

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, August 6, 1952.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Dunks) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

AERIAL SURVEY FOR URANIUM.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Premier's attention been drawn to a statement in this morning's *Advertiser* that the Commonwealth Government intends to embark on an intensive aerial survey for uranium deposits in the Northern Territory, and is the State Government contemplating a similar survey, perhaps with Commonwealth assistance or with the use of its instruments, in possible ore-bearing areas in South Australia?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have seen the press report, which deals with the suggestion of an investigation with an airborne scintillometer. This is not new to South Australia, work of this nature having been carried out by the State Government as long as 18 months ago when it imported a scintillometer from America. It has proved very valuable; it was used in the honourable member's own district with success. A difficulty facing the State Government has been the provision of suitable aeroplanes, and, having no air force, the State has been involved in heavy expense in hiring private planes to undertake the work. The Government is asking the Commonwealth if it can provide an air force aeroplane. Apart from surveys, for which approval has already been given, the Government desires to expand its activities in three additional areas—one to the north-west of the State adjacent to the Everard Ranges, another south-east of Oodnadatta in the Peake and Denison Ranges, and a third area in the Flinders Ranges adjacent to Mount Painter.

Mr. Riches—Could not this work be done with an Auster aircraft?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government has hired private aeroplanes for the purpose. If the outcrops do not come to the surface the instruments cannot register, but where they do it is an effective way of making a general survey. This year a survey will be made in certain parts of Eyre Peninsula, and we hope to be able to follow that up progressively in the other three areas mentioned.

PORT PIRIE SEWERAGE.

Mr. DAVIS—Has the Minister of Works anything to report regarding Port Pirie sewerage and can he say when the work will be done?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I am not in a position to do that. Apart from anything else, the Loan Estimates will be presented to the House in the near future.

MONEY-LENDERS' CHARGES.

Mr. LAWN—Has the Premier anything further to report following on the question I asked yesterday about the Money-lenders Act?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yesterday I suggested that the Money-lenders Act dealt with the matter raised by the honourable member, but today I have obtained a report from the Parliamentary Draftsman saying that it does not directly deal with it. The following is his report, and after I have read it the honourable member may ask a further question if he desires:—

The Money-lenders Act, 1940, which I think is the only relevant Statute on this topic, does not fix any definite maximum rate of interest which may be charged by money-lenders. There are, however, some provisions in the Act designed to protect borrowers against rates of interest which the court might hold to be excessive. If a money-lender sues for his principal or interest, and the court is satisfied that the interest is excessive, it may relieve the borrower from the obligation to pay any sum in excess of what the court thinks reasonable, and may order the lender to repay any excessive interest which he has received. The borrower is also permitted by the Act to apply to the court for relief from the obligation to pay excessive interest under a money-lending contract. What is an excessive rate of interest is a matter for the court to decide. It depends, mainly, on the security, the risk, and the terms of repayment. In some cases the courts have allowed fairly high rates as being reasonable. In a Western Australian case in 1936 the Full Court of that State approved of 15 per cent, and 8 per cent was approved in a New South Wales case in 1935. In the English cases some very high rates have been approved of, e.g., 25 per cent, 30 per cent, 20 per cent. The English Money-lenders Act provides that any rate in excess of 48 per cent is presumed to be excessive. In view of the different circumstances in which loans are made, particularly as regards security or lack of it, there are difficulties in attempting to fix a maximum rate of interest by legislation.

Mr. LAWN—In view of the information given by the Premier that the Western Australian courts have held that an interest rate of 15 per cent is not too high having regard to security, risk, and weekly repayments, and the advertisement, which I quoted recently in the House and which offered a loan at a rate of 55.87 per cent, could not this matter be brought before the Cabinet for further consideration with a view to amending the present Moneylenders Act so as to provide some maximum interest rate?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—As the Parliamentary Draftsman, Mr. Bean, has pointed out, the difficulty of setting a rate is very much influenced by the type of security offered in each case, but I will have the matter examined to see if any State has, in fact, fixed a rate, and, if it has, on what basis it has been fixed, and will let the honourable member have a reply.

GUARANTEE OF QUALITY OF GOODS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can anything be done, either through the Prices Commissioner or by legislation, to provide for a guarantee of the quality of drapery or clothing purchased at a sale and found later not to measure up to the standard normally required? Often when a customer returns the article to the shop he is informed that as it has been purchased at a sale no guarantee can be given as to quality and that the firm cannot accept responsibility for any defects.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—State prices laws only provide for one thing—that the Prices Commissioner may fix a maximum price at which a commodity can be sold; no minimum price is fixed. The obligation rests on any purchaser to first satisfy himself as to their quality. The Prices Commissioner can take action under such circumstances if the price charged is above the permitted maximum, but otherwise the prices laws give no assistance. For years there have been conferences between the States with the object of having a uniform law that textiles shall be marked to denote quality. That has been accomplished as regards shoes—whether or not they contain solid leather, etc.—with indifferent success. Although the States have passed laws regarding the branding of textiles it has not yet been found practicable to put them into effect because many textiles come from overseas and we have no knowledge of the percentage of the various fibres in them. Although there is legislation on the Statute Books of every State for the branding of textiles, no State has been able to put it into effect because of these difficulties. This topic, more than any other, has been the subject of interstate conferences which have been held almost regularly, but there are so many synthetic materials imported from so many sources that no very effective method of dealing with the question has been devised. The question arises whether we could make a law, say, that a commodity should not be branded “wool” unless it contains more than 85 per cent wool.

Mr. Macgillivray—Hasn't legislation been passed?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes, but no way has been found to make it effective, because materials are imported from many countries and have different compositions which in many instances are not known.

Mr. Macgillivray—Australian-made goods could be guaranteed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! Honourable members must not debate the answer to a question.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The question of making all Australian-made goods carry a brand has been considered, but the Australian manufacturer has violently opposed the proposal, for, he says, it would put him in an adverse position compared with his overseas competitors. The Prices Commissioner can only fix a maximum price, and can take adequate action only with regard to reported cases of sales above that price, but he is unable to take action on the grounds that the materials concerned are not up to standard, for there is usually no evidence of the terms of the sale upon which the original undertaking was based.

PORT LINCOLN WATERFRONT DISPUTE.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—Has the Premier any further information with regard to the waterfront problem at Port Lincoln about which I asked yesterday?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have received information today that the strike at Port Lincoln has now been declared off and that the union has agreed to increase its waterside strength there.

ERADICATION OF RED SCALE.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I understand that a disease known as red scale, which affects citrus trees, is prevalent in the metropolitan area and that if home gardeners should pack infected fruit and send it to the market the disease would most likely be conveyed to the trees of commercial growers. I believe that prior to the war the Department of Agriculture supplied sprayers at a fee to growers to eradicate the disease. Has the department now a similar plan or any other for eradicating this disease in the metropolitan area?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—Mr. Strickland, the Chief Horticulturist, reports:—

The most effective programme for control of red scale on citrus is a white oil emulsion spray, followed about two weeks later by tent fumigation with hydrocyanic acid gas. Fumigation requires expensive equipment and its

application in suburban gardens by other than skilled operators would be extremely dangerous. The suburban gardener must therefore rely on spraying measures, and the following programme is advised:—

- (a) For lightly infested trees: a spray of white oil emulsion one gallon in 40 gallons late December to January;
- (b) For fairly heavily infested trees: two spray applications as prescribed in (a), the first late December and the second late in February;
- (c) For heavily infested trees: very heavy pruning to facilitate spraying, burning of prunings and application of two white oil sprays one in early summer, one in late autumn.

To be fully effective, all spraying must thoroughly cover all parts of trees, and to avoid injury, applications should not be made in hot weather. Any householder whose citrus trees are infested with red scale is obliged to take measures to control the infestation.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO COUNCILS.

Mr. DAVIS—Recently the Port Pirie council decided to purchase a road grader on the understanding that it would obtain financial assistance from the Government by way of a loan, but its application for assistance was refused. Paragraph 12 of the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech states:—

The Government's policy of assisting local authorities in their road work has been continued with satisfactory results. Grants to councils for maintenance and reconstruction, and for the provision of new roads have been considerably increased, the allocations being £680,000 in 1950-51, and £1,050,000 in 1951-52. The Government has also made interest-free loans to enable councils to obtain efficient road making plant. Approximately £1,200,000 has been made available in this way and has greatly increased the capacity of the councils to provide roads of the kind needed for present-day traffic. I ask the Minister of Local Government why the Government has discontinued this practice of assisting councils, thereby placing them in a most invidious position?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Government has not discontinued that practice, but it is always based on certain circumstances. The member mentioned this matter this morning and I have brought down a reply after consultation with the Highways Commissioner. He said:—

The funds available for this purpose are limited and must be related to the amount available for actual construction.

The member read only part of the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech which referred to road construction. The report continues:—

Requests can therefore only be considered where the machinery is to be mainly used on

activities financed from Government grants and it is not possible to grant loans where machinery is to be used on works which are of local importance only. The provision of this plant is the responsibility of the local governing bodies of the area concerned and is one of its normal functions. I am therefore unable to recommend for your approval those cases where the application refers to plant required for mainly local purposes. This policy is all the more necessary as many of the items of plant now cost three times the price existing at the time the scheme was instituted. This means that approved loans must be less in number to keep within the total of funds available.

It is obviously not the prerogative of the road fund to finance councils for works or plant entirely within their areas.

Mr. Davis—It has been done previously.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—No, not for this type of work. Loans are only made where Government grants are being used to the best advantage both from the councils' and Government's points of view. I know of no instance where the Commissioner has recommended loans other than for constructional purposes. The Commissioner has stated that graders which used to cost £3,000 now cost £10,000, and we could be nothing but a lending institution and could do no road constructing.

Mr. Davis—But we only want £3,400.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Only because it is a small grader.

Mr. Riches—Is this a new policy since the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—It is entirely in keeping with the speech. This plant is to be used only within the municipality of Port Pirie and is not for construction of roads.

REPORT OF PREMIERS' CONFERENCE.

Mr. PATTINSON—In view of the importance of the Commonwealth's proposal to hand taxing powers back to the States, is the Premier in a position to make available the report of the proceedings of the Premiers' Conference on this matter?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—In view of what one member said last night, that the statement I gave to the House was not correct, I have brought down the report and will be pleased to make it available to any member who desires to read it. It is the only copy I have, and as it is of some value for office record purposes, I do not propose to lay it upon the table of the House. The relevant portions of the proceedings are marked.

WAGES AND HOURS CASE.

Mr. LAWN—On June 25 the member for Eyre asked whether the Government would be represented on the 44-hour week case and part of the Premier's reply was, "in view of those circumstances this Government is taking no action in this matter." On July 30, speaking in the Address in Reply debate, the Premier said:—

Earlier this session I was asked whether I believed it would be practicable to revert to a 44-hour week and whether my Government intended to support in the Arbitration Court an application to that end. My reply was that I did not propose to take such action as I did not think it was feasible at present.

Last night Mr. Stott said that the South Australian Government was not intervening in the present application before the Arbitration Court, whereupon the Premier said that it was. Will he now make a statement to clarify the position?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The question asked by Mr. Christian was whether the Government proposed to support an application for a return to the 44-hour week. My statement at that time was that the Government did not consider it feasible to return to a 44-hour week and I gave my reasons, namely (a) that you cannot take away privileges already granted, and more importantly (b) that two other States have legislation providing for a 40-hour week, so there would be hopeless confusion if Commonwealth legislation provided for a 44-hour week. When speaking in the Address in Reply debate I again stated that the Government did not propose to take action for a return to a 44-hour week, but that did not mean that in the important cases at present before the Arbitration Court the Government would not be represented in court to see what cases are brought forward and take the opportunity to present its views. In this morning's *Advertiser* the honourable member will see a report which confirms my statement of last night: the Government is represented at the hearing in connection with three important matters, namely, a return to the 44-hour week, the freezing of the "C" series index rises and the reduction of wages. I presume they will be dealt with by the court simultaneously as they are interlocked, and the South Australian Government is represented by Mr. Scarfe, who has been given definite instruction by me as Minister of Industry what the Government's views are on these matters.

Mr. LAWN—Can it be taken for granted that Mr. Scarfe will make clear to the court

the Government's opinion that the 40-hour week should not be interfered with because it is not feasible to take away privileges already granted and because other States' legislation provides for a 40-hour week?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have no doubt Mr. Scarfe will carry out his instructions in a proper way and will submit evidence on behalf of the State on the various matters before the court. Mr. Stott last night was under a complete misconception. I believe that when the court has very important matters before it everyone who has information bearing upon the subject should be ready to make it available to the court to enable it to determine what steps should be taken.

Mr. Riches—Can the House be informed of the Government's attitude on the other two questions?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government has never made any secret of its attitude on public questions and I have never sheltered behind the plea, which I sometimes hear, that it is a matter of policy. If this Government is in a position to answer a question it has always been prepared to do it and I shall therefore readily tell the House the Government's views on the other two questions. We do not think it feasible to alter the "C" series index to the detriment of the worker. He is involved in additional costs and any freezing of those adjustments while he is out on the limb would be unfair to him. Secondly, we do not ask for a return to a 44-hour week, but we say that the 40-hour week should be effectively worked, which is not always the case at present. Thirdly, we are not asking for a reduction of wages.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION: SUSPENSION OF DRIVING LICENCES.

Mr. PATTINSON—I ask leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr. PATTINSON—Yesterday when the honourable member for Victoria was speaking in the Address in Reply debate, and I was sitting behind him, he referred to a constituent whose driving licence had been suspended for three years, and said he had received a letter from the Attorney-General stating that there was no power to reduce the period of suspension fixed by the court. Without any previous consultation with the honourable member I interjected that there was provision in the Act for his constituent to return to the court and ask for a

remission of the suspension, and that the statement in the Attorney-General's letter was incorrect. On a proper examination of the facts of this particular case and the law thereon I am convinced that it was I who was incorrect and not the Attorney-General. In fairness to Mr. Rudall I take this the first available opportunity of saying so publicly. On the spur of the moment yesterday I recalled provisions of the Act which I had used successfully to obtain remissions of suspensions imposed by the court and by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles in cases similar to but not the same as that cited by the honourable member. These were cases where the suspensions were imposed indefinitely and not for fixed periods. If the Registrar of Motor Vehicles or the Commissioner of Police suspends a person's licence indefinitely or for a fixed period the person concerned may apply to the court to review the case and remove the disqualification. If a court suspends a person's licence indefinitely he may apply to the same court after a lapse of three months to review the case and remove the disqualification, but the Act does not contain a similar provision where a person's licence has been suspended for a fixed period—even as long as three years, as cited by the honourable member yesterday. Some members may think that that is a curious anomaly in the Act which requires amendment. At this stage I offer no opinion whether or not the Act should be amended to provide for such a case.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Adjourned debate on the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

(Continued from August 5. Page 287.)

Mr. FLETCHER (Mount Gambier)—I join with other members in expressing regret at the untimely death of His Majesty King George VI. His reign was a troublous one because of World War II. and its aftermath. We know the love and esteem in which he was held by the people of England. Only yesterday I came across an extract from a leading article in the *Advertiser* of December 28, 1946, referring to the King's 1940 Christmas message to the British Commonwealth, in which he summarized his message with the following quotation:—

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

That message, so relevant in 1940, is not less appropriate to our present situation and need. I feel sure that, with her upbringing and home life, the young Queen will worthily follow in the footsteps of her father and that her reign will be an era of prosperity like that of her illustrious predecessor Queen Elizabeth I. I regret the departure from South Australia of Sir Willoughby and Lady Norrie, but congratulate Sir Willoughby on his promotion to the high position of Governor-General of New Zealand. I doubt whether any other Vice-Regal couple ever endeared themselves so much to South Australians. I deplore the death of my friend, Mr. Leslie Duncan, former member for Gawler. There was a close personal link between the Duncans and the Fletchers. I remember when Mr. Duncan, his wife and daughter visited Mount Gambier many years ago and stayed at our place. From then a splendid friendship developed. I always looked upon Les Duncan as a very sincere friend. I now pay a tribute to his daughter, who played a big part in the lives of her parents and rendered yeoman service in her care of them. I mention that because I feel that Mr. Duncan would have liked to hear this appreciation of his daughter's help and kindness. I congratulate his successor, Mr. John Clark, and feel sure he will be an asset to this Chamber. Because of his experience as a teacher in the Education Department in modelling the characters of boys and girls, I feel sure he will be able to help in modelling some honourable members into shape.

I shall now turn to matters concerning my own district. The Public Works Standing Committee has approved of the erection of a new primary school and hospital, improved water supplies and a sewerage scheme at Mount Gambier, the cost amounting to more than £2,000,000. However, because of the reduction in the Loan works programme, it would appear that none of these jobs will reach fruition for some time. The existing primary school was erected on a restricted area and recently emergency rooms have been provided to such an extent that when all the children are in the grounds it is almost impossible to close the gate. With the district still expanding the position will grow worse. Therefore, I hope that in deciding its programme of works to be undertaken the Government will not overlook this job.

It seems rather ironical that although within a mile of the township of Mount Gambier there is an inexhaustible supply of water the people are practically out of it after a few hot days.

This has been their experience since 1938. At that time provision had been made for the re-laying of larger mains and the erection of two booster tanks, one of which has since been provided. However, since 1938 the number of water users has increased considerably and the people are still faced with water shortages. Only recently the Public Works Standing Committee approved of the laying of enlarged mains. I know that the Government will have to be careful in its expenditure of loan money, but I hope that at least the new main from the reservoir will be laid as far as the main street. If this is done it will tide the people over for the time being. The matter of sewerage facilities for Mount Gambier is important. In the past we have been fortunate because we have been blessed with more or less porous substrata which has enabled us to dispose of sewage, but the position has now become so serious that hotels and business premises in the main street do not know where to put down the next pit or bore to take away sewage. Should a serious epidemic occur it would spread quickly through the town.

The broadening of the South-Eastern gauge is still under way. At the opening ceremony at Naracoorte some time ago we were assured by the Premier that within 18 months the line would be broadened all the way to Mount Gambier, but that has not eventuated. Now we are told that the broadening will have reached Kalangadoo by October, and there is a rumour that the Railways Commissioner said that by June next year the broadening will have reached Mount Gambier. I hope that materializes because the present railway cannot carry all the goods produced in the South-East.

Much soldier settlement has taken place in the Mount Gambier district. Some of it has been successful, but not all. Like the Premier I have taken a great interest in the Eight Mile Creek area, but I regret that some of the blocks are not the success we thought they would be. I hope the Government and the department will take a lenient view in connection with some of the blocks not yet in full development. I remember the opening up of the Murray lands near Murray Bridge, and the difficulties experienced by settlers. History is repeating itself in the Port MacDonnell area. This is wonderful country but it will be a number of years before some of it will reach full production. I suggest that the settlers there should be given all the assistance possible until the land is developed to its full capacity

and provides the settlers with more than a living. A re-survey of the land might show that subsidiary drains would take away the surplus water, and I suggest that such a re-survey be made immediately. Much of the so-called re-growth is really old growth which was not properly destroyed. It is easy to realize that some of the land will take much more breaking up than the remainder.

I was pleased to hear the member for Victoria refer to the variation in the types of soil in the South-East. Even on the peat flat in the Eight Mile Creek area there are soil variations. It is not difficult to destroy the cutting grass which is growing on the solid ground, because it can be pulled out with the assistance of a horse, but where there is 6 to 8 ft. of beautiful black peat soil the pulling out of a tussock leaves a hole in which a waggon can be buried. The black soil must be taken from the roots before the tussock can be burned, and that necessitates a levelling of the soil before a crop can be sown. This is one of the problems in the Eight Mile Creek area. Meadow hay can be cut from only a small portion of the land. Until a settler can get fodder from his own property he will not be successful. I received a letter from one settler who said that he and his wife drove to Mount Schank to pick stones off a block of another settler who agreed to allow him to have the hay if he did so. In the early stages stock should have been placed on the swamp to consolidate the soil and keep down the rank growth. That, however, was not allowed, with the result that the phalaris has grown into tussocks and made the land uneven. It will take 10 years before much of the land will come into full production.

Another case is that of an ex-serviceman on Parea Estate, who has about 300 acres, classified as dairy land. Of that area he can only mow 28 acres for hay, which will not provide sufficient hay continuously to feed his stock. There are 120 acres of limestone outcrop on the block and only during spring can any worth-while feed be obtained from it. No man can make a success of a block of 300 acres unless he can conserve his hay. It has been both suggested and denied that a mistake was made in surveying the land. The adjoining settler has a wonderful block of arable land, and if the first man had an additional 40 acres of good land he would be able to carry on his block as a dairy.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—What is the average number of cows on the Eight Mile Creek area?

Mr. FLETCHER—The settlers were told that most of the blocks would carry 40 cows, rising to 60 in two years, but I do not think that they average more than 30 milking cows. I understand that the department intends to subdivide Chomley's Estate, adjacent to Eight Mile Creek, and that settlers who have insufficient highland will obtain part to tide them over, especially during the winter months, when the swamp land is under water.

Mr. Quirke—What period of the year is the area under water?

Mr. FLETCHER—From May to August, on and off, everything depending on the rainfall.

Mr. Quirke—Does the underground water meet the surface water?

Mr. FLETCHER—Yes, at times. I feel certain that the Government, in its wisdom, will give every consideration to this man's plight. I have no sympathy for a slacker or a man who is not pulling his weight; he should be removed from his block and found employment elsewhere.

The member for Unley had much to say about the construction of the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline and the South Para reservoir, stating that only one of these undertakings should be carried out at a time. As regards South Para, our engineers soon realized that before its completion there would be a demand for more water and that there was always a risk of its not filling. The Government was wise in deciding to immediately proceed with the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline. Adelaide is in a serious position as regards its water supplies today. Adelaide needs only an exceptionally dry summer to be in trouble over its water supply. Later this session I hope to introduce a Bill to amend the Local Government Act to provide for the raising of the status of some country towns, for the time is overdue for some to be classified as cities as some are in Victoria.

Mr. Christian—What would that do for them?

Mr. FLETCHER—It sounds better for a tourist to say, "I am going to the city of Mount Gambier" than "I am going to Mount Gambier." I have a brochure edited by a New South Welshman who recently visited Mount Gambier and who was surprised to find that it was not classified as a city. It is good enough for Victoria, it is good enough for some of our large country towns to have the title of city conferred on them.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—What is the population necessary for a city in Victoria?

Mr. FLETCHER—I believe the title is based on revenue, but Hamilton has a population of about 8,000; Horsham, 6,500; Warrnambool, 10,000; and Mildura, 9,000. At present Mount Gambier has a population of about 8,500. Possibly only Mount Gambier, Port Pirie, Whyalla, Gawler, and, at an early date, Port Augusta would qualify for the title of city. The Government should consider the introduction of legislation along the lines of the Victorian Town and Country Planning Act. Since my experience as a member of the Public Works Standing Committee in its inquiry into the Greater Port Adelaide scheme I have become more than ever convinced of the necessity for councils to have the power to acquire land with a view to future development. Such development may not be possible at present, but councils should be able to say to owners of properties abutting roads and streets, "In a few years' time your road or street is to be widened, and you are not to build beyond the building line."

Much has been said with regard to the 40-hour week, but, like the Premier, I consider that it will not be disadvantageous so long as the full 40 hours are worked. The manager of an industry in Mount Gambier, which in 1948 was forced to adopt the 40-hour week, told me that it meant an increase in output and that he had no regrets over its introduction in that industry. In most factories no harm will be done if the full 40 hours are worked, although it may not be possible to adopt the 40-hour week in rural industries. The *Sydney Bulletin* of July 16 contains the following report:—

Found buys more. . . . In one shirt factory a 15 per cent reduction in staff resulted in a 20 per cent increase in production and keen competition among manufacturers and retailers.

That proves that the unloading of some fellow travellers from the staff of that factory resulted in increased production.

The member for Onkaparinga had much to say with regard to potato supplies. Growers in my district have had to be satisfied with selling on the open market in New South Wales for £4 a ton less than the price received in Adelaide. As the Premier rightly explained in answer to a question, although the maximum price is fixed, there is nothing to prevent anyone selling below it. There is nothing to prevent the Adelaide hills growers from reducing their price. Mount Gambier growers were content to sell their crops at £4 a ton below the maximum price, but our friends in the hills want to get the top price.

Mr. Macgillivray—Were any Mount Gambier potatoes sold in Adelaide?

Mr. FLETCHER—I do not know, although some may have come here and then been forwarded to Broken Hill or country towns, but the majority went to the other States. I support the motion and hope that I have made a useful contribution to the debate.

Mr. CHRISTIAN (Eyre)—I do not claim to have any special remedies to offer as a cure for our financial and other problems, but I point out that we always seem to be faced with problems of some kind. We usually get over them in due course, although some casualties fall by the wayside. We all vividly remember the difficult times of the depression. We were just getting out of the wood when World War II. was thrust upon us, bringing an aftermath of troubles which are still with us, but I do not doubt that we shall surmount those too. History shows that we have generally been able to overcome them. As this will perhaps be the only occasion on which I shall be able to debate questions in a general way I thought I should take some part in this debate. As Deputy Chairman of Committees I shall be unable to speak on the Loan Estimates and the Budget.

Some members have suggested that the remedies submitted by others cannot possibly bear fruit. I thought one of the most useful suggestions came from the member for Flinders, endorsed as it was by a number of others, in reiterating the gospel of hard work. I think I made a similar suggestion last year. I cannot see how any magic remedy for our troubles can be pulled out of the hat. I have never known any remedy other than hard work and thrift to get us out of a jam in which we as individuals may find ourselves, and the same holds true of a community. Some may advocate new methods of finance, the shortening of hours or the spreading of work amongst a greater number, but fundamentally the only remedy is the application of human effort to the tasks before us. The farming community overcame its problems in the depression by hard work.

Mr. Macgillivray—Some farmers found themselves in gaol before they got out of their troubles.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—The member for Chaffey said that greater production only got the farmers into greater difficulties in the depression, but that is not entirely correct. I realize that greater production of wheat was followed by a decline in prices and resulted in greater losses in that field, but whereas

farmers later curtailed their wheat production a great change in farming was brought forth in that all manner of farm sidelines were adopted. We saw dairy cows in remote areas where a cow was hardly ever seen. Many farmers improved their position by poultry and pig raising and grazing for mutton and wool. The adoption of sidelines certainly meant more and harder work for the farmers concerned and for their families. They did not get rich or out of their troubles by shortening their hours and permitting more leisure for themselves and their women and children. Hard work is still a good, old, well-tried remedy for our problems, which cannot be solved by any moonshine proposals put forward by some people. If we do not have a restoration of the 44 hour week the only remedy is to increase production per man-hour.

I have always thought that a grave mistake was made by the institution of the 40 hour week. I do not think anyone will dispute that its adoption has increased cost of production by at least 10 per cent. The Public Works Committee has had much evidence from experts that the 40-hour week has increased the cost of constructing public undertakings by at least 10 per cent, possibly more. The curtailment of hours naturally increases costs of labour, also the hours of overtime, which must be paid for at penalty rates, therefore the 40-hour week has been a big factor, amongst others, in the increased cost of living.

We have the spectacle of a continual rise in the cost of living and in the automatic adjustments to the basic wage. I do not say that the shorter working week has been the only factor causing inflation, but it was a substantial one at the outset and has brought in its train many other cumulative causes or effects which have resulted in increased costs of living and production. The only way to stabilize or reduce the cost of production and therefore the cost of living, is by cheapening production. That can be achieved by increasing the output per man hour. I seriously hope no-one will suggest that that is impossible because we are up to the maximum of human effort. We are nowhere near that maximum in the field of industry. The last few years have been years of considerable laxity in output and a go-slow attitude seems to have prevailed. I do not say that to the detriment of workers in industry because it is only human nature to take it easy if there is an opportunity. It all increases the cost of production which is

reflected in the cost of living. Production costs have risen alarmingly because of the 40-hour week. We need only consider the cost of road making. Most district councils and the Highways Department have expended thousands in purchasing costly plant, and most councils have between £10,000 and £30,000 worth of equipment. Most of the time that plant is standing idle, and is only worked four shifts in one week. Gangs leave their headquarters on Monday morning, start work after lunch, and a half-day shift is worked. They work full shifts for the next three days and then work Friday morning but after lunch they return to their headquarters. That is an example of how little is accomplished these days for such a huge expenditure of money. It is no wonder that we cannot keep pace with the deterioration of our public highways. We are not progressing sufficiently with the construction of new roads to cater for the increased traffic. I regret that the Government did not see fit to intervene in the restoration of the 44-hour week case. I hope they will make a strong plea for the working of a full 40-hour week and for a better return per man hour. The Premier made it clear today that the Government will appear in this case and will be armed with facts and figures to present to the Arbitration Court. That information should be overwhelming evidence of the necessity for a better deal respecting the working of the 40-hour week. Apart from working costs the Government is faced with a greater capital outlay because of the 40-hour week. In hospitals additional staff quarters must be provided. This was not necessary when nurses worked 48 hours and 52 hours a week. The Western Districts hospital, now under construction, will cost at least £2,000,000. It will provide 402 beds for patients but 446 beds for nurses. The Mount Gambier block will provide accommodation for 181 nurses, 68 domestics and 210 patients. That illustrates the preponderance of staff accommodation as against patient accommodation. At one time there were two patients to every nurse and later the ratio was $1\frac{1}{2}$ to one but today it is going the other way. We are thereby involved in tremendous expenditure in providing nurses' accommodation.

Mr. Macgillivray—Do you suggest that is wrong?

Mr. CHRISTIAN—I do not think nurses object, even now, to working 44 or 48 hours a week.

Mr. Macgillivray—So long as they get paid for it.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—They get paid for it but quite apart from that aspect we are required to provide excess accommodation in order that a 40-hour week may be worked.

Mr. Macgillivray—Does any section of the community give more service than nurses?

Mr. CHRISTIAN—The honourable member does not appear to understand my point, which is that one of the costs of the 40-hour week is the excess accommodation for other than patients which has to be provided in hospitals.

Mr. Macgillivray—Is your alternative to make nurses work longer?

Mr. CHRISTIAN—My suggestion is the restoration of the 44-hour week. I have often raised the question of liquid fuel prices but it seems the more this matter is ventilated the more insistent is the oil companies' clamour for increased prices. At the recent Prices Ministers' Conference in Brisbane there was a further demand for an increase of $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. or $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. a gallon for petrol but it has not yet been granted. The utmost that we ever seem to achieve is some slight delay in the granting of those increases. However, my point particularly this afternoon is in regard to other fuels, in respect of which quite unwarranted increases have been granted from time to time.

My belief is that the huge profits of the oil companies are gained more at the expense of the users of the heavier liquid fuels than from petrol. The latter form the vast majority of the oil fuel consumers, and because of the clamour they are able to make there is some reluctance to increase the price of petrol to the same extent as that of other fuels, the users of which are in a minority and whose clamour the companies do not fear to the same extent. Prior to the war the price of diesel fuel was about 6d. a gallon. That has been increased from time to time until today it is 1s. 9d., which represents an increase of 250 per cent. Distribution of this fuel does not involve anything like the distribution costs of petrol; no costly bowser system is required as the consumer takes delivery from the depot. Moreover, it is a fuel which requires little refining by comparison with petrol, notwithstanding which we have had this inordinate increase. I have had no answer to this question and I think the matter merits some investigation because this fuel is very important to industry, for the generation of electrical energy, particularly in the country, and for our transport systems, as most of our road hauliers and our farmers are using it to an ever-increasing extent. It is playing a vital

part in industry, primary production and transportation, yet all of these consumers are being loaded to the extent I have mentioned. Another fuel is distillate, which is slightly more refined. The price has increased from 9d. prior to the war to 2s. 0½d. a gallon, which represents an increase of 172 per cent.

The price of petrol has increased from 1s. 7d. pre-war to 3s. 5½d., an increase of 118 per cent. This fuel requires a tremendous amount of refining equipment and a vast distribution system, with all the commissions and retail profits involved, yet the increase in price is small by comparison with that of the cruder fuels. Therefore I suggest to the Premier that a thorough investigation should be made before increases are granted, and the companies should be required to show complete justification for them.

The disposal of surplus sheep is another problem which will shortly arise. In 1943 we had reached the peak of our sheep population when the numbers stood at about 10,250,000. Those flocks were seriously depleted, one might almost say decimated, by the disastrous seasons of 1944 and 1945 which reduced the numbers to a little over 6,000,000. Since then everybody has been stocking up, particularly since the high prices for wool began, so that today we have again about reached the peak, if we have not surpassed it, and I have no doubt whatever but that after this season we will be faced with the problem of disposing of huge numbers of surplus sheep. The usual outlet, namely, the stocking up outlet, will not be available and so large numbers will have to be slaughtered and the only means of disposal therefore will be home consumption and the overseas market. I have no doubt that we will be able to get rid of our export lambs as usual, but mutton is a very different and difficult story. The export price of mutton is not nearly remunerative enough, being usually about 6d. a lb., and there is the further difficulty that so much of it is subject to rejection because of the C.A.V. gland difficulty which has never been sufficiently modified to enable us to export large quantities of mutton. Any carcass which has more than two C.A.V. glands is rejected for export and this seriously affects values, because obviously no-one is prepared to pay high prices for mutton for export when he knows that some unknown proportion may be rejected and will have to be dealt with somehow on the home market.

Two things ought to be done. Firstly, we should secure a higher price for mutton; it

would surely not be any hardship on the overseas consumer to pay a little more for mutton and, perhaps, a little less for lamb, because lamb prices are unnecessarily high by comparison with those of mutton, and that is something which should be examined closely in any future negotiations with the U.K. or other Governments interested. Secondly, the gland difficulty ought to be entirely removed. We eat mutton in our own country regardless of whether there are one, two, or a dozen glands; it makes no difference to the quality of the meat or its fitness for human consumption. Therefore this matter ought to be taken up in the appropriate quarters, as proper values for sheep intended for export cannot be obtained owing to the uncertainty as to the number that will be rejected. If that difficulty were removed it would also immediately remove one of the serious mutton export difficulties. We have been asked to increase our meat production, among other things. Following the present lavish feed season there will possibly be hundreds of thousands of sheep for disposal. Not all can be consumed in South Australia, and much should obviously go into the export trade, but unless that trade is profitable primary producers will not bother with it. I am informed that on Eyre Peninsula the most to be expected from the export trade for cast for age sheep is about 9s. a head net. The sheep may as well be left on the farms as to expect producers to accept that unprofitable price. It is no encouragement for them to help in the food production drive.

Mr. Pearson—Is that the canning price?

Mr. CHRISTIAN—I understand that that is the price for old sheep, most of which I take it will be in the canner class. Apart from that class, we will undoubtedly have many thousands of first class wethers for the mutton trade, but it will not be profitable to market them at the few shillings a head being offered for export. On Eyre Peninsula I feel certain there will be about 200,000 surplus sheep to be disposed of. Producers there should have access to all the mainland markets without let or hindrance. They have enough handicaps in regard to transport difficulties and other things with the present-day restrictions on the free movement of stock from that area. It would be quite unprofitable to attempt to market mutton at the Port Lincoln freezing works because of the price offered. The alternative is to give producers the free right to mainland markets. I will give an example to show what actually happens. One stockowner there recently

attempted to sell some very prime wethers practically in full wool, and the most he was offered was £3 a head. The wool is worth that. Eventually he took them to Adelaide and they were sold at the Abattoirs market this morning, the average price realized being a few pence short of £4. That meant to this producer an increased return of about £100, and it immediately points the moral that these producers should not be at any disadvantage compared with mainland producers as to markets. Unless they have the right to bring their stock right through to the abattoirs or to any other mainland markets without the present restrictions they do not benefit to the same extent as producers on the mainland. I think it is only fair that these people, who are suffering from many other handicaps, should at least have the opportunity to benefit from the big consumer markets on the mainland, and also benefit from the overseas market under more advantageous conditions than those at present ruling on Eyre Peninsula. I hope that the Minister, who has some control over the transport situation in this State, will take notice of the position developing, and that action will be taken in good time to make the avenues of disposal available before the people on Eyre Peninsula are caught.

When I visited Eyre Peninsula recently and opened a number of Agricultural Bureaux conferences on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture I stressed that we would be faced with huge stock surpluses and that this presented an opportunity to producers to play their part in the great food production drive. But a concomitant to that is the opportunity for them to dispose of their stock as I have indicated, otherwise they will not be able play their full part in the greater food production drive.

As to wheat stabilization, I want to make my position clear. The Minister of Agriculture recently returned from a conference of the Agricultural Council in Perth, where I understand it was decided to defer a final decision on the re-enactment of our wheat stabilization scheme pending the outcome of negotiations respecting the renewal of the International Wheat Agreement. I do not place a great deal of store on that agreement and I doubt whether it is worth much to us. I think it has been of far greater value to the importing countries and that exporters have got very little out of it. From the point of view of the importing countries, I am not against a renewal, because I feel that, from their angle, a ceiling price is desirable. I do not believe in our exacting the last pound of flesh from consuming countries because many of them are

in dire straits, and therefore we should lend a helping hand wherever possible. If we can feed them with wheat reasonably priced, I am quite prepared that that should be done, and for that reason I am not opposed to the International Wheat Agreement, but from the point of view of the Australian wheatgrower, I doubt its advantage. I consider that our own wheat stabilization scheme and our present marketing set-up is of far greater importance.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins—The proposal is to re-enact the scheme for 12 months pending the renewal of the international agreement.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—I realize that, but I feel that a decision should not be delayed unduly, because all kinds of factors can come into the picture to militate against its successful enactment. Many interests are working insidiously trying to undermine our own stabilization scheme with a view to returning ultimately to the old open marketing system which was never of any benefit to the farmer, but benefited quite a few other people in the business. Our present marketing set-up is the best that the farmer has ever known, and undoubtedly it is in his interests that it should be continued. I want to see it continued, and I hope that action will be taken in due course to ensure that the scheme is made permanent or to operate for as long a term as can be arranged.

While on this subject I shall refer to a remark of the member for Hindmarsh last night when commenting on the transportation of wheat on Eyre Peninsula. I have previously drawn attention to the fact that the transport system on Eyre Peninsula is by no means 100 per cent effective. There were serious shortages in railway rolling stock and train crews, and those deficiencies have not been overcome, although the railways have done fine work this year in trying to catch up the lag. They have stepped up transportation from 2,500 tons a week early in the year to about 4,000 tons at present. Whilst the railways had their own difficulties, there were other factors which helped to cause the trouble on Eyre Peninsula. Not the least of them was the waterfront situation. It seems peculiar that the waterside workers should have a complete monopoly, not only on the waterfront, which is their legitimate sphere of industry, but in regard to the unloading of railway rolling stock anywhere in the port. No-one else dares to go into that sphere of work. If someone did there would be an

upheaval and all work would stop. In consequence much rolling stock has been held sometimes as long as a week instead of being turned around immediately to go back to the country for another load. This is a handicap under which the railways have operated for some times and the position has not been remedied. Although an increase in the number of waterside workers has been approved, we still have the monopoly. Not only does this mean a slow turn around of rolling stock, but exorbitant costs. It has cost as much as 4d. a bushel to unload oats from trucks into local stacks. That was unheard of years ago: the usual cost is a fraction of a penny a bushel; but no-one seems to be able to take any action in the matter and we still have tremendous costs at our ports, which are all against the primary producers.

We have heard criticism of primary producers for curtailing the acreages of wheat production, but such criticism comes ill from people who persistently insist on a 40 hour week in their own spheres. The primary producer can work 50 or 60 hours a week and it does not matter to them so long as he produces cheap food for Australian consumers. If the primary producer were to work on the 40 hour week basis that is so dear to the hearts of industrialists, the prices of our foodstuffs would be double or treble the present prices. It is only because the primary producer works hard seven days a week that we get the present cheap foodstuffs. Let us cease all this humbug about the primary producer not producing sufficient and not working so hard, whilst other people work a 40-hour week, and some less than that. We have heard enough of this matter. I am opposed to the Government taking over the tramways as a transport organization. The tramways are a purely local affair and belong to the municipalities in the metropolitan area. They serve only the citizens of that area. Surely the Government has enough bankrupt undertakings, or undertakings which do not pay, so why add another?

Mr. Whittle—Country people come to town sometimes.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—Yes, but mainly they use their own motor cars. Without adding to the responsibilities of the Government we already have enough undertakings that do not pay and it is politically impossible to make them pay. Everybody knows that the railways do not pay because we dare not raise freight rates and fares to that level.

Railway fares in the metropolitan area have continually been much lower than tram fares. For years they were about half the fares charged on the trams for similar distances. Metropolitan people have always had cheap fares, much below the cost of supplying the service. The tramways undertaking is practically bankrupt and the Government has been asked to take it over. We can imagine the clamour there will be to prevent the raising of tram fares. Once the Government took over the undertaking it would never pay. The trams are not a state-wide instrumentality. It is said that the railways, water supplies, and other public utilities are a benefit to country people, and that by reason of its water rate the city helps to pay for country losses. It must be remembered that these things develop primary production; without them there could be no development. In the final analysis the metropolitan area depends upon country development. The cost of metropolitan services are met as a result of the wealth derived from primary production. It is not relevant to say that the country should come to the rescue and help prevent further losses being incurred by the tramways. I am not opposed to the Government making grants to square the ledger for the time being, but I am opposed to its running the trams as a public utility, because it would mean losses being incurred for ever.

Mr. Dunnage—Couldn't the tramways be made to pay?

Mr. CHRISTIAN—Yes. The tramways have paid, and they could be made to pay again.

Mr. Dunnage—They paid in 1946.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—Because of better management.

Mr. Dunnage—Costs have got out of hand.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—I don't dispute that. When times are good and revenue is buoyant it is usual to put something aside to meet the bad times which might come later, and the tramways have accumulated considerable reserves. Now is the time to use those reserves. More than that, I think the management is due for an overhaul: the recent Royal Commission established that fact. Something should be done to bring about proper and efficient management of the undertaking. The councils are anxious to get rid of the trams, but it is their problem and they should handle it without coming to the Government for assistance. If we do this sort of thing for the metropolitan area, as soon as a country transport undertaking is in difficulties the Government will be asked to take it over, so long

as freight rates and fares are not increased, leaving it to the taxpayers to meet the losses. I am opposed to this sort of thing. Although I do not claim to know anything about tramway management, I have seen evidences of bad management, but I do not know where to sheet home the blame. We have all seen construction and maintenance gangs which seem to be inordinately large, with the men getting in each other's way, and half of them idle whilst waiting for the other half to finish their jobs. In the work on King William Road recently the progress to me seemed to be unjustifiably slow—so slow that I wondered why the men were there. I am not blaming them individually. If they are so organized that the work cannot proceed more effectively then it is somebody else's fault, usually the top management.

Another example of the inordinate costs in the tramways was given to me by a person who was employed by the trust. I have been unable to verify his statement and can only repeat what he said. He told me in all seriousness that he was engaged in the maintenance branch at night and used to go to the depot to sign on at 11 p.m., beginning work at midnight. By 3 o'clock they were rolled up in their blankets. That was, he said, as much as they did for their shift, being paid for full time. He said it went on so regularly that finally he became disgusted and left. If his statement is correct there are other avenues for effecting reforms and savings in the undertaking. It is not the only undertaking in which I have heard of there being far too many doing far too little work.

I heard from a responsible railway officer that the railways have far more men on the office staff than are required for the little work to be done. I do not know whether that is true, but there should be some real inquiry into the efficiency of these various departments. Unless economies are made in this regard, it will always be reflected in unnecessarily high costs which have to be met either by the public or the taxpayer.

Scientific discoveries interest me greatly. The member for Alexandra made some worthwhile remarks about scientific discoveries and their availability to the average person, who would benefit from them. I favour the Department of Agriculture distributing, as quickly as possible to primary producers, the results of scientific discoveries. A most important discovery was recently made in America and I would like to see more attention paid to this type of research. I refer to the method of

de-salting brackish or sea water by a very cheap and efficient means. This has personally interested me for years. The problem seems to have borne good fruit in American researches where an effective method of turning sea water into fresh water has been evolved. I am sure members appreciate the tremendous importance and the widespread benefits which would flow from such a discovery.

We have costly water schemes in South Australia. In some instances it costs as much as 13s. a thousand gallons for water in country areas, some of which are adjacent to the sea. How remarkable it would be if we could simply utilize the method I have referred to and supply water to them for a fraction of the present cost. Let me quote from the American publication *American Exporter Industrial*, in which there is a long article on the new discovery. The American Congress, I believe, has voted \$2,000,000 for further research into the matter. The method is described as the permionic membrane de-salting operation. The article states:—

This process is based on the use of ion exchange films or membranes made of plastic. When differing electrical potentials are applied to these plastic sheets, sodium chloride and other compounds are dissociated and can be removed. The basic operation is one of ion exchange in that positive and negative electrical charges are traded in the fluid being treated. In practice, this results in a stream of concentrated brine and another stream twice as large of fresh water.

Dealing with costs of the membrane process the article states:—

Latent energy of the salt, the minimum energy necessary to separate its chemical components, is three kilowatt hours per thousand gallons of sea water. The amount of salt in the water governs the quantity of electrical power necessary to remove it, and sea water contains about 3½ per cent. For this reason brackish water may be the first large-scale test material used. Brackish water is a fifth to a tenth as salty as sea water. The power cost of de-salting such brackish water may run as low as 1 cent per thousand gallons.

The costs given for de-salting sea water are generally from 20 to 30 cents a thousand gallons, which is very low when compared with our present distribution costs for fresh water from far away sources. Our department should pay attention to this matter, as there are tremendous possibilities for utilization of the new discovery in the cheapening of our water supplies and their distribution. Instead of pumping water 223 miles from the River Murray to Whyalla we might be able to use the sea water on the front doorstep of Whyalla itself.

There is also a new process for distilling sea water, which might be worth looking into. I refer to the method used in the overseas vessel *Himalaya*, which regularly visits South Australia. Its costs of distillation are as low as 9d. a ton. The best we have achieved for distillation is 15s. a thousand gallons. When people have developed worthwhile things we should look into them in our own interests rather than continue to promote frightfully costly schemes, not only in capital outlay, but in ultimate operating costs. Our scientific officers should be devoting time to this matter because it will pay dividends. We do not always want to be beholden to other countries for new discoveries which will ultimately prove of benefit to us, we should devote a much greater amount of money, energy and time to these fields. I support the motion.

Mr. TEUSNER (Angas)—I support the motion for the adoption of the Address with which His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor was pleased to open Parliament. With other members, I express sorrow at the death of King George VI. I think it is agreed by everybody that he devoted his life to the service of his many subjects throughout our vast Empire. It was a life of service in the true spirit of the motto *Ich dien* (I serve) adopted by the Black Prince, son of Edward III., after the Battle of Crecy in 1346 and subsequently adopted by our Princes of Wales. We are indeed fortunate that His Majesty was a Christian monarch. His life was an exemplary one and his public utterances made it apparent that he was applying Christian principles in his conduct of life. I think that most of us still remember some of his Christmas and New Year messages. I recall one in particular. It was given a year or two before his decease when he said he believed from his heart that the cause which bound his people together was the cause of Christian civilization and that on no other basis could true civilization be built. I think that the people of His Majesty's vast Empire should endeavour to emulate the fine example set by him, the spirit of service and sacrifice which was apparent to each and every one of us. At the same time, while we say "The King is dead" we also say, "Long live the Queen" and declare our unswerving loyalty to our new Queen, Elizabeth II., who has ascended the throne at a youthful age like her predecessors, Elizabeth I. and Victoria. Notwithstanding her youth she has already made it apparent by the concientious discharge of her duties

that she is eminently fitted to follow her father's footsteps.

I also pay a short tribute to our former Governor, Sir Willoughby Norrie, and his good lady for the fine services they rendered to South Australia. We have indeed been fortunate in our Governors and I think the people of South Australia can say that no other Governor has endeared himself as much as Sir Willoughby, who saw every part of South Australia and came into contact with the people throughout the State to learn of their various vocations, difficulties and so forth. We wish them well in their new sphere of activity. I express my regret at the death of Mr. Les Duncan, whose electorate of Gawler bordered mine and with whom I had many opportunities of discussing matters affecting both electorates. For a long time he was employed in my home town, and I am sure that while he was a member of this House he rendered yeoman service to the people of Gawler. If the new member for Gawler can succeed in following the footprints left in the sands of time by his predecessor he will achieve much.

I am a rather keen student of history, particularly that of the early days of this State, and in my reading during recent months I have discovered that 1952 is the centenary of a year memorable in South Australian history for a number of reasons. Firstly, in 1852 an Act was passed pursuant to which it was possible to appoint district councils, whose powers were defined. All members realize the important part played by councils as a form of local government and I trust their powers will be extended rather than diminished. Secondly, 1852 marked the beginning of an important era in our agricultural activities, for it was in that year that James Martin of Gawler began to manufacture the improved Ridley reaping machine, which had been invented shortly before. Thirdly, 1852 saw the introduction of prepaid letter postage. Fourthly, in that year steam postal communication was inaugurated by the arrival at Port Adelaide from England of steamers of the Royal Steam Navigation and the P. & O. Company. Fifthly, in 1852 the Victorian gold rushes occurred. At first they were very detrimental to the economy of South Australia, for by March, 1852, more than one third of the adult males had left this State. The plough rusted for want of a furrow, the price of flour rose from £12 to £37 a ton, and business was practically at a standstill. By the end of January, 1852, two thirds of South Australia's coin supply had been taken to Victoria

and insolvency was imminent until the then manager of the Bank of South Australia, Mr. George Tinline, conceived the idea of giving currency to the gold brought from Victoria by casting it into stamped ingots. On January 28, 1852, the coinage problem was solved by the passing of the Bullion Act, which was read a first, second and third time, passed and assented to on the same day—a record speedy passage. The Act provided for an assay office for the casting into ingots of gold, which was purchased by the banks at £3 11s. an ounce. The bank notes with which the purchases were made passed into circulation and relieved the money shortage.

Another occurrence with a special significance to my own electorate was the death in 1852 on the Bendigo goldfields of Mr. Menge, who has been described as the "Father of South Australian mineralogy." He was a somewhat eccentric gentleman who was sent to South Australia as a mineralogist by the South Australian Company in 1836. One historian has said that "he prepared the way for the wonderful work that was accomplished later on and which made South Australia for a time the world's leading producer of copper." Mr. Menge spent a number of years in the Barossa district, to which he referred as New Silesia because many of its settlers came from Silesia. On March 9, 1840, he wrote a remarkable letter to a gentleman in England concerning "New Silesia," which he had explored and on which he was reporting. He stated, *inter alia*:—

But now I feel happy to repeat to you my conviction respecting your surveys that your land is and will prove the kernel of the province. I am satisfied that New Silesia will furnish the province with such a quantity of wine that we shall drink it as cheap as in Cape Town.

In a subsequent letter he said:—

I am quite certain that we shall see both places flourishing and vineyards and orchards and immense fields of corn throughout all New Silesia, which is matchless in this colony. Coal is not to be found but there is plenty of wood for charcoal; and if coal exists in this province it must be found either on the plains of the Murray or else on Yorke Peninsula

I feel that the Cassandra-like prophecy of Mr. Menge has been fulfilled, for it has been proved that deposits of coal exist at Moorlands and in the Barossa Valley tracts of land, which within the memory of living man were virgin country, today testify by the abundance and variety of their crops to a supreme profusion in which there is renewed from year to year the old Biblical promise of seed time and harvest.

Despite this profusion gummosis is worrying many people in my electorate. This highly contagious bacterial disease is attacking apricot orchards, particularly in the Barossa Valley, and in recent years the Department of Agriculture has carried out much research work on the disease, but unfortunately no remedy has yet been found. Gummosis was first noticed in the Barossa district in about 1898, and since then, particularly in recent years, it has made very rapid strides, until most orchards are at present affected by it. In 1932 Mr. G. Samuels, the then plant pathologist at Waite Research Institute, made an official visit to the district to investigate the disease. Since then much research work has been done in this State by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, the Waite Research Institute, and the Department of Agriculture. Moreover, I appreciate the fact that, as a result of efforts by the Minister of Agriculture at the 1946 meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council, the Interstate Gummosis Committee was brought into existence. Since 1935 experiments have been conducted in an apricot orchard of 300 trees in my district, and it has been found that about 40 or 50 infested limbs have to be removed annually in this orchard. In 1932 Mr. J. B. Harris, an orchard officer attached to the South Australian Department of Agriculture, wrote that about 10 per cent of trees had been affected by this disease. About two months ago a deputation which waited on the Minister of Agriculture stressed the importance of intensifying the investigations into this disease because it was felt that unless a remedy was found in the near future many apricot orchards in the non-irrigated areas of this State would go out of production. Between 1940-41 and 1949-50 the production of fresh fruit apricots decreased considerably, and although I realize that frost and drought may have played an important part it seems to me that gummosis has played no small part in causing such a decrease. The following table shows the production of fresh apricots and dried apricots in South Australia from 1940-41 to 1949-50:—

Year.	Fresh apricots.		Dried apricots.	
	Bushels.	Cwts.	Bushels.	Cwts.
1940-41	519,865	32,799		
1941-42	476,495	29,308		
1942-43	337,135	21,184		
1943-44	536,734	33,128		
1944-45	249,065	13,415		
1945-46	414,321	23,862		
1946-47	461,233	24,120		
1947-48	461,784	17,865		
1948-49	459,369	18,919		
1949-50	428,808	16,697		

In 1944-45 we had a record low production because it was a drought year. The table shows that in the early 1940's the production of fresh apricots was about 500,000 bushels, but those figures are no longer reached and I suggest that the spread of gummosis has played a considerable part in reducing production. I therefore urge the Minister of Agriculture not to lose any time in taking this matter up with the Waite Research Institute, as he promised last week, with a view to having a full-time officer appointed to intensify research work into this disease for the purpose of finding a remedy. Unless a remedy is found I have no doubt that shortly the production figures will be considerably lower and that many of our apricot orchards in the non-irrigated areas will be out of production.

Much has been said about decentralization of industry and population. I have spoken on this topic in previous debates on the Address in Reply and have always supported decentralization. However, I believe it is first necessary to decentralize industry within Australia as a whole. In the past too much stress has been laid on decentralization within a State.

Mr. Macgillivray—Why can't we do both?

Mr. TEUSNER—I would like to see that, but it is primarily necessary to decentralize within the Commonwealth itself. For decades prior to World War II. there was a persistent concentration of industry in the eastern States, resulting in an unbalanced economy, but since the war many large industries have been attracted to South Australia; indeed, many of them have been transferred from other States. That is a noteworthy achievement in the history of South Australia which, perhaps more than any other State, has benefited by the establishment of secondary industries. This has been primarily due to the outstanding efforts of our Premier who has spared no effort to persuade industrialists to come here.

Mr. Macgillivray—The geographical position of the State has had much to do with it.

Mr. TEUSNER—I am coming to that. I visited other States recently and heard people there say that the South Australian Premier was very zealous and was frequently in New South Wales on various missions, and that when new industries contemplate coming to Australia he had been active with a view to getting them established in South Australia. Various factors make this State an ideal place in which to establish secondary industries. Firstly, the South Australian Government's policy, which has been supported by Parliament, has ensured adequate coal supplies as a

result of the supplementation of Newcastle coal with coal from Leigh Creek. Secondly, good water and electric power supplies have been provided. Thirdly, conditions generally are stable in this State, and fourthly we seem to have a better type of worker than some of the other States. It could be said that the era 1939 to 1951 has been one of outstanding achievement industrially for South Australia. In 1938-39 we had 2,067 factories, but in 1950-51 we had 3,141. The number of factory employees rose from 43,371 to 83,169, and the value of the gross output increased from £35,005,264 to £192,300,000. Some people say that we should try to achieve greater decentralization by compelling industries to become established in rural areas, but I do not agree. The Premier has said that we are a free country, and I think that as free men compulsion would be abhorrent to us.

Mr. Macgillivray—Who advocates compulsory decentralization?

Mr. TEUSNER—I am pleased to hear the honourable member say that.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—People on the River Murray send their fruit to Adelaide to be processed.

Mr. TEUSNER—We should try to assist decentralization by encouragement and persuasion, not by compulsion. In Queensland a few weeks ago I was interested to learn of attempts to decentralize in that State, which has a Government of a different political complexion from that in South Australia. We often hear from Opposition members what is being done in other States in regard to decentralization. An article in the *Brisbane Courier* on decentralization of industry in Queensland stated:—

In the view of Cabinet members, post-war experience has blown out the theory that taxation is the major factor in deciding where industry will be located. Under uniform taxation Queensland has had no more success in attracting competitive secondary industry than it had when the States levied their own taxes. Labor and Industry Minister (Mr. Jones) said yesterday that manufacturers tended to go where they found the biggest markets and greatest pool of labour, and where other industry was situated.

I stress these remarks of the Minister (Mr. Jones):—

We cannot take an industry by the scruff of the neck and plank it down where we want it. We now have to realize that the strength of the State lies in developing our primary industries and those industries dependent on them, like sugar mills, flour mills, meat works, and butter factories.

I now ask whether we have not perhaps gone too far with the development of secondary industries in Australia as a whole, as well as in this State. In 1901, 17 per cent of all Australian employees were engaged in secondary industries, and 33 per cent in primary production, but in 1947 (the last figures available) we had 27 per cent of Australian employees in secondary industry and only 18 per cent in primary production. Professor Karmel, Professor of Economics at the Adelaide University, wrote an interesting brochure entitled "The Australian Economy from Federation to Jubilee and Beyond," and he poses the question whether it would not be better to concentrate on the more essential lines and eschew those on the margin of economic production which could be more profitably procured from abroad. He said:—

It may be a triumph for Australian ingenuity and workmanship to produce a certain article wholly in Australia, but if it costs twice as much here as abroad to produce it, is it a very sensible thing to do?

South Australia has always been a primary production State and we should realize, in these days of food shortages, that the well-being and strength of the State depends on the further development of our primary industries and those who depend on them. The Barossa district is probably the most outstanding example of closer settlement in this State, if not in Australia, and also of the establishment of industries dependent upon primary production. A recent survey I made revealed that within a radius of ten miles of Tanunda there are 48 industries, most of them dependent on other primary industries in the district. A greater effort should be made to ensure that there is a larger concentration of industries in rural areas, such as flour mills, fruit canneries, and jam factories dependent upon primary industries.

Much has been said about uniform taxation. I am opposed to the system because I believe it is strangling the States and depriving them of their sovereignty. It is apparent from the pre-Federation Conventions in 1901 that the Australian people then wanted a Federation of States and not unification. They wanted a Federal system under which specified powers were to be delegated to the Commonwealth and the residuary powers left to the States. The zeal of the respective States to safeguard their sovereignty can be gathered from the remarks of some of their delegates at the Federal Conventions. Sir

George Reid, a New South Wales delegate, said:—

Why should the States with their great and expensive public works to carry on, be put in the position of being at the mercy of the Federal Parliament? The Federal Parliament could cripple the States, and bring about endless confusion and irritation and bitter quarrels. If there is one thing which will keep Federal and States revolving peacefully, usefully and harmoniously, it is the rigid definition of their appointed courses, in writing, so that nothing may be left to chance interpretation.

Mr. Alfred Deakin said:—

Let us be careful of the rights of the States, and secure them under our Constitution, so that they may never be liable to be swept away. We should fail in our duty if we did not embody in our draft such a distinct limitation of Federal power as would put the preservation of State rights beyond the possibility of doubt.

Our South Australian delegate, Sir John Cockburn, said:—

It would certainly sap the independence of the States to place the Federal Parliament as a sort of Lord Bountiful over the State to whom *ad misericordiam* appeals could be made. The whole proposal that the Federal Parliament might render financial aid to any State in such a manner as it thinks fit is foreign to the spirit of the Constitution. The thing will not bear a moment's consideration.

The position, however, is that while we have a Federation of States we have, in essence, financial unification particularly since the introduction of uniform taxation. Until 1910 the States' financial positions were satisfactory because of the operation of the Braddon clause in the Federal Constitution, under which the States were entitled to at least 75 per cent of the revenue from customs and excise. It was due to the insistence of New South Wales that this clause was operative for a period of only 10 years. At the expiration of that time a new arrangement was entered into. No doubt all parties realized that the Commonwealth required a larger share of the revenue, as the then Deakin Liberal Government had introduced and passed the Old Age Pensions Act. As a matter of interest, the Commonwealth legislative power regarding old age pensions was granted by the Federal Convention on the motion of a South Australian, Mr. J. H. Howe, who had been on the South Australian Royal Commission on the Aged Poor. The new financial agreement provided for the receipt by the States of 50 per cent of the customs and excise revenue, expressed as a per capita grant of £1 5s. At that time the Commonwealth revenue from customs and excise was £2 10s. a head

of population. In 1948-49 it was approximately £17 per head, and I believe that it has been higher in the last couple of years. South Australia, however, did not receive a per capita payment equal to half of this amount as the 1910 arrangement, confirmed by the Financial Agreement of 1927, prevailed. There was no alternative in 1910 but for the States to accept the per capita grant because, upon the cessation of the operation of the Braddon clause, they were financially at the mercy of the Commonwealth. No doubt as a consolation to the States the Surplus Revenue Act was passed in 1910, which provided that Commonwealth revenue surpluses must be divided among the States, but until 1927, when the Act was amended, there were no surpluses, or at least none were shown. By the doubtful device of transferring any surplus into a trust fund to meet unforeseen contingencies the Commonwealth, from 1911 to 1927, deprived the States of millions of pounds. South Australia lost over £1,300,000 and although that may not sound much now it then represented a lot to this State. The Commonwealth also invaded other fields of taxation and imposed sales tax, land tax, payroll tax, gift duty, estate duty and income tax. Many of these taxes were not envisaged by the fathers of the Constitution because they were not mentioned in any of the pre-Federation Convention debates.

The Hon. S. W. Jeffries—There have been two world wars since then.

Mr. TEUSNER—The first world war was responsible for the introduction of income tax. My point is that we have lost a large amount of revenue by being deprived of the benefit of the Braddon clause. The introduction of uniform taxation in 1942 struck the death knell of the sovereignty of the States, many of which became mendicants. Although a Grants Commission was established to consider the claims of the smaller States for assistance, the position has not been satisfactory because, indirectly, such a body can dictate the policies of the States. It is difficult for a State to satisfactorily provide for a long range and far-sighted policy as it is not known what money will be available in future. The Grants Commission can insist upon economies being made by the smaller States but this should also apply to the larger States and to the Commonwealth. There should be an overhaul of the system of Commonwealth-States financial relations, and indeed, after 50 years, the Federal Constitution should be reviewed and amended

in the light of past experience. In his maiden speech the member for Gawler said:—

As regards loan money allotments, the States have recently not been treated as well as when the revered Ben Chifley was in office. We cannot expect always to have a Prime Minister with the feeling for State Governments that this great man had.

I have investigated what money was made available by the Commonwealth in recent years and the figures are surprising. In 1949-50 Queensland received from the Chifley Government £7,844,000 loan money, £1,250,000 for Commonwealth-State housing and £11,523,000 tax reimbursement and special financial assistance. In 1951-52, from the Menzies Government, Queensland received £22,500,000 loan money, £4,489,000 for Commonwealth-State housing and £19,000,000 tax reimbursement and special financial assistance. In 1949-50, South Australia received £6,838,000 loan money and £10,229,000 tax reimbursement and special financial assistance, but in 1950-51 it received £21,800,000 loan money and £15,462,000 tax reimbursement and special financial assistance. These figures do not support the statement of the member for Gawler. It was also said in recent months by members of the Opposition—I think during a recent by-election—that the Playford Government will be out, meaning presumably at the next elections. Of course it will be "out"; out in the future, as in the past, to develop further the vast resources of this State; out to improve further the social conditions of the people of this State and out to serve all section of the community at large without regard to class, creed or privilege. We can all co-operate by applying ourselves diligently to the task ahead, in the performance of which let us remember—

You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.

You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.

You cannot help small men by tearing down big men.

You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich.

You cannot lift the wage-earner by pulling down the wage-payer.

You cannot build character and courage by taking away a man's initiative and independence.

You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—I join with the Leader of the Opposition and other speakers in paying a tribute to the Royal Family and to our recently departed Governor, Sir

Willoughby Norrie. I also pay a special tribute to our late comrade, Mr. Les Duncan. I understand that it is the intention of the Government always to give consideration to matters raised in the course of this debate and therefore with confidence I ask that it consider amending section 19 of the Road Traffic Act which reads:—

(1) If an owner who has registered a motor vehicle transfers the ownership thereof to some other person whether on a sale or any other transaction, he shall within 21 days of the transfer—(a) notify the Registrar in the prescribed form of the transfer: (b) deliver to the Registrar the registration card issued in respect of the transferred motor vehicle and for the time being in force, or take such other action in relation to the said car as is prescribed by regulation.

(2) If any person fails to comply with any requirement of this section he shall be guilty of an offence.

If it is necessary for the previous owner to notify the registrar of the transfer the Act should be amended to compel the purchaser also to do so. It is almost a daily occurrence to find that the purchaser of a vehicle, with a view to saving the very small fee, has gone along merrily without notifying the registrar simply because the car may have been registered for the next few months after the transaction. When such cars are involved in accidents a tremendous amount of the time of police officers is wasted in trying to find the new owner and therefore I hope that the Government will give some attention to this matter.

I am pleased that the Premier has given a firm indication that the Government proposes to consider the desirability of legislation to deal with hospital and medical benefits companies, for I am greatly interested in the people who will become contributors for social benefits under the Federal Government's health scheme. At present the Commonwealth Government undertakes to pay 8s. a day towards the hospital fees of any person occupying a bed in a registered hospital. Also it will pay 4s. a day extra if the patient is a member of what is termed "an approved organization" provided the member's subscription to that organization entitles him to at least 6s. a day hospital allowance. Summed up this means that the approved organization would guarantee 6s., and the Commonwealth Government 8s. plus 4s., or at least that is how I understand the Federal Government's legislation. I have previously in this place referred to an organization which advertises itself as Blue Shield Health Benefits (Aust.) Ltd. which has the temerity to place a red sticker on its

brochure which indicates that it will pay a subsidy of 28s. a week or 4s. a day in addition to this contract for a prescribed fee of 6d. a week or 26s. a year is paid. I have persistently brought this matter before Parliament because, unless it has been recognized within the last two or three weeks, it is not even a registered organization within the meaning of the Act. I believe that in relation to companies of this description there is room for improvement in the Companies Act unless the other legislation proposed to be introduced by the Government conforms to that passed by the Victorian Parliament last year. Yesterday I mentioned the Ajax Company on which there is comment in this morning's paper. This company has been formed since the House met on June 25 and there is nothing to prevent it or similar companies from being registered as a private company, and in my opinion the Companies Act should be modified in order to afford some protection to people who subscribe money to health benefit schemes. I trust that the Government will make further investigations into the matter for there is grave doubt in my mind whether some of these companies I have mentioned will be able to meet the claims upon them. Of the unregistered organizations I mentioned on the opening day of Parliament I doubt whether one is in a position to meet its contracts. In moving the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply Mr. Shannon said we should not erect one building we could possibly do without, and wherever practicable we should use the cheapest form of construction. He linked that up with the operations of the Education Department.

Mr. Hutchens—Wattle and daub!

Mr. FRANK WALSH—When I was a member of the University Council an inspection was made of University buildings and the big quantity of creepers growing on the facades of some of the buildings was referred to. I recalled that one of South Australia's leading architects once said there was too much similarity about the brick buildings at the University, and that the authorities desired to alter the facades by the growing of creepers. My comment was that if they were anxious to cover their buildings with creepers, wattle and daub type buildings could be constructed. Undoubtedly creepers on the existing buildings increase the cost of maintenance. The architectural beauty and solid type of construction of the Adelaide University buildings are second to none in any part of Australia. I have in mind particularly the red brick facades.

An article appeared in the *Advertiser* of April 4, 1952, under the heading "Housing expert prefers brick." It contained a report by Sir Thomas Bennett, who, it was stated, was one of the most practical of British architects and planners in everyday problems of industry, commerce and real estate. He said that instead of importing so many pre-fabricated type homes, every State of the Commonwealth should have concentrated its activities on the manufacture of burnt bricks and the construction of solid type buildings. Our State Bank has a credit foncier department, but to what extent it is functioning I do not know, except that in the last four months not one loan has been advanced to a home purchaser where the house had been previously occupied and was offered for sale. Such action will eventually have a drastic influence on the State's economy. I do not know whether Mr. Shannon had such action in mind when he made his comment about restricting home building. If we attempt to reduce home building, I can visualize evil days arising. I know that some organizations are lending money on homes that are re-sold. One organization which, so far as I know, has not been registered to make advances for homes, seems to be able to supersede any other organization in making advances, and offers conditions that no bank or other approved organization can approach. On some dwellings it has advanced beyond 90 per cent of valuation. Considering some of the types of homes being erected, there will surely be a day of reckoning.

At Nangwarry and Mount Burr the Woods and Forests Department is erecting for its employees homes which compare more than favourably with many of those being built in the metropolitan area, and at lower cost. In reply to a question by the Leader of the Opposition, the Premier said that these departmental homes, excluding fences, were being erected for £1,418, whereas imported pre-fabricated homes are costing £2,560, which is not inclusive of the Commonwealth subsidy of £300. If I were faced with the proposition of buying the type of home being erected in the South-East for forestry employees or an imported pre-fabricated home, I would not hesitate to buy the former. I have examined them and prefer them to the imported pre-fabricated dwelling. However, I understand there is a ready demand for the homes being imported by the Housing Trust, which are sold for £2,560. The catch is that it is all right so long as the Government instrumentality, at the behest of

the Government, can pass on the responsibility. This is not idle gossip: I have never been more sincere. I do not think the Government paid enough attention to its responsible officers in the South-East, particularly those in the timber mills at Nangwarry and Mount Burr. If we accept Mr. Shannon's suggestion, would it not be better to use South-Eastern timber for the construction of our timber-frame buildings? It is difficult to keep timber buildings up to standard because of the heavy maintenance costs. A pre-fabricated building will also deteriorate in condition quickly unless it has proper maintenance. If maintenance work is not done frequently a wooden building soon becomes obsolete. I can appreciate the value of the older buildings of the Education Department. There is also value in the portable school buildings we have now, but I am opposed to the sole use of pre-fabricated buildings for schools. I cannot agree with Mr. Shannon's remarks on this matter.

I come now to the question of loans on pre-fabricated houses. It is not idle gossip to say that some applicants for Housing Trust homes have had their names down for up to three years. Those who want the more solid type of home will have to wait longer. Some of these applicants will have to pay £2,560 for a pre-fabricated house, and then they will have to meet heavy maintenance costs. For this type of home the trust will make an advance, but the weekly payments are almost impossible to meet. In the early days of the St Mary's settlement the trust could write off £80 on each unit before any of the houses were sold. I would like to know whether the trust is getting sufficient applications from people prepared to accept imported pre-fabricated houses. If it is not, it should alter its policy and make these imported pre-fabricated houses available for rental. I would not mind if their rental were increased a little on semi-detached houses.

Sitting suspended from 5.58 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—From inquiries I understand that it would be cheaper to build a house of the type required by the State Bank than purchase an imported pre-fabricated house. Although I do not agree that the erection of these imported pre-fabricated houses would be in the best interests of councils, more consideration should be given to their erection on ground that is unsuited for houses of solid construction. One factor which should be considered is the letting rather than the sale

of pre-fabricated buildings to people who are still desirous of renting homes from the Housing Trust.

Referring to taxation proposals and the return of taxing powers to the States the member for Onkaparinga, in moving the adoption of the Address in Reply, said:—

The Commonwealth Government could afford to do away with its collection of probate duties. That collection could be left to the States. A State has the right to collect probate duties from its wealthy citizens.

I am interested to know whether the Government will consider amending the Succession Duties Act 1929-42 to enable properties to automatically pass to the widow of a breadwinner and provide her with a home for herself and children. I have in mind a specific case of a property which was purchased in 1927 for £1,000. The purchasers had an additional room added at a cost of £200, but it was valued last year at £3,200. The property was held in joint ownership and the investments in Commonwealth stock and savings amounted to £1,331. I understand that following on agreement between the Federal Institute of Valuers and the Commonwealth Government, valuation of properties today have increased from £220 to £240 a square of 10ft. x 10ft. When the Succession Duties Act was before Parliament on the last occasion the price of a house was pegged on 1939 values and I cannot understand how a property, bought in 1927 with the addition of one room, could be valued at £3,200.

I agree with Mr. Shannon that there is need for the Federal Government to withdraw from the field of succession duties taxation. Information I have shows that the following charges were levied on the estate in question:—Solicitor's fee, £39 15s.; probate duties, £3 11s. 6d.; death certificate and registration of death, £1 2s. 6d.; succession duties, £42 11s. 11d.; and Federal Government duties, £28 14s. 2d. The equity in the property, because of joint ownership, was set down at £1,600. I think it was Parliament's intention that the property should automatically pass to the widow. The second schedule of the Succession Duties Act provides that where the net value of a property derived from a deceased person by any widow is £1,000 and under £2,000 a duty of 3 per cent is payable. There is also a proviso that where the person taking is a child under 21 or the widow of the deceased the duty shall be charged at one-half of the foregoing rate if the net value of the whole of the estate of the deceased is under

£3,000. In the light of what I have said I ask the Government to review this legislation.

Dealing with increased primary production, increased hours and the working week the member for Ridley advocated that a special Premiers' conference should be held to deal with the question of inflation. He suggested, too, that the Federal Government should pay a subsidy towards the cost of living on goods mentioned in the "C" series index. Many items can be considered as coming within the ambit of that index in the compilation of the basic wage. By that I mean a standard of living for a man, wife and three children. Some of the items referred to are bread, plain flour, self-raising flour, tea, sugar, sago, plum jam, flaked oats, seeded raisins, currants, dried apricots, canned pears, potatoes, onions, soap, kerosene, butter, cheese, eggs, milk and certain miscellaneous items. Mr. Stott complained about the home consumption price of 10s. bushel for wheat compared with the export price of 21s. 6d. to 22s. Both the members for Flinders and Eyre advocated greater effort towards increased primary production. The member for Ridley mentioned the amount which was lost to wheatgrowers through the home consumption price for wheat. Primary producers generally were provided by the Chifley Government with an orderly marketing scheme and a guaranteed price—an improvement on conditions obtaining prior to 1941. It has been stated in this debate that the cause of the decreased acreage sown to wheat is the high rate of taxation which must be paid by the farmer, but I point out that that would apply whether the farmer's products were disposed of by orderly marketing or on the open market. Assuming that orderly marketing were discounted, how long would the farmer continue to get the price he is at present receiving for his product? If he disposed of his crop on the open market would any more incentive be given to the wheat farmer to sow more acreage to wheat than he sows now under a planned economy?

The honourable member for Glenelg asked whether, in tackling the problem of inflation, we should start with the wage earner or the primary producer, but I consider the only way out of our trouble is by a vigorous policy of subsidizing and control of food prices. In 1948 the Federal Government was in a position to do the things advocated by the honourable member for Ridley last night, but where was he during the prices referendum campaign held during that year? If, during the 1940's, the subsidizing of the items in the "C" series

index resulted in a stable basic wage, surely the same goal could be achieved by the same methods today. The honourable member for Ridley said that he favoured a system of incentive payments for the worker and that such payments should be authorized by the Arbitration Court, but I point out that such an award would inevitably force up the prices of certain commodities still further. When speaking of the long hours worked by primary producers, members often lose sight of the time spent by the worker in secondary industry in travelling from his home to his job. Such time is not leisure time and has been recognized in various Bills introduced to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act. Of what benefit to the economy of Australia would be the working of extra time on Saturday morning? Would it not tend to lower the standard of living of the worker? We must be careful about our approach to these problems. I have always advocated a shorter working week and opposed the working of overtime. When as a tradesman I was working on the construction of the additions to Parliament House strong representations were made on behalf of stoneworkers to the Arbitration Court and to the Government of the day to have all such tradesmen medically examined at the expense of the Government. As a result of X-ray examinations to discover whether the work was having an injurious effect on our health, our hours were reduced from 44 to 40, although we were still paid for 44 hours' work, for it was considered necessary that we should have those extra four hours away from the work to ensure that we would not be adversely affected by the nature of our job. It seems fashionable today to advocate a 44-hour week, but, if industry is properly organized, a 40-hour week is in the best interest of this country, as it need not mean decreased production. In replying to the Leader of the Opposition the Premier said:—

In 1938-39 there were less than 6,000 tractors in South Australia, but in 1950-51 there were over 16,000. The number of tractors in use has therefore increased by about 150 per cent. The whole basis of farming is dependent to a large extent, as the Leader of the Opposition said, upon mechanization. In 1938-39 there were only 684 milking machines in the State. That was when my Government first came into power. The poor unfortunate dairyman could not then afford to purchase a milking machine. In 1950-51 there were 4,590 milking machines in South Australia, and no doubt there are many more now because the State has continued to prosper.

Is the dairyman really so poor today? Surely he cannot be working such long hours as in

the past. As indicated by the figures quoted by the Premier, many dairy farmers now have milking machines, which eliminate much hard work. In order to purchase those machines they must have received payable prices since 1938-39. Further, their wages bill, because of the use of machinery, must have been reduced. Both the member for Onkaparinga and the Premier stated that there had been an increase in dairy production in this State, but they did not say why there had been lower production in some of the other States. They did not mention the bush fires, droughts and floods experienced in those States, which greatly affected dairy production.

The member for Ridley, amongst others, referred to inflation. I point out that those on the basic wage who recently received the quarterly adjustment of 13s. a week have had to meet higher prices for the past three months and are only just being compensated. When we speak of the "C" series index we should be clear what it means. I agree that the method of computing quarterly adjustments of the basic wage needs an overhaul and I should like to see a halt in price rises. I don't think we shall ever see the basic wage return to less than £3 a week, which it was years ago. I should be happy if the basic wage remained as it is today. People who have purchased homes would be in financial trouble if it dropped below £10 or £11 a week and they had to meet increased commitments as a result of alterations in interest rates. If we are to arrest inflation greater subsidies will have to be granted on goods included in the "C" series index. If the cost of living rises as it is rising today the basic wage in 12 months may be up to £15 a week. What the salaries of members of Parliament will be I do not know, but I think most members will agree that we would not benefit materially by any further increases if the cost of living continues to rise. Many people on the basic wage are burdened with taxation although no allowance is made in fixing the basic wage for the payment of taxation, yet those people are expected to keep pace with galloping inflation. I make no apology for advocating the introduction of a rigid price control and heavier subsidies to assist to stabilize the economy of this country, and particularly to help the primary-producing section, which is entitled to a satisfactory living standard.

Last session I said I had been informed that a number of ex-servicemen had been selected for settlement in the Penola area for dairy

farming. I heard that many of them were disposing of their herds to take up fat lamb raising. Can the Minister of Repatriation say whether those men had to contend with foot rot, have they since returned to dairying, and was there another area not far away for which applicants who later took up dairying were selected for lamb and beef production? I believe that when people are selected for a particular type of production but wish to change to something else their equity should be purchased by the Government and they should be allotted holdings which they considered suitable. Other applicants could then be selected to work the holdings they vacated for the purpose originally intended.

Address in Reply adopted.

BUILDING OPERATIONS BILL.

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

That the Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act for the control of certain building operations, to repeal the Building Materials Act, 1949-1951, and for other purposes.

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

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD, having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Prices Act, 1948-1951.

Read a first time.

THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GAS COMPANY'S ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD, having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend The South Australian Gas Company's Act.

Read a first time.

STAMP DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD, having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Stamp Duties Act, 1923-1950.

Read a first time.

CRIMINAL LAW CONSOLIDATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD obtained leave to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Criminal Law Consolidation Act, 1935-1949.

LAND SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Minister of Lands), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Land Settlement Act, 1944-1951.

Read a first time.

GARDEN SUBURB (REPEAL) BILL.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins, for the Hon. M. McINTOSH (Minister of Local Government) moved—

That the Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolves itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to annex the Garden Suburb to the municipality of the city of Mitcham, to repeal the Garden Suburb Act, 1919-1936, and for incidental purposes.

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

Bill introduced and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 9.27 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, August 7, at 2 p.m.