

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, September 27, 1951.

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

ASSENT TO ACTS.

His Excellency the Governor, by message, intimated his assent to the Business Agents Act Amendment, Swine Compensation Act Amendment, Police Act Amendment, and Public Purposes Loan Acts.

FURNITURE REMOVAL CHARGES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked last Thursday about alleged unfair prices charged by certain removalists to convey soldier settlers' furniture from the mainland to Kangaroo Island?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have received the following report from the South Australian Road Transport Association:—

The customary procedure is for furniture removalists to pack furniture into "transport boxes" where removals by sea are required. For a normal house consisting of four rooms a standard box is used measuring 12ft. x 8ft. x 7ft., which has a capacity of 672 cubic feet. For larger removals transport boxes of commensurate size are used. Some of the boxes can be collapsed for empty return, but quite a lot are of the non-collapsible type. The Leader of the Opposition has quoted two instances of removals and I shall deal with each one separately, using the above details as a basis.

Port Lincoln to Parndana Settlement, Kangaroo Island.—There is no direct shipping service between Port Lincoln and the island and, in consequence, the furniture has to be taken *via* Port Adelaide, where it is unloaded and then shipped into another vessel. The shipping charges alone are as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Port Lincoln to Port Adelaide— (672 cubic feet at 36s. per cubic ton of 40ft.)	30	4	9
Port Adelaide to Kingscote— (672 cubic feet at 46s. per cubic ton of 40ft.)	38	12	10
Return of empty collapsible box (3 cubic tons)	6	18	0
Total	£75	15	7

If the box is of the non-collapsible type the return freight is £19 6s. 5d., thus making the total shipping charges £88 4s. To these figures must be added the cost of wharfage and harbour charges at Port Lincoln, Port Adelaide, and Kingscote. In the case of transhipment at Port Adelaide the boxes are discharged and loaded again at different berths involving the cost of cartage between the wharves, and in some cases when shipping space is not available, the boxes have to be

taken from the wharf and stored prior to re-shipping for Kingscote. It will thus be seen that the shipping costs, harbour and wharfage fees, and transhipment expenses alone can vary from £80 to over £90. To these charges would have to be added the furniture removalist's expenses of packing, picking up at house, and carting to wharf, as well as carting approximately 19 miles from Kingscote to residence at Parndana, and unloading and return to Kingscote. It would appear from the above illustration that the £65 mentioned was a genuine misquote and the final cost of £110 would be quite reasonable.

Port Adelaide to Parndana, Kangaroo Island.—The figures used in the first example will also illustrate this case. The shipping charges would be as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Port Adelaide to Kingscote (672 cubic feet at 46s. per cubic ton)	38	12	10
Return of empty collapsible box (3 cubic tons)	6	18	0
Total	£45	10	10

For the return of a non-collapsible box the freight is £19 6s. 6d., making the total shipping charge £57 19s. 3d. In this instance also must be added wharfage and harbour charges at Port Adelaide and Kingscote. It will thus be seen that estimates of upwards of £60 to cover sea freight between Port Adelaide and Kangaroo Island are quite justified. So far as road transport services are concerned the rates are subject to the control of the South Australian Prices Commissioner.

The honourable member will see that the association has to meet very heavy sea charges, which justify the ultimate charges.

GOODWOOD-MARINO LINE DUPLICATION.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—In reply to my question on August 2 the Minister of Railways said that work on the duplication of the Goodwood-Marino line would be resumed within the next six weeks. As considerably longer than that has elapsed can the Minister indicate when the work will be re-commenced?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will inquire from the Railways Commissioner. Obviously, where millions of pounds' worth of work is involved, neither the Minister nor the Railways Commissioner himself is in a position to say when one job will start or end.

MYXOMATOSIS VIRUS SUPPLIES.

Mr. MICHAEL—Owing to the wet winter, water is lying in a number of places in the country and since the warm weather mosquitoes have become very active in localities where the water will quickly dry up. Can the Minister of Agriculture inform the House whether the

myxomatosis virus will be available to private land holders, and if so, how soon, and what procedure will be necessary in order to obtain supplies?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I have discussed this question with my Chief Veterinary Officer, Mr. Macindoe, and he informs me that there are considerable difficulties in the way of making the virus available to private landholders. First, it is put out in ampules and these have to be imported. Each ampule holds a dose for about 70 rabbits and the virus remains good, I understand, for only about 12 hours. Consequently, to make it available for the inoculation of the very limited number of rabbits that a farmer would have would be to waste the virus unnecessarily, and because there is not sufficient available it would not be possible to do that at present. A number of requests have been made by farmers for half a dozen inoculated rabbits to be sent them, but the same difficulty applies there. The C.S.I.R.O. and the Institute of Veterinary Science are investigating the position to see whether they can devise an effective way of sending half a dozen infected rabbits to farmers. I may add that the programme for the spreading of myxomatosis has been most carefully drawn up with a view to dealing first with those areas where the water will dry up first and in consequence getting the best effect. As regards the South-East, the Drainage Board was consulted and advises that there will be ample water lying about in the South-East for the spread of myxomatosis as late as November of this year.

RAILWAYMEN AND HOUSING TRUST HOMES.

Mr. HUTCHENS—It would appear that the Railways Department has made application forms available to its employees for the purpose of their applying for houses. The form is headed "South Australian Railways. Application for a Departmental House." A clause of the application states "If not employed in the South Australian Railways—I am working as . . . , " a space being left for particulars. A number of railway employees are of the opinion that the filling in of those forms will make them applicants for Housing Trust homes. Can the Minister of Railways say whether the Railways Department has an understanding with the Housing Trust for the allocation of a number of homes to railway employees?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—To get over the difficulty arising out of the inability to get enough men to carry on essential services the Housing Trust has collaborated with the Railways Commissioner. To ascertain how many employees will apply for homes, these forms have been issued. There has undoubtedly been an arrangement—and I think it is a proper one—that the priorities of the functions of the Railways Department, the Engineering and Water Supply Department and the Harbors Board are so high today that a certain number of men will have to be settled in houses and assured that, if they have taken a job with one of those departments they will be permanently settled in them. I know of no further arrangement than that indicated. I can only suggest that, if I were a railway man, I would fill in the form, confident that the Government is doing its best to see that the men it requires are properly housed.

SALISBURY NORTH SEWERAGE.

Mr. GOLDNEY—The Housing Trust has a large building programme in the Salisbury North area which is well under way, there being between 40 and 50 dwellings already occupied. A considerable number are nearing completion and I understand contracts have been made for many more. The present method of sanitation of those already occupied is by means of hygeno cans, which are not very satisfactory. Can the Minister of Works say whether the Government has in hand a proposal for the sewerage of this area, seeing that it will be very extensive in the very near future?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The question of the sewerage of country areas has been the subject of a Bill, and a rate of 1s. 9d. in the pound has been provided as a levy. As required by the provisions of the Public Works Standing Committee Act, proposals for sewerage of those areas which have been investigated are now before the committee for report, but up to date we have received no report from the committee; therefore it is not possible to proceed with those areas for which plans have been prepared. I would not say there is any likelihood of the area mentioned being given priority, for two reasons. Firstly, if it is to be an extensive area—as it probably will be—it will probably be the basis of a scheme costing more than £30,000, and therefore will require to be reported upon by the committee. Secondly, the Government has no special provision, either on the Estimates or

by any other means, which would enable it to forecast when that job can be proceeded with. It must take its turn with several others of the same type throughout the State.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIRE BRIGADES BOARD.

Mr. STOTT—A statement was made yesterday by the Treasurer in reply to a question by Mr. Hutchens respecting contributions toward fire brigade services by municipal councils. To show the expenditure on fire brigade services in the various States I quote the following figures:—New South Wales, £1,074,000—Government £134,000, and councils £134,000; Victoria, £471,000—Government £157,000, and councils £157,000; South Australia, £213,000—Government £23,000, and councils £54,000; Western Australia, £156,000—Government £35,000, and councils £35,000. In the other States the figures are for the financial year ended December, 1950, and in South Australia for the year ended June, 1951. Yesterday the Treasurer said that his inquiries did not support the assertion that the authorities here were very adversely treated, but the figures I quoted show that the councils here are more adversely treated than those in the other States. The South Australian Government's contribution of 19 per cent is lower than that of all the other States with the exception of New South Wales, where the contributions are based on 12½ per cent by the Government, 12½ per cent by councils, and 75 per cent by insurance companies. The Government's contribution of £23,000 in South Australia for the financial year ended June, 1951, was lower than that of every State with the exception of Tasmania where of a total expenditure of £33,000 the Government was responsible for one-third—£11,000—and the insurance companies and the councils also contributed £11,000 each. In view of those figures which prove that the councils in this State are more adversely treated than those in the other States, will the Treasurer consider making provision in his Budget to bring the contribution by the Government up to a more equitable basis in line with the other States?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Some time ago the member for Glenelg introduced a deputation concerning this matter and submitted a case for an alteration of the Government's contribution. As I told Mr. Hutchens yesterday, the matter was considered by the Government after a full report had been received as to the contributions by Governments, councils, and insurance companies in the other States.

In due course Mr. Pattinson was advised of the Government's decision and the figures I referred to yesterday, which were revised figures, have since been received by Mr. Pattinson and made public on a number of occasions. They set out the amounts which will be contributed this year by the Government to the Fire Brigades Board. The adjusted figure proposed in the Budget this year does not reflect that the metropolitan authorities as a whole are in an adverse position. In this State the position compares favourably with that in all the other States but one.

Mr. STOTT—The following figures are taken from a volume showing the figures of all State contributions to fire brigades, and there is no doubt about their accuracy. They show that the New South Wales Government contribution is 12½ per cent, and that in South Australia it is 19 per cent. The total contribution by the New South Wales Government is £134,000, as against £23,000 in South Australia. On a population basis South Australia's contribution is nowhere near the New South Wales contribution. Figures for other States are—Queensland 28½ per cent, Victoria 33½ per cent, Western Australian 22 per cent, and Tasmania 33 per cent. There must be some explanation of the difference between the figures quoted by the Premier and myself. The figures for the other States are for 1950, whereas those for South Australia are for the year ended June 30, 1951. Will the Premier peruse them to see if the South Australian Government contribution is equal to Government contributions in other States?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The honourable member did not catch the meaning of what I said previously. When I replied to Mr. Hutchens I was referring to current publicized figures based on the amount proposed to be paid under the Estimates this year. Those figures could not have been placed in the document referred to by the honourable member. Mr. Pattinson introduced a deputation and received a reply, which has been made available to the local governing bodies.

Mr. Stott—Even on your three-ninths contribution, on those figures the position would be adverse.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not think the honourable member knows the figure for this year. It is not £23,000, which he quoted. He is quoting figures from previous Budgets, whereas I am quoting figures from the proposed Budget. The figure which has been circulated

to councils is not adverse. Although some councils would prefer to hand the whole of the cost over to the general taxpayers, it still remains a fact that the figures in the Budget this year are generous as compared with the figures for the other States.

WALLAROO AND MOONTA COPPER DEPOSITS.

Mr. McALEES—Some weeks ago a survey plane and a scintillometer were used in a search for copper in the Moonta and Wallaroo areas. The plane crashed while on duty and it was reported that stock had damaged the fabric and wings, but I am not greatly worried about that as the occupants were uninjured. Can the Minister representing the Minister of Mines say whether there is anything to report about any discovery in the area?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Not yet.

Mr. McALEES—People in my district view this matter seriously, because the location of copper would be of great interest to South Australia and Australia. Is the Premier able to state what took place during the recent survey?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The survey was carried out because we found on investigation that copper lodes in the Moonta and Wallaroo Mines areas had associated with them a certain amount of uranium minerals. The dumps at Wallaroo Mines, for instance, are fairly radio active and a survey was made with a scintillometer, which is designed to detect uranium. There was a chance that by detecting occurrences of uranium we would automatically detect occurrences of copper. Unfortunately, before the survey had been completed, there was a mishap to the aeroplane, and before any action could be taken to prevent it portions of the aeroplane were eaten by local stock. Fortunately, there were no fatalities with the aeroplane mishap, and the equipment we had purchased from America is still intact. The survey will be continued, and when it is completed I will let the honourable member have a complete report as to what the indications are.

PREFABRICATED HOUSES.

Mr. DUNNAGE—A report in yesterday's *News* stated:—

Migrants Can Bring Houses.—London, Tues.: A London company is building prefabricated houses specially for migrants to Australia who want to take a home with them. The houses are being made by Unitroy Ltd., and cost about £A1,850. A spokesman for the company said, "We are building the houses in such a way that the various parts are easy to ship. The

prefabs. can be erected without any skilled labour, and are fire and vermin proof." The company is contacting Australian housing officials, and if a demand for its houses is great, will consider building a factory in Australia.

The report went on to say that similar houses had been erected by the company in practically all parts of the world. Can the Premier tell the House anything about the prefabrication of homes and the company that is prepared to come to Australia to erect them?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not know this firm, but the claim made by it sounds much better than it really is. While it may not take a tradesman to actually put the homes together it will undoubtedly take tradesmen to provide all the associated services that go to make a home habitable. Water and sewerage and other facilities require on site experienced labour, and at present it is difficult to obtain it. The price sounds very high unless it includes all the transport and landing charges and erection costs.

COST OF POLICE UNIFORMS.

Mr. LAWN—As regards the cost of uniforms for police officers, I understand that a winter coat and a pair of trousers cost them £21 10s. and an extra pair of trousers £5 5s. For the summer an unlined coat and pair of trousers costs £15 15s. and an extra pair of trousers £4 10s. Should the coat be lined the cost is £18 15s., including a pair of trousers. Police officers require three blue and three khaki shirts, the total cost being £9 9s., a cap costs £1 10s., boots £2 5s., a cap cover 7s. 6d., two ties 6s. 11d. each, a helmet £2, and an overcoat about £7. These prices have been supplied to the Police Association by the Federal Clothing Company. I understand, too, that the allowance paid to police officers in September and March is £15, making a total of £30 for the year, whereas the actual requirements according to the above list costs £70 5s. 4d. Officers advise me that they are the minimum requirements. I have also been informed that men who recently joined the Police Force have applied to be paid the full year's allowance of £30 instead of two payments of £15 six-monthly. Will Cabinet consider either reimbursing police officers the full cost of uniforms, etc., or, alternatively, the department supplying them for police officers?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have no details as regards the Police Department, and I am

not sure of the conditions under which uniforms are provided. I will refer the matter to the Chief Secretary and bring down a reply next week.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION: GREY-HOUND RACING.

Mr. SHANNON—Inadvertently, in this morning's *Advertiser*, there appeared a statement that my proposed amendment to the Restriction on Coursing Act is to provide betting facilities for greyhound racing, whereas in fact it is the opposite—to deny betting facilities entirely at such events and also to restrict the number of courses that may be established.

UPPER MURRAY ROADS AND BRIDGES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—On Tuesday I asked the Minister of Works if he would bring down a report dealing with roads in the Upper Murray areas and also the bridge at North Lake. Has he anything to report on the matter yet?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—As promised, I conferred with the Engineer-in-Chief, who is also South Australian representative on the River Murray Commission, and with the Commissioner of Highways, Mr. Richmond. The honourable member will recall that it was suggested that the reason why the level of the roads was not raised was some objection on the part of the River Murray Commission. Dealing with this aspect the Engineer-in-Chief reports:—

It is pointed out that excessive obstruction of the stream flow over a broad area of river flats could cause heavy damage by erosion on the river banks, thereby endangering property and silting up the river channel. This is a matter of great importance and it is far better to close a road for a short period, say, every 10 or 15 years, rather than cause heavy damage to other roads and loss of property by restricting the waterway provided by Nature to pass the flow during flood periods.

The Engineer-in-Chief also stated that the River Murray Commission had nothing to do with fixing the height of the road from Cobdogla to the Kingston ferry and pointed out to what height the road could be raised without detrimentally affecting other areas. The Highways Commissioner states:—

All roadworks which may have some effect on the flood flow of the Murray are designed in collaboration with the State representatives of the River Murray Commission. Levels are fixed to provide sufficient waterway to pass floods which previous experience shows may occur at long intervals. To raise a bank beyond the level considered practicable would

necessitate construction of an inordinate length of bridges, and the expense therefor would be out of proportion to the benefits derivable.

Dealing with the Berri-Loxton road he states:—

The level of this road was fixed to provide a dry crossing for all floods except those which may occur once in approximately 10 years. Economic factors prevented the raising of the road to a higher level.

I think, therefore, we can take it for granted that there has been complete collaboration between the two departments. The idea always is that it is no use benefiting one section to the detriment of others of perhaps greater importance. There has been no overlapping between the two departments.

SUBDIVISION OF LAND FOR PURCHASE.

Mr. FLETCHER—Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 170 of the Crown Lands Act provides that if—

Two or more persons (according to the number of blocks into which the land is suitable for subdivision), in writing request the Commissioner to purchase the land for the purpose of subdividing it into blocks for allotment to the said persons under agreement for sale and purchase, containing such terms and conditions as agreements under Division V. of this Part contain, and submit to the Commissioner a scheme for subdividing and allotting the blocks the Commissioners may cause the said land to be valued by the Land Board with a view to purchasing it. Is that part of the Act still in operation and has consideration been given to any approaches that have been made by two or more persons for subdivision and allotment of the land required by them?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The desirability of carrying out a scheme of that nature depends on whether it will provide a living area for the two persons concerned. We have done certain development under the Crown Lands Development Act, and perhaps something could be done in that direction. If the honourable member will supply further information on the matter I will be happy to go into it.

PORT AUGUSTA-WARRAKIMBO MAIL ROUTE.

Mr. RICHES—Complaints have been made by a number of settlers about the condition of the mail route between Port Augusta and Warrakimbo which, for a considerable time, has been in a deplorable state, almost impassable, and definitely so after a heavy shower of rain. Representations have been made over a long period for something to be done to this

road. I am aware of the difficulties that confront the Engineering and Water Supply Department, but I believe its officers are sympathetic. Settlers feel that the time is ripe to ask for special consideration to the matter of having the road put in a passable condition. Will the Minister of Works call for a report from his officers at Crystal Brook on the possibility of putting the road into good condition?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—As the honourable member knows, the determining factor is not the availability of funds for the purpose. The only bottleneck is the inability to get sufficient manpower and plant to do all the work required. Obviously it follows that if we do one job we take something from another. I guarantee that if the Engineer-in-Chief did that, there would be a complaint from another area that their work had been superseded for less important work. As the honourable member knows, we called for tenders and received offers, which were accepted, of two large graders. Until they come to hand I am afraid I cannot offer any more than this. Priority will be given according to the needs of each district, and they must be assessed by the man on the spot. I could not undertake to take it out of its priority, or ask the Engineer-in-Chief to do so, even if, in the opinion of those who know the district very well, it is desirable. I will refer the matter to the Engineer-in-Chief and see if it is deserving of special consideration.

SUPPRESSION OF NAMES IN COURT CASES.

Mr. STEPHENS—I have noticed for some time in the press that in cases brought before various courts counsel have sometimes been successful in having defendants' names suppressed, whilst other applications have failed. It has happened in courts before judges, magistrates, and justices of the peace. In this morning's *Advertiser* two cases at Port Adelaide were mentioned. In one case a man was charged with indecently assaulting a five year old girl. He was committed for trial and his name was suppressed from publication. In the Port Adelaide court yesterday another man was charged with theft and he also was committed for trial, but his name was published. Although I think it right to publish the names of those committed for trial, why should the name of the man who committed a much worse offence than theft be suppressed and the other not? Is there any law, regulation, policy or principle to guide justices, magistrates and judges in this matter?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The suppression of a name is in the hands of the presiding justices or magistrates. I understand that the general rule is that a name is not suppressed except by order of the presiding authority, and then only if he believes it to be in the public interest. I will obtain a report on the cases mentioned.

EXPANSION OF DAIRYING INDUSTRY.

Mr. MICHAEL—A few days ago I received a publication issued by the Commonwealth Minister for Commerce and Agriculture setting out what has been done by the previous and the present Federal Governments in the past five years with a view to stabilizing the dairying industry and proposals for the future. This entails the addition of 1,000,000 cows by 1960, which is the equivalent of 20,000 additional dairy farms with 50 cows each. The concluding paragraph of the publication states, "The Commonwealth Government will be anxious to co-operate with the State Government in these matters." Has the State Government had any communication with regard to this subject and, if so, has it considered the action to be taken to ensure that a fair proportion of that expansion shall take place in South Australia?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The co-operation which the Federal Government wanted from the States was mainly in price determination and we have had many communications on that. Although agreement has not been reached with every State, substantial agreement has been reached between the Commonwealth and four of the States. As regards the physical problem of securing the land, a survey is being made to get the fullest possible information as to where dairying can be increased in South Australia. This State is not geographically ideal for dairying, but every effort will be made to obtain expansion in localities where it is possible.

MURRAY RIVER RESERVOIR.

Mr. STOTT—Can the Minister of Local Government indicate where the banks are likely to be constructed in connection with the proposed new reservoir in the Pike Creek area, as the local people are very anxious to have that information?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Obviously such a scheme involves, first, the collaboration of and acceptance by the River Murray Commission, after a survey by a competent authority. We have submitted only a preliminary plan and I think it would be very unwise to

disclose it at this stage, because I should imagine that a good deal of land speculation might take place with the object of reaping the benefits accruing from such a scheme. I will certainly not undertake to give that information until it is necessary to place it before the proper authorities and after the Government has approved of it.

ONE-BRAND PETROL STATIONS.

Mr. RICHES—Some of the major petrol companies have instituted one-brand petrol stations. Has the Government been watching the proposals with a view to ascertaining whether it should legislate in the interests of service, supply and price? Does it think that similar action should be taken here as is being adopted in New South Wales where, I understand, a licensing system is being instituted? It has been stated freely in the north that the reason for the one-brand stations is to effect economy in distribution costs. If that is so, will the Prices Department made inquiries with a view to breaking down the freight differential charged on petrol prices in country areas?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I believe that the elimination of a number of bowlers at each service station would reduce the overhead costs of distribution. Against that, probably, the lack of competition would offset any advantage. Speaking generally, distribution costs in South Australia compare favourably with those in other States and the Government will not, from choice, do anything that would eliminate competition which, although it has some weaknesses, has some good points from the buying public's point of view. The Government knows of no reason which would make any legislation necessary.

KAROONDA AREA SCHOOL.

Mr. STOTT—Will the Minister of Works ascertain the contract price for the school bus service to the Karoonda area school?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Yes.

JACOBS CREEK BRIDGE.

Mr. TEUSNER—Has the Minister of Works a reply to my recent question regarding the dangerous situation on and in the vicinity of the Jacobs Creek bridge on the main bitumen highway between Gawler and Tanunda?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I have conferred with the Commissioner of Highways, who reports:—

This bridge is narrow and for that reason has been placed on the list for attention when possible. The approaches on each side are

straight and signs have been erected to warn traffic regarding the width. The greater proportion of traffic is local and therefore aware of conditions and thus no exceptional danger exists. Apart from the inadequate width the bridge, which is of steel, is in fairly good condition, and would have many years life as regards carrying capacity. In view of the large number of bridges throughout the State listed for attention (some of which are almost approaching the stage of failure) and the shortage of supplies of the necessary materials, it is unfortunately necessary to defer otherwise desirable work on any bridge which can be made to serve for a few more years.

In effect, the Commissioner of Highways states that although this work is desirable, more urgent works require attention. Until such lag has been overtaken I can offer no immediate prospect of this work being carried out.

TRESPASSING ON LAND BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

SUCCESSION DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

Committee's report adopted.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BUILDING MATERIALS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 25. Page 656.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—This Bill has become a "hardy annual." Clause 2 increases by £300 the amounts which may be spent in the erection of a non-permit house, which is another illustration of this Government's failure to adequately control prices. It also shows how a Government of the same political colour in Canberra has failed to put value back into the pound. I doubt whether home builders will be able to complete houses for the sums provided. In almost every case imported materials must be used, such as cement, steel rods, galvanized iron and timber. A man may build a house of 12½ squares for £2,200 and, after moving in, lay down a terrazzo floor in his bathroom which he may also tile, and construct built-in furniture. The amounts stated in clause 2 should be for the cost of the bare needs. Also the higher prices of some imported materials should be considered. For instance, local cement costs about £9 17s. a ton, whereas the price of

imported cement ranges from £17 to £26 10s. a ton. This imported cement is costing £16 13s. a ton more than local cement and on a home of 12½ squares, with concrete foundations and cement bricks, the extra cost would be £233. That point warrants consideration. Why are some people permitted to use Australian cement to build homes when permit holders have been waiting 12 months without being satisfied? Non-permit holders should be compelled to use imported cement. Certain merchants are post-dating their supplies and telling permit holders that they will have to wait nine months. How can they know what their supplies will be? Excluding group home construction by the South Australian Housing Trust and the War Service Homes Commission, for every builder with a permit there are at least six private persons with permits trying to buy local cement. The present local cement position is hopeless, and until such time as local supplies can meet all the emergencies provided under the Bill this cement should not be used for other purposes. If a person desires to build a home greater than 12½ squares and costing more than £2,200 a permit is necessary. This could lead to abuse by a person obtaining a permit and spending extra on cupboards and built-in furniture. Does the total cost include only the house, or the extras mentioned? If a person builds a home under this legislation, sells it and then wants to build another home, it should be incumbent upon him to obtain another permit. I agree with that provision which enables a home builder to erect one out-building. In his second reading speech the Minister said:—

The policy as regards the issue of permits is such that any person with a reasonable case for the issue of a permit has no difficulty in obtaining one.

If a person has already built a house, but because of increased family desires to add additional rooms, the Building Materials Office in most cases will direct that he is not to use burnt red bricks. Consequently many homes are being spoilt in appearance. Although the Minister said that it was not now so difficult to obtain permits as previously, I believe there is still great need for the Building Materials Office to use greater discretion when a person, because of increases in his family, desires to add to his accommodation. Often he is compelled to use cement or cinder bricks, which are covered with plaster, and this results in a patchwork job. Instead of the value of the house being enhanced by the addition it is depreciated.

When the Building Materials Office issues a permit for the erection of an additional room or a sleep-out on the outside facade of a house, the owner should be allowed to use bricks to match the existing building. I hope the Government will issue the necessary instructions to this end.

I appreciate the necessity to tighten up the provisions of section 8 (6) of the Act. However, if a builder has a quantity of water-piping on hand because he did not need all that was ordered on a previous job, he should not be penalized if he uses it on another job, thus ensuring that his employees will not lose time awaiting materials. Of course, if a person obtains controlled materials for a particular job but sells them on the black market I have no sympathy for him. The provision relating to bricks appears to be necessary, but I understood there was strict control over burnt red bricks. With all these controls not one extra brick will be made available for home building, and until the Government or its agent, the Housing Trust, manufactures burnt red bricks controls will remain. I should not think a fine would be imposed on a person who is unable to make use of his permit within the specified time because of labour or material shortages. If he disposed of bricks without obtaining the consent of the Building Materials Office he would be liable to a penalty, but the department would gladly give him the right to dispose of them legitimately. I want to make it clear that the Opposition is opposed to trafficking in building materials that are in short supply.

Clause 5 relates to the duration of the permit. I agree with the Minister's explanation, but shall instance a case where a "Stop" notice was issued. The person concerned had paid the fine and approval was given to finish a part of the house, but it was stipulated that two years should elapse before any additions could be made. I believe it is only right that if permission is given to finish portion of a home the conditions should be enforced for up to two years before the person can commence other building operations. I shall have an amendment on the files early next week in regard to section 9, as follows:—

Where a person is convicted under this section and his stop work notice has not been lifted within 12 months of notice being served he shall have the right to approach the nearest local court.

I believe the Government has appointed a Building Materials Advisory Committee, which

has the right to recommend the issue of "Stop" notices or to direct the Director of Building Materials to issue them. The person concerned may appeal to the committee that authorized the "Stop" notice, although perhaps to no avail. I will give as an illustration the case of a man on whom a "Stop" notice was served in July, 1949. This man assures me that he has on hand all the materials required for the completion of a house if permission is given. I received the following letter on the matter, dated April 20 last, from the Building Materials Office:—

The application of Mr. "X" to complete portion of the house situated at Woodville upon which a "Stop Work Notice" now applies was considered by the Building Permits Advisory Committee at its recent meeting. Members were not prepared to recommend to the director, Building Materials Office, that this "Stop Notice" be withdrawn, and it is regretted, therefore, the application must be refused. Mr. "X" has been notified accordingly. A suggestion was made by the members of the committee that favourable consideration would be given to an application from Mr. "X" to erect a new dwelling of an area not to exceed 1,250 sq. ft. overall on the condition that the house at Woodville is sold to a large family to be approved on the basis of their need for improved accommodation by the Building Materials Office. If this suggestion is acceptable to Mr. "X" it would not be advisable for him to dispose of the house by sale until such a time as the family selected has been approved.

The letter is double-barrelled. I frankly admit that this man committed a serious breach of the Building Materials Act, but when did Parliament give the right to the committee to dictate such terms as are contained in the letter? Probably the Treasurer can say. Can he say that when the advisory panel was established it had the right to say it would give consideration to this man's disposing of the house, uncompleted, to a family who could measure up to the department's needs? It is time members realized what is happening and considered the advisableness of amending the Act in the way I have indicated. Another case concerns a man who endeavoured to erect a house of 1,500 sq. ft. without a permit. He, however, got off scot-free. Apparently some people may dispose of a property and others have to pay the full penalty.

After having paid the fine and complied with the requirements of the Act Mr. "X," mentioned earlier, saw me and asked me to take up his case. I felt under an obligation to assist him. I asked him what representations he had made to the Building Materials Office to have

the "Stop work" notice lifted. He said that he had typed an application—and at my suggestion would re-write it by hand—stating that he was prepared to leave it entirely in the hands of the Building Materials Office whether it would allow him to complete the building. The walls have been erected and roofing timbers fixed ready for the tiles, which are available. Mr. "X" has a wife, a child, and an invalid mother, and I think he is entitled to erect a house of more than 1,250 sq. ft.

Mr. Whittle—By how much did he exceed the area?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I cannot say, but I do not think it would be greater than the area which was exceeded by the man who got off scot-free. I do not believe that Parliament wanted the advisory panel to have unlimited powers. I interviewed the Treasurer and formed the opinion that he was sympathetic towards giving the man reasonable accommodation and the right to cover the roof so that there would be no deterioration of the roof timbers and walls. The Building Materials Office could grant a permit, but stipulating that Mr. "X" should not do any more to the job for 12 months or two years. If that is done I am satisfied he will carry out his obligations. If the Building Materials Office will not recommend the lifting of the "Stop work" notice, he should be able, on the ground of hardship, to appeal to the nearest local court to hear his case.

Clause 6 of the Bill has much to commend it. The case of a man named Allchurch is well-known. Because of his war service he was enabled to take a course of bricklaying under the post-war reconstruction scheme and became sufficiently qualified to do this work. Every permit that is issued by the Building Materials Office should contain the important provision set out in clause 6 that a building contractor shall, within three days after receiving any money as deposit for the erection of a house, pay it into a special purpose account in a bank in South Australia in the joint names of the owner and himself. If that were done fewer persons would be robbed. Members are also asked to consider the advisableness of the registration of all builders. I am sure that everybody will appreciate the desirability of that. I understand that there is an agreement amongst timber merchants whereby a person who desires to set up in the building business cannot obtain supplies of timber, whether he is an ex-serviceman or not, unless he is a recognized customer. Clause 9 is the most

important in the Bill because it provides for control for a further 12 months. I believe that before that period elapses there will be no need for this control, because as the result of the Budget introduced by Sir Arthur Fadden, Commonwealth Treasurer, everything will be controlled. Already a millstone has been placed around the necks of the people of this country.

Mr. HAWKER secured the adjournment of the debate.

MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

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

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Mining Act, 1930-1950.

Motion carried. Resolution agreed to in Committee and adopted by the House.

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 25. Page 671.)

Mr. TAPPING (Semaphore)—I support the Bill because I firmly believe that the wording of some of the clauses makes it abundantly clear that the Government realizes that price control is essential for the well-being of the State. Clause 3, which deals with the evidence of rates for services, will help officers of the Prices Branch in their work. The Premier said, in introducing the Bill, that in his opinion price control is not a cure for inflation, but that it will cushion the effect of inflation, and to that view I subscribe wholeheartedly. The price control carried out during the war proved valuable. Since only some prices have been controlled in this State the basic wage has been affected; consequently, from time to time wages have been increased, but each rise had an adverse effect on people. As soon as wages rise prices of commodities increase. If there is proper control of prices there will be a cushioning effect. Some time ago the Labor Party in the Commonwealth Parliament tried to get a referendum held on price control, but the move was rejected, I think unwisely, by the Menzies-Fadden Government. It has been proved beyond doubt that uniformity in price control is desirable, and that individually the States cannot do the job properly. If the people of Australia were asked today to support Commonwealth price control I am sure it would be

agreed to by a large number. Butter has often been mentioned in this place. The various States hold different views on the butter price. In Queensland the butter position is almost chaotic, because most of the butter produced there is withheld from the market or sent to other States where better prices are obtainable. Next week if something is not done to increase the Queensland butter price, supplies there will be withheld altogether. New South Wales is in a similar position. People in that State cannot get butter because it goes across the border to other States. In South Australia mutton is controlled, but not lamb, so butchers have a torrid time trying to do their best under the conditions. From time to time producers have withheld stock from the market because they wanted better prices, and consumers have had to temporarily go without the meat they required. The Government should consider controlling all meat prices so that the public will know their position. I have previously referred to the position of motor cars. At present new motor cars are controlled, but not secondhand cars.

The Hon. T. Playford—New motor cars are not controlled.

Mr. TAPPING—I understood that they were.

The Hon. T. Playford—New motor cars have been decontrolled for some time.

Mr. TAPPING—I was led to believe that there was some control.

Mr. O'Halloran—There is some competition between local and imported interests which imposes a price on new cars, but not secondhand cars.

The Hon. T. Playford—The control of new cars is a control exercised by manufacturers.

Mr. TAPPING—I take it then that the control of new motor cars is not exercised by the Prices Branch, and has something to do with the manufacturers. After a new motor car has been driven for 100 miles it becomes secondhand, and a very high price can be obtained for it. I know of a 1947 Chevrolet car, costing £750 when new, being sold at double its value. If it is possible for a person to sell an article at twice its real value, it is time that the price of that article was controlled. Between September, 1939, and June, 1948, the Commonwealth controlled prices, and during that period prices rose 39 per cent, an average of 4 per cent per annum. During the last three years, under State control, prices increased by 44 per cent, an average of 15 per cent per annum. It is therefore abundantly clear that price control is a job for

one body. It is only common sense to suggest that the Premier of each State has a different outlook on price control. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to the matter of land and house sales. This is an important subject because it affects the ordinary citizen. A very grave error was committed when the control of land sales and homes was lifted. During the last year, through the Harbors Board, the Government has been acquiring a considerable area of land between Largs Bay and Outer Harbour. We find that representatives of the Harbors Board have offered £40 for blocks which could be sold in the open market for £120 or £130, so although there is no control over land sales, the Government is apparently prepared to work on assumed pegged values. If these people have to give up their land, as ultimately they will, they will have to look around for other blocks on which to build the homes they plan and will probably have to pay 200 per cent or 300 per cent more for them. With control over land sales this position would not arise. The same situation obtains in respect of the sale of homes. Houses ordinarily worth £700 are bringing as much as £1,500, double their true value, and I feel that we should do something to benefit the whole State by seeing that controls are again imposed. I have, from time to time, referred in this House to the price of fish. Because of the exorbitant prices being asked by fish vendors many people cannot afford to eat fish, and this is particularly hard on sufferers from certain maladies who are obliged to have a fish diet. I was not quite sure whether Mr. Shannon favoured the Bill or opposed it. He resented the conditions which bring about control and I think we can all agree with him on that. We would all like to see a balanced economy under which no control was necessary. He felt that the law of supply and demand would meet the situation, but I feel that demand is much greater than supply. He referred to the black marketing which would probably become rampant if we had controls, but the person who commits a breach of any law is dealt with under that law, so if we had a law governing prices any offender could be dealt with. We should welcome this Bill. Although it does not do much in actual fact, it does extend a certain measure of control until 1953, by which time we hope there will be no further need for it.

Mr. TEUSNER secured the adjournment of the debate.

POLICE PENSIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Gumeracha—Premier and Treasurer)—This Bill makes two amendments to the Police Pensions Act. The first relates to the maximum amount of the contribution payable by members of the police force who joined the pensions scheme at its inception in 1930. There are about 200 of these members, and the legislation relating to the police pensions scheme has always fixed a maximum limit upon their contributions which has been varied as changes have been made in the amount of pension. Members will recollect that police pensions were raised last year by an amending Act, which provided for increases in both contributions and pensions. The basis of the Act was that the Government should increase its annual contribution to the Police Pensions Fund by £15,000 a year, members contributions should be raised by an annual amount of £7,500, and there should be an increase of about twenty per cent in pensions. A new schedule of members' contributions was drawn up; but owing to the absence of the Public Actuary at a conference in Canberra when the Bill was being considered the need for raising the limit of the contributions of members who joined the fund on January 1, 1930, was overlooked until a few days after the session ended. The result is that whereas 600 members who have joined the fund since January 1, 1930, will pay increases of at least £7 10s. a year, those who joined before that day will remain on their old rates.

It is proposed to correct this position by increasing the maximum amount payable by members who joined the fund on January 1, 1930. The maximum for such members who are non-commissioned officers will be raised from £23 2s. a year to £30; and that of commissioned officers from £27 14s. to £36. The increase will operate from July 1, last; and the arrears in respect of the period between that day and the day when this Bill becomes law will be payable within two months after the last mentioned day.

The other amendment raises the amount payable to widows of ex-members of the force in respect of allowances for children. Under the present law the children's allowance is 10s. for a first or only child under 16, and 7s. 6d. a week for each other child. It is proposed to raise this allowance to 12s. 6d. a

week for each child. By reason of this amendment the children's allowance in this State will be equal to the rate in Queensland which is the highest in Australia. This alteration has been made at the request of certain widows-pensioners and the Government understands that it is supported by the Police Association. I move the second reading.

Mr. O'HALLORAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

URANIUM MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Gumeracha—Premier and Treasurer)—Copies of this Bill are not yet on members' files, but I can explain its intent. Its only purpose is to amend the Uranium Mining Act to provide that uranium mining and those things associated with it shall not be deemed to be public works within the meaning of the Public Works Standing Committee Act. Members know that under that Act it is unlawful for any Minister to introduce into Parliament a Bill providing for the expenditure of £30,000 or over for any public work unless that work has first been reported upon by the Public Works Committee. That does not apply only to works included in the Loan programme; any work requiring the appropriation of money must be inquired into by the Committee before the Bill can be lawfully introduced.

Mr. O'Halloran—And generally speaking, that is sound policy.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I quite agree.

Mr. Hawker—It does not apply to Leigh Creek.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Electricity Trust now controls its own affairs and the money provided by the State is found by way of debenture. In those circumstances it does not apply to the Electricity Trust undertaking as a whole. The only other exception, I believe, was the work associated with the Salisbury munitions works during the war. As members know, I recently went to the United States of America to investigate the question of whether the uranium deposits in South Australia should be worked, and whether the testing has been sufficiently advanced to justify that work. Since I returned I have submitted a report to the Cabinet and to the Federal Government concerning the information I was

able to obtain overseas. That leads me to assure the House that our deposits are valuable, and there is no doubt in my mind, or in that of the Director of Mines who accompanied me, that these deposits should be worked. The conditions under which they will be operated will, to a certain extent, depend upon Commonwealth policy. Although this metal will, I believe, ultimately become an important key to the industrial fuel problem, it is today one of the most valuable of minerals for defence purposes. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind—and the Government has accepted by recommendation—that mining should be undertaken at Radium Hill and energetically pursued. The purpose of this Bill is to enable the Minister of Mines to place upon the Estimates, which will be brought down in the near future, a line to enable this work to be carried out. Fairly substantial sums have been expended at Radium Hill and other places, and the Crown Solicitor has submitted an opinion to the effect that investigational work of the type we have undertaken does not constitute a public work; indeed he went further and rather indicated that uranium mining itself might not be considered to be a public work.

Mr. O'Halloran—It might even be an industry.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Very obviously it could be, but to put the matter beyond doubt the proper thing is to make a small amendment to the Act of the nature I have indicated. It is the purpose of the Government to include an amount in the Budget which will enable this work to go forward. At present Mr. Dickinson, Director of Mines, is in America, and, with such technical assistance as may be procured, is drawing up a plan for the active development of these mines. I hope at some appropriate time it will be possible to arrange for members to visit this field and see at first hand the deposits and appreciate the grounds on which the Government believes this work should be undertaken. This important matter to a large extent involves the future of this State. Members know the traditional shortage of fuel we have always had in this State. While it may be some years before the industrial use of atomic energy is possible, anyone alive to the tremendous scientific advances in this field must realize that there will be further great advances in it. I move the second reading.

Mr. O'HALLORAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

IMPRINT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Gumeracha—Premier and Treasurer)—This Bill repeals the Imprint Act, 1863-1935, and enacts an amended set of provisions on the same topic. The Act deals with what are commonly called “printers’ imprints” or, more simply, “imprints”—namely, the names and addresses which printers are required to print on books and papers printed by them for public distribution. Most English-speaking communities have found it necessary to have laws requiring printers of books and papers to print their names and addresses on every copy printed. Such a law is of importance from the point of view of enforcing the laws as to the various kinds of libel, and indecent publications. For if anonymous publications were allowed it would be relatively easy to promulgate defamatory, seditious or indecent matter with impunity.

For some years representatives of the master printers in this State have been urging the Government to amend the law so as to remove certain ambiguities and anomalies in the present Act which dates from 1863. The Government has investigated the complaints which have been made and is satisfied that there is need to state the law more clearly and remove some anomalies. The Bill has been drafted with this object in view.

The explanation of the clauses is as follows:—Clause 3 contains an interpretation of the word “print” and is the same as the present Act. Clause 4 sets out the printed matter which is exempt from the Act. In the main it follows existing law, but the following changes are made:—

(a) Printed forms for use in preparing legal documents are exempted. The present Act exempts letters of attorney, deeds and agreements. But many other types of legal forms are commonly printed and sold—*e.g.*, forms for the preparation of Real Property Act instruments, Bills of Sale and the like—and it has by no means been the practice to observe the Act in relation to these. There appears to be no special reason for applying the Act to such documents and it is therefore proposed that they shall be exempt.

(b) At present all papers printed by the authority of any “public board” or “public officer” in the execution of their duties are exempt. This goes too far. It is difficult to say exactly what the words “public board” or “public officer” mean; but there is no doubt that this exemption covers a good many publications which should not be exempt. It is quite possible that a citizen may be defamed in a publication of a public authority or public

officer; and in such a case he should be able to inquire from the printer the exact source of the statement. It is therefore proposed to repeal the general exemption of papers printed by public authorities and public officers. If any such papers are to be exempt they can be specifically exempted by proclamation.

(c) The Governor is given a general power to exempt books and papers from the Act by proclamation.

Clause 5 sets out the duty of a printer to print his name and address on books and papers printed by him. The following amendments of the law are made by this clause:—

(a) It will be sufficient if the imprint is placed before or after the other printed matter in the book—not necessarily on the first or last page as required by the law at present.

(b) Where the printer is a company, the name of the company and the address of its registered office or place of business will be sufficient. At present it is not a compliance with the Act to print the name of a company as the printer of any publication.

(c) Where the printer is a partnership the firm name will be sufficient.

(d) The penalty is made more reasonable than under present law. At present it is up to £5 for each copy printed in contravention of the Act. Thus if a printer printed 10,000 leaflets without the proper imprint on them the maximum penalty would be £50,000. It is proposed that the maximum penalty under the Act shall be £100.

Clause 6 provides that a printer must keep a copy of every book or paper printed by him for publication for a period of at least six months after the last copy was printed. This is substantially the same as the present law. Clause 7 provides for the imprint of the Government Printer. Clause 8 makes it an offence to sell or distribute a book or paper which is printed in the State and does not bear the imprint required by law. These clauses also embody existing law.

Clause 9 sets out the penalty of £100 for breaches of the Bill and clause 10 provides that offences against the Bill may be prosecuted summarily. The section of the principal Act which provides that half of every penalty imposed is to go to the prosecutor and half to the State is repealed and not re-enacted. Provisions of this kind, which were originally intended for the encouragement of common informers, are not in accordance with public opinion of today or modern methods of policing laws. Some question has been raised by printers as to whether legislation of this kind places any responsibility on employees of printers. The Government’s view of this Bill is that it places the responsibility of observing its provisions on the master printer, but

not on an employee unless he is knowingly a party to a breach of the law by his employer. I move the second reading.

Mr. HUTCHENS secured the adjournment of the debate.

SUPERANNUATION ACT AMENDMENT
BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Gumeracha—Premier and Treasurer)—The recent decreases in the value of money have rendered it unavoidable that the Government should again review the rates of superannuation and invalidity pensions payable to ex-members of the State public service, including ex-employees of the Railways Department and ex-teachers. The rates of these pensions were last adjusted in 1948, when the unit of pension, which had previously been £26, was increased by 25 per cent to £32 10s., and the maximum number of units for which an employee could subscribe was increased from 12 to 20. In ordinary times one would have expected these adjustments to be sufficient for a few years, but so rapidly have salaries and wages moved in the last year or two that the Government deems it just to follow the example of the Commonwealth and Victoria and again make consequential adjustments of pension rates. The Bill, therefore, is mainly concerned with the increase of pensions. At the same time the Government considers it fair that some increase should be made in the contributions of employees. The fund was originally instituted on the understanding that half of the cost of the pension would be borne by the Government and half by the employees. But by the end of last financial year the Government's share of the cost was approximately three-quarters and that of the employees one-quarter; and even allowing for the increased contributions prescribed by this Bill, the effect of it will be an immediate increase in the Government's share of the cost.

The basis of the Bill is that on and after December 1 of this year pensions and contributions will be increased by one-fifth. The increase of pensions will apply automatically to all pensions in force on November 30, and, of course, there will be no question of collecting any increased contributions from those who are pensioners on that day. Pensions commencing on or after December 1, will also be increased, unless the contributor elects not to take the increase. The Government realizes that there may be some employees who feel

that they will be adequately provided for with their present pensions and any private means they may have, or any benefits which may be available to them under the social services legislation. Such employees may prefer not to incur any expense in subscribing for increased pension from the Superannuation Fund. The Bill therefore allows any employee at any time before March 1, 1952, to elect not to increase all or any number of his units from £32 10s. to £39. When such an election is made increased contribution in respect of the number of units to which the election applies will cease to be payable as soon as the Superannuation Board can make arrangements to stop them; and any increases previously paid by the employee will be refunded to him. I was most anxious that the benefit of this Bill should be available to present pensioners as soon as possible. I have received a number of very pathetic letters from persons whose pensions, by force of circumstances, have decreased in value. What was perhaps a reasonable amount when the pension was first granted has become a completely unrealistic amount today. If it had been provided that public servants should have a reasonable time to elect whether to take the increased amount or not it would have meant a serious delay in bringing the Bill into operation. The advantages under this Bill are so substantial that I doubt whether any public servant who realizes those advantages will elect not to come under it. We have contrived for the Bill to take effect as if every public servant came under it, and those not wishing to come under it may so elect. If a man has some units being paid for at a high rate of contribution and others at a lower rate, and elects only to increase some of his units, the increase in his contribution will be based on the average rate at which he is contributing for all his units. Even allowing for the increase in contributions the Bill will increase for some years the share of the cost of the pensions payable by the Government. As regards the pensions which are now in force or will be in force on November 30 next the full cost of the increase will fall upon the Government. As regards future pensions the Government's share will be more than it pays in respect of units taken up in the usual way at present, because contributors will receive additional pension, but the additional contributions proposed are less than the rates appropriate to their present ages.

Clause 4 enables the Superannuation Board to deal with any special problems which may

arise in connection with the alteration of pensions and contributions. Although the general principles of these alterations are clear and have been carefully worked out, many complex problems will necessarily arise in practice as a result of special circumstances affecting particular employees. It is impossible to foresee all of these and it is most desirable that the board should be able to deal with them as they arise and give a binding decision. Clause 4 therefore provides that if any circumstances arise in connection with the alterations proposed by the Bill, which are not provided for by law, the board may give a direction as to what is to be done. A direction so given must not be inconsistent with the Superannuation Act, and as all interested parties are represented on the board it can be assumed that proper and just directions will be given.

Clause 5 is a general clause dealing with the rights of contributors who have elected not to take or have not elected to take units available to them. Cases constantly arise where owing to inadvertence, wrong information, absence or other cause, employees lose the right to take units through making no election, or through making an election which they afterwards desire to rescind. The board has found it impossible to do justice to employees in such cases unless it has power to allow employees to take up, after the prescribed time, the units which they have missed. Clause 5 will enable this to be done on terms and conditions approved by the board.

Clauses 6 and 7 provide for the increase of 20 per cent in contributions for ordinary and reserve units of pension. In cases of ordinary units, as I mentioned, the employee can elect not to increase. In cases of reserve units, if the employee retains the units he must pay for them at the increased rate; but under the principal Act he can surrender any reserve units if he so desires. Clause 8 provides for the increased contributions to be paid by the Government. These involve complicated arithmetical calculations which are difficult to express in words and difficult to follow when so expressed. It is provided by the clause that they shall be prescribed by regulations under the Act. As the regulations have to be recommended by the board as well as approved by the Government, all interested parties will have the opportunity to satisfy themselves that they are in order.

Clause 9 carries into effect a promise given by the Government to certain employees who were on their final long service leave when the Act was passed last year for making pensions payable as from the commencement of such leave. Last year's Act only applied to those who retired after it was passed. Those who were on long service leave at that time were not covered. The proposal is that those who were on long service leave when last year's Act was passed will be entitled to pension as from the passing of that Act. Clauses 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, and 16 provide for the increase of the value of the unit from £32 10s. to £39 as I have explained, and also that widows' and children's benefits will be increased in proportion. The only exception to the increase is where an existing employee elects that all or some of his units will remain at their present value.

Clause 13 provides for an allowance for the children under 16 of a widow pensioner, who had previously been a contributor to the fund. The allowance will be at the rate of £39 a year for each child. At present the Act provides for a similar allowance in the case of the death of a widower pensioner. Recent cases have arisen which demonstrate the need for a similar provision for widows. Clause 14 provides (*inter alia*) that where a widow pensioner dies leaving children over 16 and the amount of pension and allowance received by the widow and her children is less than the amount of her contributions to the fund, the excess of the contributions may be paid to or for the benefit of the children. A similar rule previously applied in the case where a widower pensioner died in the like circumstances. Owing to the increasing employment of married women it is now desirable to extend the principle to widows. Clause 17 sets out the scale of contributions for new units of pension taken up after November 30 next. The rates prescribed are those now in force, with minor adjustments to bring them to the nearest shilling and ensure a smooth progression. None of the adjustments exceeds 3s. a year. I move the second reading.

Mr. O'HALLORAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.40 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, October 2, at 2 p.m.