

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, October 16, 1951.

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

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

The SPEAKER laid on the table the Auditor-General's report for the financial year ended June 30, 1951. Ordered to be printed.

WHYALLA WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL.

The SPEAKER laid on the table the report of the Public Works Standing Committee on Whyalla West primary school, together with minutes of evidence. Report ordered to be printed.

PRICE OF WHEAT FOR STOCK FEED.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—A report appeared in today's *Advertiser* of the conference of Ministers of Agriculture held in Canberra yesterday. It states that a proposal was put forward for an increase in the price of wheat for stock feed in Australia to 16s. 1d. a bushel, which is the International Wheat Agreement price, and that the conference resolved accordingly by five votes to two. The Ministers were also of the opinion that the difference between the home consumption price and 16s. 1d. should be met by a Commonwealth Government subsidy. Has the Premier had a report from the Minister of Agriculture on this matter, and is he in a position to say whether legislation will have to be brought down on it, or whether the policy that was apparently adopted by a majority at the Agricultural Conference is likely to be given effect to?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have not yet had an opportunity of discussing this matter with the Minister of Agriculture. When he left for Canberra no proposals had been submitted to the State Government; consequently he could not be reinforced by a Cabinet decision. I drew a somewhat different conclusion from the report in the *Advertiser* from that of the honourable member. I gathered that the council had been unanimous on the question of raising the price of wheat for stock feed to 16s. 1d., but that there had been a difference of opinion as to whether there should be a subsidy, the method by which the subsidy should be paid and the industries to which it should be paid. However, I can only speak on assumption because I am in the same position as the honourable member, as I have only the report in the *Advertiser* to guide me. As soon as

this matter has been discussed with the Minister of Agriculture and Cabinet's opinion has been formulated I will see that the honourable member has an early advice as to what my Government believes will be necessary. As the present position is the result of an agreement ratified by the Federal and State Governments, after the wheatgrowers had approved of it by specific vote, I think any alteration will involve an amendment of the South Australian Act.

BUILDING PERMITS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Premier any further information to give in reply to the question I asked last week relating to building permits for persons issued with a notice to quit?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have received a full report from the Director of Building Materials. The classes of persons who do not receive permits are much fewer now than the classes of persons who receive them, so the report is based on those who at present are not eligible. Those eligible will be the remainder. The Director's report states:—

The types of persons not granted permits are as follows:—

(1) New Australians who have not satisfactorily completed their contract with the Commonwealth Government.

(2) Other recent arrivals of less than three months' residence in this State.

(3) Persons requiring a house for the accommodation of one person only.

(4) Persons who have sold since September 22, 1949, a house reasonably available to them for occupation.

(5) Owner/occupiers, *i.e.*, persons occupying their own house.

(6) The tenants of a suitable house (as distinct from a flat) except where—

(a) The owner requires the house for his own occupation and he has a reasonable claim.

(b) Returned servicemen with one child; ex-servicemen with two children, and civilians with three children are granted approval if they are tenants irrespective of the owner's need.

For some time now permits have been granted with very few refusals in country districts, including consent for houses required to accommodate employees engaged in primary production. Priorities allotted are as follows:—

Priority No. 1 or emergency priority, depending on urgency—

(a) Any returned serviceman, provided he is married or produces evidence of intention to marry.

(b) A married ex-serviceman with one child, and

(c) A married civilian with two children.

Priority No. 2—

(a) Married ex-servicemen with no family.

(b) A married civilian with one child.

Restricted permits.—Restricted permits are granted to other approved applicants including New Australians with the necessary qualifications; for an ex-serviceman or civilian wishing to marry and producing evidence of intention to marry, or a married civilian with no family. These restricted permits prohibit the use of burnt bricks made in the metropolitan area, Australian made corrugated galvanized iron, terra cotta tiles, pinus radiata flooring, and Australian made $\frac{3}{4}$ in. and $\frac{1}{2}$ in. reinforcing rods.

Priorities for country houses generally are the same as for the metropolitan area except that in certain cases priority is increased, *e.g.*, if an applicant living on a farm property wishes to marry and there is no other dwelling on the land he is granted an open permit with a No. 2 priority. All country housing in non-reticulated areas is given No. 1 priority for Australian made galvanized iron for roofing.

WINE INDUSTRY STRIKE.

Mr. HEASLIP—Last week when replying to a question by Mr. Stott the Premier said he would consult Mr. President Morgan on the matter of the wine industry strike. Has the consultation taken place and has the Premier anything to report?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have spoken to Mr. President Morgan on this matter. He said that he had seen representatives of the parties on a number of occasions without results. He had informed them that he was always willing to see them again at any time at the request of either side. No such request has been made. The determination of the Wine and Spirit and Distillery Board permits the employment of females in certain tasks in bottling departments and fixed for this work wages about 82 per cent of male rates. The strike was originally against the employment of females at all in this work; it is now to obtain the same rates for females as for males. The President said that in effect the relevant conditions in the determination resulted from or followed upon his own decisions, except that the female wages, at the wish of the employers, were perhaps somewhat larger than the Industrial Court would fix. He said that he did not see any advantage in his calling upon the parties to see him again. It would be useless for the President to tell the representatives of the men that the stoppage of work was against the provisions of the determination, since they knew that already, and it would be improper for the President to recommend or suggest to the employers that in order to appease employees the employers should agree to conditions more favourable to the employees than those in the determination. It will be seen from Mr. President Morgan's remarks that there is no possibility of an intervention.

The issues in the matter have already been before the court, and the strike has resulted because the men are not prepared to accept the determination.

KEROSENE DRINKING BY CHILDREN.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Last Friday the press reported that an infant had been taken to hospital because it drank kerosene, and there have been numerous reports of a similar nature. Because of the tendency of children to drink from bottles of kerosene believing that they are partaking of a pleasant drink, and the neglect of persons to put bottles containing kerosene out of the reach of children, will the Government consider introducing legislation to prohibit kerosene being supplied or stored in bottles?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—This matter has been before the Government on a number of occasions. It was suggested that certain types of bottles should not be used. It is not easy to overcome the carelessness of some parents who leave kerosene about in bottles, sometimes with disastrous results to their children. The Chief Secretary has been giving a good deal of attention to trying to find a solution of the problem, and some correspondence has been received from one of the larger women's organizations on the matter. Unfortunately the mere branding of a container does not help at all because the children cannot read it or understand what is involved. I will refer the matter to the Chief Secretary, and if there is anything further I can usefully add I will let the honourable member know.

HOUSING OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES.

Mr. FRED WALSH—In this morning's press there appeared a report about the intention of the Commonwealth Government to transfer the wives and families of a considerable number of New Australian railway men, now housed at Mallala, to Mildura. The proposal is giving the union of which the New Australians are members some concern, and if persisted in it will cause considerable hardship and inconvenience apart from its effect on the social and domestic life of the families concerned. Has notice of the proposal and its effects been brought before the Minister of Railways and what action, if any, is contemplated to prevent this serious separation of husbands from their wives and families?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—By arrangement with its employees the Railways Department has over a period of years been augmenting the supply of houses for the purpose of

keeping the families together. There is a tacit understanding that a certain number of houses of a permanent nature will be allotted to migrants and a certain number to Australians. The policy of the railways is to have its employees in their own homes or provide them with suitable accommodation. I was surprised to see the suggestion put forward; there must be some background to it of which I am not aware. I intend to take the matter up with the Railways Commissioner to see if what is proposed can be avoided. It is not the desire of the Railways Commissioner or the Government to have discontent among railway employees. Because men are hard to get, and we want to keep them, when we get them we want to see them happily housed.

LIGHTS ON TRAMS.

Mr. MOIR—Will the Minister of Works take up with the Municipal Tramways Trust the matter of lights on the rear of trams to assist oncoming traffic and prevent accidents? The only light on some trams is when the word "Stop" appears in red lights on the near-side at the rear.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will take up the question with the general manager of the Tramways Trust and bring down his reply. The matter is not under the control of the Government and I will refrain from making any comment until I have received a report.

"COP THE LOT" RADIO COMPETITION.

Mr. LAWN—Has the Premier a reply to my recent question regarding the "Cop the Lot" radio programme?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Crown Solicitor's report reads:—

I understand that the radio programme "Cop the Lot" incorporates a competition in which listeners are invited to send entries guessing the nature of a noise which is broadcast during the programme. Listeners are informed that only certain entries will be opened each week, and that a prize will be awarded to the first entry opened which correctly identifies the noise. A further prize is offered to the correct entry if it is written on the wrapper of a certain brand of products. It is announced during the programme that persons in South Australia are ineligible to compete. This condition is not imposed because of any ill-will to South Australians on the part of the promoters, but because they believe that the so-called competition would be unlawful in South Australia. There is no doubt that this so-called competition is a lottery. But as no money or other valuable thing is sent with an entry, I do not think that any person in South Australia entering

the so-called competition, as at present conducted, would be committing an offence against the Lottery and Gaming Act, 1936-1950. However, the competition provides for an additional benefit to the person who writes the winning entry on the wrapper or package of certain products. If the competition were open to South Australians there would be a breach of the Trading Stamp Act, 1924-1935, by the radio station broadcasting the programme and also by any person dispatching any wrapper or package from South Australia.

Mr. LAWN—Does not the Premier consider the present Act rather trivial in its prohibition of participation in such a competition? Will he consider introducing amending legislation so as to permit participation by South Australians?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will look into the suggestion. The Stamp Trading Act was thrashed out recently by Parliament, which at the time considered that these concessions given with the object of selling commodities did not warrant its support, and the Act was designed to prohibit that sort of thing. I do not know of any way to carry out the honourable member's suggestion except by repealing the Act and I think that would be a retrograde step.

SEATON PARK WATER CONNECTIONS.

Mr. TAPPING—Has the Minister of Works a reply to my recent question regarding water connections for houses occupied by New Australians at Seaton Park?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—In his question the honourable member stated that these New Australians had been waiting for over 12 months for water services; but actually the application was not received until some time this year and the work was approved in July last. Owing to the shortage of pipes it was impossible to proceed with the work as early as desired. Additional pipes are now on hand and it is expected that the extension in Russell Avenue will be completed by the end of November. Residents requiring services who have not already paid the prescribed fees are advised to do so in advance so that connections may be made as the main-laying proceeds.

HOUSING CONTRACTS.

Mr. DUNNAGE—At present I am receiving more inquiries regarding housing than for a long time past and it appears to me that the housing position is even worse today than it has been for a long time. I know the Housing Trust calls for tenders for buildings; but has any approach ever been made to big firms such

as Fricker Ltd., Hansen and Yuncken, and C. H. Martin, which carry out big contracts in this State, to undertake housing contracts?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Every effort has been made to increase the ambit of contractors at present constructing houses in this State. A number of large contractors have swung over and are giving material assistance in this direction. A large number of houses are now built by contractors who were not previously engaged on the cottage type of construction. There are, however, a number of other contractors who say that their plant, their experience, and available labour do not enable them to swing over to house construction work easily or profitably. Another difficulty with which the Government has been confronted for the last two or three years is that major contracts have been available on the rocket range and a considerable number of our larger contractors have been engaged on that type of work. I do not know the conditions of that work, but I believe it is on some system whereby there is an on-cost added for profit which does not involve the contractor in any risk as an ordinary contract would do. I do not believe it is a straight-out cost-plus system but something between that and a contract system. I publicly state that the Government would welcome any further assistance it can get in home building. One of the firms mentioned by the honourable member is already giving us significant assistance.

MANNAHILL PASTORAL LEASES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Earlier this session I asked the Minister of Lands what was the intention of the Government regarding the area of pastoral land adjacent to Mannahill which has been closed for some six or seven years in order to see the effect on regeneration of natural plants. I understand an examination was recently made by the Minister of Agriculture and officers of the Pastoral Board and the Agriculture Department to see if a soil conservation area could be established there. Can the Minister of Lands say whether the future of this area has been decided on and, if so, what is the intention of the Government regarding the area?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The honourable member has several times asked questions on this matter. I have a report from the chairman of the Pastoral Board, which states:—

On the 8th October, 1951, Sir George Jenkins, accompanied by Dr. Callaghan and Mr. J. Neil McGilp, representing the Pastoral Board, inspected the land known as Teetulpa Goldfields and Homeward Bound Blocks. A free

discussion was entered into regarding the possibility of using the land for rearsch purposes. It was decided that, in view of the cost and shortage of materials required for setting up a suitable unit, and the difficulty of obtaining labour for the supervision and working of the property, it was undesirable to embark on the proposal. The land not being of living area proportions, it is now proposed to offer it under miscellaneous lease conditions so that adjoining or nearby settlers in need of additional land may have the opportunity of applying for the whole or portion. The term of the lease proposed will probably be limited to a period which will ensure that proper use is made of the land prior to a pastoral lease being granted.

DEMOLITION OF CITY DWELLING.

Mr. LAWN—From time to time one sees statements in the press regarding the demolition of homes to make way for industrial buildings. A recent press statement mentioned that many Adelaide firms were buying land in the city, some of which was occupied with old type houses which will be demolished to make way for industrial buildings when materials are available. The demolition has taken place of a lovely double-fronted house in Gilbert Street, Adelaide, next to the premises of the Kar-Fix Engineering Co. As soon as the tenants left the building the front was immediately knocked down and the house was made un-inhabitable. It is now being utilized as a car showroom. Can the Premier say whether a permit for demolition was obtained, because no demolition or part demolition can take place without a permit from the Minister, and whether a permit was obtained to construct the showroom?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Very few permits for demolition are given and a very strong reason must be submitted before one is given. A number of permits have been granted only when a firm has guaranteed to import or has imported and established another house in lieu of the house demolished of which it desired occupation. I cannot give the honourable member an answer to his question offhand, but will get a full report and let him have it as soon as possible.

UPPER MURRAY ROADS AND BRIDGES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Last week, in conjunction with Mr. Stott, I approached the Minister of Local Government on behalf of the Berri and Loxton district councils to see whether it would be possible to raise the new road being made between Berri and Loxton by from 2in. to 11in. Has the Minister anything to report?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—This morning I conferred with the Commissioner of Highways and the Engineer-in-Chief and have brought down a report. In forwarding information to the councils I would ask the member to impress upon them that it should be read in conjunction with my reply of September 27. The opinion of these two officers coincides with mine, for what that might be worth, and is as follows:—

In times of flood there is a certain volume of water which must be passed down the river channel. Any road or bank across the channel is an obstruction, to a greater or lesser degree. Therefore, the volume of water must be passed either over the bank, or through it by means of bridges. If such a bank is increased in height the result is either:—

- (a) the level of the water upstream is raised until the flood can pass over the bank; or
- (b) sufficient extra bridges must be constructed to pass the water through the bank without raising the upstream level.

The request of the council would entail raising the bank by approximately 1ft. This would involve the risk of flooding property upstream which would otherwise not be affected at present water levels. The danger of erosion and silting of the river channel would also be increased. To compensate for the extra obstruction, at least five extra bridges would be required and the total cost of the work on bridges and road would approximate £200,000. Moreover the position would be identical if a future flood were 12in. higher than the present. The present level was selected to give a reasonable compromise between cost and regular service. It is estimated that the road might be submerged on an average of once in 10 to 12 years. The council's proposal is therefore not as simple as suggested and would involve expenditure out of proportion to the results obtainable.

It is not only a question of costs, but any work done would be to the detriment of other interests which, in my opinion, could not be compensated for the inconvenience sometimes caused by the present level.

TRAMWAYS TRUST FINANCES.

Mr. MOIR (on notice)—

Is the Treasurer aware—(a) that the loss on the Municipal Tramways Trust undertaking for the current year is likely to be over £450,000; and (b) that the constituent municipal councils are very perturbed at the continued drift of trust finances?

2. Has the trust approached the Government for a special grant, subsidy, or any financial assistance?

3. If so, is it the intention of the Treasurer to refer the matter to the committee now inquiring into the trust's operations for a full investigation?

4. From what date did the last increase in tram and bus fares operate?

5. What additional revenue per annum did the trust expect from such increases in fares?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The replies are:—

1. (a) and (b). Yes.

2. The Municipal Tramways Trust recently asked the Government for additional loan moneys which could not be made available.

3. The committee of inquiry is at present inquiring into the finances, administration and future development of the trust.

4. April 15, 1951.

The chairman of the trust reports:—

5. £325,000 per annum (subject to no loss in patronage).

BOTANIC PARK SPOON DRAINS.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES (on notice)—

1. Is it the intention of the Government to make urgent representations to the board of governors of the Botanic Garden to take action to control speeding over the roadways in the Botanic Park other than by constructing spoon drains?

2. Does the Government approve of the practice of creating physical dangers to discourage possible traffic offences?

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

1. Yes.

2. No.

CONTROL OF CEMENT.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (on notice)—Are the following types of cement controlled under the provisions of the Building Materials Act:—(a) Ciment fondu (b) white cement; (c) colour crete?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—

(a) Yes.

(b) Yes.

(c) Yes.

CONTROL OF FLOORING BOARDS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (on notice)—

1. Is the use of flooring boards sawn by a contractor in his own workshop for his own use from fitches of oregon or other imported timbers controlled?

2. Are tongued and grooved floor boards machined as above controlled?

3. Are lapped joint floor boards machined as above controlled?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The replies are:—

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. Yes.

In each case the answer refers to the use of flooring boards for some purpose other than the allowable purposes set out in section 4 (2) of the Building Materials Act.

SPASTIC PARALYSIS PATIENTS.

Mr. TAPPING (on notice)—How many spastic paralysis patients (a) under 12 years of age, and (b) over 12 years of age, are domiciled at Parkside mental institution?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The number of patients with a spastic condition, domiciled at Parkside Mental Hospital, excluding elderly patients suffering brain degeneration are as follows:—(a) Under 12 years, five; (b) over 12 years, 18 (eldest 59 years).

CONVICTIONS FOR RAPE.

Mr. TAPPING (on notice)—

1. How many persons were found guilty of rape by the Supreme Court during the past three years under the Criminal Law Consolidation Act under (a) section 48, and (b) section 49?
2. What was the duration of sentences imposed?

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

1. Rape under section 48—seven persons convicted. Attempted rape under section 49—two persons convicted.
2. Duration of sentences:—For rape—two years' hard labour; three years' hard labour and bond to be of good behaviour for 12 months; 4½ years' hard labour; two years' hard labour; three years' hard labour; 2½ years' hard labour and bond to be of good behaviour for nine months; 3½ years' hard labour and bond to be of good behaviour for 12 months. For attempted rape—two years' hard labour and 12 months' hard labour.

RAILWAY DEFICIT.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (on notice)—What was the deficit in the South Australian railways account for the year ended June 30, 1951, after taking into consideration the amount of £2,600,000 granted by Parliament towards working expenses and debt charges?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Railways Commissioner reports that the amount is £1,171,568.

GENERATING PLANT AT TEROWIE.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (on notice)—

1. Is it the intention of the Railways Commissioner to instal generating plant at Terowie with sufficient capacity to increase the quantity of electricity available by arrangement with the district council of Hallett for general lighting purposes throughout the town?
2. If so, can the Minister of Railways say when such plant will be installed?

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

The Railways Commissioner reports:—

1. Yes. An additional generating unit is on order.
2. The plant will be installed within two (2) months of delivery. The manufacturers have contracted to supply the necessary plant three (3) to six (6) months hence.

BUILDING PERMITS FOR SHOPS, FACTORIES, ETC.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (on notice)—

1. How many applications have been received for building permits from October 1, 1950, to September 30, 1951, for shops, factories, and office accommodation?
2. How many applications have been granted in each case?
3. Is it necessary to have permits to alter or make additions to shop fronts?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The replies are:—

- 1 and 2.

	SHOPS.		FACTORIES.		OFFICE ACCOMMODATION.	
	New bldgs.	Repairs, etc.	New bldgs.	Repairs, etc.	New bldgs.	Repairs, etc.
Permits granted	25	20	125	133	13	18
Permits refused	185	11	67	48	12	8

Repairs, etc., include alterations and additions. The figures for permits granted are accurate, but there are additional applications not included in the figures for permits granted or refused—e.g., applications deferred for

further information and also applications granted preliminary approval and held in abeyance pending submission of a plan, builder's price, etc. Many proposals for business premises are discussed verbally, and if advised

that approval is most unlikely, written application is not made; such verbal approaches without written application are not included in the statistics.

3. A permit is required to make alterations or additions to shop fronts if any cement or essential building material is used and the total cost of all repairs, alterations, or additions to the building exceeds £150 during any year ending June 30, excluding the cost of painting.

ACTING CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES AND DEPUTY SPEAKER.

The CLERK—I have to inform the House that the Chairman of Committees, Mr. H. S. Dunks, owing to illness, will be unable to attend the House this week.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD moved—

That the member for Eyre (Mr. Christian) be Acting Chairman of Committees of the whole House during the absence of the Chairman of Committees (Mr. H. S. Dunks) and in the absence of the Speaker he take the Chair as Deputy Speaker. The Acting Chairman of Committees shall, while acting as Deputy Speaker or as Chairman of Committees, perform the duties and exercise the authority of the Speaker or of the Chairman of Committees, as the case may be, in relation to all proceedings of the House or of any committee: Provided that, if the House shall adjourn for more than 24 hours, the Acting Chairman shall continue to perform the duties and exercise the authority of the Speaker for 24 hours only after such adjournment.

Motion carried.

BUDGET DEBATE.

In Committee of Supply.

(Continued from October 11. Page 902.)

Legislative Council, £7,215.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Frome—Leader of the Opposition)—The Treasurer's Budget speech was remarkable for two things—firstly, it was the shortest Budget speech I can remember and, secondly, the revenue and expenditure figures established an all-time record for South Australia. In order that honourable members may realize the significance of those figures I shall quote some of those in recent years. In 1941-42 revenue was £15,122,000 and expenditure £13,832,000. In 1946-47 revenue amounted to £17,193,000 and expenditure to £17,253,000. For 1951-52 revenue (including £230,000 surplus brought forward from last year) is estimated at £42,308,000, and expenditure at £42,293,000. Those figures indicate how the State's commitments have grown during the past 10 years. Formerly a surplus was devoted to some special purpose, such as reducing the

public debt or wiping off some accumulated loss, but this year the Treasurer brings the surplus forward and includes it in his Revenue Estimates. I am at a loss to understand how this can be done because in 1936 Parliament passed the Public Finance Act which provided, among other things, how surpluses might be disposed of. Section 30 states:—

Any surplus disclosed in the Revenue Accounts of the Treasurer in any financial year, subsequent to the financial year ended on the 30th day of June, nineteen hundred and thirty-six, may be applied, without any further authority than this Act, to the reduction of such debits in the Loan Accounts of the Treasurer as the Treasurer thinks fit.

That undoubtedly gives the Treasurer the option to use any surplus for reducing any debits in Loan Account, but I do not think it gives him the right to bring a surplus forward for inclusion in consolidated revenue for the current financial year. Further, I cannot find any other provision in that Act enabling him to do this. Undoubtedly this financial year is subsequent to the financial year ended June 30, 1936, and in the absence of any amendment to the section I suggest that what is proposed cannot be properly done under the law.

Mr. Teusner—Does the section say "may" or "shall"?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—"May," but in the sense in which the word is used I think it is mandatory. At the time undoubtedly it was the intention of Parliament that it should be done. If the Treasurer was to be given an option in the matter the legislation would have said so. It will be interesting to hear his explanation on this matter. The bringing forward of a surplus is consistent with the Treasurer's policy of lumping together items in one pool, as for instance the Loan Accounts. We have had evidence of that in the Loan Estimates in recent years, he apparently thinking in terms of consolidated revenue rather than money being appropriated for specific purposes and being spent on those purposes. It may be a useful way to handle Treasury finances, but it does not give Parliament control over expenditure. It used to be the cry that each year's finances should be regarded as separate; now it does not seem to matter. This point was widely discussed in the debate on the Loan Estimates earlier in the session. There was a feeling then that sufficient detail was not given about the various items of Loan expenditure, both in retrospect and prospect. It was thought that we should not be asked to vote large sums

of money for ventures which have been carried on for years without there being a statement of the results of the already-incurred expenditure and the prospective results of future expenditure. We were told that all details would be available in the Auditor-General's report, but it was pointed out that that report would be of no use to members in discussing the Loan Estimates, and it has been of no use to me in discussing revenue estimates because it was tabled only this afternoon. Other speakers in this debate will be in a better position than I am because they will have the opportunity to peruse the report before speaking. We are entitled to have more details of revenue and loan expen-

diture than we have been given. Increases in Budget figures in recent years represent (a) rapid inflation and (b) increased Government undertakings. From the meagre details given to us it will be readily realized that there has been a rapid increase in Government undertakings. The Treasurer has budgeted for a surplus of £15,000, which represents only .035 per cent of the total revenue, and which is insignificant from an economic point of view. There have been great variations in actual revenue and expenditure as compared with the estimates, and this year we may have a substantial surplus or deficit. The following table shows the revenue position for 1950-51:—

Item.	Estimated. £	Actual. £	Discrepancy. £
Taxation	3,622,000	4,052,000	430,000 up
Railways	10,530,000	9,760,000	770,000 down
Other public services	5,878,000	6,248,000	370,000 up
Land, etc.	306,000	308,000	2,000 up
Commonwealth grants	12,462,000	13,305,000	843,000 up
Totals	£32,798,000	£33,672,000	£874,000 up

Last year's estimated deficit of £10,000 turned out to be a surplus of £230,000. This was achieved notwithstanding unexpected expenditure of £287,000; but the so-called winnings tax brought in £230,000 more revenue than was anticipated when the Estimates were introduced. Therefore, irrespective of its impact on punters, it was certainly a winner for the Treasurer. It seems to me that with money resources rapidly expanding it is not difficult to achieve a surplus; but in any case, whatever the result, it may be regarded as largely accidental. The Treasurer assured us that the Government had followed a "prudent policy," and implied that the happy state of Government finance and the good prospects for the current year were both due to that policy. It is difficult to understand what this "prudent policy" is. Anything to which the Treasurer has given his personal support has received financial backing; money has been no object. Apparently he has forgotten the rapidly increasing public debt, which has risen by £21,000,000 in the last two years and is to be considerably increased this year. "Interest, etc.," has risen from £3,684,000 in 1946-47 to £6,759,000 in 1950-51—a staggering increase over four years. One wonders where we will derive the revenue to meet these commitments if and when we run into the sort of times which have been with us more often than not during my long association with Parliament.

The Liberal and Country League always used to regard the increase in the public debt involved in the development of State undertakings as bad. For an anti-Socialist Government to sponsor such development at inflated values is, to say the least, remarkable. The air of confidence with which the Treasurer introduced the Budget can be explained only by the fact that he has lost all sense of proportion and responsibility. Referring to the provision for cost of living increases which may take place during the year he said:—

Should this amount (£700,000) prove to be insufficient, further funds will be available as it is usual to authorize the Treasurer in the Appropriation Bill to pay any increases of salaries and wages which are the result of orders made by wage-fixing tribunals. This implies that whatever additional amount might be required will be available; but authorizing payment does not create money. The Treasurer should have explained how he proposed to make it available. Is it to be by some adjustment of expenditure under various items or is there some potential source of revenue which has not been explained in the Budget and which may be tapped in order to meet these possible increases? Living wage adjustments have been provided for this year; last year they were not. The Treasurer has estimated that the adjustments will be about 8s. a quarter. It would be interesting to know on what he bases this estimate because so far

as I know no authoritative statement has been made by those responsible for the compilation of the regimen on which the basic wage is adjusted quarterly. The last quarterly adjustment was 13s. and since then there has been a substantial increase in the price of butter and other commodities, which may raise the adjustment to over 8s. The proposed increased price of locally consumed wheat may considerably influence the cost of living. Undoubtedly there will be a substantial increase in the price of wheat, both for home consumption and stock feeding, which will also probably affect the cost of living in the near future; but whatever the cost of living increases are during the financial year we are told that funds will be available to meet them. Where are these funds to be derived and why were we not told of them when the Budget was presented?

Dealing with the estimate of revenue, we find the winnings tax operating for a full year will be an even greater winner for the Treasurer than it was last year, because he anticipates the amount derived therefrom will increase by £237,000. New assessments for water and sewers' charges have been made for the whole of the metropolitan area, and perhaps in some country towns. Increases proposed from this source are due not to an increase in water rates but to increased values disclosed by last year's assessment. At a time when water is almost permanently scarce and we frequently have to impose water restrictions in almost every part of the State, why should we sell excess water at a charge less than the standard charge? That question should be investigated. The price of excess water should be brought up to at least the standard charge under the present system.

Mr. Shannon—The present practice is a relic of the days when we had surplus water.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, and the profit made from its sale was clear profit; but today when we are hard pressed to supply water for essential needs I see no need to maintain the present rate of 1s. per 1,000gall. excess as against 1s. 8d. per 1,000gall. rebate. Railway freights and fares are to be increased as from January 1, 1952. We are told that for half the current financial year the sum of £600,000 is anticipated from this source. That means for a full year, £1,200,000—a substantial increase on top of the two substantial increases imposed during the past 18 months in various railway fares and freights.

Mr. Macgillivray—It will all be paid by the country people.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Probably; but I shall have something to say about that later. It seems to me that at last the Treasurer is becoming more realistic in his approach to this problem. There was a time when he asserted that there should be no increase at all in freights and fares. The railways perform a great developmental work, and their financial position must be partly considered in that light. Although they are not a "business undertaking in the true sense of the word" there should be some relation between charges and operation costs. If the railways are to be considered as a public service rather than a business undertaking, we might also regard the tramways as a public service and as being entitled to some consideration.

Mr. Shannon—What are they developing?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—In recent years they have helped to develop a great industrial potential in the metropolitan area, for which development the Treasurer and his Government have taken considerable credit from time to time. If it were not for the transport provided by our tramways systems the numbers of workers coming to the city might not have been attracted to work in those industries.

Mr. Macgillivray—That might not have been a disadvantage to the State.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Possibly. In any event it appears that a re-organization of our transport system is unavoidable and the sooner we tackle this problem the less difficult it will be to solve. The railways could earn much more if industries were established in the country instead of being concentrated in the metropolitan area. The railways have not benefited by the intense industrial development which has taken place in the metropolitan area during the past 10 years. In fact, they have been detrimentally affected, because many thousands of people formerly living in the country and assisting in producing commodities, particularly primary products, have been attracted to the metropolitan area to work in the new industries, with the result that primary production is falling rapidly and the volume of rail freight is not increasing in proportion to the increase in population. These new industries do not increase railway revenue because the commodities being produced by them and railed to the country would have been sent over the railways in any event had they been produced in another State or overseas. I do not say they should have been produced outside this State; but if a proper system of decentralization of industry were

fostered in this State we would have some hope of arresting this progressive decline in railway finances.

Now I come to the question of land tax. The so-called quinquennial assessment of 1950, which has been responsible for some of the estimated increase in the amount to be derived from land tax this financial year, was really a decennial assessment, because it is the first made for 10 years. I doubt whether that assessment has brought the unimproved value of land into its proper perspective. We are all aware of the extravagant prices being paid for land which, after making the most generous allowance for all the improvements thereon, do not represent real values. There should be some figure between the low rates prior to this new assessment and the rates which obtain on the public market which would more reasonably approximate the true unimproved value of land in South Australia. For many years I have strongly held that some of the cost of Government developmental undertakings like the railways and water supply which, because they are developmental, must necessarily be losing propositions, should be a charge on the whole of the land values of the State. In other words, we should not spend money in creating those improvements which undoubtedly add to the value of land and then allow the owners of this privately-held land to sell it at a profit. Sooner or later we will be forced to do something on the lines I suggest, not only to support the finances of those public utilities, but to see that the lands of the State are put to fuller use.

In his speech the Premier said, "The Government's policy of providing water supplies, transport and electricity for country districts and towns . . . has been continued." Where? How much has been provided in these Estimates for their continuance? What details have members been given as to what particular town or area is to be provided with these facilities as a result of the Estimates? Those are details we are entitled to have, but unfortunately under the present set-up apparently although we are entitled to them, we do not get them. This is rather a sore point with me, because I represent some towns in the north which apparently have become Cinderella towns in regard to water improvement. As recently as last week the Engineer-in-Chief supplied evidence to the Public Works Committee relating to the proposed relaying of the trunk mains over the whole network of a reticulation system in good rainfall districts at a cost of about

£3,000,000, to improve a service which has been in existence for many years. No doubt it requires improvement, but I want to know why the district I represent, which happens to be on the outer perimeter of this favoured area, is not receiving any consideration and apparently has no prospect of any favourable consideration. It is nearly five years since the committee completed an investigation of a scheme to supply water to Jamestown, Caltowie, Peterborough, Terowie and Yongala, and it reported favourably, pointing out very properly that it would not be a sound financial project, but was warranted as an amenity. Since then Parliament has approved of the first section of the scheme from Spalding to Jamestown with a link to Caltowie. That was three years ago, but nothing has been done to give effect to it.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Yes, something has. The pipes have been ordered and some are now arriving.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I hope the Minister's anticipations are correct and I will be happy to see the pipes being laid along the Spalding-Bundaleer route in the not distant future. However, that does not overcome the difficulties I mentioned. It is time that I said something on behalf of the long-suffering people of Peterborough, Terowie and Yongala.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Peterborough already has a water scheme, whereas towns in my district have none.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I admit that, but it is inadequate in quantity and quality. The people are asked to use water carrying 110 grains to the gallon, which is 40 grains higher than the experts say is the worst water that should be used in a reticulation system. The people have had to use the water year after year and the supply is inadequate. With such an inadequate and unsatisfactory water supply there is no possibility of industries being established at Peterborough. On two occasions firms have considered establishing small industries employing a limited number of females because they felt that once an industry was established there would be a reservoir of female labour in a town the size of Peterborough, which at the moment is limited to providing work for men only in the railways. As soon as they found that the water supply was inadequate and there was no possibility of a sewerage scheme they immediately lost interest. That state of affairs will continue so long as the water supply is inadequate.

There is also the important question of supplying water to the railways. One of the factors which considerably influenced the Public Works Committee was the fact that a reticulated supply of good water to the towns mentioned would solve a very serious railway difficulty. There is a great loss of haulage capacity and a big increase in maintenance costs of boilers because of the bad water used in those areas. A report submitted by the Railways Department showed the annual cost of carting and treating well water, etc., was about £2,600 prior to 1947, and that was based on traffic figures which are not nearly so great as at present. The committee formed the opinion that a reasonable estimate of what the average annual expenditure might be in future, with increasing coal and ore traffic, would be £4,000 a year. Since then, because of the change in cultivation methods, cereal growing has been largely discontinued in the catchment area of the largest reservoir which supplies water to the railways, namely, Yongala reservoir, and it has not been filled, nor has the Gumbowie reservoir, so the railways have been forced to cart much more water than was visualized when the committee investigated the proposed extension. Last year the cost of carting water to Terowie and Peterborough was staggering. The details are as follows:— Cost of water purchased from the Engineering and Water Supply Department at Burra and Gladstone, £1,755; cartage from Burra to Terowie, £7,826; cartage from Gladstone to Peterborough, including a small quantity for Jamestown, £11,607; pumping at Hanson and Terowie, £1,143; or a total cost for the 12 months ended June 30 last of £22,331. That was to provide water for the railway services only. The estimated annual loss on the whole of this scheme not only to supply those three towns, but also Jamestown and Caltowie and all the intervening country land, was about £20,000 a year. It will therefore be seen that in one year it cost the Railways Department over £2,000 more than the estimated loss on the whole scheme, and I submit that will be a recurring loss to a greater or lesser degree until we have a reticulated scheme for those areas. I ask members to compare the economics of such a scheme with that which is going to cost £3,000,000, and from which no additional return will be derived because the land in question is going out of wheat production and people are leaving it. All we are succeeding in doing in providing better water schemes is to build up higher land

values for the few people who remain on it. That is what is happening today. We should first provide for the towns I have referred to, particularly for railway requirements, and then devote our attention to developing a policy for the country lands provided with these amenities to be used to their full productive capacity so as to bring about a more adequate return on the expenditure incurred. Population is not being kept in rural centres. A sound economic basis for building up rural population would be better than artificially bolstering up the waning country population. The only way to do this is by balancing the development of primary and secondary industries in the country so that people born there who cannot be absorbed on farms will have opportunities for employment without breaking up their homes and thereby encouraging the migration of other members of the family to the metropolitan area to seek employment.

I notice that £5,050,000 is to be transferred this year from general revenue to meet debt charges and increased working costs of the railways, an increase of nearly 100 per cent on the sum of £2,600,000 transferred last year. Why this endeavour to make the actual accounts of the railways balance when the idea of the revenue pool is so much in evidence in other directions? The Treasurer gave no reason for it. The total estimated revenue of the railways (with transfers) for this year is £14,200,000, and the total expenditure £12,683,000. Why does the Treasurer budget for a surplus of £1,500,000 on the railways when a surplus can only be accomplished by a transfer of £5,050,000 from other sources? That is beyond my comprehension, and he should have given some explanation.

Land transfers account for a considerable proportion of stamp tax revenue. Is this source of income likely to continue at the high level of the last two years? Is there not a possibility of some retrogression? Last year stamp tax amounted to £722,000, and it is estimated to yield £857,000 this year. This is possibly too high an estimate. I think we may be a little past the peak in land values and perhaps in future we shall have a diminution of revenue from this source. Revenue from motor vehicle registrations, etc., is estimated at £128,000 higher than actual collections last year—about a 10 per cent increase. However, last year's revenue was £79,000 down on the estimate, so is it not reasonable to assume that the higher figure suggested for this year may not be attained? The higher sales tax on new

motor vehicles may reduce sales and thereby help to reduce our revenue from registration fees. Obviously, any additional revenue can only be obtained from the registration of new vehicles for I doubt whether there are many old "can 'ardlies" that are not on the road. Everything that will go is registered. Although the Treasurer budgets for an increase of £128,000 from motor vehicle registrations, he expects a reduction of £1,362 in revenue from petrol pump licences. This is only a small sum, but it represents over 40 per cent of the amount derived last year from this source. What is the explanation? If there are more vehicles on the road one would expect more petrol pumps to service them, or will the introduction of one-brand petrol stations result in a substantial diminution of revenue?

Apparently there is to be some change in the charging of exchange for the purpose of book-keeping simplicity. The Treasurer stated, "In past years it was the practice to charge all exchange to Revenue. . . . Exchange transactions will not in future be handled through Revenue Account." If not, through which account will they be passed? It seems that they will have to be passed through Loan Account and I question the wisdom of that. On the question of Commonwealth Grants, tax reimbursement under the formula would have been £7,411,000, but the actual reimbursement approved is £10,200,000. I understand this is the result of a conference held some time ago between State and Commonwealth authorities at which they scrapped the formula and decided on a distribution of the revenue derived from income tax on the basis of needs rather than formula. If the formula is defective, why not work out a more satisfactory one? The grant under section 96 of the Constitution for this year will be £4,558,000, but last year it was £5,332,000, so there is a substantial reduction there, but no reason was given for it. Unfortunately, the report of the Grants Commission is not available, so we do not know why it recommended the reduction for this State. Is it that the commission, like the Treasurer, believes that South Australia has suddenly become a very prosperous State? The Treasurer said that this State had prospered to such an extent that we are now second only to Victoria. If the Grants Commission takes the same view is it not likely that we shall have further reductions in Commonwealth grants? If that happens, I wonder where we shall get the amounts required to make up the deficiency.

I doubt whether South Australia is as prosperous as the Treasurer says. We still have a long way to go to catch up to the prosperity of Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland with their greater populations and natural resources. I am still a supporter of the claimant State in the disbursement of Commonwealth revenues.

The Treasurer stated that had the State been able to retain its pre-war share in the income tax field now monopolized by the Commonwealth it would be entirely free from the necessity of receiving financial assistance from the Commonwealth. That is a vague assertion, and should have been supported by data. If it is a fact I see no reason why the Treasurer should not be able to induce his colleagues of the same political faith in the Commonwealth Government to revert to the old system, because when Mr. Menzies and Sir Arthur Fadden were in Opposition they said they did not believe in uniform taxation. I fear that if we revert to the old system our State income tax will be relatively high and it will probably be imposed with greater severity on the people with the lowest incomes. That was the result when we levied our taxation prior to the introduction of the uniform system.

Now I come to the development of our State resources. There is a substantial increase in the vote for the Mines Department this year, and the money is to be spent mainly on the development of our uranium field. Last year the vote was £477,728 and this year is £820,000, an increase of about £342,000. Recently I supported proposals to bring about a rapid development of our uranium field, and I approve the expenditure on this item in the Estimates. There is an acute shortage of copper cable, which could be overcome to some extent by the development of our copper resources. From what I know of the world's copper position it will be difficult to obtain adequate supplies of the metal from overseas; therefore it is incumbent upon us to develop any resources we have worthy of development. I have examined Mines Department reports on this matter for many years. I shall not deal with the old Burra, Kapunda, Wallaroo, and Moonta projects. I leave them to the members for the districts concerned. I know they are requesting examinations of the fields with a view to their being re-opened. In my district there are the Mutooroo and Olary groups of copper mines. Considerable work was done at Mutooroo in the early years, about 1910 or 1912, but there is still an appreciable area of copper country not developed. The Olary

group was never extensively worked. In the Flinders Range from Hawker northwards there are a number of copper mines not extensively worked, but as the result of earlier examinations it is known that prospects are favourable for their development at depth, but it has never been attempted. The Mines Department could set out upon a systematic examination of the older and lesser known mines in order to improve the production of copper. One lesser known mine was worked in two periods—the first in the last part of the last century, and the second in the early days of this century. I refer to the Prince Alfred mine which is close to my electorate and which is in the adjoining electorate of Newcastle. According to several reports of the Mines Department it has an excellent history as a producer of good quality copper from ore containing a comparatively high percentage of the metal. I think it has been worked to only the 370-ft. or 380-ft. level, so there are possibilities at that mine, and there is unexplored country which merits an immediate examination. This matter should be brought under the notice of the Minister of Mines. Copper is scarce and very essential to industry so we should try to produce more of it.

In the concluding portions of his Budget speech the Treasurer made some critical remarks and some optimistic remarks about the economic position of the State. We all agree with him that the rise in prices during the last two or three years has been alarming. He said that at the conference convened by the Prime Minister in August last there had been an exchange of ideas. There may have been this exchange but I have not learned of the ideas. Those who were not at the conference do not know what took place, and the Treasurer did not give us any clue about it in his Budget speech. He said it was hoped that the exchange of ideas would be followed by action by the various Governments. I fervently say "We hope so too." It would have been desirable for him to say what proposals the Government is considering following the conference. In the Commonwealth and in this State a Liberal and Country League Government is in office, and if those two Governments have the answers to the inflationary problem why not say what they are? Only a comprehensive plan for increased production, especially primary production, can bring stability to our economy. The State Government is not doing anything to bring it about, and the Commonwealth Government is doing a great deal to retard it.

Regarding the production of ordinary everyday commodities, such as milk, meat, bread and vegetables especially, there should be an investigation to see how best it can be increased. Then there is the pig industry, which is apparently on its last legs. These are farming industries, and they are vital to the community. Food is vital to maintain peaceful conditions at home, and food is vital in the feeding of the underfed peoples of the world. There is only one way to deal with the matter and that is to see that our land, which in the main is held in too large areas, is made available in proper areas to people who still work it and produce the foodstuffs which are urgently needed. I may be old-fashioned, but I am not too happy about the great mechanization which is taking place on our farmlands. We cannot continue to produce wheat, vegetables and other things with the expensive and highly technical equipment we think is necessary. Unless we can go in for collective farming, and personally I do not believe in it, there will have to be a realization that the man with the small plant and working his own holding, provided he has the knowledge that his living and the living of his children and his children's children depends upon the fertility of the soil, is what we need to increase food production. It is probably too late to do anything this session but I hope that next session the Government will produce a policy which will help to overcome the problem and give us something worth while.

Mr. CLARKE (Burnside)—I assure honourable members that there has been no collaboration between the Leader of the Opposition and myself in drawing attention in almost precisely the same words to the practice adopted in carrying forward a surplus for a year. My notes were made last night and were not prompted in any way by Mr. O'Halloran's remarks. If one could find a point for criticism in admirably presented Budget figures, by a paradoxical twist that point for criticism could become a point for commendation. The Treasurer referred to the total revenue, which included about £250,000 surplus carried forward from last year. This would make the total funds available for this year about £42,000,000 odd. The Treasurer said he was budgeting for a surplus at the end of this year. I think it would have been better to stress that it was a surplus over two years, because in fact the estimated revenue for this year does not equal estimated expenditure, being about £250,000 short. The Leader

of the Opposition referred to the practice in former years of using surpluses to reduce accumulated deficits, and he also said it was the practice to fund deficits in annual accounts. For some years the deficits of the State Government have been met by Commonwealth grants if they resulted from expenditure in a Budget which had been adjusted to the average of the non-claimant States and found not to be in excess of the level of the expenditure of those non-claimant States. On previous occasions in discussing the Budget I have deplored the necessity of ruling off each financial year, closing the accounts, and starting as it were with a clean slate. It is becoming generally accepted amongst students of public finance that the watertight compartment of yearly accounting is becoming far too rigid for a proper appreciation of the trends of public finance. From my point of view the carrying forward of the balance from the previous year, whether a surplus or a deficit—although a surplus is to be infinitely preferred—is logical. It is not a good thing that at the end of the financial year the accounts should be ruled off and placed in the limbo of forgotten things. It would be a valuable reminder of some past errors if we could see plainly some of the results of policy which have been so costly to taxpayers. I am not concerned with the smallness of the surplus, provided expenditure is made with due regard to economy and efficiency. It is a cardinal principle of public finance that the Government should take out and keep out of the pockets of the people as little as possible above the cost of government. It seems to me, however, that in recent years the Budget has been framed with an overall appreciation of the needs of the State. It would seem, too, that there was little evidence of pressure groups for projects which, in the light of experience, have proved such white elephants to the State. I well remember the political pressure which resulted in the building of the Willunga railway, and the undertakings entered into so glibly by interested parties who promised to meet any deficits on that line. It is a good thing sometimes to be reminded that not always has it been possible to say, as I have heard the chairman of the Commonwealth Grants Commission say, that the public accounts of South Australia are the best prepared in the Commonwealth.

For a moment let me look at the latest report of the Grants Commission. It is one of the inherent defects in vital statistics that

they are never right up to date. Consequently, although I have examined the latest report of the committee, the statistics are those of 1949-1950. I am looking for evidence to support the Treasurer's view that this State can cope with the problems we now face. Summarized, these problems are to stabilize the price structure, to increase both the efficiency and output of secondary industry, and to ensure relatively greater progress in primary industries. When the Grants Commission last reported it said with regard to South Australia:—

Economic activity continued at high levels, production and employment were fully maintained, wool and meat production exceeded the previous year's levels, and there was great activity in investment.

How do we compare with some of the other States in a 10- or 11-year review, say, between 1938-39 and 1949-50? Over that period in Queensland we find a decline in the quantity of production of wool, whole milk, butter, lead, and also a decline in the number of sheep and cattle. There was an increased production of sugar, timber, and black coal in that State. In New South Wales there was a decline in the production of meat, whole milk, butter, silver, and lead, and there were increases in the production of wheat, wool, and timber. It is mildly satisfying—and I stress the word "mildly"—that in the same period in South Australia, while our wheat yield fell slightly, the quantity of production increased in wool, meat, whole milk, wine, barley, and timber, and the number of cattle increased. I have made a somewhat sketchy survey from figures in the Grants Commission's latest report to show that in other States there has been a marked falling off in production of foodstuffs. It is a tragic commentary on the times that Australia with its present rate of increase in population will probably be unable to feed itself, let alone supply an export quota to the under-privileged nations which are incapable of producing more than a small part of their own needs.

My purpose is to develop the theme of the Treasurer that we must ensure a relatively greater progress in primary industries. The Treasurer rightly stresses that the high capital cost of establishing rural production, the need to keep costs under control and marketing efficient are problems not easily handled. I think it is becoming recognized that primary as well as secondary producers have a duty to make their production as efficient as possible. Private ownership of land, which I support, carries with it an obligation to produce

efficiently. This in turn means a husbanding of fertility in the interests of producers yet to come. On the other hand, all sections of producers must feel that so far as it lies within its power to do so the Government must foster the conditions for prosperity. I believe that the Budget has been framed on those lines. It seems to me that political expediency has had little consideration in a Budget which recognizes the elements for prosperity. As the Treasurer says, success depends far more on the initiative and enterprise of the people themselves than on anything the Government can do.

What then are the conditions for a prosperous and contented people? Obviously there are the basic needs of housing, transport, education, health, water and electricity. No purpose would be served in traversing the figures set out in the Budget for these things. Everyone here could probably find something not completely to his satisfaction and probably we could all say that something more could be done. The essence of the Budget should be that it is realistic and practical, that what it sets out to do can be done. We have the Treasurer's assurance that the State can accomplish what has been set out in his thirteenth Budget. It is unlikely to be an unlucky one. It is fundamental that there should not be an appreciable difference in the standard of certain things as between city and country, and in truth such differences as do exist are being steadily broken down by the expenditure which will take place in rural areas, particularly when read in conjunction with the Loan Estimates recently passed. There is, however, a feature of country life which while recognized has received little attention. In the main, cultural and artistic standards in the country are markedly below those in the city, yet in many places, as I have seen and heard myself, there is talent which could be used to raise those standards. Not all the amenities of water and sewerage, electricity and schools, will of themselves encourage development, increase efficiency, keep people on the land and attract new people to it. The cinema, the illustrated press, and the radio, have awakened a taste in the country for things which 30 years ago were regarded only as the prerogative of the city. I can remember the time when practically all country people could be recognized by their dress or their gait. Today this condition has very properly changed and there has been produced a desire for the other amenities which go with nice clothes, good housing, organized sport, and social life.

I should like to have seen in the Budget some more attention paid to the purely cultural side of our national development. Now that the class of people who were once the patrons of the arts and music have been viciously taxed out of existence the State must perforce take their place if the arts and music are to extend their influence to the country. I feel that following the recent announcement of a benefaction for the School of Arts the time is perhaps ripe for a thorough examination of the teaching of art in this State. From what I have seen the standards of graphic art in the country are deplorably low. This is particularly evident at shows where fine quality cattle and produce equal to the world's best are shown in exhibitions which contain assuredly the world's worst in graphic art. I would like to see a much wider use made of travelling exhibitions of art, and an understanding by local authorities, in the city as well as in the country of the decoration of public halls with a modicum of good taste. I am sure these things go hand in hand with the basic physical requirements of all people. To the extent that the Budget recognizes these needs in the items for the Art Gallery, the Public Library, and the grant for the State Orchestra, it is good, but a much greater stress needs to be placed on these things. Perhaps the Premier takes the view—and rightly so—that the fundamentals must come first. I do not disagree with that; but we are approaching the time when we must do these things if we are to make relatively greater progress in primary industry.

Having made a small plea for the recognition of things of the mind as a stimulus to rural expansion I turn back for a moment or two in conclusion to sum up some of the economic implications of the Budget. Firstly, is it designed to establish conditions for prosperity? I find no evidence to the contrary. Is the Budget beyond the financial resources freely available to the Government? The answer is that the Budget will be balanced after taking into account reasonably estimated likely increases in cost. Does it place burdens on the people which will result in less economic good than if they themselves spent the sums the Government proposes? The answer to that question is rather complex. By far the largest part of revenue comes from the Commonwealth, and, according to the way one looks at it, it is either a bad thing or a good thing that the State is not responsible for collecting its principal revenue—*income tax*. Therefore, this is not an answer which this Government is now

required to give. Quite obviously the expenditure on law and order, education, health, public works and the like are necessary and could not be undertaken by the people themselves. If I might be pardoned a flippancy, I would say that if I could find in the Budget any reference to the salaries of members of the Potato Board I would move that they be reduced by £1. Whether too much or too little is spent is not easy for a private member to say, but we do know that if the State spends above the average of the non-claimant States the Commonwealth Grants Commission will penalize us; conversely, if we do not tax ourselves with the same severity in the few taxes which remain to us we will also be penalized. So far as the weight or burden of the Budget goes, we have a very good watchdog in the Grants Commission. Equally, too, we can be satisfied that the Treasurer and his officials are thoroughly imbued with a sense of responsibility, not only to the present but to the future. Although I give my full support to the principles on which the Budget is based, one must, as every auditor does, rely on the certificates of responsible officers for certain details. That brings me to a final point. While I appreciate the reason why the Auditor-General's report is not on the files, I do think that next year members should have that report before them when the Budget is presented. The report was laid on the table this afternoon and during question time I had a quick look at it and have drawn several points of interest from it, but the very short time available to the early speakers on the Budget to examine the report has handicapped them, as the Leader of the Opposition said, in comparison with those who speak later. I draw attention, as Mr. O'Halloran did, to the special provision for the railways, which this year is to be almost doubled. It is evidence of the financial difficulties in which all forms of public transport find themselves today. The Auditor-General also refers to the dead weight of public debt charges—those charges which must be met by State taxation or Commonwealth grants. Although the percentage of taxation and grants which is absorbed by dead weight debt this year has fallen from 26 per cent to 22 per cent, it should be noted that this is not due to a reduction of the dead weight debt, but to an increase in the yield from taxation and grants. In fact, the total of dead weight debts has risen by £50,000 to £3,790,000 in the past year. Attention should also be drawn to the cost to taxpayers of the functions of government. These are classified

in detail. I have taken them only under broad headings. The cost of social services, which embrace health, law and order, education, and so on, has increased from £6 16s. 8d. a head in 1947-48, to £10 13s. 6d. in 1950-51. Under the heading of "Development of State resources," which relates to roads, agriculture and lands, mining, surveying and the like, the cost between those years has increased from £2 2s. 7d. to £3 4s. 5d. For public utilities, covering railways, harbours, water supply, irrigation and so on, the cost has increased from £4 4s. 1d. to £7 11s. 1d. There is to be noticed a decline in the earning power of our harbours. The slow turn-round of ships and the fewer number of ships calling at our ports are regrettable features and this trend must be stopped if humanly possible. Overall, the net cost of government to the taxpayer has risen from £14 11s. 8d. in 1947-48 to £23 8s. 9d. in 1950-51, an increase of more than 50 per cent. I was surprised to find in the Auditor-General's report that nearly £145,000 was written off last year for drought relief, farmers' assistance, and loans for fencing, etc. These aspects of the finances of the State to which I have referred do not necessarily mar the overall picture of the satisfactory position of our State accounts. They do, however, show that there are some grave difficulties of public finance which must continue to exercise the minds of the Treasurer and the Treasury officials. Provided the ever-present problem of dead weight debt and the steeply rising costs of public utilities are not taken complacently, then we can accept the Budget with confidence. I support the adoption of the Estimates.

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—I intend to deal only with a few matters affecting my district directly. I notice it is proposed to increase the expenditure on hospital services for the current year by £529,453, the amount to be made available being £2,361,975. Considering the decline in the value of money and the increase in the State population, the increase in expenditure is far less than one might have expected. Representatives of the western districts of the metropolitan area are grateful for the progress on the construction of the Western Districts Hospital, and it is to be hoped there will be no delay and that materials will be available to complete the job. I believe that the small increase in expenditure on hospitals is due largely to the spirit of a number of splendid organizations which work to provide for the sick. It is

recognized that, because of the overcrowding of hospitals, many patients are discharged earlier than they would be under normal conditions, and this demands the attention of a qualified person to care for them until they are able to care for themselves. Among these are a number of aged pensioners. We should express our sincere appreciation to these organizations, which are subsidized by the Government. The Government proposes a grant of £18,000 to the Mothers and Babies' Health Centre. I am disappointed that this amount is £5,635 less than was provided last year. I have seen this organization in operation and learned to appreciate its value in an industrial area. It is doing a remarkable service to the community generally. On the other hand, I was pleased to notice that the District Bush Nursing Society is to receive a grant of £7,500, an increase of £3,300. I appreciate that this amount has been provided in full appreciation of the work the organization is doing. It has 29 branches in the State, 18 being in the metropolitan area and 11 in the country. I have been a member of this organization and know of the important work it has done. A number of people have worked for it over the years and travelled the districts in which the society operates collecting for it, but they are growing old and the society has found it difficult to get people to take over their work. It would, therefore, appear that it is not receiving the support from the public to which it is entitled. It operates throughout the State, having a branch at Mount Gambier in the South-East and another at Marree in the Far North, and is also established at Port Pirie, Gawler, Murray Bridge, and many other country centres. The society has 40 fully qualified sisters. For the year ended June 30, 1951, a total of 116,476 visits were made, an increase of almost 20,000 on the previous year. Because hospital accommodation is overtaxed many patients are discharged and then attended by the staff of the District Bush Nursing Society. Parliament has a responsibility in caring for the sick and should express its appreciation of the services rendered by voluntary organizations. I trust that the increased grants for them will be greater in future because organizations like the D.B.N.S. save the Government much money and relieve it of many difficulties in providing hospital accommodation.

It is proposed to spend £4,262,137 this year on education. It is a tragedy that many so-called temporary buildings are being erected

on new school sites. A number of temporary buildings have been standing at the Croydon boys' technical school for several years. In some respects no complaints can be made about their quality, but initial school buildings should be of solid construction in order to provide a nucleus for later years. If more classrooms were then required because of the increasing population of the district temporary buildings could be provided. In the older suburbs the school population tends to decrease, and if some of the buildings were of a temporary nature they could have been transferred to help relieve the congestion in the newer areas. According to a report by the Minister of Education the average expenditure per head of population on education, including the cost of buildings, is £5 4s. 9d. Excluding the cost of buildings the cost is £4 5s. 8d. The average cost for each pupil is £25 15s. 6½d. per annum for primary schools, £34 17s. 0¼d. for higher primary schools, £45 10s. 0¼d. for area schools, £57 4s. 1¼d. for technical schools, and £63 7s. 2¼d. for high schools. To some people those costs may seem high, but I do not think they are. Although it may be necessary to spend much money for defence purposes, for each trainee entering a military camp Australia is committed to an expenditure of £85 on his kit alone, so the amount spent on education is comparatively low. Countries under Fascist domination spent huge sums on their youth to convert them to false doctrines. Before long we shall have to consider seriously making greater amounts available to assist youth organizations such as the Boy Scout movement and the Girl Guides Association. For the proper development of our young people we shall have to spend to the limit on education.

Mr. Shannon—Many of our servicemen in the last war could not read or write.

Mr. HUTCHENS—That is a fact and supports my argument. Unless we educate the children we shall not be able to develop our industrial and rural activities fully or compete with the rest of the world. Higher ideals could be fostered in our youth if church organizations abandoned their parochial outlook and united, because they would then draw more people to them. School committees, school councils, and parents' and friends' associations have greatly helped the Government. I attended a school committee meeting last Friday and was told the committee had £2,000 which it was prepared to make available to the Government for building classrooms. Such assistance demands the appreciation of all. It is gratifying to note that this

year £50 will be granted to the School Committees' Association. This is the first time such a grant has been listed on the Estimates, and after comparing the amount with the sums voted for this purpose in other States I believe it will be increased in the future. If it were not for the school committees and other organizations the expenditure per head of population on education would be much greater. I point out that the proposed expenditure of about £4,000,000 on education is only one-third that of the railways. We should seriously consider assisting organizations helping to create a civic pride. Australia has the opportunity to develop and of becoming one of the leading nations of the world. We must create in our people a civic pride. We have far too much vandalism and far too many people indulging in useless pastimes. The cinema has a most deleterious effect upon our young people. Thousands of them attend picture theatres because we have insufficient organizations working to persuade them to spend more of their time in the open air. The proposed expenditure for police protection is large, and the only criticism I can offer about our police force is that we have insufficient policemen. About £1,169,000 is to be spent on police matters. I think it would be better for the State if money were spent on persuading people to indulge in happier pastimes, and this would do away with the need for us to have such a large police force. This year £30,000 is to be provided for assistance to fire brigades. That is an increase of £18,000 on last year, and at first glance it would appear to be a large increase, but an analysis of the position shows that it will have little effect on the amounts various councils have to pay as fire brigade contributions. For some time in this place I have spoken on this matter, and I want it to be known that none of my remarks are to be taken as criticism of members of our fire brigades. I believe them to be as efficient as any fire-fighting men in the world, and they have equipment which is equal to the world's best. The cost to councils of all this should be reviewed. Some councils say that the cost to them is far more than they can afford, but I feel that if we want an efficient service we must be prepared to meet the cost of it. If a fire occurs at Glenelg and equipment is required from, say, Woodville, it is sent to Glenelg without hesitation. All our fire stations are under one head. The Act should be amended and councils should be levied according to the value of the property protected in their areas.

They should not be levied according to the cost of running local fire stations. One council with an annual assessment value of £507,722 paid last year as its fire brigade contribution £9,787, while another with an annual assessment value of £478,793 paid only £904. The Adelaide City Council pays as a fire brigade contribution 7.2 per cent of its rate revenue, the Port Adelaide council pays 13.3 per cent, and the Hindmarsh council 6.1 per cent. One district pays only 1.4 per cent. The three former are commercial and industrial areas, and in addition to having to meet the cost of maintaining roads and footpaths and providing additional services they have to meet excessive fire brigade contributions. The Government should consider amending the Act as I have suggested. At Hindmarsh it matters not how efficient is the fire brigade, because if there were two major fires in the district the available water supply would be insufficient, and the services of the brigade at one fire would be useless.

Mr. O'Halloran—One fire would have to be left whilst the other was fought.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Yes. On one occasion there was a fire at the Adelaide Potteries and there was insufficient water available to fight it. The River Torrens in the Hindmarsh area would provide a natural supply of water at little cost. It runs close to many industries, which, with the present water supply available, really have little protection against fire. Adequate water could be pumped from the river for fire-fighting purposes, and this is a matter which should be considered by the authorities. I hope the fullest consideration will be given to all matters affecting the State, and that the State will progress, following on an understanding of the position by all sections of the community, with each receiving his or her just reward for services rendered. May that reward be a sense of security, freedom from the fear of want or war, and all things needed for human happiness.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—A record has been achieved by our Treasurer because he has introduced more Budgets than any other Treasurer of this State. I compliment him upon achieving the record. There is no doubt in the minds of any of us that our Treasurer richly deserves the confidence of our people because of his astute and careful management of State affairs. I do not recall any other Minister of the Crown who has so assiduously applied himself to dealing with State problems. One might expect the State to be showing some

of the benefits of the careful methods and wise management adopted by the Treasurer during his term of office, and I think it is particularly in the financial sphere. I am not at all concerned that we have a record high in receipts and expenditure. Obviously this is just another result of the inflationary period through which we are passing. It is obvious that what is being obtained for £1 today is no more than, if as much as, what could be obtained for 10s. 10 years ago; therefore, much larger sums of money must be involved today than when the Treasurer first took office. If, as Opposition speakers have said, certain projects which in their opinion are desirable cannot be carried out it is a proof that the bare essentials for carrying out the affairs of State absorb so much money that the Treasurer cannot branch out into fancy lines. I would deplore any policy of expenditure on things which we could afford to leave undone.

The Railways Department is one of the biggest State undertakings. Unfortunately, as the Leader of the Opposition rightly pointed out, we have had to bolster up its revenues from the general purse so that it may continue to operate. The department has had an increasing load thrust upon its undertakings by Arbitration Court awards and by the ever-increasing cost of fuel. Its operational costs have jumped tremendously. I entirely agreed with the Treasurer some time ago in his decision not to increase railway freights and fares where such increases could possibly be avoided. They were avoided for a year or two; but now some increases must be made. I am glad the Treasurer has not adopted the policy of making a flat percentage increase in the general charges for the carriage of goods or passengers, but is looking at the problem in a much broader way. He proposes to revise the schedule of charges in the tariff book so as not to unduly load certain items which would be hard hit by a flat percentage increase. For instance, some of the charges in the higher categories would be affected out of all proportion by a flat 20 or 25 per cent increase. I feel that when we are told of the full impact of the increase in charges we will see that the burden is spread as fairly as possible over all railway users.

Although I do not pose as an expert on railway management, by virtue of my connection with the Public Works Committee I have had occasion to visit other States on inquiries into South Australian railway projects, and have had a good opportunity of seeing railway operations there. I have

formed the view that, with the exception of the huge suburban passenger traffic handled in Sydney and Melbourne, with the like of which South Australia does not have to contend, our system compares quite favourably with anything other States have to offer. In fact, I believe that our railway engineers and those officers charged with the management of our railways are as far-sighted as any in the Commonwealth. At present the diesel-electric locomotive is being developed as a means of traction. Our Railways Department was the first to construct the diesel locomotive in its own shops. This has had its trial run and is to be put into service soon. More of these locomotives are being constructed and a complete list of works was seen by members when they recently visited Islington. There are indications that our railway officials are alive to the need for improved facilities on our railways.

South Australia leads the band with regard to railway passenger services. At one time the Spirit of Progress running between Melbourne and Albury was regarded as possibly the best passenger train in the Commonwealth; but I do not think that claim can be substantiated today. The roomettes and twinettes now in use on the Adelaide-Melbourne express are quite new and overseas travellers have told me that travelling facilities on that train are equal to those in most of the other parts of the world, including the U.S.A., the alleged leader in this type of transport.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—There is no provision for refreshments on the Melbourne express.

Mr. SHANNON—The discontinuance of the buffet service was a war-time move, and provision for refreshments is made at stations such as Murray Bridge and Ballarat; but refreshment cars are used periodically on various lines for special purposes and could, if necessary, be used again on the Melbourne express. I compliment railway officials on the building of new carriages for passengers who hitherto have had to sit up for the whole of the journey between Adelaide and Melbourne because they could not get sleepers. The old dog-box arrangement with eight people to a compartment did not help to make the trip congenial for a person who for the whole night had to sit up, cheek by jowl with his neighbour. This will not be necessary when the new coaches now being constructed at Islington are in operation. They have seats comparing more than favourably with anything offered by any

airline in this country. In addition to the adjustable back they have an adjustable leg rest, and should prove a big step forward in passenger comfort. I commend the Railways Department for making a forward move in trying to encourage people to use the railways. I find it hard to understand why people should have to be encouraged to use them, because railway travel is the cheapest form of transport available. Driving one's own motor car may have the advantages of mobility and choice of route, but it is a much more costly method. I do not think a person can travel to Melbourne and back by motor car at a cost anywhere near as low as the railway fare, even leaving out of account overnight stays at hotels; but people are so flush of money these days that such cost is of little account with them. I am certain the time will come when people will be turning over every shilling before spending it and then our railways will enjoy the patronage of the people who really own them.

I pay a compliment to the officers of the Engineering and Water Supply Department, which possesses a band of very competent men. It is popular to point the finger of scorn at this department for not keeping up with the demands of the metropolitan area because restrictions are imposed from time to time, but much of this criticism is not well-founded. The former Engineer-in-Chief, the late Mr. Angwin, and the present Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Dridan, have frequently pointed out the danger existing to the metropolitan water supply. It was during Mr. Angwin's regime that the Mannum pipeline scheme was projected. He said at the time that not until it was completed could Adelaide rest assured that it would never be faced with the fear of further water restrictions. The present position is chiefly due to the industrial development in the metropolitan area, with the consequent increased demand for homes. Shortly after the Mount Bold reservoir was completed in the early 1930's it was considered that we had a safety valve which would meet Adelaide's requirements for many years. However, many industries have been developed, such as Actil Cotton Mills, which use large quantities of water. This has resulted in the department being faced with an almost unanswerable problem. Householders can obtain water by merely turning on a tap at a cost of about 3d. a ton. It is certainly the cheapest service the State renders and much cheaper, in comparison, than a postage stamp costing 3½d. The time has arrived when the

point raised by the Leader of the Opposition should be energetically taken up. Apparently there is no reason why the Government should charge 1s. 8d. a thousand gallons for rebate water and only 1s. for excess water. I consider there is an excellent case for the excess charge being increased to 1s. 8d. When Tumby Bay sought a water supply the people agreed to the recommendation of the Public Works Committee to pay two and a half times the normal price of water. In my opinion that is not justifiable, fair or reasonable. Water is no more valuable when delivered to places like Jamestown and Tumby Bay than to the metropolitan area.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—There is a limit to the economics of delivering water.

Mr. SHANNON—If the Government insisted upon the policy of years ago when a water district must give promise of a return of 4 per cent interest on the capital invested, there would be hardly a country water district in the State. I do not think Mr. Jeffries is suggesting that such a limit should be fixed which would deny country people the enjoyment of a water supply.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—It would depend on the number enjoying it.

Mr. SHANNON—It would also depend on local conditions. There are towns of magnitude in my district which should have sewerage facilities. Many country towns have the constant worry attached to the disposal of sewerage. I think the Public Works Standing Committee is adopting the right policy in pointing out to Parliament what will be the impact on the State's finances in the establishment of country water schemes, and having done that has done its duty. Whether Parliament will provide funds for these schemes is its business. About 30 or 40 councils have asked the Government for a sewerage service and the department has prepared projects for about 12 or 15.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—Has any country town accepted a sewerage scheme?

Mr. SHANNON—In every country town where evidence has been taken the project has been welcomed, the people being prepared to accept the financial responsibility. An Act has been passed to give country people the opportunity to get this facility without having to bear the full cost, and for every scheme examined by the committee the State will be called upon to meet a considerable proportion of the operating costs, plus interest and depreciation. Very few of these schemes will

be able to pay working costs, let alone the other charges. That does not mean that these people should not get this service. About 14 years ago the metropolitan water service gave a return of eight or nine per cent, but has now shrunk to little less than half of that. The department has stated that when the old mains are replaced and the Government feels the full impact of the capital expenditure involved in relaying, the interest return will be further reduced.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—The charges have risen considerably this year.

Mr. SHANNON—I understand that a long overdue assessment has been made. The department will have to supply additional water for the extra rates and the additional charges will not meet the full impact of the increased costs. A charge of 2s. a thousand gallons is not exorbitant, especially when it is remembered that many country people have to pay much more than that for having water carted to them. The rate of 4d. to 7d. an acre, the range permitted to the department for assessing broad acres, is entirely out of keeping with present day land values. Some land in my electorate, on which practically the only improvement is fencing, cannot be purchased for £100 an acre. The Government should go into the question of spreading the range on broad acres much more widely. If the rate were increased by from 2d. to 1s. 2d. an acre it would not hurt anybody, although possibly the Government would not be popular by increasing the rate. People have never been in a better position to pay increased water charges.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the Government had not done anything to decentralize industry and that everything had gravitated to the metropolitan area. He contended that, with the exception of Whyalla, no major secondary industries had been established in the country. I remind him, however, that wherever secondary industries are established power is required. It was because no source of power was available in the country that Adelaide became the medium for the establishment of secondary industries by overseas organizations since World War II. The move by the Government to establish a power station at Port Augusta must entirely alter the position and should shift from Adelaide a considerable part of industry into areas around Peterborough, Port Pirie and Port Augusta. Large secondary industries have been established in the metropolitan area because the

firms wanted to be near a major seaport. The Government has no control over the establishment of such factories. An electric power line is being taken along the River Murray to serve Berri, Barmera and Loxton areas and I think that the time is not far distant when Renmark will obtain its electric current from the Electricity Trust. These are factors which must ultimately lead to the decentralization of many small industries. Adelaide is steadily growing into a central industrial octopus and I hope that all big industries will not congregate here, as is the case in Melbourne and Sydney.

Health is another matter in which I am greatly interested. In 1946 the Government appointed a Health Committee which inquired into the question of consolidating the various State health services. I compliment the Government for taking steps to implement the committee's recommendations. A large field of labour on health matters has not yet been touched upon, possibly because local politics enter into the matter. Probably if the Government implemented the whole of the committee's recommendations it would be treading on people's corns. Public health should not be the concern of local boards of health. It is obvious that certain country councils have not been spending sufficient time on problems relating to the health of people in their areas. In most country towns inspections of sanitary conditions are carried out by district clerks who, in many cases, are overworked and underpaid servants of the people. They are expected to have a knowledge not only of roadmaking and footpath construction and other works undertaken by councils, but of the provisions of the Building Act so as to advise councils of any infringements. They are also expected to be qualified to examine and report on sanitary conditions, but many of them have not been properly trained in this field. In the metropolitan area the Department of Public Health is administered by medical officers and those who inspect properties are experts in deciding whether or not conditions are sanitary. Such a set-up is essential for the metropolitan area with its congested population. In some country towns there is virtually no sanitary inspection at all. It might be said that the local clerk has been appointed sanitary inspector, but he might not have made any inspection in his area. If he does not report any insanitary conditions the local board of health does not complain. Councils usually get rid of their board of health work in 10 minutes at the end of the council meeting. In many country towns the local boards of health have not been

very active. Perhaps they have had to appoint the local clerk as sanitary inspector for financial reasons.

Mr. Whittle—Is it invariably the case that local boards of health are inactive?

Mr. SHANNON—No. Some councils have done a good job in this field, but many have not.

Mr. Whittle—I think Clare was the second council to introduce immunizations against diphtheria.

Mr. SHANNON—Yes. In Lobethal 98 per cent of the children were immunized and all would have been if a local minister had not refused permission for his children to be immunized. All country local officers of health who gave evidence before the Health Inquiry Committee supported the Committee's findings that a different set-up should be considered in the field of public health. I doubt if the expenditure incurred would be any greater if councils adopted the committee's recommendation to form themselves into counties and appoint qualified inspectors to supervise sanitary conditions in their areas. A part-time officer of health could be appointed to direct policy in a wide area and under him the officers of each local government area could be retained in order that prompt decisions might be given. No-one knows better the requirements of their own towns than the local officers of health, who accept their responsibilities and often make repeated reports to their local boards of health without avail. They then usually become disheartened and lose much interest in their work. Outbreaks of summer diarrhoea could have been avoided if the fly nuisance and the filth lying around people's back doors had been removed. Local officers are called in to cure the diseases caused by ignorance and neglect. Perhaps if we could give sufficient powers to local medical officers many health problems would be solved, but local bodies may not be prepared to go that far because they think medical officers are busy-bodies with no other objective than to force residents to do things which, in their opinion, are not essential.

Mr. Whittle—Hasn't every council its own medical officer?

Mr. SHANNON—Yes, but he can only make recommendations to the local board of health. He cannot take any action himself or force the local board to take action.

Mr. Whittle—Hasn't the Central Board of Health any authority in this matter?

Mr. SHANNON—Occasionally it is called upon by country councils and has sent qualified

officers to assist them, but it has its hands full in looking after the metropolitan area. Its inspectors could not cover the whole State. Further, it would not be wise to supervise country health inspections from Adelaide. There would be a greater reluctance on the part of country councils to co-operate with people sent from Adelaide to make suggestions in regard to sanitary arrangements than with local men. I suggest that some councils could co-operate to supervise the public health of the area bounded on the north from Mount Pleasant to Gumeracha, and on the south from somewhere south of Meadows to Clarendon. Part of the districts represented by the members for Stirling, Alexandra and Gumeracha would be included as well as most of my district. The local councils could group themselves into a body which might be called the Adelaide Hills Health Authority. They could be given powers to take whatever steps they thought necessary in the interests of health in their areas so as to prove or disprove the value of the different method of control suggested for country councils. I do not know whether members know that few country towns have meat or milk inspections carried out to test purity and cleanliness.

Sitting suspended from 6 till 7.30 p.m.

Mr. SHANNON—There is one other example of preventive treatment which would be easy to achieve and which, if applied to the young, would save much suffering among certain sections of our people in later life. I refer to what is known in the hills district as the goitre belt. The medical survey disclosed that there was a higher percentage of goitre in a certain area of the hills than in other parts, and it was concluded by those competent to judge that this could be attributed to the deficiency of iodine in the drinking water and in the locally produced foodstuffs consumed in the area. There are areas in the hills where it is customary for the supplies of food and vegetables for home consumption to pass through the clearing house of the Adelaide markets: I suggest it is a most uneconomic method of handling produce about to be consumed almost next door to where it is grown, but that is the system which prevails. However, I must admit that where it operates the incidence of goitre is not nearly so great, so it is obvious that some of the produce coming back through the Adelaide markets was not grown in the iodine-deficient soils. A practical

approach to this problem has been suggested by a doctor concerned in this survey, namely, the addition of a sufficient quantity of iodine salt to the bread distributed in the area, first to make it palatable and, secondly, to make good the iodine deficiency. This, it is claimed, would probably cause the disappearance of the disease. It is a very simple remedy, and even though it may not prove entirely successful at least it merits a trial. Goitre may not be the only disease attributable to chemical deficiencies, and if my plan to aggregate certain local government areas into one larger one for the purposes of public health were adopted, this method could be tried out. Other remedial measures having relation to direct sanitation also could be more readily brought into operation if there were a local authority clothed with the requisite power.

I now come to the question of hospital accommodation for country people, and I hope that I shall not be charged with treating this as a parochial question. The provision of hospital facilities is a State-wide question and affects most country areas, with the exception of the favoured few places where a Government hospital is established, such as Port Pirie, Mount Gambier and Wallaroo. I am not complaining that the Government provides hospital facilities for people in the metropolitan area, but in the latest estimates presented for the consideration of the Public Works Committee on hospital construction in relation to the new Government hospital for Mount Gambier, we have the amazing position that a 120-bed hospital is estimated to cost £831,000—and that estimate is already a few months old and may have gone up in the meantime. In round figures that is £4,000 a bed—a staggering sum. I want members to realize the problem faced by any country body which sets out to establish a hospital, whether it be a subsidized hospital—where the Government finds pound for pound of the cost of the building and some moiety of the cost of maintenance—or not. I admit that possibly the Mount Gambier hospital is not the best example, for pathological facilities are to be provided there which may not be required by the average country hospital. However, even if we reduced the figure to £3,000 a bed—and I doubt if it would be less—the average country area seeking to establish a hospital, or extend the existing facilities, must face a cost of about £1,500 a bed for its moiety.

I have one example in my own electorate, where the Mount Barker hospital requires a maternity wing. The estimated cost of this is

about £30,000, of which the Government has offered £10,000. If the people in the district raise another £10,000 they are still only part way towards construction, and at the moment the local fund is still well under £5,000, despite the fact that the pressure has been on for 18 months or more. It therefore appears to me that this is a slow way of providing hospital facilities in country areas. Country people already contribute, through general taxation, part of the cost of hospitals provided by the Government in the metropolitan area, and if they are called upon to shoulder this additional burden it will retard country hospital facilities indefinitely. In many districts, including my own, there are too many cottage-type hospitals which are expensive to staff; each must have a fully qualified matron and, since she cannot be on duty 24 hours a day, a fully qualified assistant, which raises the overhead dis-proportionately, for the same two sisters could supervise a much larger institution. This problem must be faced in a realistic way, and some of those responsible for these small hospitals told that they are uneconomic; that in a town four miles away there is a larger and better hospital capable of providing all the facilities required by the district, and where two qualified sisters and one staff could do the whole job.

Mr. Macgillivray—How many country hospitals could take the additional patients?

Mr. SHANNON—Admittedly they would have to be enlarged. It is a big problem, and nearly all country hospitals from time to time have staff troubles. Some thought should be given to this matter by the Hospitals Department, which could arrange a programme for establishing hospitals to serve certain regions. They could be known as regional hospitals.

Mr. O'Halloran—There should be co-ordinated ambulance services.

Mr. SHANNON—We shall have an opportunity later to deal with such services and I propose to leave my remarks on the matter until then. At present most country hospitals have provision for an ambulance service. I am more concerned about a reasonable approach to the matter of providing curative facilities for country people. They should not be saddled, first of all with the cost of establishing hospitals in the metropolitan area, and secondly, with paying more than their fair share of the cost of hospitals in their own districts. I know it is easy to propound these problems, but it should not be beyond the

scope of qualified people to decide what can be done to provide satisfactory hospital accommodation in country districts.

Mr. Macgillivray—It is a matter of finance, not only of accommodation.

Mr. SHANNON—Our present methods of finance are holding up the provision of hospital accommodation in country districts. I wish now to make a suggestion about an important aspect of education. I realize that the Education Department is doing excellent work. In the metropolitan area its work measures up more than satisfactorily with the work done in other States I have visited. We have high, technical, and infant schools, and kindergartens provided by the Kindergarten Union, and all in all the city is well catered for. Technical schools in Adelaide have a commercial course in their curriculum. In these days commercial work is an important aspect of education. In the press daily can be seen columns of advertisements about vacant commercial positions. If the commercial course could be taken only at high schools they would be overcrowded, so, wisely, the course has been included in the technical school curriculum. That sound policy should be adopted for country high schools and area schools. In my electorate there are three secondary schools—high schools at Birdwood and Mount Barker and an area school at Oakbank. The two former schools are really multi-purpose schools, and of that I approve. They have arts and crafts classes, cookery courses for girls, and an agricultural course for boys. I suggest that the name of the school is not so important as the work done at the school. The Oakbank area school teaches the academic subjects required for entrance to the University, but there is no commercial course. There is such a course at the high schools at Birdwood and Mount Barker, and there is at Oakbank a qualified commercial teacher who could give the necessary commercial training if the facilities were available. Wherever practicable—and I realize that the staff position may be difficult—the department could wisely extend the multi-purpose scheme to all secondary schools in the country. I would like this matter to be given careful consideration by the Minister of Education. The subjects I have mentioned today largely involve finance. I do not forget that our Budget is barely balanced and I do not want to see the State run into debt, but some of my suggestions could be adopted even if it meant the expenditure of more money. The Lobethal child health scheme was

carried on until such time as it broke down through no fault of the Minister of Health. It was an experiment which, if trained personnel had been available, would have meant some results in the treatment of children. I want to encourage that particular attribute of the Minister, who is prepared to try out some of these things. What I have suggested, even if it means the expenditure of a few extra pounds, may be worthy of a trial in a small way, and then if proved successful it could be extended *ad libitum* according to personnel available.

Mr. TAPPING (Semaphore)—I want to refer first to the expenditure proposed for the Electoral Department. Mr. Frank Walsh has frequently referred to the need to shorten polling hours at State elections. It is a sound suggestion because returning officers and poll clerks should not be expected to work from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. Those who work on behalf of the Labor Party on election days do so voluntarily, and they should not be expected to work practically the whole of the 12 hours without fee or reward. In these days most workmen are not engaged on Saturday mornings.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Polling should end at 6 p.m.

Mr. TAPPING—That may be all right in the metropolitan area, but a later hour would be better for the country. It is unwise to make the poll clerks work for 12 hours.

Mr. Whittle—As soon as voting is ended counting commences.

Mr. TAPPING—Yes, but if polling ended earlier so would the counting of votes. I hope the Government will give this matter consideration. The Federal elections are carried on under the same conditions. We in this State should take the lead by reducing polling hours by one hour so as to make them 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The member for Hindmarsh referred to hospital facilities generally and made a good point with regard to the need to expedite the construction of the Western Districts Hospital. This matter has been investigated by the Public Works Standing Committee for many years and from time to time piecemeal recommendations have been made for its construction. Tenders have been called and I understand some of the work is already in progress. On June 27 of this year in another place the late Hon. E. A. Oates asked whether the Government intended to give this building very high priority for materials and labour. The

Minister of Health replied in effect that the work was being held up because of a shortage of building materials. I concede that that is true up to a point, but I must point out that in my opinion too much material is allocated under permit for work on existing industrial buildings such as for new walls and renovations. That is unwise in view of the acute shortage of building materials, and results in the precluding of the diversion of materials for the construction of the Western Districts Hospital which is urgently required.

For years the Royal Adelaide Hospital has been overcrowded and the demand on its staff and capacity has proved to be beyond reasonable limits. While this state of affairs exists people who should gain early admission for attention cannot do so. Like many other members I have received notice of many cases where a person requiring an urgent operation cannot gain admission to the Royal Adelaide Hospital. I commend the doctors, nurses, and other staff there for the excellent part they have played in making that hospital one of the best of its kind in Australia; but because of this overcrowding the Government must take early steps to speed up work on the Western Districts Hospital, which, when completed, will accommodate about 450 patients, including both general and maternity cases. These facilities are urgently required, and the Government, through the Building Materials Office, should allocate the necessary building materials for the work.

Today the housing of our old people is an important matter which is frequently mentioned by members both in this House and in another place; but action is needed rather than words. It is regrettable but true that when some people reach the evening of their lives they are kicked from pillar to post—a very poor reward for the pioneering service they have given to this country. At that time of life they should receive the best of attention; but because of existing circumstances they are not treated as they should be. I understand the Housing Trust has a plan whereby aged couples will be provided for. I commend the trust in that regard and hope that the plan will soon be working satisfactorily; but I am concerned about persons left on their own because their families have died or because their children do not want them in their old age. It is our duty to do all we can to offer facilities to the aged folk so that they will not have to suffer at an important time of their lives.

In Semaphore the Bower cottages have been established as a result of a legacy left by Mr. Bower many years ago. There six men and six women are accommodated for a payment of only 3s. a week each, which includes the use of electric light and power. Something along that line is required in other places. Twelve months ago I had the opportunity of looking through the Ballarat home for the aged which accommodates about 420. It is an excellent home and has reading rooms, a garden, a bowling green and other amenities. This has been made possible by the wisdom and charity of the people of Ballarat backed by the Victorian Government which grants the institution about £50,000 a year. The remainder of the cost is raised by public subscription with the help of Victorian radio stations. It is an education to see the satisfied expression on the faces of the inmates. That home is a model which should be emulated by this State in an effort to help our old folk. At Semaphore South has been established Wesley House, conducted by the Rev. A. D. McCutcheon. At present it accommodates 12 old people, and the reverend gentleman has now appealed to South Australians for £15,000 so that another 40 or 50 people may be housed there. When that spirit is shown by an individual or an organization the Government should do everything possible to sponsor the cause. It would be a very fine gesture by the Government if it subsidized such institutions on a pound for pound basis.

On many occasions I have referred to the advisability and wisdom of granting old age pensioners concession rates on trams and trains. I realize the Government has not a direct say with regard to the trams, but with regard to the railways these folk could be helped. In New South Wales pensioners are allowed to travel on the railways for half fare, and that is all I ask for. It cannot be suggested our railways are overcrowded, and even if 40 or 50 pensioners were carried on the one train, the railways would not lose. At the same time, the real pioneers of the State would be given a helping hand.

The member for Hindmarsh referred to the Government's contribution to the Fire Brigades Board. From time to time that subscription has been raised, but in my opinion it is still lagging behind what could be considered to be reasonable. This year the grant has been raised from £12,000 to £30,000. The councils are carrying a burden because of the failure of the Government to contribute an

adequate amount. I am naturally concerned with the contribution by the Port Adelaide corporation, which this year is £10,000. This payment is burdensome to the corporation and will result in restricting its construction of public works. I appeal to the Government to give councils some relief from this burden. The *Fire Queen* in the Port Adelaide river is used in case of outbreaks of fire on the river and the corporation has to pay hundreds of pounds towards its maintenance. I claim that this obligation should devolve upon the Harbors Board and South Australian insurance companies. I realize that these companies are already paying something towards the upkeep of the *Fire Queen*, but the corporation should not have to meet part of that cost, because the function of the float is the preservation of the wharves and the cargoes on ships on the river.

It has been suggested that some suburban fire brigade stations should be closed, but that would be a tragedy considering their part in the preservation of life and property. Almost three years ago the Fire Brigades Board decided to close the Semaphore Station and indeed did so for about eight or nine weeks; but during that period the people in my district showed their resentment in no uncertain manner. Thousands signed petitions praying that the board should re-open the station, and because of that agitation the station was re-opened. It is true that it was closed for economic reasons, but the preservation of life and property is more important than the economics of this country. If any move is made to close any fire brigade station in my area I shall raise my voice to oppose such a retrograde step. I notice that £2,000 is provided for the purchase of land at Fort Glanville from the Commonwealth Government for use by the South Australian Tourist Bureau. The fort has an historical background and therefore I take it the Tourist Bureau desires to maintain its historical significance. However, I appeal to the Premier to have the fort buildings used for housing spastic children, who are a burden upon their parents, particularly the mother who has to care for them day and night. This continued strain often results in the mother breaking down. So the Spastic Children's Welfare Association desires a home in South Australia where the children can be domiciled for two or three months to ease their parents of the continuous burden. Although Fort

Glanville has an historical background it would be in the interests of humanity to use it to help these suffering children.

Price control is a very contentious matter, but I shall refer only to one commodity, namely, potatoes. It is impossible to buy them at Semaphore. About a fortnight ago I asked a question about potatoes being retailed for 8d. a lb, although the price fixed is only 4½d. I have no desire to blame the retail greengrocer who sells at the excess price, although he is a party to the offence. He is faced with the position of paying heavily on the black market to satisfy his customers, and to reimburse himself must charge 8d. a lb. The price for wholesale distribution amounts to £35 a ton, which is a little less than 4d. a lb. Some of the offenders in my district bought potatoes on the black market at 7½d. a lb., which works out at £70 a ton. In his reply to my question the Premier said that if I would give him detailed information he would have the matter attended to. I did not supply the information and perhaps to that extent I was remiss, but I feel that the Prices Branch should be cognizant of these things and members of Parliament should not have to tell them their job, although it is true that we should co-operate. The black marketing of potatoes is rampant in this State and I therefore ask the Premier to give attention to it. My contention is that if a grower receives £35 a ton for his potatoes he is being amply paid. I was in the game myself some years ago as a traveller for a wholesale firm and sold potatoes for £3 15s. a ton, although I realize that on today's cost of commodities and labour that would be insufficient. With a retail price of 4½d. a pound and a wholesale price of £35 a ton the retailer is getting a margin of 25 per cent, which should be ample.

I notice with satisfaction that the South Australian Amateur Swimming Association is to receive a grant of £200 this year compared with £100 last year. As a life member of that organization I express appreciation to the Government for its gesture. This body is playing an important part in the teaching of swimming and lifesaving, and I am pleased the Government has recognized the wonderful service it is rendering. I was disappointed to see the Royal Lifesaving Association is to receive only £300, which amount has been paid for a number of years. This organization, like the swimming association, is doing excellent work. Its members patrol the beaches between Largs

North and Marino during the summer and by their vigils are doing their part to protect life. I feel that the Government would be well advised to give this matter earnest consideration next year and increase the grant.

Mr. Riches—Where does the £300 go?

Mr. TAPPING—It is spent on administration. Uniforms have to be bought for teams to take part in competitions and telephone fees and other expenses have to be met. Much has been said about a co-ordinated ambulance service. This is a welcome innovation and a step in the right direction. In saying that I do not condemn or disparage the fine service rendered by the ambulance services up to the present. They have given of their best and many of their volunteers spend hours every week in the metropolitan area to keep the service in operation. I pay tribute to those men who have helped over the years. However, the job of providing an ambulance service in the metropolitan area has proved beyond their capacity because of insufficient manpower and conveyances. I appreciate the Government's action in setting out to provide a reasonable ambulance service throughout the State. As one who comes from an industrial area I can say that the Port Adelaide and Semaphore districts have been neglected, whereas, I suppose there is a greater need in an industrial area like Port Adelaide for an ambulance service than in any other part of the State. Because of the danger associated with waterfront work numerous accidents occur and it is unfortunate that on occasions when an ambulance is wanted, particularly at week-ends, it is at Hindmarsh. I predict that when the new system is operating Port Adelaide will have an ambulance available day and night. Sometimes because an ambulance has been slow in arriving after an accident a person has lost his life or the delay has made the doctor's job in retaining life extremely difficult. On a previous occasion I referred to the need for an ambulance to serve the industries established at Osborne. There has been a greater advance of industry in that area than in any other part of South Australia. The Electricity Trust's establishment has grown by leaps and bounds and employs 1,500, and the South Australian Gas Company and I.C.I. also have many men employed, yet no ambulance is available there in the event of an emergency. I have been approached by members of the Electricity Trust urging that I do everything possible to bring before the Government the need for an ambulance service at Osborne. Some of the officers of the trust have told me that their

ideas coincide with those of the men. I realize it will be some time before the co-ordinated ambulance service is operating satisfactorily, but I hope the claims I have made on behalf of Osborne employees will be given attention by the Government.

We are all very proud of the scheme submitted by officers of the Harbors Board for a modern layout for Port Adelaide and Outer Harbour. From what I have read of other sea ports, and having seen the plan prepared for Port Adelaide and Outer Harbour, I consider that our ports will be amongst the best in the world. It is regrettable that in undertaking this scheme some fine buildings will have to be demolished. Already three hotels have been knocked down and I believe two more are to go. The Foresters Hall, which would be worth about £45,000, is also to be demolished in the next four or five weeks, but such things of necessity are associated with progress. We welcome this harbor improvement scheme because we know when it is operating the turn-round of ships will be better than it is today. We all agree, if we are fair, that the reason for the hold-up of shipping transport at Port Adelaide is the inadequate accommodation at the wharves and insufficient space to cater for steamers, resulting in many of them being held up at the roadstead waiting for admission to the harbour. As many as five wharves at Port Adelaide cannot be used because of their state of disrepair. We can look to the future with pride and pleasure knowing that the slow turn-round of ships will have been rectified when the Harbors Board is able to carry out its scheme. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—This afternoon, in a comprehensive speech, the Leader of the Opposition gave a general review of the State's position. The question of increased water and sewer rates must be considered by the Government, particularly in its effect upon the cost of living. It was indicated at the recent Agricultural Council meeting in Canberra that the price of wheat for home consumption is to be increased. I do not know to what extent this will affect South Australia, but it must have a bearing on this and future Budgets. It was also indicated that the Commonwealth Government proposed to subsidize poultry farmers, but apparently no consideration was given to the question of pig meat production. The Prime Minister is reported as having said that pig meat production was more or less a subsidiary line of the

dairying industry. Recently I made a special plea for assistance to small mixed farmers. Much was said in the Address in Reply debate about food production in South Australia, but I do not know what effect this will have on poultry farmers. Apparently they are to receive a subsidy to enable them to keep on with egg production. The whole matter requires a lot of straightening out.

I am particularly interested in the retail price of bread, but have not seen any report as to what effect the home consumption price of wheat will have on it. Suggestions have been made about the retail price of eggs, but it would appear that pig meat will be outside the ambit of consumers' purchasing power. Not long ago Government supporters said that South Australia should not have anything to do with price control. It was only a few weeks ago that the dairying industry became the greatest of all political footballs. Great fears were expressed by Government supporters when members of the Labor Party sought to extend the provisions of the Industrial Code to rural workers. Government supporters raised their hands in horror and were aghast at the proposal. What conditions are those engaged in the poultry industry to work under? How can we measure up to what is a fair living wage for poultry producers? I recall the statement made by certain members that farmers would be unable to begin harvesting before 11 a.m. if an award were made to cover farm workers. It would appear that the Government will have to recast its Budget or introduce another. All industries affected must be considered and I do not know what the position of dairymen will be. They have been promised a certain increase but apparently have not received anything notwithstanding that the price of butter has been increased. Why this delay?

Mr. Whittle—Your suggestion that dairymen will not receive an increased price is wrong.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—As I read the press report dairymen have not received any increase. I do not know whether they are to receive retrospective payment, but consumers will be asked in no uncertain terms to meet any increase the moment that the price of butter rises. It is the case of the basic wage endeavouring to catch up with ever increasing prices. This Government opposed Federal price control. The public has been informed by the Federal Treasurer, Sir Arthur Fadden, that they can expect a 10 per cent increase in taxation. These mounting costs must have a detrimental effect on people endeavouring to pur-

chase homes. The Commonwealth Government has intimated that it will increase the amount of loan money to purchasers to enable them to build homes, but those who could borrow money at 3½ per cent interest will soon find that the extra money will cost them 4½ per cent or 5 per cent. How can any person in the middle income group, with a wife and family, be expected to build a house for £2,500 and meet interest on it at 4½ or 5 per cent? The outlook for those people is certainly not rosy. The Liberal and Country Parties in 1948 said the States could effectively control prices and put value back into the pound, but they have failed to do so. I am very concerned about the plight of people desiring to build homes. I have frequently referred to the shortage of burnt red bricks. The Deputy Director of Industrial Development, Mr. C. W. Branson, was reported last Friday as saying it was necessary that a modern brick plant capable of producing 40,000,000 bricks a year be established because South Australia needs at least 155,000,000 bricks annually. All the Government has done is to increase the price of bricks at the kiln by 11s. 6d. a thousand, with higher delivery charges. The high prices of £13 0s. 6d. a thousand for special bricks, £12 5s. for outsides and £11 10s. 6d. for insides will force up the cost of homes even more. Despite the shortage of bricks for homes and other buildings the Government stood idly by when a Hoffman kiln was demolished some time ago. Because of the shortage of materials and their high cost the Government or its agents, the South Australian Housing Trust and the State Bank, should manufacture bricks, but the Government is living in the past. I have been told by the Premier that in the dim and distant past one Government went to the people with the policy of establishing its own brick-yards and was defeated and that consequently his Government will not produce its own bricks. Is it afraid to face the electors on this issue, or are the electorates so gerrymandered that it does not need to face up to vital questions?

This afternoon the Premier informed me of the method of issuing building permits, but after getting permits the onus is on the prospective home builder to obtain materials. Mr. Branson said that more than 50 per cent of the 6,000 to 7,000 homes to be erected this year will be constructed with cement bricks or blocks. This will result in a constant maintenance cost. The Government should be alive to the requirements of the building industry.

Whether the Government will now more favourably consider matters brought forward by back benches is questionable. An adequate supply of basic materials for additional homes and other buildings is one of our greatest problems. It takes more than homes to make a country. Last week I was present when the Minister of Education opened a school in my electorate. He said however good a school building might be it was necessary for the children to have a good home life, and a religious background. How can we expect such a desirable state of affairs if the Government does not attempt to produce the necessary materials? The member for Hindmarsh said about 200 persons with experience in the brick industry were prepared to offer their services, but the Government did not take advantage of that offer, and continues to neglect its obligations to the people.

It seems that there are now more commissioned officers in the Police Department than rank and file. Constables were usually employed in directing traffic at city intersections, but those duties are now often carried out by officers. I do not know whether the Government believes it will create a more efficient force by increasing the number of commissioned officers. Why is there a shortage of policemen? I think it was suggested that the number employed in traffic patrol duties could be reduced by equipping the men with solo machines instead of motorcycle outfits. With the provision of solo machines in place of motorcycle and sidecar patrols one would expect that some officers would be released for other duties, but apparently the police force is not sufficiently attractive to induce recruits to enter, and the shortage of officers persists. I am forced to speculate as to the reason for this. Are we offering sufficient remuneration? Do officers have to pay for their own uniforms, irrespective of their family obligations? Such matters should be examined to see whether it is possible to stimulate recruiting. I am happy to know that some of the police stations in my own electorate have been supplied with motorcycle and sidecar outfits and trust that it will not be long before all suburban stations are so equipped. At the same time I hope it will not be necessary to take further officers away from these stations, thereby throwing many of the duties on the wives of the officers-in-charge, for I am of the opinion that they should be paid the equivalent of at least half their husband's salary for looking after the

station in his absence. According to figures presented in the Auditor-General's report today the revenue from the winning bets tax for the period between December 1, 1950, and June 30, 1951, totalled over £355,000, of which the Government received £323,593. This must have exceeded the most optimistic expectations of those who supported this legislation last year. However, the same report indicates that fewer bets were made, and that more was invested in the totalizator. This makes me curious to know whether illegal betting has increased since this winning bets tax was introduced, for this has an important bearing on the work of the police force. Perhaps the Treasurer could ascertain whether illegal betting is being carried on extensively in some of the bigger establishments in the metropolitan area.

Mr. O'Halloran—Do you think he would know?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I believe that Ministers, if approached in the right way, have facilities for ascertaining facts, so the Treasurer may be able to ascertain from the Chief Secretary whether the Police Department considers that illegal betting is being carried on in a big way, for I have a suspicion that some very big illegal betting transactions have gone on since the winning bets tax was introduced, particularly as it was imposed upon the punters own investment.

This afternoon I listened with interest to the Leader of the Opposition when he referred to decentralization, and to Mr. Shannon, who went to great lengths to defend this Government's attempts at decentralization. He suggested that the fact that the Government had been responsible for the establishment of an electricity power station at Port Augusta was an indication of the benefits which could be expected from secondary industries within the northern areas. Another matter which agitates my mind is the proposed re-organization of the Warren water reticulation system. I understand that it is proposed to relay the trunk mains and that eventually the Mannum-Adelaide main will guarantee a supply of water to the Warren reservoir. This project is expected to cost about £3,000,000. Through the improved Warren system a few wealthy landowners will get a greater security and they will be able to change from wheat-growing to sheep grazing because of the assured water supply. I cannot agree with Mr. Shannon that the expenditure of the estimated £3,000,000 will create new industries.

In fact, I do not think it will mean the engagement of one extra man in rural production.

Mr. Michael—The honourable member knows nothing about the matter.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Perhaps the honourable member will be able to enlighten us when he speaks in this debate. If wheat-growers are to get an increased price for their product the men who will do the work of improving the Warren system will have their cost of living increased. This will mean increased wages, so it will become necessary later for Parliament to vote additional money to meet the cost of improving the Warren system. I trust that the Government will take note of what I have said, and that steps will be taken to develop the brick industry to a greater extent.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—As the Budget was introduced only on Thursday last I have not had time to make a thorough examination of it. During the 20 years from 1931-32 the State has experienced eight surpluses and 12 deficits, and in two years expenditure has equalled income. The deficits have totalled £4,406,140 and the surpluses £2,218,627, leaving an overall deficit of £2,187,513. For the year ended June 30, 1951, there was a surplus of £229,529 in State accounts, which the Treasurer intends to carry forward as revenue into the present financial year. I am a new member in this place and I do not know the policy adopted in this regard in years gone by, but I think that any surplus in State accounts should be used to reduce the State debt. When a taxpayer, after a period of unemployment or sickness running him into debt with a storekeeper, again has an income he uses some of it to pay off his debt and not to meet his next account. That should apply in connection with the State debt. In London the State has a loan of £2,737,500 at 3½ per cent which the Treasurer can pay off at any time after February 1, 1951, and a loan in New York of £505,908 at 3½ per cent, repayable at any time on or after June 1, 1949. In Australia there is a loan of £6,314,099 at 3½ per cent, repayable at any time on or after November 15, 1950. Last year's surplus should have been used to pay off some of this debt, instead of being used as revenue in this financial year. I feel that during such times as the present the State should balance its budget. The budget discloses a surplus of £15,000, but taking into

account the £229,000 carried forward from last year, the Treasurer is actually budgeting for a deficit of over £200,000.

The Treasurer has budgeted for railway revenue of £14,200,000, but included in that amount is a financial transfer of over £5,000,000. The estimated expenditure for that department is £12,683,248. It appears that the Treasurer is budgeting for a surplus in that department of over £1,500,000; but I see no reason why he should budget for such a surplus when over £5,000,000 of the revenue of that department is in the form of a transfer. That sum comes from other departments for which a surplus is shown. For instance, revenue in the Engineering and Water Supply Department is estimated at over £1,800,000 and expenditure at £1,406,956, resulting in a surplus of almost £400,000. I do not know whether the Treasurer expects that surplus as a result of the extended housing programme or from additional charges. If the latter, such a step might seriously affect some prospective home builders who would be faced with increased charges at a time when every house is needed.

In my electorate every week people are leaving homes. In some cases the owners are offering the tenants money to vacate premises. The moment they leave the front of the house is knocked down without the permission of the Treasurer as the Minister administering the Building Materials Act. Later those one-time homes are occupied as factories, offices or storerooms. Where they are converted to offices or storerooms the same revenue is not derived by the Engineering and Water Supply Department. In such a case people are made homeless or must occupy rooms or Housing Trust emergency homes to the exclusion of another family. Each case means the loss of another home to the State. This afternoon the member for Unley said the housing position is becoming worse, and I agree with him. Today I spent hours in interviews in the precincts of this House on this problem. I have been told of a case in which Mr. Ziesing, S.M., has issued an order on the application of a man called Kakkoufas who has been in this country for some years but who brought his wife and children out from Italy only six or seven months ago. Yesterday he applied for occupation of his house and he has obtained right to possession from December 10. The present tenant, an Australian, has occupied the premises for seven years and has a wife and family; yet the new owner with only 18 months

ownership can obtain possession through a court within only a few months of bringing his family from Italy.

Other members are continually faced with similar cases. On October 3 the Adelaide City Council gave a family comprising a father, mother and four children seven days' notice to vacate their sleeping quarters under a staircase because of the unhealthy and overcrowded conditions. I brought that case to the notice of the Housing Trust to see what could be done. It is not unusual for 14 or 16 people to be living in an ordinary-sized house in Adelaide. I feel the Government is not doing all it could to house the people. There is no reason why it cannot follow the lead of the Commonwealth Government and consult all sections of the building industry as to what can be done to promote greater production of building materials and homes. The Government should set up an advisory panel composed of building contractors, business people, and manufacturers of bricks and cement which would have no powers of administration but could advise the Government as to whether every effort was being made to provide building materials to produce homes. There is nothing which cannot be accomplished if the Government has the will. I remember the time when the Japanese were knocking at the front door of Australia and Mr. Norman Makin became Minister for Munitions. In those days we had practically no munition factories in Australia, despite the fact we had been at war for two or three years, and those few factories we did possess were in the eastern States. The moment the Curtin Government took over and Mr. Makin became Minister for Munitions it was said that factories would be built to manufacture sup-

plies, and they were built. There is no reason why this Government cannot say, "We have not enough homes, but we are going to get them." There is no problem the Government cannot solve if it has sufficient will power.

The Adelaide Town Hall is used not only as a polling booth but also for the declaration of polls. To reach the polling booths one has to climb a number of steps and this is beyond the capacity of many aged and sick people. When they are confronted with the stairs they are forced to go elsewhere to vote. At the recent referendum I had to advise some of these people to go to the Currie Street polling booth and elsewhere. At the declaration of my poll last year a lady who attended it suffered a stroke as a result of climbing the stairs. Provision should be made for voting for aged and sick people on the ground floor of the town hall, and declarations of polls should be held in a building more accessible. Recently I asked the Premier whether free tram and railway transport could be provided for aged people, but this was refused. South Australia should follow the example of New South Wales, which allows pensioners to travel at half fare if they produce their pension cards. If primary producers are entitled to railway concessional rates for the carriage of their produce, particularly during prosperous years, surely those people who have spent their life in the interests of the State are entitled to concessions on our transport system. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 9.40 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, October 17, at 2 p.m.