HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, November 7, 1951.

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

WINE INDUSTRY STRIKE.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Today's *Advertiser* contained the following report:—

Watersiders Ban Wine Cargo.—The freighter *Balarr* will sail from Port Adelaide today for Brisbane with a consignment of liqueurs, whisky and gin intended for South Australia. Watersiders refused to unload the consignment under the ban on the handling of wines and spirits imposed by the Trades and Labor Council's disputes committee.

I ask the Premier what steps the Government is prepared to take to bring this unfortunate and illegal strike to some form of conclusion, and how long he intends to allow it to sabotage the State's economy?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The matter raised by the honourable member has been giving me considerable concern. I do not think any honourable member does not appreciate the fact that it is a most serious matter when a very important industry of the State is held up indefinitely on a strike which appears to have no solution, and where the grounds of the strike have been altered from day to day.

Mr. Fred Walsh—They have not.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—They have been altered twice to my certain knowledge. The union is seeking to enforce its will on the community, not by going to arbitration—the proper method of dealing with this matter—but by creating an entirely unlawful situation which amounts to a ban on the lawful handling of commodities. I assure the honourable member that I am just as concerned as he is. Now I find that quite recently, in the South-East, this ban has applied, not only to commodities produced in this State, but has even been extended to commodities coming from Melbourne by road into Mount Gambier. I assure the honourable member that this matter is being looked at both from the point of view of what industrial action should be taken and whether there is any legislation which could usefully be brought to bear on it.

SLAUGHTERING AT ABATTOIRS.

Mr. GOLDNEY—I understand trouble is being experienced in dealing with stock at the Metropolitan Abattoirs. This is naturally causing concern to stockowners in country areas and to meat consumers generally. Has the Minister of Agriculture a statement to make on this matter?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—Some trouble has developed at the Abattoirs recently and it would appear that pin-pricking tactics are being adopted by the men there. After the statement last week by the union that the men were prepared to work on the week-ends the Operational Committee made it possible for considerable numbers of livestock to come in by road and rail. The "co-operation" of the men was shown by their walking out at mid-day Friday instead of working on the week-end as had been promised. The chairman of the Abattoirs Board has reported to me that this morning the men refused to man the chains to capacity, and the slaughtermen who were taken off the chains asked for work in other branches on full pay. This was refused. The question of granting three weeks' leave and 6s. a week increase all round remains in the hands of the Wages Board or higher authority, and the Abattoirs Board does not intend to interfere with the will of the country as expressed through arbitration. If the men refused to abide by the terms of the award to man the chains to full capacity and cut full tally as provided in the determination, the Board would immediately give a week's notice of dismissal to the slaughtermen and other labour, for example, drovers, etc. The matter is now in the hands of the Abattoirs Board and it is hoped that common-sense and wiser counsels will prevail and that the men will abide by the decision of the Wages Board and go back to work, rather than hold up the meat supply of the city of Adelaide and the slaughtering of export lambs.

FRANKLIN HARBOUR VERMIN DISTRICT.

Mr. PEARSON—The Franklin Harbour vermin district, according to my information, ceased to be a vermin district in April, 1947, but vermin rates are still being levied on landholders within the area. If the Vermin Board has been abolished and its services to ratepayers discontinued, on what authority are such rates still being levied? Can the Minister of Lands say whether it is the policy of his department, or the body vested with the authority of levying vermin rates, to continue to render the service to the landholders, or is it intended to discontinue levying those rates?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I am rather surprised at the statement of the honourable member, but I will look into the matter and give him a reply tomorrow.

FLOODING OF LOWER MURRAY.

Mr. DUNN—Has the Minister a reply to the question I asked last week referring to a report of salt water having flowed over the Goolwa barrage, thus causing the death of fish?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Yes. The salt water flowed into the river because the barrages were opened to let floodwaters out. The fish killed were mostly inedible, and of the carp variety. The Engineer-in-Chief reports:—

The barrages have and are continuing to efficiently perform the functions for which they were designed and built. The gate and stop log openings are continually altered to meet the needs of the moment, but the barrages cannot be opened and closed twice daily to cope with high and low tide conditions. There has been a strong river flow for many months and the barrage openings have been regulated to pass this flow without raising the level of the lakes too high, but at the same time to maintain the lakes at a level sufficient to prevent the ingress of large volumes of sea water. If the barrages had been closed during the gale to which Mr. Armfield refers, the lakes and lower river would have risen to a higher level and greatly increased the danger to the reclaimed swamp areas and to property and roads in the vicinity of the lakes. During this period a mixture of salt and fresh water flowed at times upstream through the barrages, but the quantity which flowed downstream was far greater than the quantity which passed upstream. The fish which died were mainly non-edible carp and the mortality is always high with these fish when salt water passes upstream through the barrages. As an indication of the effect of high winds and the impossibility of maintaining stable conditions at all times, I refer to the strong west wind which occurred yesterday (6th). In the morning the wind was from the north and north-east, and by 11 a.m. it had veered around to the west. Within two hours the river level at Goolwa fell 2ft. and it was impossible to prevent some salt water from passing upstream. This same wind, of course, caused the high level which inundated the main road near Meningie, causing the diversion of traffic through Coonalpyn. I have been in touch with the district clerk, district council of Meningie, who advises that conditions have now improved and traffic can follow the normal route with care.

DOG NUISANCE AT SEWAGE FARM.

Mr. STEPHENS—I was informed yesterday that a number of sheep are paddocked at the Islington sewage farm, and that for some time they have been attacked and some have been destroyed by dogs. I believe that during the last three months at least 68 have been killed. The owners of the sheep do not know how to deal with the dogs. They are afraid if they shoot at them with a rifle they may injure persons or horses. Has the Minister received any report about dogs molesting the sheep and, if not, will he make inquiries about it? Can the Government do anything to protect the sheep?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The control of dogs is dealt with by the Registration of Dogs Act and is entirely the responsibility of the local council. When the department leases parts of the sewage farm it does not know how many sheep are on them, nor how many have been killed by dogs or otherwise. It is not in any way the responsibility of the Government to take care of the sheep or control the dogs. The matter is one between the lessees and the local council.

PORT GERMEIN RAILWAY CROSSING.

Mr. HEASLIP—The district council of Port Germein was requested by the Commonwealth Railways to close a railway crossing at the entrance to the town, but if it were closed it would virtually mean the death-knell of the township, so the council refused to do so. The Commonwealth Railways have now intimated that they will hold the Port Germein district council liable if any accident should occur at that crossing after its refusal to close it. Can the Minister of Railways give any information regarding the position of the Port Germein district council in this matter?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Following representations made on behalf of the council through the honourable member, I took up the question with the Commissioner of Highways and Director of Local Government. I concur in his report, which is as follows:—

The council agreed (rightly or wrongly) to the closing of the crossing, but on further consideration withdrew its agreement before any action had taken place. Therefore, the *status quo* remains, and I cannot see that the legal liability of the council can be thereby increased. To the best of my knowledge, if the council adheres to its latest decision, the crossing could not be closed against its wishes. The Highways Department has always assumed the crossing would remain open and as far as I am aware, no particular hazards exist other than inherent in all open crossings.

COPPER ALLOCATIONS.

Mr. McALEES—A report of Mr. Barton Pope's address to a women's social gathering appeared in yesterday's *Advertiser*. He stated that if copper were discovered at Kadina, Moonta, or Wallaroo it could not be used in Australia. I do not know his authority for making that statement. Can the Premier clarify the position?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The matter to which Mr. Pope referred is not under the control of the State Government, but I believe

the facts are that an international conference allocated between the respective nations shares of certain commodities in short supply, and which are required for military purposes. Some nations are producing large quantities of one material and other nations are producing large quantities of other materials. The conference to which I referred was an international materials conference and was held with the object of providing the utmost assistance in the re-armament programmes of the free nations. I think Australia received allocations of copper, of which she does not produce sufficient for her own requirements, and of tin, rubber, oil and fuels which are not freely available on the world's markets. In return, I understand Australia gave concessions in connection with zinc and lead, of which she is a large exporter. Mr. Pope probably had in mind the fact that the amount of copper to be used in Australia has been decided by that authority and that if we produced more in Australia less would be made available to us from overseas. Assuming Australia's allocation was 60,000 tons and we produced 10,000 tons more than we are at present that amount would be deducted from the total now allotted to us from overseas.

WAIKERIE FERRY CAUSEWAY.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The Highway Department has gone to considerable trouble and expense to keep the Waikerie ferry operating by building a causeway over a large lagoon. The causeway has operated successfully for quite a time, but now, with the continuous high river, the edges of the causeway are getting sodden. Motorists who do not know the conditions try to overtake and pass other vehicles on the causeway. This was never intended, and, as a result, on Monday at least five motorists were bogged on the track, and on the following morning two more were bogged, one of whom was myself. If a sign could be put at either end of the causeway pointing out that this is only a single track road, and that no passing should be indulged in, it would save trouble. Will the Minister of Local Government take steps to instruct the responsible authority to erect such signs?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The honourable member mentioned this matter to me yesterday and, in pursuance of the conversation, I took up the matter with the Highways Commissioner, who informed me that the road in question is under the control of the local council. In order to try to facilitate the progress of people over the causeway he tried to get in touch with the council, but because of the breakdown in telephonic communications resulting from the storm he was unable to do so. As early as possible he got in touch with the council and anything that we can do will be done.

KANGAROO ISLAND STOCK ROUTES.

Mr. BROOKMAN—Can the Minister of Lands say whether the Lands Development Executive has considered the provision of travelling stock routes on Kangaroo Island? I do not mean stock routes wider than the normal width of existing roads, but I suggest the cleaning up of the sides of the roads, which in many cases are carrying bull-oaks right to the edge of the roads. It would be difficult to travel stock along those roads, quite apart from their getting any food. Consideration could be given to providing small areas where stock could be camped at night. At present the distances from Parndana to the airfield are considerable, and in some cases stock would have to be driven up to 20 miles to the present blocks. There will be greater distances to be covered later as development proceeds.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have not been advised that that aspect of the matter has been considered, but to widen the roads at this stage would be costly and almost impossible.

Mr. Brookman—That is not suggested.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—It might be possible to have suitable camping sites, in the event of settlers having to drove sheep from Parndana to the airfield or to Kingscote, the natural shipping port. If there is any request from the settlers I will be happy to take it up with the Lands Development Executive.

PRIMARY PRODUCTION.

Mr. QUIRKE—In view of the publicity being given to the pronounced decline in the production of many essential primary foodstuffs and the static position of other forms of food production, can the Premier say what action is being taken to increase the production of essential foodstuffs, particularly protective foods like fruit and vegetables, eggs and dairy products, in order to meet the demands of our increasing population?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—By various methods the Government has assisted industries of the type mentioned by the honourable member. It is continuing to develop irrigation areas along the River Murray which produce some of the protective foods, and in doing that it is assuming a considerable amount of financial responsibility, towards which the taxpayer has

to make some contribution. Where the Government can get suitable land it is actively undertaking land development. In connection with water and electricity reticulation, the Government is seeking to provide more amenities in the country, and make country conditions more acceptable. If the honourable member casts his mind back over the great progress which has been made, particularly in water reticulation, in recent years he will agree that production will be stepped up. Production figures can be rather deceptive. For example, there has been in South Australia a big decline in the area sown to wheat, and in wheat production but, on the other hand, there has been a very big increase in the area sown to barley and oats. The figures for the last 10 years reveal that the areas sown to wheat, barley and oats have shown little variation from year to year, and that there has not been an overall decline of any moment; there has been a fluctuation of about 200,000 acres either up or down in that period. At one time we were growing too much wheat, and the Agricultural Department is to be congratulated on having trained farmers to undertake diversified farming and to carry more stock. If we had kept on planting large acreages of wheat the fertility of the soil would have been permanently impaired. As regards non-irrigated areas, the Government will actively search for land capable of development and, either with or without Commonwealth assistance, it will place on the land suitable settlers, giving ex-soldiers a preference, and when the irrigation plantings allocated under the present agreements have been fulfilled further steps will be taken to increase the irrigation areas until we are in a position to claim our full share of the River Murray waters. The Government will continue the policy of attempting to take to the country amenities to make life more attractive to country people, and to develop country areas by providing houses, schools, electricity and water.

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Some time ago the Minister of Lands informed Parliament that he intended to send a circular letter to all applicants under the war service land settlement scheme. Can the Minister say whether that has been done, and, if so, what results are now to hand? Has he now any information as to the number of applicants for both irrigation and dry land farming blocks who are still interested?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The information with regard to settlers for irrigation blocks is practically completed and, speaking from memory, withdrawals of applicants who are not now interested amount to about 30 per cent. The information regarding applicants for dry land blocks should be completed within the next few weeks. When I have it I will be happy to supply particulars to the honourable member.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Now that the figures with regard to irrigation blocks are practically completed, does the Minister intend to apply to the Commonwealth for further allocations of horticultural and viticultural plantings?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I assure the honourable member that the Government will take up the question of a further quota of plantings with the Commonwealth Government.

BETTING CONTROL BOARD RULES: MINIMUM BET.

Adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. Tapping—

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

(Continued from September 19. Page 612.)

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Gumeracha—Premier and Treasurer)—The main debate on this matter took place during my absence, and I have not had the opportunity to go fully into members' remarks. The motion seeks the disallowance of a regulation of the Betting Control Board which provides for a minimum bet of 2s. The regulation has operated for a long time, and as far as I am aware, no objections have been raised against it. I find that some of the statements by the honourable member in moving the motion are contradicted by the secretary of the Betting Control Board. I believe some of those statements were made under a misapprehension and the board has assured me that they do not desire either to increase the volume of betting, or to bring in additional revenues. The regulation is an attempt to protect revenues already provided by Parliament. I am also informed that the 2s. minimum now provided is still lower than the amount provided for totalizator betting, where the minimum involved is 2s. 6d., and 5s. for an each-way bet. Having regard to the altered value of money the board does not believe the regulation is wrong, and still strongly supports it. I do not understand all the ramifications involved in connection with

this matter, but I do not believe there is any public demand for this regulation to be rescinded.

Mr. Stephens—Where would you hear of such a demand?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If there is any matter causing irritation or concern members usually get letters or requests for interviews from their constituents. I have had no indications of any personal or public opposition to this regulation; therefore I ask the House to support the authority appointed by Parliament, which is independent in its view, and whose function it is to adjudicate in these matters.

Mr. TAPPING (Semaphore)—I thank members for giving deep consideration to this matter which might appear trivial on the surface. I desire to rebut some of the arguments against the motion. The Premier said that he did not know much about the matter being discussed; in making that admission he weakens his opposition to my case. As a speaker entrusted to reply on behalf of those opposing the motion his attempt was very weak. He told us that the public has not voiced any strong disapproval of the regulation, but I remind him that people have written letters to the press, to some of which I referred, stating that it was unfair to deprive people with humble means of a bet of only 1s. I believe those people have a good argument and that four or five persons wrote letters to the press on the matter. Hundreds of others share the disapproval expressed through the newspapers. As a rule only a few letters appear in the press on controversial subjects, for most people suffer in silence. It does not need many words from me to rebut the statements made by the Premier. The member for Prospect said he was a member of the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation and also said he knew nothing about betting. I agree that it does not need much knowledge of the sport to be able to express in this House approval or disapproval of the regulation in question, but at least Mr. Whittle made some attempt to say why he opposed my motion. He referred to the two shilings minimum bet which has been in operation since December, 1950. Parliament prorogued at the end of November last. I believe betting taxation legislation and the subject of my motion are interwoven. I am concerned that the regulation in question was gazetted two weeks after Parliament prorogued and Parliament was not told the full position when it discussed the betting taxation legislation last year. Had the regulation been promulgated when that legislation was before the House many members would have expressed their disapproval. That regulation should not have been framed after Parliament rose. Mr. Whittle quoted extracts from evidence given by Mr. Alexander, secretary of the Betting Control Board, and tried to establish his case by saying that the average bet had increased from 17s. 2d. in 1933-34 to £1 6s. 6d. in 1949-50. If we consider the depreciation in the value of money the statements made by the member for Prospect strengthen my case. Mr. Whittle also quoted Mr. Alexander's remarks about betting shops, but members know that they have not been operating in the metropolitan area for some years.

Mr. O'Halloran—That was a red herring.

Mr. TAPPING—I agree. He then referred to the splitting of bets. Since I spoke on this motion I have found I made a statement that was not quite correct and have to offer Mr. Alexander an apology. I said that some people, according to Mr. Alexander, would back four or five horses in a race as a means of evading taxation. Mr. Alexander has written me a letter saying it is not a question of how many horses an investor backs, but the fact he backs one horse on three or four occasions, so if a man were allowed to invest one shilling he might go to three or four bookmakers and thus evade paying the taxation. I listened to Mr. Shannon's remarks intently, but was not able to decide whether or not he was supporting my motion. He said, "The regulation fixes a minimum bet higher than some people would normally invest." That is my very point. The regulation penalizes people who have no desire to invest more than one shilling on a race. They are people in a humble way who go to the races for the love of the sport. He further said that the regulation would affect mostly women. That is no reason for opposing my motion. We have often heard from various statesmen of the noble part played by women in public and home life and if we allow a regulation to penalize them we are doing something wrong. Every man engaged in industry needs some diversion. Some people play sport, but there are others on the basic wage who desire to invest one shilling on a horse. Mr. Shannon also said that this matter was small and paltry, and I agree that the Betting Control Board could have turned its attention to major anomalies to be found on the race course. In Victoria the investor pays taxation on his

winnings only, but in South Australia taxation is levied on his investment as well as on his winnings, and I strongly object to that. Mr. Heaslip said, "No regulation should encourage easier betting, for any increase must cause a further drop in the production of goods which are so essential." That statement has no substance. Most race meetings are held on Saturday afternoons—

Mr. Heaslip—You did not come down from Gawler yesterday.

Mr. TAPPING—This regulation would not have any effect upon production. If the motion is disallowed illegal betting will increase. If a man can afford to invest only five shillings or six shillings during a race meeting he will not attend the races but bet with illegal bookmakers. The Government is wrong if it believes it will increase its revenue by consenting to the regulation. The member for Mitcham opposed the motion and said he pinned his faith in the Betting Control Board. Members of Parliament are the custodians of the people's privileges and have every right, if the Board makes a mistake, to criticize it and suggest alterations in its administration. Mr. Dunks gave the impression that the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation had reached a unanimous decision on the matter, but as a member of that committee I know that at least two members did not favour the proposal. Each member of the committee has the right to express his opinion, and all decisions are reached by a majority vote. Mr. Dunks said that betting was a mug's game. Although it may be described that way by some people, betting returns a large revenue to the State; consequently the mugs play an important part in providing State revenue. Mr. Dunks said that racegoers show their feelings by the look on their faces when they lose a few shillings, but the person who invests a few shillings on a horse is doing something he wants to do and naturally his face shows his feelings whilst waiting for the name of the winner to be placed on the board; if his horse wins his face breaks into a smile. Not much is involved in this matter and I shall not labour it. If the motion is defeated it will penalize one section of the community. The man who can afford to invest a larger sum of money should not be favoured against the man in more humble circumstances. The regulation was promulgated so that everyone collecting from a bookmaker should contribute to the betting tax. That should not be the position. We should look at the moral principle involved. I ask members to view it that way and to support the disallowance of the regulation.

The House divided on the motion—

Ayes (9).—Messrs. Duncan, Hutchens, Macgillivray, McAlees, O'Halloran, Quirke, Stephens, Tapping (teller), and Fred Walsh.

Noes (18).—Messrs. Brookman, Clarke, Dunn, Dunnage, Fletcher, Goldney, and Heaslip, Hons. C. S. Hincks, Sir George Jenkins, and M. McIntosh, Messrs. McLachlan, Michael, Pattinson, and Pearson, Hon. T. Playford (teller), Messrs. Shannon, Teusner, and Whittle.

Pairs.—Ayes—Messrs. McKenzie, Davis, Riches, and Frank Walsh. Noes—Mr. Moir, Hon. S. W. Jeffries, Messrs. Christian and Hawker.

Majority of 9 for the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

COUNTRY HEALTH SERVICES.

Adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. Riches—

That a select committee be appointed to advise the Government on the question of granting assistance in the maintenance of nursing hostels, ambulance, aerial medical, and other health services in districts outside local government areas in South Australia, and what assistance should be given to the Bush Church Aid Flying Doctor Service.

(Continued from October 31. Page 1049.)

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Gumeracha—Premier and Treasurer)—I oppose the motion, which is founded on many incorrect assumptions. This year's debate on the Estimates proved conclusively that Mr. Riches' move was unwarranted. He did not mention the matter when the line on the Estimates was debated, probably because he intended to move the motion, but that did not prevent other members from discussing the line, yet not one complained about the matter raised by the honourable member. Usually in the debate on the Estimates more time is spent in discussing health services in outlying areas than on any other matter. It is usually one where the amounts of the grants given to various institutions are debated and where conditions in different districts are compared; but it was rather significant that this year not one honourable member had any query on grants to subsidized hospitals and other health services under the "Chief Secretary—Miscellaneous" line. Over the past years the Government has undertaken a system of the most extensive grants to assist local authorities. It has helped to establish hostels and cottage hospitals in areas which could not support subsidized hospitals. It has even provided on the Estimates a line for emergencies and contingencies. The most sympathetic assistance has been given to subsidized hospitals and

health authorities in all parts of the State whether densely or sparsely populated. The motion is based on an entirely wrong assumption. The Government has been and is still anxious to avoid a system which involves it in subsidizing religious institutions. Such institutions are doing magnificent charitable work in this State, but if the Government were involved in a system of subsidizing them it would have the utmost difficulty in satisfying the various organizations that the grants were made on the same basis. We have no balance-sheets from those institutions and in many instances do not know what amounts of expenditure are involved under the various headings. It would be injudicious for this Government to become involved in the general subsidizing of religious institutions. On a number of occasions we have given religious institutions assistance in doing a specific work. Where work normally done by the Government is undertaken by some charitable institution the Government has directly assisted the maintenance of that work.

Mr. Fletcher—Do you receive balance-sheets in those cases?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes. The Government has every reason to say that the expenditure provided under those circumstances has been well applied. I have no hesitation in recommending to Parliament that that system be continued, but that is entirely different from a system which involves the Government in general grants to religious organizations.

Mr. Riches—A grant in this case would not assist any denomination.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I realize that. The honourable member assumed that the sum of £10,000 provided in the Estimates for ambulance services would apply only to the metropolitan area, and based all his arguments on that incorrect assumption. The object of the co-ordinated ambulance service is to provide some central body to assist in the expansion of ambulance services. Since the system has operated a number of ambulance services have signified their desire to affiliate. On October 4 last, when the honourable member raised this question in the House, I replied:—

I regret that I cannot give the honourable member that information now. The conference held in my room dealt with general principles, and it was agreed that the details would be worked out by the associations and the Police Commissioner at further discussions. I will find out and let the honourable member know what steps a country ambulance service should take if it desires to become attached to this co-ordinated service.

I made it quite clear that any country ambulance service could be included in that co-ordinated service. I received a reply from the acting Commissioner of Police, Mr. Walsh, on October 30, and I have been waiting for the honourable member to approach me about it. The reply states:—

If the present country ambulance services desire to become co-ordinated in this scheme they should contact the secretary of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, Mr. K. G. Shapter, at Brigade Headquarters, Gawler Place, Adelaide.

Therefore, the honourable member's first conclusion on this matter was wrong, because the Government desires that a co-ordinated ambulance service shall work under general rules which will apply evenly throughout the State. No member will question the integrity of the St. John Ambulance Council.

Mr. Riches—No member did.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No-one can say that it is a solely metropolitan organization; therefore, the honourable member has bolstered up his argument on wrong premises by saying that the St. John Ambulance Council is a metropolitan show. The Government has granted annual assistance to the Beltana hostel since 1923, and to Innamincka since 1930. Oodnadatta received £130 in 1924 and £100 in 1932—long before Mr. Riches was a member of this House. Assistance has been granted annually since 1938. The honourable member was wrong in stating:—

When I represented that district in this House representations were made to the Government and grants of £100 and £150 were made to those institutions (Australian Inland Mission Hostels at Innamincka, Beltana, and Ooodnadatta).

Those grants were made long before the honourable member came into this House.

Mr. Riches—There were no grants in 1932.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—That sounds like the Hill Government.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not want to go into that matter, because circumstances were different in those days, and I have every sympathy for a Treasurer who was in office then. When the Budget was debated only last week no member raised any question in connection with this matter—something which has not happened to my knowledge in the last 13 years.

Mr. Riches—Motions similar to this have been debated on three previous occasions.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I am not arguing that point. When the honourable member raised the matter previously the Government took it up with the organization concerned and

complete agreement was reached. The South Australian Government has never been reluctant to assist outback areas with regard to health services. It was one of the first to contribute to the Flying Doctor Service, although at that time it did not extend as far outback as it does today. It has been proved that succeeding Governments have always made grants to the outback areas which were not based on the same formula as those for inside areas. If I wished I could say how the Government has provided assistance and given guarantees to keep doctors in outback areas—something it would never do in closely settled districts. The Bush Church Aid Society of Australia and Tasmania controls and staffs the hospitals at Ceduna and Wudinna, and Dr. Gibson is paid by the society to make visits to Penong, Cook, and Tarcoola, and also goes to emergency cases wherever required in the surrounding districts. The society also provides transport by plane to various hospitals. In October, 1950, the organizing missioner wrote to the Government and asked for £1,000 for the flying doctor service at Ceduna, £1,000 for the flying doctor service at Wudinna and £250 towards nursing facilities at Cook. The Government has approved of £500 being paid to the district council of Murat Bay provided the council finds another £500 and pays to the hospital at Murat Bay £1,000.

Mr. Riches—That is utter nonsense!

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I listened to the honourable member courteously, so surely he can listen to me without continually interjecting. If he will not cease interjecting I will cease to speak.

Mr. O'Halloran—The district council is not rated under the hospital rating system.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—That is the whole point. Wherever there are subsidized hospitals in council areas we require the councils to make contributions towards the district hospital.

Mr. O'Halloran—Has the £500 to be contributed by the Murat Bay council been arrived at on the same basis?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes, as far as I know, and the council has agreed to the proposal. In both instances the £500 was accepted and as far as I know the member for the district was entirely in accord with what was then done.

Mr. Riches—So was everybody else.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Now we are getting somewhere. The society asked for certain sums under various headings. Some of them were headings under which the Government does not provide money. For instance, it does not provide money for subsidized hospitals where the council does not contribute in rating and in this instance the Government properly stated that if the council agreed to rate like others do and meet its share of the expenditure the Government would do precisely what it is doing. As a matter of fact, the Government has done more in this district than in others, because it does not always subsidize on a pound for pound basis of the rating. It seeks to assist districts as their necessities require, and in some instances the amount it contributes is greater than a pound for pound subsidy, but in others it may be less. The two councils have accepted the rating and as far as I know that matter has now been cleared up. In October, 1950, the Bush Church Aid organizing missioner wrote to the Government and asked for £1,000 for the flying doctor service at Ceduna, £1,000 for the flying doctor service at Wudinna and £250 towards the nursing facilities at Cook, a total of £2,250. The Government has approved of £500 being paid to the district council of Murat Bay provided the council adds another £500.

Mr. O'Halloran—Is that not to maintain a hospital?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It is certainly in connection with a hospital, but it is not usual to fly patients short distances, such as between Ceduna and Penong, where there is a first class road and the journey can be made in a short time. Further, a hospital has been established at Penong. The Government does not assist such an air service anywhere in the State, but assists air services where there is no hospital and roads are impassable. When we were told of the regular trips made by the air service we found they consisted of a trip to Tarcoola once a month, and to Cook once a month.

Mr. Riches—And to Mulgathing.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not think the report mentioned Mulgathing, but I accept the honourable member's word for that. However, it showed that there was a frequent service between Ceduna and Penong, which is an area that would normally be served by a road doctor service and which would not warrant the use of an aeroplane. I think the plane is used on this service because it is available for the service to Cook and Tarcoola and is therefore being used on the Penong run. If I can satisfy the mover of the motion that he has advanced his arguments upon wrong premises I think something useful will have been accomplished. Of the original request for

£2,250 the sum of £2,150 was granted. It was not granted under the headings requested, but for medical services in those districts. The honourable member was correct in saying that the district councils have been requested to make sums available, but why should not they make contributions as others do? Members would object if they found that their district councils were being rated to assist hospitals in their districts while others had subsidized hospitals without being rated. The Bush Church Aid Society advised that for 1950-51, £133 14s. 3d. was received in donations and subscriptions at Cook. Correspondence between the Government and the organization shows conclusively that the Government is not unsympathetic. On September 14, the Chief Secretary wrote to the Rev. T. Jones, Organizing Missioner for the Bush Church Aid Society of Australia and Tasmania, Sydney.

Mr. Riches—That was in regard to the Cook hospital only?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes. The Chief Secretary, as Minister of Health, stated:—

I am at present preparing for submission to the honourable the Treasurer financial estimates for this year's Budget. You have expressed the desire that some recognition might be given to the work of the Bush Church Aid Hostel at Cook. From recent discussions it is understood that local contributions are made towards its maintenance. If that is so then I am prepared to recommend that local contributions should be subsidized by a similar amount from Government funds. Before moving in the matter an early reply is desired indicating whether such a step would be entirely satisfactory to you and to enable me to advise the honourable the Treasurer in time for any necessary appropriation to be made. It would, of course, be necessary also if your reply is favourable to supply details of such income, which would be required annually for the purpose of appropriating equivalent sums on the Estimates. The Treasurer has requested me to forward my department's Estimates to enable him to present his Budget at the earliest possible date, so that your prompt attention to this subject would be appreciated.

Mr. Jones replied:—

Thank you for your letter of September 14. Cook is outside local government areas, and therefore there can be no contributions to hospital maintenance in the usual way. From time to time donations are received from private persons, but these are small and erratic. A small weekly amount is paid by those who are members of the medical scheme, for which they receive treatment. Railway workers are, for the most part, members of the Commonwealth Railways Provident Fund, which pays the sum of 4s. 6d. per day into the hospital when members are patients. . . . Fees are charged for those not members of the fund and to the travelling public when treated. The income for 1950 was made up as follows—fees £448 14s. 9d., donations £34 2s. 6d., subscriptions £99 11s. 9d., and salaries of £312 10s. were paid from the general funds of the B.C.A. from this office. Would it not be possible to make either a straight-out grant to the hospital work at Cook, as is done at Tarcoola, or to the Flying Medical Service itself?

The Minister of Health replied:—

I am in receipt of yours of September 18 regarding the finances at Cook, in which you suggest a straight-out grant might be made as is done at Tarcoola. With this suggestion I concur, and in view of the donations being £34 2s. 6d. and the subscriptions £99 11s. 9d. last year it seems a grant of £134 would be sufficient to match those local contributions and donations. I suggest for a straightout grant that it be in round figures of £150 for the current year, and I await your comment upon this suggestion, and also to whom the local members pay their contributions to the medical scheme.

Mr. Jones then wrote to the Minister of Health as follows:—

Thank you for yours of September 25. I concur with your suggestion that the straight-out grant be for the round sum of £150 for the current year. The local contributions are paid to the Sister-in-Charge, Bishop Kirkby Memorial Hospital, Cook, and I suggest that the grant be paid to her for absorption into hospital funds.

The Government felt that, having submitted a proposition to Mr. Jones, and having received his complete concurrence, the matter had been satisfactorily adjusted. There was an obvious intention by the Minister of Health to help in a reasonable way. The correspondence does not disclose the attitude which the honourable member would have us believe was the Government's attitude. The honourable member's argument falls to the ground because last week during the discussion of the Estimates not one member complained about the grants made in connection with country health services. Mr. Christian, in whose district the service under review mainly operates, did not mention the matter.

Mr. Riches—He was in the Chair at the time.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes, but on a number of occasions he has discussed district and health matters with me, and as far as I know he has never complained about the health services. He would be the first to agree that it would not be possible to have a set of rules for one district and a second set for another district. The official Flying Doctor Service is recognized by every Australian Government, including the Commonwealth Government. The service covers the whole of the inland of Australia, irrespective of States, except the area

bounded by Tarcoola, Cook, Penong, and Ceduna, which is covered by the Bush Church Aid Flying Doctor Service.

Mr. Quirke—From how many centres does the Australian Flying Doctor Service operate?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I cannot say. It has established a wireless inter-communication system. Any flying doctor service is helpless unless it can communicate with outlying areas. Steps are being taken to install, with the assistance of the official Flying Doctor Service, such an inter-communication service for the Bush Church Aid Flying Doctor Service. The last I heard was that discussions were taking place on the matter.

Mr. Quirke—Who controls the Australian Flying Doctor Service?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I cannot say.

Mr. O'Halloran—It was begun by Flynn of the Inland.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes. The official Flying Doctor Service has assisted the Bush Church Aid Flying Doctor Service with a grant of £500 and it will assist in connection with an inter-communication system. That is the correct way to deal with the matter. I do not want to push out the Bush Aid Flying Doctor Service, but if the Official Flying Doctor Service says it needs additional money to maintain a medical service through the Bush Aid Flying Doctor Service the Government will be happy to assist. Let me illustrate by saying how we assist kindergartens. We do not subsidize all individual kindergartens. We make an overall grant to the Kindergarten Union, which, in turn, distributes money to individual kindergartens.

Mr. O'Halloran—You mean that you will assist by granting money to the official Flying Doctor Service in order to keep the machines of the Bush Aid Flying Doctor Service in the air?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If the official service recommends that the money should be made available to it to maintain the other service the Minister of Health and I will be pleased to assist.

Mr. Riches—Does that mean that the Bush Church Aid Society will have to go to the other people?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It has had to go there previously, and it is doing so in connection with the wireless inter-communication system. A report on the Flying Doctor Service states:—

This co-operation of the Bush Church Aid Society Flying Medical Service will prove of great benefit to the residents in the large outback area west and south-west of Port Augusta.

They are willing to co-operate, and I have no doubt the Bush Church Aid Society has already received financial assistance from them.

Mr. Riches—That is not correct.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I understand it is and that £500 was provided to assist in the establishment of the base in the first place. I will check that point and let the honourable member have the details.

Mr. Riches—The Bush Church Aid Society has not received a penny from any Government. This Flying Doctor Service had to establish its own base.

Mr. O'Halloran—The £500 grant was provided in connection with aerial communications.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I understood that £500 had been provided for the establishment of a base, but it may have been in connection with the aerial service. If the official organization makes a request and, after consultation, the Chief Secretary says a certain amount is necessary, it will be provided, but the Government deals with ambulance services only through the co-ordinated service. Kindergartens are not dealt with except through a co-ordinated service. In answer to the question by the Leader of the Opposition as to what should be the policy with regard to the Flying Doctor Service, I say this Government does not deal with minor organizations except through co-ordinated services. The motion was moved on the assumptions that the Government was niggardly or desirous of treating outback areas differently from areas nearer to the city, that the co-ordinated ambulance service was a metropolitan show, and that because there were no councils in outback areas to provide rating no assistance would be available in those areas.

Mr. Riches—I did not make the last assertion.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—From the point of view of cost the Government has provided more services in outside than in inside areas. The honourable member's contention falls down most when it is realized that when an opportunity was given to 37 members to question expenditure in this connection not one of them queried the adequacy of the grant. I oppose the motion.

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—I did not intend to speak in this debate, but having listened to the member for Stuart and the Premier, two gentlemen who have been in this place for a long time and both of whom put forward scientific arguments, I am confused. Because of that confusion I support the motion, for I feel no member may claim that he is clear on this question. Every member must appreciate the necessity to supply outback areas with adequate health services so that the

pioneers responsible for the progress there may be cared for. Consequently a committee should be appointed to investigate this question. The Premier indicated in his concluding remarks that, if the Flying Doctor Service applied for funds, the Government would be prepared to consider an application to assist the Bush Church Aid Flying Medical Service. The Premier gave the impression that he had most of the facts at his fingertips, but when questioned about the Flying Doctor Service he had to admit that he was not quite clear on its workings. Members must be in doubt as to whether the Flying Doctor Service is prepared to co-operate with the Bush Church Aid Society. The Premier went on to say that many grants had been made to local government bodies for the purpose of supplying medical services. I realize that and express my gratitude and that of my constituents for grants made to medical services in my district. However, the Premier did not, in my opinion, make it clear that satisfactory grants would be made for the continuation of the services which are the subject of the motion. To support his argument he made some claims about the length of the plane trips made, but admitted that such trips were in keeping with the nature of this service. He said that the Government desires to give the utmost assistance to medical services. I believe that, but feel that an investigation should be made to see what assistance might be given to the Bush Church Aid Flying Doctor Service. I do not subscribe to the making of Government grants to religious institutions, but I have gathered that this is not a denominational institution in the truest sense. It renders a service necessary for the development of this State. These outback people should have services of a quality approaching, if not equal to those given to city residents. I support the motion.

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley)—When this motion was introduced I had every intention of supporting it, and but for the promise of the Premier I would have undoubtedly given it my support. At present I intend to join that small body of optimists led by the honourable member for Prospect and known as the "Trust the Premier brigade." I do not think that trust will be misplaced, for the Premier has given a direct promise. I understand that if the Bush Church Aid Flying Medical Service approaches the official Flying Doctor Service seeking its aid, and the official Flying Doctor Service approaches the Premier with the request for aid, that aid will be given to the Bush Church Aid Service. That is my understanding from the replies given to questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. O'Halloran—That is the position as I understand it.

Mr. QUIRKE—It is difficult to give financial aid to a denominational service, but I understand that the Government has already given £150 towards such a service.

Mr. Pearson—That was for the maintenance of a hospital.

Mr. QUIRKE—A hospital run by this organization has been subsidized by the Government.

Mr. Pearson—It is in the form of an ordinary hospital subsidy.

Mr. QUIRKE—But who runs the hospital?

Mr. Pearson—That does not matter.

Mr. QUIRKE—If that is the Premier's interpretation I can imagine that he will get a flood of applications for assistance tomorrow.

Mr. Whittle—What the Premier said did not exactly convey what the member for Flinders has said.

Mr. QUIRKE—This service is run by the Bush Church Aid Society and the hospital building has nothing to do with it. The question is, who administers the money granted?, and the Premier broke down there. I do not blame him, but congratulate him for doing so, because this nursing service gives the only hospital service in the district, and the flying doctor service operated by the Bush Church Aid flying doctor provides the only medical service in the area. This was clearly indicated by the questions I asked on June 27 and July 26, when I asked whether there was any alternative to that flying doctor service, and whether, if it were discontinued, the people there would not have any medical attention. The Premier did not give a definite reply, but I know there would be no alternative to that service. Has the Government an obligation to see that medical services are available to the people in those areas? I think so, and congratulate the Government on rather tardily recognizing its obligation. The grant of £150 indicates that the Government realizes the necessity to provide financial assistance. If there is no alternative to a medical service run by a denominational organization the Government must be under an obligation, and it met it. Further, in order that the Government shall not be further involved in this matter, the Premier's promise must be fulfilled. Instead of receiving a direct grant, which could cause certain complications, the grant will be provided if it is sought through another channel. The member

for Stuart can now, with complete dignity, not force a vote on his motion. He should accept the Premier's statement and see whether the promise is fulfilled. I do not think the Premier will fail. His promise has altered my attitude, and I will not now vote for the motion.

Mr. HAWKER (Burra)—I have discussed this matter with the member for Stuart because I realize, like other members representing outback areas, the necessity of providing amenities, especially medical services, to them. The motion has resulted in bringing before the House just what the Government has been doing in assisting outback medical services. I shall quote from the *Air Doctor*, the official organ of the Flying Doctor Service of Australia. In its fourteenth annual report under the heading of "Ceduna Base," it states:—

After conferences and discussions with representatives of the Bush Church Aid Society of Australia and Tasmania and local government authorities at Ceduna, the establishment of a wireless base at that town has now advanced to a suitable site being made available by the South Australian Government for the erection of the necessary buildings. The council of the Flying Doctor Service is now seeking information as to the approximate number of transceivers that will be licensed to communicate with the new base, and as soon as the building plan is completed, tenders will be called for the erection of the base.

The next paragraph has already been quoted by the Premier, but I shall repeat it. It states:—

This co-operation with the Bush Church Aid Society Flying Medical Service will prove of great benefit to the residents in the large outback area west and south-west of Port Augusta.

It will therefore be seen that there is complete co-operation between the Flying Doctor Service of Australia and the Bush Church Aid Society of Australia and Tasmania and we have, as the member for Stanley stated, the promise of the Premier that if the recommendation comes through the official body it will receive support. That shows that these two societies co-operate in their work.

Mr. RICHES (Stuart)—I take strong exception to the inferences of the Premier that I did not place accurate information before the House in moving that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into what I considered the niggardly treatment by the Government of those rendering splendid service in the outback. I am not in the habit of telling lies and the information I placed before the House was accurate in every respect. I wish the Premier were in the Chamber now so that I could disabuse his mind on certain matters. In the first place he read correspondence between the Chief Secretary and the organizer of the Bush Church Aid Society about the services, but he did not make it clear that there are a number of services being rendered by this society, and that there is complete satisfaction now on the question of subsidy for some of its work. However, the society has not yet received one penny to assist other branches of its work. The Premier referred to an application from the Bush Church Aid Society for £2,500 and proceeded immediately to mention the application from the district council of Murat Bay for a subsidy towards the maintenance of the hospital there and indicated that the Government, in granting the district council's application, was meeting the request of the Bush Church Aid Society for financial aid for the Flying Doctor Service. He said the service had applied for £1,000 for the Flying Doctor Service at Wudinna and that the district council had applied for £500, which had been granted, on condition that the council raised another £500 and that this would meet what the Flying Doctor Service sought. When I interjected that that was nonsense, because one application had no relation to the other, the Premier objected to my interjections. The Premier referred to requests that were made for subsidies for the hospitals conducted by the society and also for district council hospitals, and for hospitals conducted outside district council areas. He also referred to applications for assistance for the Flying Doctor Service. It was agreed that the applications for the hospitals inside council areas would be made in the name and on behalf of the district councils. They were granted by the Government, and I have no quarrel with that. It was also agreed that the applications for a subsidy for the Flying Doctor Services would be a separate application. That is an entirely different matter. It was also agreed that an entirely separate application would be made for the hospitals conducted outside local government areas. This was in regard to a hospital at Cook and was the subject matter of the correspondence referred to by the Premier. He said that £150 had been made available and that Mr. Jones, the organizing secretary, had concurred with the fixation of that sum. When I introduced this motion I, too, expressed pleasure that this sum had been granted, but I drew a comparison, namely, that Cook has a six-bed hospital with two double-certificated nurses in attendance, and the service rendered is much greater than the one rendered by the

Australian Inland Mission in single-bed hostels whose grant is much larger. This year Cook will receive £150, but the other places, where there is only one sister and where maternity cases are not treated, are to receive an increased grant of £250. I pointed out this difference and the matter should be adjusted. I did not raise the matter on the Estimates because there was no line covering it. I pointed out previously that negotiations were in hand and I accepted the assurance that a grant of £150 would be made.

The Premier said my argument fell to the ground because not one member criticized country health services when the Estimates were before the House, but only two members are interested in this particular matter. When the Estimates were debated one of those members was in the Chair, and I was the other. The Premier knew that I intended to move the motion. The matter was debated when the Supplementary Estimates were before the House, and it was referred to by Mr. Christian during the Budget debate last year. It has been brought up on the Estimates for five years in succession. This year we wanted something more definite. That is why I did not raise the matter when the Estimates were discussed. Other members did not raise it because their districts are not affected. The Premier tried to make capital out of the fact that I said that in 1933 representations were made by Mr. Beerworth and myself in connection with hostels along the North-South railway line. If grants were made prior to that time I was not aware of it. I do know that in 1932 there were no grants to those institutions and Mr. Beerworth and I took the matter up in 1933. That is a true statement and not an inaccuracy as suggested by the Premier. I am not in the habit of telling lies. When I say that Mr. Beerworth and I raised the matter in 1933, and that grants were not made in 1932, I stand by the statement. I regret that the Premier tried to confuse members by bringing in side issues. The matter of grants to hospitals in district council areas was not raised by me, but by the Premier in order to confuse the issue. Every time the Premier has dealt with this matter he has changed his ground. In the first instance he refused to make a grant because it was a denominational matter, but it was shown that it was completely undenominational, although the people controlling the service were members of the Church of England. It was pointed out that as the other service received a grant we wanted a similar grant for the Bush Church Aid Service, but again the Premier changed his ground and said it was not a service normally assisted by the Government. We explained that the Government provided a subsidy in connection with attendance at places by doctors, yet this Bush Church Aid Service, in addition to conducting a hospital, had a doctor in attendance at certain places once a month. The service has not been recognized and granted one penny subsidy.

The value of it cannot be overstated because of the lives saved. I was informed this afternoon of a life saved this week because of the service. A child was brought to Adelaide from Mr. Pearson's district. Probably the service was under the auspices of the official service, but it gives an indication of the value of the service to outback people. The child is now in the Adelaide Children's Hospital. It was a tetanus case and the evidence of the doctors is that the child's life would have been lost if the child had not been flown to Adelaide to be given life-saving drugs. It is not to the credit of the State that the Bush Church Aid service, although it operates only in South Australia, has had to be maintained by donations from people outside the State. Most members are puzzled why the service does not receive the aid to which it is entitled, and which they believed it was receiving. Again today the Premier has adopted a different attitude. Now he says that the service connects towns which could be served by road transport. If the Flying Doctor Service were taken away, some lives could not have been saved. Patients could not be brought to the city in time by road service. I have given figures showing the number of patients brought to Adelaide by aeroplane. In asking for this matter to be referred to a Select Committee for inquiry I acted on a suggestion by the Premier, so surely it could not have been a bad suggestion. Last year when the matter was raised the Premier said it was being inquired into by a competent committee. He made that clear when the House discussed the Supplementary Estimates two days before the end of the last financial year. He repeated it about half a dozen times. It was only when the session was resumed in July that he discovered a committee had not been appointed to inquire into the matter, and that is why I asked members to agree to the appointment of a Select Committee.

When the Budget debate took place 12 months ago the Premier promised that if on inquiry it was found that the service was subsidized the Government would make a substantial grant

for the year ended June 30, 1951, as well as for the next financial year. That definite promise is in *Hansard*. It was repeated, and I want to know what has happened in regard to it. Does the Premier intend to honour the promise? He said he would make up any back lag. Last session he said it was too late to put a line on the Estimates because they had been drawn up, but he said that if it could be shown that a grant was warranted one would be made. What has happened in this matter? I am interested in the undertaking he gave today and I am prepared to accept it. As I understand it, and as the Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Quirke understand it, the Premier will make a grant to the Bush Church Aid Flying Doctor Service if it applies to the official Flying Doctor Service, and if it indorses the grant. If that is a definite promise, and the Government can be held to it, I accept it and hope it will be honoured. I am prepared to accept the Premier's assurance that, if the Bush Church Aid Flying Doctor Service applies through the official Flying Doctor Service and that application is recommended by the latter service, the Government will give financial assistance to keep these services operating. As I understand I am not permitted to withdraw my motion, I ask leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

HOUSING POLICY.

Adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. Frank Walsh—

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

which Mr. Macgillivray had moved to amend by striking out of lines 3, 4 and 5, the words:—"under one administrative head, a department of housing under the control of a Minister with no other departmental responsibilties should be established and that".

(Continued from October 31. Page 1056.)

Mr. WHITTLE (Prospect)—I oppose the motion. The member for Hindmarsh, in supporting the motion, suggested that members who opposed it indicated their complete satisfaction with the progress of the housing programme in this State. That was a most exaggerated and incorrect statement. I do not know any member on either side who is completely satisfied that sufficient houses are being constructed to accommodate the many thousands of people who are crying out for homes; but the fact that some of us do not consider the adoption of this motion would alleviate the position cannot be construed as meaning that we are not alive to the housing problem. The progress of our housing programme is being impeded by shortages of materials and labour; but one has only to go to any suburb or country town to realize the great number of houses which have been erected, not only by the Housing Trust and private contractors, but by people who are building their own non-permit homes. The housing problem is not being neglected by this Government and the creation of a special department would not help the position one iota. Every member wants to see more houses erected so that young people may be established in their own homes instead of being forced to live with their parents and rear their families in an uncongenial atmosphere, so any really progressive step towards providing more houses will receive my support; but, if carried, this motion would not be responsible for the great benefit which its mover claims for it.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—The Premier said that he could see no difference between this and previous motions on the same subject, but there are none so blind as those who do not wish to see. If the Premier can see no value in this motion, no words of mine will influence the result of the vote on it. Members on this side have no apology to make for the proposed appointment of a Minister of Housing, with no other departmental responsibilities, assisted by a building advisory panel as envisaged by the motion. Such a Minister would be responsible directly to Parliament.

Mr. Macgillivray—There is a Minister responsible at present.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The present arrangement is inadequate, because of the activities of officers such as the Director of Building Materials and the Chairman of the Housing Trust, none of whom are directly responsible to Parliament.

Mr. Macgillivray—You suggest the appointment of another Minister?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—That move is long overdue, but I am not in a position to influence Government policy on a question of administration. I can only make suggestions and hope that sooner or later the Government will see fit to appoint a Minister of Housing. Today the position is unsatisfactory in that we have some officers making statements on behalf of the Government. The Premier stated that if I had any confidence in it I would have sought to include certain amendments in the Building Materials Act when the Bill was before Parliament, but this measure was introduced to assist people desiring to build homes. The Opposition has always contended, and will continue to do so, that people issued with permits to build should have a guarantee that sufficient materials will be available to them. The Building Materials Act is quite complicated enough now without attempting to include other matters. I thank the Premier for complimenting me on my interest in amendments to that Act, but I did not wish to complicate the issue further when the Bill was before the House. The Premier said, "Does the honourable member mean the Minister would have to ask building operatives if they had enough bricks?" If he had read the motion carefully he would not have made that remark. The member for Chaffey, by interjection, said that we already have a Minister of Housing in this House, but not long ago the Peak Construction Company started business in South Australia and approached the Premier who, I suppose, is the Minister for Housing. Another builder, Mr. M. C. Wood, was asked to make a certain quantity of bricks available to the Peak Construction Company and the consequences were that neither the company nor Mr. Wood could complete five homes a week between them, although the latter had been erecting that number for the Housing Trust. It is clear that the Premier does not appreciate the object of my motion. I desire an advisory panel to be appointed to co-ordinate building activities and to concentrate on ensuring that adequate supplies of basic materials are provided. The Premier brushed that aspect aside, but introduced many side issues. I wonder how often the Premier has manipulated the supply of materials to builders. The Orlit Company came from England not long ago to start building operations in South Australia and was guaranteed a supply of cement on the excuse that quantities had been made available from the Port Augusta power station. That excuse was accepted by merchants, but the true position was that cement was made available to the company at the expense of home builders to whom permits had been issued by the Building Materials Office. Most of those people are still waiting for cement, whilst the Orlit Company can get it.

It is high time that the allocation of building materials was investigated. Are Government supporters prepared always to follow the Premier's lead? Are they not able to make up their own minds about the merits of my motion? For how long will the Government deny materials to people with permits, but have them supplied to new firms coming to this State? The position is becoming impossible and it is high time the Government seriously considered appointing a Minister of Housing. Members would not then be frequently disturbed at meal times and in the evening by telephone calls and knocks at the front door by people asking, "Can you tell me where I can get cement and other materials? I have had my permit for months entitling me to cement." At present members cannot answer such questions satisfactorily. Government supporters should pay more attention to my motion, or will they continue to ignore it and accept the Premier's explanations willy nilly? He said the motion, if passed, would result in the socialization of the building industry, but I do not apologise for that.

Mr. O'Halloran—He really didn't mean it.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—He is socialistic in his approach to many other problems, so why should be condemn the motion? We should at least have a Minister responsible to Parliament and advised by a panel representative of the building industry.

Mr. Macgillivray—You overlook the fact that we have a Minister, but we do not have an advisory panel.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—But hasn't the Minister other departmental responsibilities?

Mr. Macgillivray—He is responsible for running the whole Government.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I accept the interjection. A Minister with no other responsibilities should be appointed in charge of housing. I believe the member for Chaffey would be satisfied if an advisory panel were appointed to assist such a Minister.

Mr. Macgillivray—I would not support the appointment of any more Ministers because that would only be a waste of taxpayer's money.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—More houses should be built. Recently the Premier addressed a meeting of interstate master builders and contractors and, according to the press, said that the production of building materials in South Australia was such that the Government might have to assist in their production, particularly basic materials. I believe he had in mind a complete overhaul of the position, and that if private enterprise did not measure up to its responsibilities the Government would enter the field of production. That should have been done long ago, and the production should have been under the control of the Government itself, or the Housing Trust. Mr. Whittle said that houses should be made available for everybody, and that each person should be assisted to possess his own home. Here is a golden opportunity for the honourable member to achieve that by supporting the motion. Does he realize that we have reached the point where it is practically impossible for people to possess their own homes? The Government has decided that financial institutions may lend up to £1,750 on a house. Today I was informed that the cost of a new group purchase home was £2,380. Three years ago the quote for that type of home was £600 less than the present day cost. Prospective purchasers will be unable to buy such homes because they will not be able to find the necessary deposit.

Mr. Whittle—How will the passing of your motion improve that position?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The motion suggests that a panel consisting of representatives of the Institute of Architects, master builders, and the building trades unions should be appointed to advise the Minister on the best methods to employ in the mobilization of building resources, the utilization of labour, the control of materials, the expansion of production of essential basic materials and, if necessary, the importation of materials in short supply.

Mr. Whittle—Will those representatives work for nothing in order to provide cheaper houses?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—If the committee were appointed it could make an investigation into all the matters mentioned. Twelve months ago a similar motion was moved and had a committee been appointed then the housing position would be much better than it is: we would not have seen a Hoffman kiln, which could produce 100,000 burnt red bricks a week, being demolished. Advice by the panel would mean cheaper building materials. At present Australian cement, if it can be obtained, costs £9 17s. a ton, and imported cement between £21 and £27 10s. a ton. The appointment of a panel would assist greatly in the production of basic materials. Close to the metropolitan area we have clay deposits, yet no real attempt has been made by the Government to use them in the production of burnt red bricks. The Government has failed lamentably in the building of houses. The appointment of a panel would mean the building of more houses, and we would not see materials being taken away from one section of the community for another section, with the result that fewer homes are being built. The passing of the motion would assist people to possess their own homes, but if the Government allows the Housing Trust to continue to operate, its activities should be concentrated on the building of houses for letting. We should not have people continually appealing for better accommodation. To overcome that position there should be a separate Minister controlling housing. In addition to houses, we need more schools, hospitals, shops and factory accommodation. Every industry is desirable, but some industries must take precedence over others. The Government has not made a proper approach to the problem. It should do more in the production of basic materials. If we had more materials than were required for houses, they could be made available for other building work, hence the necessity to pass my motion. The *Advertiser* even published last week, although wrongly, that the motion had been carried. By doing so they conveyed to members of the Government that they should vote for it. Whether one or two aspirants to Cabinet rank on the Government side may be disappointed if the motion is carried is beside the point. The important question is: "Do we in South Australia desire that more building materials should be made available to home builders?" I believe the Government desires that more should be, and the Opposition desires to assist the Government in achieving that object.

The House divided on Mr. Macgillivray's amendment to the motion—

Ayes (2).—Messrs. Macgillivray (teller) and Quirke.

Noes (26).—Messrs. Brookman, Clarke, Dunnage, Goldney, Hawker, and Heaslip, Hon. C. S. Hincks, Mr. Hutchens, Hon. Sir George Jenkins, Mr. McAlees, Hon. M. M. McIntosh, Messrs. McLachlan, Michael, Moir, O'Halloran, Pattinson, and Pearson, Hon. T. Playford, Messrs. Riches, Shannon,

Stephens, Tapping, Teusner, Frank Walsh (teller), Fred Walsh, and Whittle.

Majority of 24 for the Noes.

Amendment thus negatived.

The House divided on the motion—

Ayes (9).—Messrs. Hutchens, McAlees, Moir, O'Halloran, Riches, Stephens, Tapping, Frank Walsh (teller), Fred Walsh.

Noes (18).—Messrs. Brookman, Clarke, Dunnage, Fletcher, Hawker, Heaslip, Hons. C. S. Hincks, Sir George Jenkins, Mr. Macgillivray, Hon. M. McIntosh, Moir, Pattinson, Pearson, Hon. T. Playford (teller), Messrs. Quirke, Shannon, Teusner, and Whittle.

Pairs.—Ayes—Messrs. McKenzie, Davis, Lawn, and Duncan. Noes—Messrs. Goldney, and Christian, Hon. S. W. Jeffries, and Mr. McLachlan.

Majority of 9 for the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

CONSTITUTION AND ELECTORAL ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 31. Page 1058).

Mr. FRED WALSH (Thebarton)—The Bill provides for certain alterations in the franchise for the Legislative Council. The Premier has suggested that the object of the Bill is to bring about the abolition of the Upper House; but that is untrue. What may happen in the future is something which neither the Premier nor myself can predict, because changing circumstances need changing remedies. He said that, if the Bill were passed, the Council would become a replica of this House with regard to the passing of legislation; but what is wrong with that? Is not that the basis of Parliamentary institutions, and can it not be said that any Government, no matter what its political colour, if it has the confidence of the electors, has the right to see that the legislation it introduces is passed? The Premier's remarks could mean that the Bill would lead to only one House of Parliament, but that is not suggested. I do not want to debate the merits of the bi-cameral system, which has advantages if it is fully democratic, but so long as it is not there is not much in favour of it. The Premier reminded us that the bi-cameral system was created by the genius of the British people and has been developed over hundreds of years. One could reply, "Why did not the United States of America follow the pattern of the mother of Parliaments?" In fact, the United States evolved an entirely different system and I think it followed some of the European constitutions to some extent. Why was not our Commonwealth Parliament modelled on that of England? It was possibly because the founders of our Federal Constitution considered the American system far better than that in England. The powers of the House of Lords have been greatly modified in recent years, and it no longer intimidates Governments as it did 30 or 40 years ago. The electoral system in South Australia has been designed to prevent majority rule. It perpetuates minority rule, and particularly since 1938, when the electoral districts of the House of Assembly were gerrymandered, it has prevented any other Party than the one now in office gaining the reins of Government. If all adults were entitled to vote for the Legislative Council and the boundaries of the districts of the House of Assembly were fairly drawn there could be no objection to the bi-cameral system. The Leader of the Opposition gave figures of the number of women entitled to vote for the Legislative Council, and they are proportionately far fewer than the number entitled to vote for the House of Assembly, and thus a chamber elected by few women is able to control the destinies of housewives. The amazing thing is that the Premier says this is democratic. It is autocratic and makes Parliamentary Government in this State farcical, and the term "representative Parliament" absurd. There is no such thing as democracy if the Government is not elected by a majority of the people. The denial of the rights of the majority is the essence of totalitarian government of which the the Premier spoke when referring to Germany, Italy and Russia. The restricted franchise in South Australia savours to some extent of totalitarianism in those countries.

When the Archbishop of York was addressing members recently at a luncheon he spoke about the House of Lords in a somewhat jocular strain. He suggested that he was made a member of the House of Lords without election, but implied that the power of the House was nowhere near as great as it was 30 or 40 years ago. The Premier has often told us that he always welcomes proposals from members on this side of the House and was prepared to consider them seriously. I have been in Parliament for nine years and have never found the Government accepting anything really worth-while from the Opposition, if it cuts across the policy of the Liberal Party. When speaking on this Bill the Premier introduced aspects completely foreign to the subject matter and made many

mis-statements about the objects of the measure. He referred mainly to the possible abolition of the Upper House and said, "If we are to have a second Chamber we may just as well have one that represents a somewhat different point of view from that of the other House." I do not know what lies behind that statement. He went on: "Generally speaking, the Council electors are somewhat older than the Assembly electors and consequently it is to be presumed they have had more experience of public affairs and have a much more mature outlook." One is prepared to concede that once we get away from adult franchise there might be some merit in experience in Parliamentary affairs. No-one will deny the need for people of experience to be elected to Parliament to make the laws of the land, but I suggest the Premier's statement indicates that adult franchise was even better than the wisdom gained from experience in the election of members of the Legislative Council. The Labor Party's point is that everyone over 21 should be entitled to vote for the Legislative Council because he has to abide by the laws passed by Parliament.

The Constitution of the United States of America would be difficult to better. Its form of Government is the most democratic in the world. Further, the various States have Constitutions similar to that of the Federal body. Of course, the States of America were established about the same time, whereas in Australia they were formed with different Constitutions and before our Federal Constitution was drafted. When the Commonwealth Constitution was drawn up the States should have amended theirs accordingly. Queensland finally abolished the second Chamber and no-one would suggest that it was any worse off. New Zealand, too, abolished the Upper House, and a non-Labor Government is now in office there. That country is probably better off than it was under the bi-cameral system. The only advantage of that system is that is provides continuity of Parliamentry representation. New South Wales has a different Constitution from ours, although I would not like it adopted here. Nevertheless, it is better than the Constitutions of South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia, and Tasmania. There the Government, if it has the numbers, can appoint its nominees to the Upper House, and that is in the interests of Parliamentary government, because it is ridiculous for a Government to have the confidence of the electors and not to be able to get its legislation through the Upper House.

Let me outline the position in Switzerland. All Swiss citizens are equal before the law, and the constitution has expressly abolished all privileges of place, birth, family or person. On completion of his twentieth year every male Swiss becomes an active member of his commune, *i.e.*, he obtains the vote in all communal, cantonal and federal affairs, and is himself eligible for election. The citizen has the last word everywhere, and his right to a direct participation in the life of the State goes far beyond the right to elect the officials of the legislature and executive, and, in many cantons, the judicature. Here the cantonal constitution is the final authority. For instance, in the canton of Basle, every law enacted by the cantonal council, which is the cantonal legislature, must be submitted to the people for approval. In other cantons the referendum may be brought into action. That means that, if a sufficient number of signatures is collected by the citizens among themselves, they have the right to demand that a law approved by the legislative assembly be submitted to the vote of the people. Those features of Swiss democracy—the referendum and the initiative—are typical of its absolutely democratic nature and have been retained even in its federal constitution. A Bill approved by the Federal Assembly must, by the Constitution, be submitted to the referendum. It enters into force only if no petition is made against it within 90 days, but if a referendum is desired and a petition is submitted bearing the signatures of not less than 30,000 citizens the final decision as to whether it shall become law rests with the people. The citizen has yet another means by which he can exercise the right to take part directly in the affairs of his country, namely, the initiative. By this means the people, given the support of 50,000 signatures, can demand that the Federal Constitution shall be amended, or totally or partially revised. In the canton the public can, with a proportionately smaller number of signatures, propose amendments to the Constitution as well as the adoption of new laws. Should the Federal Constitution be amended, not only is the consent of the majority of the people required in every case, but a majority of the "States," *i.e.*, the cantons, must be obtained also. This "double majority" is ascertained by first determining the majority of all votes, and then the proportionate votes for and against the motion in each separate canton. If there is a majority of votes, as well as a majority of cantons, in favour of the amendment it then becomes law. That is similar to our referendum provisions, where there must be a majority of voters

and a majority of States supporting it for it to be carried. The Swiss are happy about their position. They can attend meetings—in some cantons they are required by law to do so—and discuss matters which will come before their Parliament.

I do not suggest that in South Australia there should be meetings with a show of hands on all matters discussed, but legislation could be submitted to the people before it became law. If that were done we would have more loyalty to our Parliament. At present there is a considerable grudge against the way in which some of our laws are passed. It should not be possible for a Government Bill to be passed by the Lower House and then rejected by the Upper House. I criticize the way in which the members of another place are elected. About 58 per cent of the State's population resides in the metropolitan area, yet in the Legislative Council they have only eight of the 20 members. Legislative Council boundaries should be redrawn with a view to more equal representation, and the Legislative Council franchise altered so that everybody over 21 years of age can vote at elections. Now no person under 30 years of age can be a candidate at Legislative Council elections. This sort of thing goes back to the dim, dark ages. When a serviceman has served his country at war he is perhaps entitled to a privilege, but I question very much whether the individual ex-serviceman values the concession to any extent. If he can vote at Legislative Council elections his wife should have the same privilege. The Bill seeks for the Legislative Council the same franchise as for the Assembly. The Leader of the Opposition wants to remove a number of anomalies, and he referred to them fully. The Bill should be passed here, but it will be difficult to get it passed in another place because of the effect on individual members. In considering this measure commonsense should prevail. I appeal to the justice of members opposite and ask them to support the Bill.

Mr. HUTCHENS secured the adjournment of the debate.

HOSPITALS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

EXCHANGE OF LAND: TOWN OF ALFORD.

The Legislative Council intimated that it had agreed to the House of Assembly's resolution.

EXCHANGE OF LAND: TOWN OF MANNAHILL.

The Legislative Council intimated that it had agreed to the House of Assembly's resolution.

EXCHANGE OF LAND: HUNDRED OF KENNION.

The Legislative Council intimated that it had agreed to the House of Assembly's resolution.

EXCHANGE OF LAND: HUNDRED OF HALL.

The Legislative Council intimated that it had agreed to the House of Assembly's resolution.

(Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.)

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF PORT PIRIE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 6. Page 1120.)

Mr. STEPHENS (Port Adelaide)—There could be a great improvement in "Stop" signs. Every reasonable driver will pull up at a "Stop" sign, but there should be better control over their position. I have frequently noticed vehicles parked close alongside a sign, making it invisible to other traffic. A large vehicle like an abattoirs van pulled up alongside a "Stop" sign would hide it from view. A few weeks ago I noticed a tramways bus pull up alongside a "Stop" sign. That is a mistake and the Trust should be requested not to do that. The word "Stop" should be painted across roadways wherever a "Stop" sign is erected, informing motorists that they are required to stop. Frequently these signs are placed alongside verandahs or hidden by trees. Subsection (4) of section 134 of the Road Traffic Act states:—

It shall be sufficient compliance with the provisions of this section if the appropriate signal is given by a mechanical or electrical device which has been approved by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles.

Drivers of vehicles with mechanical signs will often neglect to alter them. I have seen a trolley bus from Port Adelaide to Adelaide, which did not need to turn to the right until it reached West Terrace, with the mechanical sign displayed all the way from Port Adelaide. Another important matter is that of brakes on trailers. The Act provides that it is not compulsory for trailers to be equipped with brakes

and few vehicles are built today with brakes sufficiently strong to hold trailers. When a motor vehicle is built the brakes are sufficiently powerful to hold it with the weight it is registered to carry. I have seen a vehicle carrying five tons and a trailer attached with 10 tons, although the braking power was sufficient only for five tons. No vehicle should be allowed on the road without proper and efficient braking, but I have never heard of a prosecution for any breaches of that nature. A brake should be fitted to every motor vehicle, including trailors. They should be attached to them in the same manner as they are to other vehicles and operated by the driver. Brakes on all railway carriages and trucks are controlled from the engine. One of the first things a driver should learn in driving a motor is to apply the brakes properly.

The Act also gives power to the police to examine a motor vehicle to see whether it is fit to be driven on the roads. A few years ago I took some visitors to Port Adelaide to inspect a number of motor lorries and saw two or three which had been working every day without proper brakes. I asked the driver how he managed to stop the lorry and he said, "All I do is to judge the distance where I want to stop and coast along until the vehicle stops."

Another matter is the stacking of loads. I am surprised at the manner in which some vehicles are loaded. I have seen goods fall from motor lorries, causing danger to persons passing. On one occasion crates filled with bottles fell off a lorry in front of Parliament House. A few weeks ago bales of paper fell from a lorry. I have also seen loads of timber fall from lorries in Port Adelaide. One day a load fell between two groups of children in front of a public school. Goods from lorries could fall on top of passing vehicles or in front of them and the driver would not have time to stop. The police should be given power to compel drivers to adjust their loads. There is also the question of the width of loads. Some lorries look more like trailers. Drivers are allowed to load lorries to a width of eight feet and a length of 66ft. It should be reduced to 44ft. to conform to the practice in other States. I have seen the hills road in such a congested state that drivers of long motor lorries have to take them right alongside the hills to get round a bend. That should be stopped. Some overloaded vehicles are using our streets as storerooms. On North Terrace vehicles up to 66ft. long park at the side of the road taking up the room where 10 or 12 motor cars could be parked, and there is no limit on the time they can stay there. A fortnight ago when I was coming to town in the morning I saw one such vehicle parked in this way, and it was still there when I went home that evening. When I came to town the next morning and when I went home again that night it was still there, so that it had been there two full days. It had gone when I came into town just before lunch on the third day. That vehicle took up much needed parking space all that time.

Mr. Macgillivray—Would not that be a matter to be dealt with by a local government body?

Mr. STEPHENS—Yes. In Victoria that problem is not dealt with by any local government body. Firms owning such vehicles should be compelled to have a depot outside the city at which goods could be transferred from these heavy vehicles to smaller vehicles for transport to city and suburban stores. That action will have to be taken sooner or later, and we might as well move in that direction now. I draw members' attention to the number of hours which the drivers of some of these interstate vehicles work. I have been told that some of them have gone to sleep on the road, and I am not surprised at that. I have a copy of section 39 of the Victorian Transport Regulation Act, and so that this debate will not be delayed I ask leave to incorporate it in *Hansard* without reading it.

Leave granted.

The section was as follows:—

(1) It shall not be lawful for any person to drive or cause or permit any person employed by him or subject to his orders to drive any motor car which is used for the carriage of passengers for hire or reward or of goods (whether or not such motor car is required to be licensed pursuant to this Part)—

(*a*) for any continuous period of more than five and one-half hours; or

(*b*) for continuous periods amounting in the aggregate to more than eleven hours in respect of any period of twenty-four hours commencing at midnight; **or**

(*c*) so that the driver has not at least ten consecutive hours for rest in any period of twenty-four hours calculated from the commencement of any period of driving:

Provided that it shall be a sufficient compliance with the provisions of paragraph (*c*) of this sub-section if the driver has at least nine consecutive hours for rest in any such period of twenty-four hours if he has an interval of at least twelve consecutive hours for rest in the next following period of twenty-four hours.

(2) For the purposes of this section—

(*a*) Any two or more periods of time shall be deemed to be a continuous period unless separated by an interval of not less that half an hour in which the driver is able to obtain rest and refreshment;

(*b*) any time spent by the driver on other work in connection with a vehicle or the load carried thereby, including in the case of a motor vehicle used for the carriage of goods any time spent on a vehicle while on a journey in any other capacity than as a passenger shall be reckoned as time spent in driving;

(*c*) in the case of a motor vehicle owned by a primary producer and used by him in connection with his business as such a person shall not be deemed to be driving the vehicle or to be spending time on work in connection with a vehicle or the load carried thereby so long as the vehicle is not in motion on a public highway.

(3) The Board may on a joint application by such representatives of the employers and employees as the Minister of Labour certifies to be properly representative of employers and employees concerned recommend to the Governor in Council that the periods of time prescribed in this section may be varied and the Governor in Council by Order published in the *Government Gazette* may vary such periods of time accordingly (and this section shall take effect accordingly), but no such recommendation shall be made by the Board if it is of opinion that such variation is likely to be detrimental to the public safety. Any Order made under this subsection may be revoked or varied by a subsequent Order made in like manner and subject to the like conditions.

(4) Any person who contravenes any of the provisions of this section shall be guilty of an offence against this Part: Provided that such person shall not be liable to be convicted under this section if he proves to the court that the contravention was due to unavoidable delay in the completion of any journey arising out of circumstances which he could not reasonably have foreseen.

(5) This section shall not apply to motor vehicles used for fire brigade or ambulance purposes.

Mr. STEPHENS—The object of that section is to protect not only the driver of a vehicle, but other road users. Any member who has driven a car or a horse-drawn vehicle knows that after his eyes have been fastened continually on the road for a long time he will tend to doze. A driver should have all his faculties about him. I trust members will pay considerable attention to the Bill in Committee and that by co-operating we will improve the Act, for I should like to be able to say that South Australia has the best traffic laws in Australia. I support the second reading.

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—I do not propose to speak at length on this Biil, because I believe it is essentially a Committee measure. I mention one aspect ofthe Bill which is giving me some concern, so that an explanation of it may be given in Committee. I am not very happy about clause 24 dealing with cross-overs on double roads, which will affect mainly the Port Road and Anzac Highway. I live on the Port Road and have observed the operation of the present law in this regard. I consider it is operating satisfactorily and see no reason why it should be changed. Indeed, there are good reasons why it should not be changed, as such a change may well lead to some confusion.

I am concerned about the number of accidents which are occurring because of the activities of motor cyclists. Eighteen years ago 5,353 motor cyclists were registered in South Australia; today there are over 20,000. According to press figures one in every 22 motor cyclists registered has an accident. Most motor cyclists are between 17 and 29 years of age. In Australia today there are a number of New Australians, and I have heard it said that there are also many temporary Australians, meaning motor cyclists. Such a statement gives cause for serious consideration. The tragedy of motor cycle accidents is that so many victims suffer head injuries. A broken limb as a rule will mend, but a head injury has a far more serious effect on the sufferer.

Mr. Quirke—It might improve some of them.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I am not such an authority as the member for Stanley on mental defects, so I cannot dispute that statement.

Mr. Hawker—The compulsory use of crash helmets might help.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Yes. I ask the State Traffic Committee to consider an amendment to provide for the compulsory wearing of crash helmets by motor cyclists and pillion riders because I feel it would be in the best interests of the nation to minimize the number of head injuries and help save many young lives.

Mr. DUNNAGE (Unley)—I commend the State Traffic Committee for its very fine report which deals with matters about which most members are concerned. I draw members' attention to the indiscriminate parking of motor lorries and trailers. I travel extensively around the city and metropolitan area at night time, and I believe a number of accidents might be overcome by providing for the compulsory lighting of these vehicles at night time, even though they be near a street light. Under the present law they do not require tail or other

lights if they are within a certain distance of a street light. At times I have nearly run into a large lorry parked almost in the middle of the road. If such a lorry were lit up with three or four red lights across the back quite a number of accidents might be averted. I have often wondered whether it would not be advisable to make all motor lorries rank. Today in Grenfell Street I noticed that where a motor lorry was ranked it was almost impossible to pass between it and a tram, although it was possible to do so where a car was ranked. I know of one lad crashing into the back of a motor lorry which was parked under a tree at night and being blinded for life. If we could make the fine very heavy and provide that lights must always be displayed in such circumstances many accidents would be prevented. Admittedly, motor cycle riders are usually young and in a hurry. I have wondered whether it would be possible for a governor to be installed on motor cycles to control the speed. I live on a main road and there is a "Stop" sign alongside my gate. It is unusual for motorists to take any notice of it, and that applies especially to lads on motor cycles. It is a blind corner and yet they come along at speed and fail to stop at the sign. I have picked up three or four dead people who have been involved in accidents in front of my home. At one time it was nothing unusual for an accident to occur at this spot, but in the last year or two there has been no serious accident.

The dipping of lights should be compulsory. I have been on country roads at night and dipped my lights, but often an oncoming motorist has refused to do likewise. I should think that all new cars introduced since 1936 would be equipped with this device. It will be found that most old cars are in the metropolitan area, many of them being unfit to be on the roads. Garages which are largely engaged in repairing damaged cars are finding it almost impossible to keep up with demands, and this results in one having to wait long periods before getting a car back which has been involved in an accident, whereas previously it would be available within a few days. I was told only last week by one garage man that it would take six months to get a car back on the road if it had been involved in a crash, because his firm had so many cars waiting to be repaired. Many men are leaving this branch of industry. Another difficulty is that the number of young men interested in motor mechanics is not increasing appreciably. On the Unley Road in the last five years I know of only one new man setting up as a motor mechanic. Old cars are usually owned by people who cannot afford to spend much money on them, and they are getting into such a bad state of repair that they are a danger, not only to the drivers, but to other road users. A car over 15 or 20 years should be compulsorily inspected once in 12 months as is done with taxi cabs to ensure that the are fit to be on the roads.

I believe that the clause providing for action against drunken drivers is a step in the right direction, although I doubt whether it will solve the problem. It might help to frighten a few, but not very many. If one travels home in the early evening past a hotel he will see numerous cars parked nearby. This practice seems to have grown up in the last few years and a man driving home from work pulls up at a hotel and usually stays there until it closes. Those who are being picked up and fined for the offence of driving a vehicle under the influence of liquor comprise possibly only a small minority of those who are offending. It is only because they are involved in an accident, or a policeman happens to see them in an unsteady condition entering the car that they are brought before the court. The position is now so bad between 5 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. on Saturdays that I refrain from driving a car at that time because I feel it is not safe. It appears that the practice has developed of groups of people driving to nearby country hotels in the hills and spending Saturday afternoons drinking. I know of such hotels which are engaging an orchestra on Saturday afternoons to attract business.

Mr. Quirke—There is nothing wrong with that.

Mr. DUNNAGE—The only thing wrong is that it attracts motorists to spend the afternoon drinking. I am wondering whether something can be done to stop this practice, as I think it is the cause of many accidents. I believe that most fatal road accidents occur on Saturday afternoons and early on Saturday evenings. I hope the Premier will consider the various matters I have brought forward and try to do something about them. I support the second reading.

Mr. McLACHLAN (Victoria)—I am somewhat concerned about the clause which gives the court power to imprison a driver on a first offence for driving under the influence of liquor. Admittedly, it is optional for the court whether it orders imprisonment or imposes a fine, but this places great responsibility on the

magistrate. I have no sympathy for drunken drivers, but it is not unusual for a man who is not an habitual drunkard to find himself sufficiently under the influence of liquor for his judgment to be impaired. I am very wary about supporting legislation which would result in a man being imprisoned who possibly should not be sent to gaol.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Should he be in charge of a car?

Mr. McLACHLAN—I realize it is an offence and am aware of the tragedy and misery which sometimes results when a drunken driver is involved in an accident. I have always looked upon gaol as a place where a man is sent when he does something wrong when in his saner senses.

Mr. Frank Walsh—He would be sane if he didn't get drunk.

Mr. McLACHLAN—Some people can get drunk without knowing it, or without having had an intention of getting drunk. Often they do not know they are drunk until they get out into the fresh air.

Mr. Frank Walsh—If a man suspects he is under the influence of liquor would it not be reasonable for him to get somebody to drive the car?

Mr. McLACHLAN—Different people act differently when under the influence of liquor, and some get very obstinate. I would be agreeable to a fine of £100 being imposed for a first offence, or that the driving licence should be taken away for 12 months or even two years. I have a couple of sons who are practically teetotallers. At the same time I would feel perturbed if one of them had been at a party and someone had put whisky in his glass and he became intoxicated and drove a motor vehicle. However, we must be reasonable in our approach to this problem. People who drink must be careful if they know they will have to drive a car, but we must view this matter from the human aspect. None of us knows when this thing may come home to him or his friends. If an intoxicated person ran into and killed my son I would be very upset, and if my son killed a person I would regard it as a tragedy, but I think if a driver's licence could be suspended for, say, two years that would be a sufficient deterrent. If I were unfortunate enough to be charged with driving under the influence of intoxicating liquor I would sacrifice a great deal rather than have to go to gaol. I do not think a gaol sentence would be as great a deterrent as the suspension of a driving licence or having to enter into a bond to abstain from alcoholic beverages. I support the second reading, but I hope that members will view this matter in a sane light in Committee and realize the big responsibility they are placing on the magistrate. A person with plenty of money could afford to engage a leading barrister and may be able to give his evidence well. Further, the magistrate may be influenced to some extent by his demeanour and let him off, whereas a less fortunate person may find himself in gaol for three months.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—On behalf of the member for Eyre, I move—

That it be an instruction to the Committee of the whole House that it has power to consider an amendment providing for the concessional registration of share farmers' motor vehicles.

Motion carried.

Mr. RICHES (Stuart) moved—

That it be an instruction to the Committee of the whole House that it has power to consider an amendment to section 10b of the principal Act relating to concessions to incapacitated ex-servicemen.

Motion carried.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4—"Mode of computing registration fee."

Mr. SHANNON—On behalf of Mr. Christian I move to add the following paragraph at the end of the clause:—

(*c*) by adding at the end of the definition of "primary producer" in paragraph (14) the words "including share-farmer or any person who cultivates or works land under an arrangement or agreement with the owner or lessee thereof and who pursuant to such arrangement or agreement is entitled to a share of—

(*a*) the primary produce produced by the cultivating or working of such land; or

(*b*) the proceeds of the sale of such primary produce.

Mr. Christian's intention is to put the man working land on a share-farming basis on the same footing as the person who owns the land. The usual contract in share-farming is for the owner of the land to provide the property and the share-farmer, who works the land, to take a portion of the proceeds of the crop as his reward. The reduced registration fees allowed primary producers are an encouragement for people to go on the land. Primary producers' vehicles are used largely in carting superphosphate to the paddocks and wheat and other crops to sheds on the property. They are not used on the highways only. The share-

farmer falls into the same category as the primary producer. I hope the Government will seriously consider the amendment.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—The position is not precisely as the member for Eyre considered it to be. I have received a report from the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, which states:—

It would appear that the proposed amendment is designed to benefit farm employees who receive for their labour a small cash wage and the balance of their remuneration in the form of a share of the crop. Many of these farm employees own a light utility which is used wholly or mainly by the owner as a means of personal transport in connection with his sporting and other private activities. I can find no justification for registering such utilities owned by farm employees for 50 per cent of the fee payable by other sections of the community. I understand that the justification for registering a primary producer's truck for 50 per cent of the ordinary fee is that the truck is seldom used except at seeding and harvest time, and that the primary producer uses his motor car as a means of personal transport throughout the year. This justification does not apply to the employee who owns one vehicle and uses it as a means of personal transport throughout the year. Share-farmers who are working a farm on shares and who work independently of the instructions of the owner of the land have always been accepted as primary producers by me, and their commercial motor vehicles have been registered for half the ordinary fee.

The question of a person not working as a share-farmer, but under instructions from the employer crops up. A share-farmer is already accepted by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles as a primary producer and his vehicles are registered at half fees. The amendment goes further than extending concessions to share-farmers. It includes anyone working under instructions of a farmer, that is, an employee. The Registrar's report continues:—

Whether a person receiving a share of the crop is accepted as a primary producer depends upon his relationship to the owner of the farm. If the person is merely an employee of the farmer he has not been accepted as a primary producer. At the present time one in every three commercial motor vehicles registered for use in this State is registered for 50 per cent of the ordinary fee. Just how many farm employees own buckboards or utilities is not known.

Mr. Christian wants to include persons who are not share-farmers, but who act under instructions from employers, and receive their money mainly as wages, with a small bonus as their share of the crop proceeds. If the amendment is carried the finances of the Treasury will not be affected in any way, but the granting of concessions takes away money which is badly needed for expenditure on roads. The few shillings saved in connection with registration fees is frequently wasted on the upkeep of vehicles. Country roads are in an extremely bad condition and are deteriorating rapidly. Costs of labour and materials are increasing, and this is not the time to make further reductions in road revenue, which is already inadequate. We should not grant concessions which are not in the interests of the persons for whom they are sought. The country motorist would forget all about registration concessions if he could be assured of good roads on which to travel. I oppose the amendment.

Mr. HEASLIP—If the amendment includes a farm employee who uses a commercial vehicle I support it. Anyone using a vehicle to go to and from his place of work on a farm, and also uses that vehicle in farming activities, is entitled to the concession. The Premier said that if good roads were available country motorists would forget all about registration concessions, but at present our country roads are very rough, and because of that registration concessions are warranted. The Premier said that a share-farmer is accepted as a primary producer, but that is not so. I have had people come to me to assist them in the completion of a statutory declaration in order to get the registration concession. In completing the form a man must declare that he is a primary producer engaged in working his own land or land leased by him. In 90 per cent of the cases a share-farmer does not own or lease land.

Mr. O'Halloran—The Premier has misled us because he said he could get the concession.

Mr. HEASLIP—A share farmer cannot get it. I am a justice of the peace and I cannot complete the form for him because he is not a share farmer according to the declaration. Under the Act a share farmer is entitled to the concession, but he cannot get it unless he completes the statutory declaration, and if he completes it as now worded he is making a false declaration. The form does not conform to the Act, which says that a primary producer is a person engaged in fishing, or agricultural, horticultural, viticultural, pastoral, or other like pursuits.

Mr. Riches—Is there any distinction between employer and employee?

Mr. HEASLIP—No. Action should be taken to make it possible for a primary producer to get the concession.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Anyone knowing the Registrar of Motor Vehicles knows that he

would not give me or the House incorrect information. He is the soul of honour in every way, and when I quote a report from him I give it with the greatest assurance. Subsection (7) of section 9 of the principal Act says:—

If the Registrar is satisfied by statutory declaration or such other evidence as he requires that (*a*) any commercial vehicle is owned by a primary producer and (*b*) such motor vehicle will not be used on roads for carrying His Majesty's mails, goods or passengers for pecuniary reward or for carrying goods in the course of any trade or business other than that of a primary producer, the registration fee shall be the amount which would otherwise be payable under this section, less 50 per cent thereof.

A statutory declaration is not essential. To my knowledge on a number of occasions the Registrar has granted the concession without asking for a form to be completed, because he has been satisfied that the person concerned is a primary producer. I am certain that if a man declared that he was a share farmer engaged in primary production the declaration would be immediately accepted by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles. I will take up with him the question of including "share farmer" in the declaration. I hope that the amendment will not be accepted as I feel sure that Mr. Christian did not realize the complications which would follow if it were inserted in the legislation.

Mr. PEARSON—I accept the Premier's assurance that he will take up with the Registrar the question of redrafting the statutory declaration form so as to include people who are genuine primary producers. I was surprised to learn that the Registrar did not always require the form to be fully completed, for I have had statutory declaration forms returned to me by post because, in operating a partnership, certain words had to be crossed out and replaced in the plural before the form would be accepted. The Act definitely states that "primary producer" means any person engaged in fishing, or in agricultural, horticultural, viticultural, pastoral or other like pursuits. It also states that a person need not be the owner or lessee of any land. I think that the Registrar has made an unnecessarily narrow interpretation of "primary producer" in the declaration. The question of the amount of revenue produced is no valid argument in opposition to the amendment. We are merely seeking to do justice to these people without regard to the revenue obtained. I know of one case where the owner let his farm on shares to his son-in-law, requiring that he should do all the carting of the grain, superphosphate and so on. The owner did not possess a truck, the share farmer having to provide the vehicle. The Registrar of Motor Vehicles turned down an application for registration of the truck at a reduced fee because he said the agreement did not clearly state that the person working the land was working independently of instructions from the owner. I believe, however, that registration was finally granted.

Mr. SHANNON—Undoubtedly there has been some misunderstanding on this matter. I feel that if the Registrar correctly interprets the provision in the Act the producer would be entitled to half registration fee. The Act does not say that a primary producer must be engaged as a principal or the owner of any land. The definition is wide enough to include anybody who obtains his livelihood from agriculture. If the person who is engaged in primary production has a commercial vehicle, he would be entitled, under the Act, to half registration fee, but Mr. Christian's amendment will restrict that somewhat.

The Hon. T. Playford—No, it includes something extra.

Mr. SHANNON—Share farmers are not paid a weekly, monthly or annual wage, but by a share in the sale of produce from the property. I do not think that apiarists are included although I believe that they enjoy a 50 per cent reduction in the registration fee of their vehicle. The definition is loosely worded. I suggest that the words "engaged in" with no qualification may be said to apply to any person employed for a weekly wage on a farm who uses his vehicle to cart produce for his employer.

Mr. MICHAEL—The interpretation of "primary producer" has always been difficult. I have known of cases in which a farmer had an old motor car which he converted into a utility on which he was able to get the primary producer's rebate; but had he put the produce in the back of his motor car he would have been unable to obtain a rebate on that vehicle. The owner of a jeep was unable to obtain the rebate, the reason given by the Registrar being that it was a vehicle mainly used for the transport of passengers; but after discussions with the Registrar in which it was pointed out that the back seat of the jeep had been taken out and the vehicle was now used for such duties as carting fencing posts and perhaps a calf to market, that primary producer was given the rebate. I feel the amendment goes further than desirable for, under it, a man who receives a few bags of wheat for carting a crop to a siding would be entitled to half fee

registration. I do not agree with the member for Rocky River that anybody willing to work in the country should be entitled to the concession, for that would mean that a shearer or any contract worker in a country area would be entitled to a primary producer's concession on his commercial motor vehicle. I feel that the offer of the Treasurer to take up with the Registrar of Motor Vehicles the question with a view to providing for a more logical definition should overcome the difficulty

Mr. HAWKER—This is not so much a question of amending the Act as of its interpretation. It is far better to take the Treasurer's assurance than to attempt to amend the Act. Mr. Christian's amendment proposes to clarify the definition of "primary producer" by including the person who is entitled to a share of the primary produce produced by the cultivating or working of land, but what about the man who grazes cows or sheep? He may not be cultivating or working the land and may be prohibited from any concession, whereas under the present Act he would be entitled to it.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—With regard to the objection raised by the member for Rocky River, the statutory declaration states, "Any alteration made must be initialled by the applicant and a justice of the peace." Therefore, it is possible to alter the application form. On the other side of the form is set out in the words of the Act what is involved, as it certifies that a person is a primary producer within the meaning of the Act and is engaged in certain pursuits. That certificate is required to be signed by the police officer. Regarding the claim that the definition is loose, I believe that a number of cases dealing with the definition of "primary production" have been taken as far as the High Court. I am assured by the Parliamentary Draftsman that the words "engaged in" mean "engaged in as a principal." I believe the discussion on this amendment has been fruitful and I shall bring to the Registrar's notice the observations made by the member for Rocky River so that people will not be debarred from the concession on the assumption that the statutory declaration is the final word in this matter and that they must own land to be eligible.

Mr. HEASLIP—I believe the Registrar of Motor Vehicles is carrying out his duties efficiently and it is no reflection on him that I bring this matter forward. Under the present definition primary producers are not getting what they are entitled to. The Treasurer mentioned that the Registrar had personally inspected a truck close to the metropolitan area. I do not live within 100 miles of the metropolitan area, and that applies to the majority of country people; it is therefore impossible for the Registrar personally to inspect vehicles so far removed from the city. The statutory declaration is made by the owner of a truck and the declaration is then sent or taken to the nearest police officer, who fills in the form certifying that the applicant is a primary producer. It is for the policeman to decide whether the applicant is a primary producer or not, and nine times out of ten it is on his recommendation that the Registrar allows or refuses the concession. I have on my farm a man to whom I pay wages, but who is earning two or three times a much money by milking cows as I pay him. He is instructed by me, but under the definition of "primary producer," although he is chiefly a dairyman, he is not entitled to get the concession. There should be a better definition of "primary producer."

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not want the honourable member to be under a misapprehension. The statutory declaration requires a person to say that he is the owner of the land. That has never been included in the Act. He could be engaged in primary production without being the owner of the land. That is the point I propose to take up with the Registrar.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. HEASLIP—I move to add the following paragraph at the end of the clause:—

(*c*) By adding at the end thereof the following paragraph:—

(16) A statutory declaration made for the purpose of satisfying the registrar as to any matter under this section may be made before and taken by any elector of the House of Assembly and when so taken shall have the like effect under the Oaths Act, 1936, and for all purposes as if it had been made before and taken by a justice.

In the country justices of the peace are not just next door to every primary producer and it often involves a trip of 10 to 30 miles to get a signature from one. This results in much unnecessary waste of time and petrol. The Registrar assures me that any statutory declaration signed by those included in the amendment would be as binding as if signed by a justice of the peace.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—When I first read the amendment I thought it was far-reaching, but I notice the honourable member does not propose to interfere with the provision that

the Registrar requires that a police officer will still sign the other side of the form. The advantage of going before a justice of the peace is that it is a protection to the person making the declaration, because any good justice of peace will satisfy himself that the declarant knows what he is doing and is complying with the law. A person making a false declaration would be subject to a severe penalty. The amendment will not interfere with the efficient administration of the Act.

Mr. CLARKE—I think the amendment could be improved and I therefore move—

After "Assembly" to insert "not being a member of the declarant's family."

Mr. SHANNON—I am not in favour of a sweeping amendment to permit anybody over the age of 21 years to witness a declaration. I am not unmindful of the great inconvenience caused in country districts by having to find a justice of the peace before signing documents. I point out that the local policeman would still have to verify the statements made by the declarant, so I suggest we could dispense with the necessity of obtaining a witness to the signature. The Commissioner of Taxation is prepared to accept a taxpayer's declaration that the particulars contained in the return are correct. Surely we could adopt that procedure. Perhaps the Treasurer should review the form to be signed.

Mr. CLARKE—If the Treasurer will undertake to review the form I will withdraw my amendment.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The department finds, even with the precautions now taken, that many people make declarations but afterwards use their vehicles illegally.

Mr. Shannon—You could still punish a man who made a false declaration.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes, but it is much more difficult to get a police officer's certificate than that of a justice of the peace. The number of police officers in outback areas is less than the number of justices of the peace.

Mr. Pearson—But country people can post the form to police officers.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—In many cases the policeman will not endorse the form until until he knows the circumstances and often he has to inspect the vehicle first. However, I am prepared to accept the amendment because I think it is to the advantage of the person making application for a concession to be impressed by the seriousness of the matter.

Mr. Clarke's amendment carried.

Mr. Heaslip's amendment, as amended, carried.

Mr. HAWKER—I agree with the heavier taxation of diesel-powered vehicles because they do not contribute towards the road fund. Such a vehicle travelling about 25,000 miles a year will now contribute about the same sum towards that fund as petrol-driven vehicles do. However, diesel trucks are used largely in the outback where little money is spent on the roads. Will a rebate of registration fees be considered for these vehicles? Most of the damage to the roads is caused by vehicles from other States over which we have no control? Is there any possibility of getting big trucks from other States to make some contribution towards our road maintenance?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—South Australia has entered into an agreement with other States to accept their registrations and they accept ours in order to prevent motorists from being held up when going from one State to another. The motorist in Adelaide does not realize how important that agreement is, but the Mount Gambier or Naracoorte motorist, who frequently goes into Victoria, appreciates it. If we wanted to get a contribution to our road revenue from vehicles coming from other States we would have to impose a special per-ton-mile fee when certain roads were used, but such an imposition would apply to all vehicles. It is a question of policy and I prefer not to discuss it tonight. I do not think the rebates suggested by the honourable member are possible. Although a vehicle may operate mainly in a remote part of the State, frequently it gets into areas where there are bitumen roads, and there would be difficulty in ascertaining how many miles were travelled on bad roads and how many on good roads. It would not be a practicable proposition. The present concessions are reasonable.

Clause as amended passed.

Clauses 5 to 9 passed.

Clause 10—"Duration of licence."

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I suggest that in order to relieve congestion when licences have to be renewed at June 30 each year, some licences should be issued for a longer period than one year, say 15 or 18 months, so as to cause the dates of expiry to vary. This would spread the renewals of licences over the year.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—At present every driver takes out a licence for 12 months, which causes considerable congestion at June 30 each year. We had a similar congestion with motor vehicle registrations and action had to be

taken to overcome it. I do not think many drivers would take out a licence for 15 months or 18 months; he would prefer to take it out for 12 months, the shortest period possible. If the proposal in the clause is accepted we will soon find the renewal of licences being spread over the year, which will prevent congestion.

Clause passed.

Clause 11—"Mechanical signals on wide vehicles."

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Today many trailers exceed the width of the towing vehicle. This applies particularly to horse floats. Any vehicle that is being towed should not exceed the width of the towing vehicle. Can anything be done in this direction?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The clause is designed to make the roads more safe with the use of wider vehicles as well as provide other road users with signals about movements. I move—

To delete in subsection (1) of new section 40c "regulations" and insert "Registrar."

In practice, the various types of equipment are approved by the registrar and not by regulation.

Mr. PEARSON—If the State Traffic Committee deems the amendment desirable I accept its finding, but I point out that practically every truck and semi-trailer on the road will come under the provision, all being 7ft. wide or more. It will take some time for all vehicles to be equipped with proper devices approved by the Registrar, and I presume that some reasonable latitude will be permitted in fitting them?

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 12—"Lights on motor vehicles."

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I move—

To delete paragraph (*a*) of proposed new subsection (2a) of section 42 of the principal Act.

I have had considerable experience in driving vehicles in various parts of the State where street lights are not powerful enough to illuminate the road and prevent motor drivers from running down pedestrians or colliding with obstacles on the road. Clause 12 goes too far. It states:—

(2a) The driver of a motor vehicle which is fitted with a device for dipping the main beam of its headlights shall keep the headlights dipped at any time when, between half an hour after sunset and half an hour before sunrise—

(*a*) the vehicle is being driven on a road at any place within 100yds. of a lighted street lamp;

(*b*) the main beam of the headlights of any other vehicle approaching the vehicle from the opposite direction on the same road have been dipped while visible to such driver, and thereafter until the vehicles pass one another;

(*c*) the vehicle is within 300yds. of any other vehicle approaching it from the opposite direction on the same road.

I wholeheartedly approve of the compulsory dipping of headlights. The great majority of motor drivers are courteous and if a driver dips his headlights there is usually an immediate response by the driver of the oncoming vehicle. Occasionally a driver with no sense of courtesy does not dip his lights, notwithstanding the number of times that the other driver dips his lights. In certain country towns and in some suburban streets, where the lighting is not particularly bright, it would mean a continuous process of dipping if a driver had to dip his lights every time he got within 100yds. of a street lamp. I do not say that that applies to the same extent in the suburbs as in some country towns; but there are country towns with perhaps one or two street lights in a fairly long street where for safety it is necessary to drive with the lights on the high beam, otherwise there is a danger of running into a cyclist who may be riding a cycle without a rear light. I suggest the clause would be adequate if we struck out the whole of paragraph (*a*). That would mean that it would be an offence if a vehicle were approaching, whether on an open country road or on any street in the suburbs or in a country town, to use the high beam.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—This amendment was included largely as the result of a recommendation from the interstate committee which has been set up to consider traffic codes, because it is desirable that we arrive at a code which is acceptable throughout Australia. However, I have much sympathy with the amendment, because I know places in the hills districts where a single light has been installed at some dangerous place and where, owing to the winding road, 100yds. would put a driver well away from it and at a spot where he would be anxious to use his full light for safe driving. I do not oppose the amendment, as the clause will still make good sense without that paragraph.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Perhaps no road in South Australia is better illuminated than the Anzac Highway; but some people embarrass approaching drivers by using the full beam, whereas a driver could drive without using any

lights on that highway. I also draw the Committee's attention to drivers who drive with one very bright light and one dim. I imagine such a driver would be committing an offence, but the practice has become more frequent over the past six months. It constitutes a menace equal to any on the road today.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The first matter mentioned by the houourable member would be an offence under this clause. The second is a result of either carelessness on the part of the driver or of bad work on the part of the garage man who is servicing the car. In that respect it can only be dealt with by appropriate court action, and I have no doubt that the additional provisions of this Bill will enable the police to take stronger action than has been possible in the past in these matters.

Amendment carried.

Mr. HEASLIP—Under this clause the driver of a modern car is penalized, because one of the biggest offenders of headlight glare is the owner of an old motor car whose lights are badly focused and directed. Whilst it is compulsory for the driver of a modern car to dip his headlights, the driver of the older type car cannot dip his, and the former must wait until the older model passes.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—When provision for dipping was first introduced many vehicles had no dipping facilities and Parliament did not feel justified in making it an offence to fine the driver of a vehicle without dipping facilities. I believe those vehicles are now almost a thing of the past; they are certainly getting much rarer. They will certainly be subject to police control, for where a person cannot dip his lights they must be focused lower to comply with the Act.

Clause as amended passed.

Clauses 13 and 14 passed.

Clause 15—"Regulations."

Mr. STEPHENS—Will the Treasurer explain that portion of the clause which requires that exposed chains on motor vehicles shall be protected by guards?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Chairman of the State Traffic Committee has handed me the following recommendation from that body:—

Arising from a resolution adopted by the Australian Road Safety Council Congress that motor vehicles known as timber straddle trucks should not be registered unless the driving chains are protected by guards, the committee has investigated the position and taken evidence. This type of machine is mainly used by timber carrying companies and there seems no doubt that an exposed vertical chain on either side of the vehicle constitutes a definite danger hazard if not protected by suitable guards. It was reported to the committee that on one occasion when a chain broke the flying end went right through the decking of a wharf and on another ocasion a man was killed by links from a broken chain. It has been ascertained that suitable guards can be placed on such machines without excessive cost. In the case of one type of machine, guards are standard equipment. Apparently, for the purpose of easier working, the guards over the chains are not being used by owners of such vehicles. After having investigated the position the committee considers it necessary, in the interests of public safety, that those chain drives should be protected. The committee accordingly recommends that the Act be so amended.

Clause passed.

Clauses 16 to 20 passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS.

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

That it be an order of this House that all papers and other documents ordered by the House during the session, and not returned prior to the prorogation, and such other official reports and returns as are customarily laid before Parliament and printed, be forwarded to the Speaker in print as soon as completed, and if received within two months after such prorogation, that the Clerk of the House cause such papers and documents to be distributed amongst members and bound with the Votes and Proceedings; and as regards those not received within such time, that they be laid upon the table on the first day of next session.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 10.13 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, November 8, at 2 p.m.