it is recognized in financial circles that if there is a risk the interest rate must be increased. That is orthodox finance, although I do not

agree with it. I suggest that the Minister get a report from the Housing Trust on the matter.

Second schedule passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 7.43 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, September 5, at 2 p.m.