HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, August 19, 1952.

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

QUESTIONS.

INTEREST ON COMMONWEALTH ADVANCES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Can the Treasurer inform the House the rate of interest that has been agreed upon in respect of advances made by the Commonwealth Government towards the cost of South Australia's public works programme during the year ended June 30 last?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have not the figure with me, but will have it tomorrow. However, it is quite a satisfactory and generous rate compared with the present rate obtaining on the market.

ACTIVITIES OF MINING COMPANIES.

Mr. MOIR—On August 5 I asked the Premier questions on notice relating to the operations of certain mining companies promoted in Adelaide by a George Macdonald. In reply he promised that these activities would be investigated, and that if evidence were forthcoming it would be referred to the Crown Solicitor for appropriate action. Approximately half the shareholders in Western Wolfram N.L. have already signified their desire for the immediate appointment of an investigator to examine the whole of the company's affairs. Can the Premier now inform me whether the matter has been investigated and a report submitted; and, if such a report contains a recommendation that action be taken, is it the Government's intention to act accordingly so as to ascertain what has become of the large sum of money invested by the public in these companies and syndicates?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—An investigation as promised was undertaken, and officers of the Police Department inquired into certain aspects of the allegations. The position is that there is undoubtedly a good deal of cross purpose between various shareholding interests in the company, and there appears to be some divergence of interest between the company and the person who was to sell certain interests to the company in Western Australia. I understand that that phase is at present the subject of a Parliamentary inquiry in that State. The report of the police officers was submitted to the Crown Solicitor, who has recommended to that Attorney-General that an investigation be undertaken by the Auditor-General under certain provisions of the Companies Act. Under this Act the Attorney-General is empowered to have an investigation made if there is sufficient evidence to show that certain matters require public inquiry. No doubt an inquiry will be undertaken by the Auditor-General in due course.

SUCCESSION DUTIES LEGISLATION.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Premier indicate whether the Government intends to introduce legislation this session to amend the Succession Duties Act?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—There has been no formal Cabinet approval for an alteration of the Act, this having been held up pending certain information at present being obtained, but I believe in due course some amendments to the Act this year will be approved by Cabinet. Certain investigations are being undertaken by the Government, and the evidence I have already seen appears to indicate that there will be some amendments.

TOURIST SERVICES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I understand that Bond's Tours Services has been licensed for over 20 years to carry tourists on sightseeing tours around Adelaide and surrounding districts. Recently the company has been informed that it is no longer allowed to carry tourists on trips outside the 10-mile limit. I understand Bond's Tours has pioneered and developed this traffic, approximately 80 per cent of passengers being interstate tourists. The company has spent thousands of pounds in advertising South Australia throughout the Commonwealth in the form of pamphlets and newspaper and screen advertising. Can the Premier say, or find out, why this embargo has been placed on the company, and if it is a fact that this recent action places at the disposal of the Tourist Bureau all the trade the company has so long and painfully built up at tremendous expense?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—For many years the Tourist Bureau provided its own buses for certain tourist activities and did its own advertising. About five years ago the Bureau entered into an arrangement with Bond's Tours or another firm to run buses on its behalf on a commission basis. That contract is now terminated and the Bureau is making other arrangements because of certain factors in the arrangement which were not satisfactory to it.

Mr. Macgillivray—Could the unsatisfactory factors be made known to the company concerned?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It is about five or six months since the matter came under my notice, and I understand that at the time Bond's was not anxious to continue with the arrangement, because it had become somewhat independent of the Bureau. It is some time since I saw the docket and I would like to refresh my memory. I will get the docket so that the honourable member may be apprized more fully of the facts.

CAPACITY OF ABATTOIRS.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—Has the Minister of Agriculture any information regarding the number of sheep for export which the Freezing Works at Port Lincoln are capable of handling this season, and has he any knowledge of the numbers likely to be offering and the likely return per pound to producers of export mutton?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—There have been a number of inquiries lately from the honourable member's district regarding the ability of the Port Lincoln works to handle meat this year. An entirely false report was prevalent in the district that the freezers were already full and were not in a position to handle additional supplies. At present there are about 6,000 carcasses of lamb and mutton in the works and they are being moved away by exporters and other people who had stockpiled meat for some time. Consequently, from that aspect the freezers are ready to operate as soon as producers in the district make available to the works information about the number of sheep or lambs they wish handled. It would greatly help the organization at Port Lincoln if the orders were to come in early in order that an organization could be built up to handle the sheep or lambs which are made available. The actual number of carcases in the works at the end of last week was 5,894. At a meeting of the Meat Board of South Australia on July 15 the amount of stock which would be forwarded to the Port Lincoln works for treatment under export conditions was estimated to be 20,000 lambs and 40,000 sheep. The departmental view is that up to 30,000 lambs and 50,000 sheep may be submitted, which is slightly in excess of last year's figures. On this basis the works has the storage and killing capacity to handle those offering. The number of lambs and sheep booked for slaughter under export conditions as at the week ended August 9 total only 3,822, from August 9 to October 25 inclusive. These figures, of course, should be very greatly improved upon and it would be of considerable advantage to the works, particularly in the employment of extra labour, if producers and/or operators could make known to the management at Port Lincoln the numbers and probable dates of despatch, in order that a killing programme might be planned with some degree of order. Owing to the heavy financial losses incurred at the works over the last few years it is not desirable to call for additional labour until economic numbers are in sight for slaughtering. There is not a surplus of labour at Port Lincoln and opportunity must be taken to obtain men as and when they offer, for fear that they may go to other employment. If lambs come in in substantial numbers during September and October preference, of course, must be given to these as regards slaughter, but from November onwards the works should be able to handle sheep numbers, provided the labour is available. In this connection the slaughtering capacity of the works, fully manned, is 2,500 per day. For the last six years the works have not been called upon to work the full slaughtering chain owing to the small numbers offering and the department has been able to meet the situation with a half or three-quarter chain.

I discussed this matter with the general manager of the Government Produce Department this morning and he informed me that provided sufficient orders came along they could man half a chain in two or three weeks. The honourable member will appreciate the need for orders to come in early in respect of lambs and sheep for slaughter. The new price for top grade lamb has been announced. It is about 19d. a lb., with the various grades slightly lower. I have a schedule of the prices in respect of lambs which I will make available to the honourable member. The new price for mutton has not been declared, although it has been stated that the increase will be on the same basis as for lambs, a 17½ per cent increase. Therefore, the approximate price for freezer mutton first grade will be about 9d. a lb. There may be slight variations according to the different qualities of mutton. The increase for top grade will be slightly higher than for other grades because the percentage increase on a high figure is naturally greater than it is on a lower figure. I impress upon the producers with lambs and sheep to sell not to miss the opportunity to get them in

as early as possible in order to spread deliveries for the season, and not have a big rush at one period of the year, which will be to their own detriment and cause great inconvenience to the works.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Can the Minister say whether inquiries have been made or any reports secured as to the possibility of a fairly considerable number of stock being available on the mainland for slaughter this year, and, if so, whether the Metropolitan Abattoirs will be in a position to handle such quantities as may come forward?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The Abattoirs are fully prepared to handle stock as soon as they come forward, and it is hoped, for the same reason as I gave in reply to the member for Eyre, that producers will as far as possible spread their deliveries over the whole season so as to avoid the usual crush which occurs through everyone wanting to get their lambs in for slaughter in the same week. The Abattoirs are prepared to handle all the lambs coming forward.

Mr. O'Halloran—What about mutton?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The same provision will apply there. The Abattoirs are freezing mutton at present and will handle mutton for export until the rush of lambs, when first preference will have to be given to lambs. When that rush is over, mutton will be handled again. I expect that, if sufficient orders come forward, the Abattoirs will be able to fill all their chains, and in such circumstances their capacity to handle stock is considerable.

DRUNKEN DRIVERS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I am not opposed to the consumption of liquor and do not claim to be a teetotaller, but I ask the Premier to consider amending the Road Traffic Act to provide greater deterrents against those who drive motor vehicles whilst under the influence of liquor. Human life is too sacred for the present unsatisfactory state of affairs to continue. Despite increased penalties provided under the amending legislation last year this type of offence continues to grow. To give an indication of the growing menace I submit the following figures for the last three years:—Accidents by drivers under the influence of liquor 135 (7 killed, 76 injured), 140 (5 killed, 90 injured), and 162 (7 killed, 48 injured). Prosecutions for being drunk in charge of a vehicle for the same years were 219, 381, and 390, almost eight a week. As the present law is apparently not a sufficient deterrent, will the Premier consider an amendment to give the courts greater power of imprisonment and heavier fines; and what would be wrong in taking away the offender's driving licence for life? With the possibility of imprisonment facing them, there would be many fewer evasions of the law. I understand the Danish law was amended providing for imprisonment without the option, and that immediately there was a tremendous drop in the number of offences.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—This matter has received the attention of Parliament on two or three occasions recently and heavier penalties have been imposed in each case. On the last occasion Parliament took the extreme step of allowing imprisonment for a first offence. I will have a police report prepared as to how effective that amendment was, whether, in the opinion of the Traffic Branch of the Police Department, any good purpose would be served by any further amendment, and, if so, to what extent further penalties should be imposed and what form the amendment should take. I should have an answer ready for the honourable member after the forthcoming adjournment of Parliament.

BARMERA WINERY.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—In his reply to my question of last Thursday concerning the intention of a wine company to erect a winery on its leasehold at Barmera, the Minister of Irrigation said:—

> Actually, we had information to the effect that it was the intention of this firm to eventually erect a distillery in the locality and for that reason a lease was granted, but there is nothing in it to compel the firm to erect a building.

I drew the attention of the Minister to an interview that had taken place with the Premier during which it was ascertained that the company had plant which it could shift to the Barmera lease, and I also intimated that the department had taken men off important work to put a water supply on to the lease. I felt that that was sufficient evidence that there was at least an understanding with the responsible department that this building would be erected almost immediately. Has the Minister obtained a report on this aspect of the matter?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have conferred with the Secretary for Irrigation and have to report that I have not been misinformed or misled in regard to this matter, nor have I stated that "at no time was the erection of a

distillery on the land mentioned.'' In reply to a recent question by the honourable member as to whether there was any truth in the rumour that the company does not intend to build a winery I stated that the department had no knowledge of the company's intentions. Replies given to previous questions have made the following points clear:—

1. That the company when applying for the land intended erecting a winery and distillery within 12 months of the allotment of the land, subject to the required authority being obtained for the necessary building materials.
2. There is no record of a proposal to shift a building from Eden Valley to Barmera.
3. That the water main to the land was constructed by men obtained from a pool of labour stationed at Glossop for general construction work and that the company paid for the work.
4. The general conditions of irrigation perpetual leases (as distinct from township leases) do not contain any provision with regard to the erection of buildings, and no such condition is included in the lease issued to the company. It is provided, however, that the land may be used only for the purposes of a winery and distillery and not for any other purpose.

ALLEGED RACING CONSPIRACY.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Last year I asked whether the police could act in connection with incidents connected with horse racing where it had been alleged that conspiracy had occurred. On June 7 of this year, at Berri, a horse was alleged to have carried short weight by losing its lead bag shortly after jumping the second hurdle. It continued in the race, and the clerk of the course, about whom an element of doubt exists, returned the lead bag to the trainer after the race, the trainer in turn handing it to the jockey. The horse was correctly weighed in, but as a result of the inquiry by the stipendiary stewards it was disqualified from the race, although all bets on the horse had been paid out. Continued inquiries resulted in a part-owner and the jockey of the horse being disqualified for two years. The police took the matter in hand, and the *News* of July 10 reports:—

Further developments in the Gay Parade case are likely soon following information obtained by police this week. It is known that police investigations, believed to be nearing a climax, have extended as far as Renmark.

Can the Premier say whether police investigations have disclosed any suggestion of conspiracy on the part of those concerned, and, if so, do the police intend to take legal action?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The police are free to inquire into any matter they think requires investigation under the Criminal Law Consolidation or the Police Act. The procedure for a long time has been that in straightforward cases they lodge their own complaints and bring them before the court, but on a complicated case they may seek the advice of the Crown Solicitor. Consequently a police report would not normally come into my possession unless I actually had occasion to ask for it. I have not seen the report about this case, but I did see the matter mentioned in the press. I will obtain a report and let the honourable member have firsthand information.

BRIGHTON RECREATION RESERVES.

Mr. PATTINSON—About February last the Public Works Committee recommended that the Government acquire some allotments of land on the esplanade between Brighton and Seacliff and vest them in the Brighton council so that the council could develop and beautify them at its own cost as recreation reserves for the use of the public. This recommendation confirmed an earlier one of the Glenelg and Brighton Foreshore Amenities Committee, of which I was chairman. I understood at the time that the Government had acted upon the report of the Public Works Committee, but the Brighton council is very anxious that these lands be vested in it so that it can immediately start to develop and beautify them. Will the Minister of Local Government obtain a report from the appropriate officers as to what progress has been made in the acquisition of the land?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I shall be glad to do that, but I point out that Parliament has entrusted the Government with limited funds to acquire land for recreational purposes where the councils concerned have not sufficient land at their disposal. So far all that has been done has been to grant them on a contributory basis, the Government not buying all the land, and putting it in trust or at the disposal of the council. This matter is now before Cabinet and I will take it up and confer with the mayor and councillors as to how much the council, in keeping with what has been done in the past, is prepared to do towards paying for this land. The amount involved is considerable, and if the Government were to buy all the land and give it to the council, on the funds available no other council in the State could be assisted in like manner. If the honourable member will arrange a conference with the council I will gladly attend it to see what proportion of the cost of acquisition should be borne by the State on the one hand and by the council on the other.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF LAND.

Mr. HUTCHENS—It has been reported that the Department of Lands has spent considerable sums on taking or making preparation for aerial photographs of much of the State for the purpose of ascertaining the value of the land, but the opinion has been expressed that the department has not the necessary plant for reproducing the photographs satisfactorily from a geologist's point of view. For geological purposes universal colours are used and the maps are printed in colours to indicate the respective values of the land. I ask the Minister of Lands whether the department has the plant for the satisfactory production of aerial photographs.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The honourable member kindly indicated he would ask this question today and I was able to get the following information for him:—

The photogrammetric section of the Department of Lands has now been provided with equipment at a cost of £75,000, the last machine having been installed at the end of the last financial year, and enables the preparation of basic topographical maps. For ordinary purposes plans can be satisfactorily produced from plates prepared in the Department of Lands, but for work requiring extreme accuracy —*e.g.*, geological plans—it is the practice to have the zinc plates prepared by outside firms who specialize in this type of work. The modernization of the photolitho branch in several directions, including the preparation of these plates, is under consideration. Last financial year an automatic feeder was installed on the offset machine at a cost of £1,700. This modification ensures the high degree of registration necessary in colour printing plans for geological and mining purposes. The department has been highly commended on the geological maps printed.

EGG PRICES ON EYRE PENINSULA.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—Has the Minister of Agriculture any further information to give to the House about the price of eggs being paid to a producer at Wudinna?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The chairman of the South Australian Egg Board reports:—

In reply to the question asked by Mr. Christian concerning the price of eggs paid to an egg producer at Wudinna, I have to advise that with regard to production of eggs on Eyre Peninsula, the policy of the board is that all the eggs, with the exception of those required for sale as eggs in shell on Eyre Peninsula, are pulped at Port Lincoln and paid on what is termed the ungraded price. The board has from time to time had eggs sent over by boat to the mainland for grading, but with the additional handlings and also the fact that the great bulk of eggs produced on Eyre Peninsula are on sideline production and have long distances in transport, the outturn of the eggs from a quality viewpoint when they arrived in Adelaide was disappointing. It did not warrant the additional cost of transport plus the loss of quality due to the delay in transport and the board decided on the policy of pulping during the export season all the surplus production at Port Lincoln. Consideration has been given to the packing of eggs in shell for export at Port Lincoln, but with the very high percentage of sideline production only a small percentage of these eggs would pass the grading for export and also, and this is the main reason that during the egg in shell export season which commences in July and finishes at the end of November, there is not an overseas boat with refrigerator space available for shipping from Port Lincoln. There is usually one refrigerator boat a season, and that has been, during the last two years, early in December and occasionally there is another boat some time during April or May. However, with the export pulp at Port Lincoln, it is necessary for the board to pay storage charges on this pulp from the time of pulping, which normally commences at Port Lincoln early in August, until such time as this pulp is shipped which is usually some time in December. If, however, any individual producer is not satisfied with this procedure, he can consign direct to any of the board's grading floors in Adelaide. The board has given this matter very close attention and is satisfied that by paying the ungraded price at Port Lincoln throughout the whole 12 months the producers are receiving a reasonable return for their eggs.

LOVEDAY-NOOKAMKA PIPELINE.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—During the debate on the Loan Estimates the Treasurer promised to get me information regarding the proposed expenditure of £10,000 on the pipeline from Loveday to Nookamka. Is that information available yet?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have a report on the matter and will let the honourable member have it in due course.

QUARRY BLASTING NOISES.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—In the St. Mary's area, where a number of Housing Trust homes have been erected, residents are complaining of the unnecessary noises from quarry blasting. These noises are actually heard as far away as Edwardstown and Black Forest. The Mitcham Corporation is also perturbed. Section 670 of the Local Government Act provides that any district council may make by-laws for regulating and controlling quarrying and blasting operations, but as the Mitcham Corporation is no longer a district council it has not these powers. Will the Minister of Local Government consider an amendment of the Act to give corporations similar powers?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—This is a matter of policy. As the honourable member is aware, it would be very difficult to prohibit quarrying in certain areas, because it would have the effect of increasing the cost of housing and road construction. Most of the people now complaining bought their houses after the quarry had been established. It is not a very easy question to answer, but if the honourable member will put it on the Notice Paper I will bring down the considered reply of the Government.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Could a report be obtained from a responsible officer of the Mines Department as to whether the noises are the result of extraordinarily deep charges, or of what are known as "blistering" charges, which make a very loud noise without removing any rock whatsoever?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The point raised will be considered when a reply is being framed.

LIQUID FUEL COSTS.

Mr. CHRISTIAN (on notice)—

1. What is the landed cost per gallon *ex* tankers, not including duty and primage, at Port Adelaide, Port Lincoln, and Port Pirie, of—(*a*) petrol, (*b*) power kerosene, (*c*) Diesel fuel, and (*d*) distillate?

2. What is the duty and primage per gallon on the above products?

3. What are the storage, handling, delivery, and overhead costs per gallon on each of the above products in—(*a*) the metropolitan area, (*b*) Port Lincoln, and (*c*) Port Pirie?

4. What quantities of each of the above fuels are used in South Australia in a twelve-monthly period?

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

1. This information would only be obtainable through the Prices Commissioner who, however, is precluded pursuant to the Prices Act from communicating or divulging any matters which come to his knowledge officially.

2.

	Duty. Per Gall.	Primage. Per Gall.	Total. Per Gall.
Petrol	10d.	1.29d.	11.29d.
Power kerosene	Nil	.50d.	.50d.
Distillate—			
For fuel purposes	Nil	1.08d.	1.08d.
Coastal bunkers	Nil	.43d.	.43d.
Other purposes	4.5d.	1.08d.	4.58d.
Diesel oil—			
For fuel purposes	Nil	.98d.	.98d.
Coastal bunkers	Nil	.39d.	.39d.
Other purposes	4.5d.	.98d.	5.48d.

N.B.—Primage is based on f.o.b. cost and specific gravity, thus it can vary with such shipment. Above figures represent last quarter's weighted average as paid by industry.

3. *Vide* No. 1.

4.

	Gallons.
Petrol	64,500,000
Power kerosene	11,500,000
Distillate	8,500,000
Diesel oil	24,500,000

PRIMARY SCHOOL AT TAPEROO.

Mr. TAPPING (on notice)—Can the Minister of Works intimate whether the proposal to establish a primary school at Taperoo has been varied, and if so, why?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—On January 8, 1952, the Public Works Standing Committee recommended the construction of a new primary school at Taperoo in accordance with plans prepared by the Architect-in-Chief. These plans provided for the construction of a school in brick at a total estimated cost of £64,500. Owing to the restriction on the availability of Loan monies, it was necessary to postpone the construction of this as well as a number of other schools. However, in order to meet the educational needs of this district it was decided to provide a prefabricated school of 10 classrooms, together with the necessary office and staff room and other facilities. The classrooms will be of the standard wooden frame type, and, from the point of view of lighting, ventilation and efficiency for teaching, are considered to be fully satisfactory. It is expected that this school will be available by the beginning of the school year in 1953.

TEACHERS' SALARIES.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES (on notice)—

1. Was the latest determination of the Teachers' Salaries Board increasing the salaries of teachers in Government schools a unanimous decision?

2. If not, which members dissented?

3. Did the board give any reasons for an increase in salaries in addition to the increases received through the quarterly cost of living adjustment?

4. If so, what were the reasons?

5. Was the increase on a uniform percentage basis of the existing rates of pay?

6. If so, what was the percentage? If not, what was the formula applied in arriving at the increases?

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

1. and 2. The award was signed by four members of the board and the deputy of the fifth. The Government has no information indicating that any member dissented.

3. and 4. The award was forwarded to the Minister of Education with a covering minute from the chairman, stating shortly the effect of the award and the main factors which had influenced the board in making it. Apart from this minute the Government has received no reasons from the board.

5. No.

6. The increases are not based on a formula, but the Government is informed that in arriving at the award the board acted on the principles of comparative wage justice commonly accepted by industrial tribunals in Australia.

BLOOD DONATIONS.

Mr. TAPPING (on notice)—

1. Is it possible for honorary blood donors to be reimbursed for fares or loss of time incurred in making their blood donations?

2. Why is it that donors cannot be bled on any night in the week and week-ends, to enable the enrolment of many willing volunteers who cannot attend during working hours?

3. Is there any reason for the change in the long established manner of making refreshments available to donors at the Royal Adelaide Hospital?

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

1. Authority already exists for the payment of time lost by any employee in the State Government Service, who is rostered to attend the Royal Adelaide Hospital as a blood donor, upon production of a certificate from the hospital confirming the attendance of such employee. It is understood that private employers follow the same practice. Reimbursement of fares has not been considered necessary.

2. The Blood Transfusion Department is open on each Thursday night and Saturday morning for the "taking of blood." It is not considered to be economical or necessary for the department to remain open on other evenings during the week.

3. Refreshments, as required, are still made available to blood donors at the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

MEANS TEST FOR TRUST HOMES.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES (on notice)—

1. Is the Housing Trust, in letting houses, bound by sections 27 and 28 of the South Australian Housing Trust Act, 1936, as amended by the 1937 and 1942 Acts?

2. If so, do not those sections provide for a "means test" to be applied by the trust in the letting of trust houses?

3. If the trust is legally bound by the sections above referred to, does the Government approve of its flouting the law?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—For a considerable number of years the South Australian Housing Trust has borrowed funds from the Treasurer, erected houses, and let them in pursuance of the provisions of the Housing Improvement Act, and has not carried on any building under the South Australian Housing Trust Act. Sections 27 and 28 of the latter Act do not apply to houses erected under the Housing Improvement Act.

ELECTRICITY EXTENSIONS.

Mr. GOLDNEY (on notice)—When is it expected that the Electricity Trust will commence the work of extending services to residents in the Waterloo Corner and Virginia South Areas?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The chairman, Electricity Trust of S.A. reports:—

Work on extensions in the area mentioned cannot be proceeded with at present due to shortage of funds. If the Honourable the Treasurer's negotiations for further funds are successful, and the trust is allocated a portion, the extensions referred to will receive consideration along with other country and metropolitan extensions which have had to be postponed for the present.

FOOTBALL TEAMS: INTERSTATE TRANSPORT.

Mr. TAPPING (on notice)—Can the Minister of Railways explain the Transport Control Board's existing policy and that of 1951 relating to football teams desirous of travelling by road bus (annual trip) to towns in Victoria?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Transport Control Board's policy covering issue of permits for interstate football parties has not changed since 1951. Each application for a permit is treated on its merits.

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE INCORPORATION BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

STAMP DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON CONSOLIDATION BILLS.

The Legislative Council intimated its concurrence in the appointment of a Joint Committee on Consolidation Bills.

SUPPLY BILL No. 2.

His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, by message, recommended the House to make provision by Bill for defraying the salaries and other expenses of the several departments and public services of the Government of South Australia during the year ending June 30, 1953.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD moved—

That the Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider a Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion carried.

In Committee of Supply.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD moved—

That towards defraying expenses of the establishments and public services of the State for the year ending June 30, 1953, a further sum of £6,000,000 be granted; provided that no payments for any establishment or service shall be made out of the said sum in excess of the rates voted for similar establishments or services on the Estimates for the financial year ended June 30, 1952, except increases of salaries or wages fixed or prescribed by any return made under any Act relating to the Public Service or by any regulation, or by any award, order, or determination of any court or other body empowered to fix or prescribe wages or salaries.

Resolution agreed to, adopted in Committee of Ways and Means, and agreed to by the House. Bill introduced by the Hon. T. Playford and read a first time.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. Clause 2 provides for the further issue of £6,000,000 for the Public Service for the year ending June 30, 1953. The £5,500,000 provided by Supply Act No. 1 will have been expended within the next few days, and further supply is necesary pending the passing of the Appropriation Act. Clause 3 provides that any payments made shall not exceed last year's estimates, except that the Treasurer is authorized to pay increases in salaries and wages. It has not yet been possible to complete the Estimates as two or three important items are still not available. For example, the Commonwealth Grants Commission's report has not yet been presented and until it is to hand it is difficult to form an idea of what the figures will be.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

URANIUM MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. The Bill deals with two matters affecting the mining of uranium by the State. Firstly, it contains a set of provisions designed to ensure that operations and processes, which in the national interest ought to be kept secret, will be kept secret. Secondly, it provides for the establishment by the Government of clubs and refreshment rooms in the vicinity of the mines and for the sale of liquor in any premises so established.

Members are aware that the State is being assisted in the mining and treatment of uranium ores by Governments and authorities of other countries. One of the ways in which we are being helped is by the supply of scientific and technical information. This will be disclosed to us in confidence upon the understanding that strict precautions will be taken to ensure that it does not fall into the hands of potential enemies. Apart from our duty to keep this information secret, it is possible that, as work on the field progresses, developments may occur which, in the interests of national security, should also be kept secret.

In this matter of security the State is being helped by officers of the Commonwealth attached to our staff, and it is essential that in carrying out their work these officers should be fortified by stringent legal provisions which will enable them to act effectively. The security provisions are contained in a number of proposed new sections of the principal Act set out in clause 3. The first of these is section 4a under which any person employed under the Uranium Mining Act may be required to take an oath or declaration of faithful service and secrecy. It has been found in practice that the obligation to take an oath of this kind is of considerable value to those whose duty it is to enforce security provisions and section 4a has been included in the Bill at their request.

Section 4b enables the Governor by proclamation to declare what are called "prohibited areas" and to vary them from time to time. A prohibited area may be a tract of land, or it may be merely a particular building or office. When a prohibited area is declared, a suitable person will be appointed as the officer in charge of it and the restrictions mentioned in section 4d will come into operation. The first of these is that a permit will be required to enter or be in or fly over the area. This requirement will be binding on everyone, including employees, and is subject to two exceptions only, namely, that no permit will be required for flying over a prohibited area which consists solely of a building, office or other like premises, and a permit granted to an aircraft operator will be sufficient authority for all passengers and crew in his aircraft to fly over a prohibited area. While a person is within a prohibited area he must comply with any directions given him by the officer in charge as to his movements within the area.

New section 4e provides that no person is to make a record of anything within a prohibited area, or of any operations or work within such an area without the permission of the Minister or of a person authorized by the Minister to give such permission. The term "record" has a wide meaning and includes any written description, photograph, sketch, plan, or other representation or likeness. It is also an offence to have any such record in one's possession or deliver any such record to another person without the prescribed permission. Further, it is an offence to communicate to any person information concerning any work, operation or thing in a prohibited area, without permission. These provisions, however, do not prevent the communication of information given to Parliament by a Minister or contained in a Parliamentary Paper. Another restriction imposed by the Bill in relation to prohibited areas is that it is forbidden to have in one's possession or carry or use a camera in any such area, except with the permission of the officer in charge.

Section 4g is an important section making it an offence to destroy, damage or interfere with any real or personal property forming part of or being within or upon a prohibited area. Section 4i empowers the officer in charge of a prohibited area, or any person authorized by the Minister, to search any person in the neighbourhood of a prohibited area or leaving or entering any prohibited area and to seize anything made, obtained collected, recorded or possessed in contravention of the Bill.

Section 4j enables any court in any proceedings to make orders for ensuring that evidence concerning operations under the Uranium Mining Acts will not be made public. The Attorney General is empowered to appear before a Court in any legal proceedings and apply for such orders as he thinks necessary. The powers of the Court extend to ordering persons out of court and forbidding the publication of the evidence and of the name of any witness. Section 4k deals with penalties for breaches of the Act. Offences may be dealt with either in courts of Summary Jurisdiction, or in the Supreme Court. If a prosecution is brought in a court of Summary Jurisdiction the maximum penalty is a fine of £200 or imprisonment for not more than 12 months. If a prosecution is brought in the Supreme Court, the maximum penalties are a fine of £500 or imprisonment for seven years. It may be thought that these latter penalties are high, but they are in line with those recently prescribed for similar offences by the Commonwealth Parliament and that of the United Kingdom.

Offences against the Bill will vary in seriousness according to the intent with which they are committed and the amount of harm done. Some may be committed by spies or traitors for whom a high penalty is justified. Others may be committed by persons whose loyalty is not questioned, from motives of gain, or curiosity, or even out of carelessness. Thus a wide range of penalties with a high maximum is necessary, and these considerations justify the provision giving the prosecutor the option of proceeding either in the Supreme Court or in a Court of Summary Jurisdiction. It may be thought that the proposed penalties are somewhat high or that in other respects the Bill is too drastic. In answer to this it is pointed out that the Bill is in line with other legislation passed in the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth on the subject of official secrets. In fact, some considerably higher penalties are to be found in that other legislation.

It should be borne in mind that every penalty fixed by the Bill is a maximum. No minimum penalties are prescribed, and a court is at liberty to award as low a penalty as it thinks proper, but the maximum has to be high enough to be adequate for serious breaches of the Act, and in view of what has happened in other countries no one would deny that some breaches of legislation like this can be extremely serious. The penalty for the very

common offence of simple larceny can be used as an example to show how an offence carrying a relatively high maximum penalty is in fact punished by the Courts. The maximum penalty in the Criminal Law Consolidation Act for simple larceny is five years gaol and, if the offender has been previously convicted of felony, eight years. If the case is dealt with in a police court the magistrate can award up to two years' gaol, but almost every day persons guilty of larceny are punished by fines, some small, or released on bonds to be of good behaviour. The high statutory maximum does not prevent the court from fixing a punishment to fit the particular crime, but is none the less amply justified because of the more serious offences which occur from time to time.

I will mention now other legislation dealing with official secrets and I think that it will be clear, from what I say, that there is nothing unusual in this Bill. Section 78 of the Crimes Act of the Commonwealth makes it an offence punishable by seven years' imprisonment to enter or be in the neighborhood of any prohibited place for any purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the Commonwealth. It is also an offence punishable by the same penalty to obtain or communicate any information likely to be of use to an enemy. There are stringent evidentiary provisions in this section to the effect that the prosecution need not prove any act prejudicial to the safety of the Commonwealth but the accused may be convicted, if from the circumstances or his conduct or his known character it appears that his purpose was prejudicial to the Commonwealth. If any information is obtained or communicated without lawful authority that is deemed to have been done for a purpose prejudicial to the safety of the Commonwealth unless the defendant proves the contrary. The Crimes Act also fixes a penalty of seven years' imprisonment for any person holding office under the Crown who communicates any confidential information to any person except in the course of his duty. A similar penalty is imposable on any one who receives such information.

The Crimes Act by section 84 also empowers any member of the Commonwealth Defence Force or the Queen's Naval or Military Forces to arrest without warrant and search any person found in or near any prohibited place and suspected of any offence against the Act. In the English Officials Secrets Act, 1911-1939, the penalty for unlawfully approaching or entering a prohibited place or obtaining or communicating information for a purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State is a minimum of three years' imprisonment and a maximum of fourteen years. The offender is declared to be guilty of felony and this Act, like the Commonwealth Crimes Act, provide that in a prosecution it is not necessary to show that the accused was guilty of any act tending to show a purpose prejudicial to the safety or interest of the State, and notwithstanding that no such act is proved against him he may be convicted if from the circumstances or his conduct or his character it appears that his purpose was prejudicial to the interests of the State. In the case of the offence of making a sketch or plan or obtaining information contrary to the section it is provided that any sketch or plan made or information obtained or communicated shall be deemed to have been made obtained or communicated for a purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State unless the contrary is proved. The penalty of a maximum of 14 years' imprisonment applies also to this offence of obtaining or communicating information. The Act also provides for a number of lesser offences, e.g., communicating official information to an unauthorized person, or retaining documents without authority, and in these cases the defendant commits a misdemeanour for which he can be imprisoned for two years.

The Commonwealth Defence (Special Undertakings) Act contains a number of offences for which the maximum penalty is seven years' imprisonment and a number of other offences carrying penalties of imprisonment up to two years; for example, unlawfully entering a prohibited area or obtaining or communicating information relating to anything in a prohibited area are all punishable by imprisonment up to seven years. This offence covers a wider range of information than does the Bill, and has no exemptions. The Special Undertakings Act also prescribes a penalty for wilfully damaging works used for the purpose of a special defence undertaking. The maximum is seven years' imprisonment which is the same as the penalty prescribed in the Bill for damaging real and personal property within or upon a prohibited area. This penalty may be compared with the penalty of life imprisonment which is imposed by numerous sections in our Criminal Law Consolidation Act for various types of injury to manufactures, machinery and other property. In one respect the Bill admittedly is a little more stringent than the Defence (Special Undertakings) Act. Under the latter Act the maximum penalty which a police

court can inflict is a fine of £100 or six months' imprisonment, whereas under the Bill it is proposed to give police courts jurisdiction to impose fines up to £200 and imprisonment up to twelve months. The jurisdiction so conferred on our police courts is in line with that conferred by a number of other Acts.

There has been some suggestion that the Bill provides for secret trials. This is not a correct description of the provision empowering courts to make orders for ensuring that certain parts of the evidence are not to be published. The fact that some part of the evidence in a case is not to be published, or that the court is cleared while the evidence is being given, does not mean that the trial is secret. The Bill will not prevent a case from being commenced in public and concluded in public and it is most improbable that any order will be made under the Bill forbidding the publication of the whole of the evidence in any case. Under the Evidence Act as it stands today courts have power to make orders forbidding the publication of evidence and the names of parties and witnesses and constantly make such orders. The fact that such orders are made is frequently reported in the newspapers. It is not suggested that because an order of this kind is made the trial is secret. And even if a trial were held partly in secret surely the judges and magistrates could be trusted to administer justice according to law. It is relevant also to mention that by the common law of England the Crown can refuse to produce in court any official papers or documents if the head of a public department states that the production of the document is injurious to the public interest. It is the practice of courts to accept the statement of a Minister of the Crown that production of a document would be against the public interest. Thus the Crown can already secure secrecy for information contained in documents. The Bill covers the case where the Crown may find it necessary in the public interest to secure secrecy for facts stated orally by witnesses. There are provisions on the same lines in the English and Commonwealth Acts. The English Official Secrets Act provides that, if in the course of proceedings for an offence against the Act application is made by the prosecution that all or any of the public shall be excluded during any part of the hearing the court may make an order to that effect but the passing of sentence shall in every case take place in public. In the Commonwealth Defence (Special Undertakings) Act it is provided that at any time before or during the hearing of proceedings for offences against the Act or regulations the court may, if satisfied that such a course is expedient in the interests of the defence of the Commonwealth, order that the public be excluded during the whole or any part of the proceedings and order that the whole or some part of the proceedings shall not be published.

I have mentioned the above matters not for the purpose of endeavouring to prove that every clause in the Bill has an exact counterpart in some other Act, but to show that the Bill is generally on the lines of other legislation, some of which has been in force for a number of years, and that the provisions of the Bill are in no way novel or more drastic than those found necessary elsewhere. The Bill is regarded as necessary by the officers whose duty it is to ensure that confidential information is kept secret. These officers have a better idea than most people of the efforts which are being made in the interests of foreign powers to obtain information as to our processes and operations in connection with uranium. I believe this topic will have important repercussions on the future of South Australia. I have a copy of the *New York Times* of July 31 last which is available to honourable members and which sets out in financial terms the scope of the work being undertaken by the Atomic Energy Commission in America. The first paragraph of that report states:—

> The Atomic Energy Commission, in its twelfth semi-annual report, disclosed today new sources of raw materials that will support its accelerated expansion and development programme. Congress has authorized more than $4,000,000,000 to cover the programme in the current fiscal year. The cost of the atomic energy programme was given progressively in the commission's report as follows:—Fiscal year 1949, $621,900,000; 1950, $702,900,000; 1951, $2,032,100,000; 1952, $1,605,900,000; 1953, $4,120,000,000.

Members will see that the money allocated by Congress has increased in four years from 621 million dollars to more than 4,000 million. The articles shows, in words far more eloquent than I can use, how important atomic energy is considered in other countries. Congress would not have approved of these colossal sums without good evidence of the importance of atomic development. In the last few days we have heard of the discovery of further uranium deposits in Australia. From accounts published in the last few days, a discovery of uranium bearing ore in the Northern Territory appears to be of very great importance. We

have also made a discovery in South Australia which we believe is of utmost importance. The results of development of atomic energy will be available to us only if we take adequate steps to see that secret information, which is necessary for us to have, is not readily passed on to potential enemies. The world has already had three or four glaring examples of information of the greatest importance being passed on to Russia by traitors, which has doubtless been used by that country in the development of atomic energy.

Mr. O'Halloran—Those traitors were on the inside.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I agree, but the information would not have been available had proper reports been obtained and investigations made. I am sure that the House will support the Government to the utmost in its endeavours to see that information passed on to us in confidence is kept secret. This legislation is much milder than Commonwealth legislation and that operating in Britain. The alternative is for us to rely on Commonwealth legislation, but the Commonwealth Government could not use its legislation as regards a State undertaking. This undertaking will, I believe, be of the greatest importance to the future of South Australia and the development of Australia as a whole. I go further and say it will be of the greatest importance to the safety of the free world. It is an abominable lie to suggest that this legislation has been imposed on the Government by some foreign power. The Government introduced it of its own free will because it does not wish to be used as a channel for the free communication of secret information to Moscow. I say that with a lot of feeling. Nothing is more important than that this vital information should not be liberated simply because we are not prepared to take adequate steps to protect it.

Section 41 of the Bill deals with the establishment of clubs and canteens and the sale of liquor in the vicinity of uranium mines. It is a provision on the same lines as one already passed by Parliament in connection with the Leigh Creek coalfield. In that case the clubs and canteens are run by the Electricity Trust. Under this Bill the Government has no option but to confer the proposed powers on the Minister of Mines, since it is essential in this case that the premises should be under the control of a responsible public authority and the Minister is the only suitable authority operating in the area. The times for selling liquor will in the first instance be those fixed in the Licensing Act, but different hours may be fixed by regulation. As in the case of Leigh Creek the profits derived from the clubs and canteens will, when appropriated by Parliament, be applied by the Minister for purposes beneficial to the persons residing in the mining area.

Some time ago we passed legislation to enable a canteen to be established for the miners at the Leigh Creek coalfield. I am pleased to inform members that the canteen has been carried out under good supervision and that there has been no abuse of the legislation. The canteen has proved beneficial to the men on the field and been favourably reported upon by the Electricity Trust, and its profits have been faithfully applied in the interests of the mining community. It is proposed to give a similar right to the Minister as regards Radium Hill, and, although it will be necessary for Parliament to appropriate the money, it will be used solely for the advantage of the men.

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

RENMARK IRRIGATION TRUST ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Minister of Lands)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is a simple Bill, but it is of considerable importance to the Renmark Irrigation Trust, at whose request it has been introduced. It deals with the maximum amount of the half-yearly general rate levied by the trust. By section 92 of the Renmark Irrigation Trust Act, 1936-1950, it is provided that the general rate for any half-year is not to exceed £2 an acre of the land on which the rate is imposed. This amount was fixed in 1948, the previous maximum having been 25s. The trust now finds that it cannot meet its expenses without an increase in the rate. It is estimated that every rise of 10s. a week in the basic wage increases the expenditure of the trust by about 5s. an acre. As it is already levying the maximum rate allowable by law it will be seen that there is an unanswerable case for an increase. The suggestion that the maximum rate should be increased as provided in this Bill has been placed before the ratepayers of the trust at a general meeting and was approved by them without dissension. The Government therefore submits the Bill to Parliament and asks that it receive early attention as the next water rate of the trust is to

be declared on August 18. To meet the possibility that the Bill may not pass both Houses before that day a clause has been included to provide that it shall be deemed to have come into operation on August 1.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—The Bill is a hybrid measure and will have to be submitted to a Select Committee. I am in general sympathy with the proposed set-up and feel I can rely on the committee to take care of the details. I offer no opposition to the second reading.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (Chaffey)—As member for the district I support the second reading, although I regret the necessity for it. The measure has been forced upon the Renmark Irrigation Trust because of the inflationary spiral through which we are passing, and should enable it to meet expenses. There is no necessity to tell Parliament of the wonderful work that the trust is doing as a private system. The water rates charged by the trust are much lower than those for State controlled areas. I have discussed with the chairman of the trust whether it is necessary to have any limitation on the amount charged to settlers under Act of Parliament. Paragraph (*a*) of subsection 1 of section 92 states:—

The trust shall, for the purposes in section 93, declare on the land included in the assessment book a general rate for the half-year ending June 30 and another general rate for the half-year ending December 31 next, after the declaring of the rate, each rate not to exceed £2 for every acre of such land.

The concluding words could be deleted and the provision finish at "rate" where third occurring. The Act controls the method whereby water rates are increased only after the settlers have agreed to an increase. The trust has to prepare a rate assessment, after which it can strike a rate. The limiting factor on any rate charged by the trust is done by the settlers themselves. As the Minister pointed out, an increase in the charges has been agreed upon by resolution of a meeting. I hope that the inflationary spiral has finished and that it will not be necessary for the trust to ask for further rating powers, but we do not know what is before us. If we continue as we are, we shall have the inflationary spiral to infinity, or until the whole system breaks down. I know that the trust is anxious for the Bill to pass without delay, but I ask the Minister to see whether should a similar request come before him it would not be possible to excise from the Act the limiting factor to which I have referred so as to leave the matter of rating to the persons concerned.

Bill read a second time and referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Hon. S. W. Jeffries, Messrs. W. Macgillivray, S. J. Lawn and J. E Stephens and the Minister of Lands; the committee to have power to send for persons, papers and records and to report on September 18.

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 14. Page 408.)

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—The question of price control has been one of great concern to members on this side of the House for some years. I understand that the Bill has two purposes: firstly, to empower the Federal Government to control the price of butter; secondly, to continue the existing prices legislation for a further 12 months, except in respect of butter. Members on this side support the Bill in the knowledge that if one cannot secure a tailor-made suit in order to keep within the code of decency, any old clothes, even if a misfit, will do. I draw an analogy that our prices legislation is in the nature of nylon—pretty thin material. The effective control of prices under State legislation has been hampered, because it is impossible to effectively control the price of commodities made in other States owing to the operation of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. Opposition members have realized this for years. By comparison with the previous Federal control the State Governments have not been able to successfully control prices. The Leader of the Opposition quoted figures to support this view and several members on this side raised important points when speaking on the Address in Reply. I remind members of the serious decline in the economic condition of the country resulting from the ineffectiveness of State price control. From 1939 to 1948 the living wage, based upon the "C" series index, increased gradually, despite the fact that we were going through a period of war and one of rehabilitation following it. Of course, without price control inflation would have run wild, but because of the effectiveness of Federal price control the living wage only increased from £3 17s. to £5 11s. a week, a rise of 44 per cent, or about five per cent per annum.

This comparatively small increase led members of the Labor Party to urge the people

to agree to a continuation of Federal price control. From bitter experience the people have now learned that we were right, but they were told by the press and the wireless, and from some public platforms, particularly in this State, which had the junior partner in the firm of Menzies, Fadden, Playford, and Company, to vote for the abolition of Federal control. We well remember the promises made that State Governments could control prices and rents in the public interest, but what a hopeless system State price control has proved! The living wage in this State increased by about 100 per cent from 1948 to 1952, or about 25 per cent per annum. This has had sad effects on the economy of the State and the Commonwealth; indeed, it seems that we are heading for economic disaster, although some people say we are unpatriotic when we say that we are heading for a depression. In spite of these warnings we on this side believe it is our duty to make known the true position to the people.

In a question last week I pointed out that in spite of an increase of 17½ per cent in the price of meat some people engaged in the industry say that the producers of lamb and mutton will suffer a reduction in net earnings this year. This is partly due to ineffective price control under State legislation. When the price of commodities rises wages naturally rise, resulting in increased handling costs. The profits of the producer then decline, and this is detrimental to our export trade and to our economy. On the opening day of this session I directed a question to the Premier, who is in charge of the Prices Department, in regard to the price of cut luncheons. He replied:—

The position in regard to restaurants and the food industry generally in this State is that great difficulty is being experienced in maintaining a service to the public.

This has been caused by the ineffectiveness of State price control. Small shopkeepers are in an unhappy position because manufacturers are also operating retail shops and can charge the small man whatever they like as there is no control over the price of their products. The press has often referred to rising prices and has encouraged people to take action to protect themselves. Under the heading "S.A. wives, it's up to you!" the *News* of July 12 published the following editorial:—

After enduring years of exploitation and discomfort, the long-suffering Australian housewife has taken up arms in her own defence. The war has been over for seven years for many people. But for the housewife it has never ended. Some trade organizations keep up prices, enforce "unofficial" zoning, cut down deliveries, and restrict service. Boards, whose costs add to her burden, dictate when and in what quantities foodstuffs shall be made available. Even the times of glut which used to offer her bargains no longer bring much relief. The grower finds his return cut to ribbons, but there are too many interested people between to allow much benefit from the price cut to reach the housewife. Too many traders and middlemen have forgotten that price control was introduced to prevent overcharging. It was never intended to block the enterprising trader who seeks by lowering his profit margin to increase his trade. If South Australian housewives want to end the "fantastic" prices and rising margins of which they complain daily, the remedy lies in their own hands. Alone, the individual housewife is a pathetic figure. United, she can swiftly curb most of the profiteers.

Subsequently another editorial appeared in the *News*, on July 16, which read:—

The *News* on Saturday suggested housewives should unite to curb the activities of profiteers. Hard-pressed women all over the State will be heartened to learn that this course has now been followed by the S.A. Housewives' Association. A protest meeting to be called next month will discuss alleged cases of overcharging; a call will be made for volunteers to form a vigilantes' committee. Public apathy is the price gouger's most effective defence. Efforts to wipe out over-charging will not succeed without the individual housewife's daily co-operation.

That will not be accomplished without the sympathetic support of our Prices Minister. The article continues:—

In her own interests—and those of the whole community—she should make it her duty to report every instance of over-charging.

The Housewives Association has worked untiringly and has achieved much, but unfortunately some housewives are beginning to believe they have little chance of getting prices down to a stage which would enable them to enjoy a decent standard of living. Our Premier was unsympathetic and he was the first Minister controlling prices to de-control clothing. I am unable to mention stores which have increased clothing prices since then because I would involve employees and may bring about their dismissal. It will be remembered that the Premier indicated that if unjust rises took place when clothing was de-controlled he would not hesitate to revert to control. However, there were rapid increases in prices and they occurred before any increases in the basic wage. In a suburban store men's cardigans were sold for 9s. 11d. more than they were under control, blankets were increased by 10s. 6d. a pair, and men's blue drill trousers

by 2s. 6d. a pair. In city stores the prices of ladies' frocks, on which the retailer enjoyed a margin of £4 under prices control, were increased by 16s. and in suburban stores by 14s. If the Treasurer was sincere in his promise to re-impose price control he would have had officers investigating the position, but if he did he has ignored their reports.

Today's type of trading is adding to our unemployment pool because the potential buyer resents it and establishes a buyer's resistance. An article in the Associated Chamber of Commerce official journal of July 11 is headed "Buyer's Resistance Reaches Huge Proportions." There are between 3,000 and 4,000 persons assocated with the clothing trade in this State, but because of buyer's resistance more than 50 per cent are unemployed. It is obvious that we must have more effective price control. In an article from the *Advertiser* of July 19 headed "Highest Cost of Living Rise in Adelaide" cost of living increases in the capital cities were tabulated, revealing that they had risen in Adelaide by 5.8 per cent, Melbourne 5.7 per cent, Sydney 5.4 per cent, Perth and Hobart 3.8 per cent, and Brisbane 2.9 per cent. It is obvious from those figures that our Minister controlling prices is not sympathetic.

Mr. McLachlan—What were the relevant percentage increases for the previous quarter?

Mr. HUTCHENS—I did not anticipate that question but I suggest that when the Prices Minister's sympathies decline, prices must increase. The Australian people are aware that the most important task confronting any Government is that of keeping living costs down. The results of a Gallup Poll were published in the *Advertiser* of July 10, and a relevant portion read:—

The high cost of living is the chief problem confronting the Federal Government, most electors told the Gallup Poll recently. In this survey people were handed a card listing five of Australia's problems. They were asked which problem the Federal Government should attend to first. Of every 100 people interviewed 47 say, "Keep down the cost of living."

I support the Bill because I believe that in 12 months' time we will have a Federal Labor Government, supported by a Labor Government in this State, which will be sympathetic to the people's interests and provide for a return to price control.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—In the main I support the Bill because it is the best offering. It includes provision for handing over the price control of butter and cheese to the Commonwealth but it does not go far enough as I would prefer other items to be included. I am confident that price fixing in this State is not being administered as it should be. One anomaly in the Liberal Party's policy is having seven different price-fixing authorities in the Commonwealth. The Labor Party has advocated one price-fixing authority. Last January the Minister controlling prices announced that the prices of soft drinks were to be increased in the form of an increased deposit on bottles. As a result numerous letters appeared in the press and representations were made to me by shopkeepers. On January 29 I wrote to the Prices Minister as follows:—

Recently the price of cool drinks has been increased and the reason given through the press is that of the shortage of bottles caused by the non-return of empty bottles. There has at the same time appeared in the press several letters from storekeepers who claim they have a large quantity of empty bottles which the manufacturer refuses to collect. Another complaint made by not only consumers but also by storekeepers is that the label becomes detached from the bottles and in consequence the additional deposit is lost to either the consumer or the storekeeper. It would be appreciated if you could advise as to whether before the increase price was permitted the claim by storekeepers that manufacturers are not collecting empties is justified, and was considered prior to the increase being granted; and what redress consumers and storekeepers have after having lost the label off the bottle, which alone carries the guarantee of the refund of the increased deposit.

I received the following interesting reply, dated March 18, from the Premier's secretary:—

With reference to your letter of January 29 last regarding cool drinks, I am directed by the Premier to inform you that he has been advised by the Prices Commissioner that every angle affecting the increased deposit price on bottles was considered over a very long period, the application having been lodged nine months earlier. The Commissioner states that if those storekeepers who claimed that the manufacturers would not take bottles back had placed their case in his hands it would have received immediate attention. He reports that, despite the fact that a label becomes detached from the bottle, the storekeeper will still get credit from the manufacturer and it is hoped that the storekeeper will give credit to the consumer, provided label is returned.

The Prices Department has also had many complaints from consumers on the amount of deposit returnable. Prices of drinks, other than Coca Cola, have not been increased this year, and, in actual practice, if the bottle is returned by the consumer to the storekeeper to the manufacturer, there is no financial loss between the parties The Prices Commissioner also reports that another factor which influenced the increase in deposits was that some people

were selling bottles to dealers who were selling them interstate at much higher prices than the deposit rate previously charged. The present deposit rate does not cover the cost of the bottle.

That indicates the effect of varying price controls, in this instance enabling marine store dealers in South Australia to sell empty drink bottles in another State and receive more for them than they would collect here. As a consequence South Australians have been compelled to pay 100 per cent more as a deposit on bottles to finance South Australian cool drink manufacturers. Although the letter says that the present deposit rate does not cover the cost of the bottle, I point out that in 1917 26oz. bottles cost the drink manufacturer 2s. 6d. a dozen; and he allows sufficient in the price of his drinks when sold to the storekeeper to cover this cost. In his price for a bottle of drink he includes one-eighth of the cost of the bottle, so when a bottle has been sold eight times the manufacturer is recouped for his outlay on it. Today the cost of the same bottles is 6s. 8d. a dozen, but the deposit demanded is 6d., which is practically the full cost of the bottle—6⅔d. each—and yet the letter from the Premier says that the deposit rate does not cover the cost of the bottle. It certainly almost does. If a bottle is sold eight times the manufacturer still gets the return of his original outlay on it. I have seen bottles that were manufactured in 1917 and others in 1942 that are still in use. Therefore, the manufacturer has had returned to him time and time again the actual cost of those bottles, and he still has them. Although the consumer has to pay a deposit of 6d. a bottle, he only gets that returned if the label remains attached. People with families generally buy half a dozen bottles at a time, and when the contents have been consumed the empties are returned for another half dozen. Therefore, these people are compelled to lay out 3s. whereas the amount should not be more than 1s. 6d. at the most. Although the Premier's letter says that if the bottle is returned by the consumer to the storekeeper and then to the manufacturer there is no financial loss between the parties, actually in the initial stage there is a 100 per cent outlay by the consumer and storekeeper, who, in effect, are financing the manufacturer.

Mr. Fred Walsh—There would be no actual loss.

Mr. LAWN—Unfortunately, there is a considerable loss. When the storekeeper receives his bottled drinks from the manufacturer, unless he checks every crate at the time of delivery, he has to suffer any loss from broken bottles. This happens unless he draws the driver's attention to the breakages at the time of delivery. Often further breakages occur in the refrigerator, due to the varying temperatures, and again the storekeeper must bear this loss. The 100 per cent increase on deposits on bottles was unnecessary. The letter from the Premier pointed out that the Prices Department had had many complaints from consumers on the amount of deposit returnable. Complaints were made direct to the Prices Branch not only by consumers, but also by storekeepers. The letter pointed out that with one exception there had been no actual increase in the price of drinks during the year. The general number of crates delivered to storekeepers is 100 and they contain 100 dozen bottles. I am advised that that is the normal requirement of storekeepers. Although some may have more, very few have less. Last year storekeepers were paying 2s. deposit on each crate, amounting to £10 on 100 crates, and 3s. a dozen deposit on bottles, amounting to £15 on 100 dozen—an outlay of £25 in deposits to the manufacturer. This year the respective charges are 5s. on crates, making £25, and 6d. on bottles, making £30, a total of £55.

Mr. Fred Walsh—The object is to enforce the return of bottles and crates, and not to enable the manufacturer to show a profit.

Mr. LAWN—Only last week storekeepers were protesting because drink manufacturers would not call to collect the empties. The Prices Commissioner admits that he has had complaints that these bottles were not picked up.

Mr. Fred Walsh—The storekeeper buys his bottled drink for 5s. 6d. a dozen, and often sells the drink at 7d. a glass, sometimes getting as many as five glasses from a bottle.

Mr. LAWN—The storekeeper's reply to that would be that he was trying to recoup himself for the losses I have already referred to. I am told that the drivers, when asked to pick up empty bottles, say they cannot do so because they have not sufficient space on their trucks. I protest against the action of the Prices Commissioner. Apparently the manufacturers were not able to justify a price increase, but they pointed out that they were short of bottles, which was the reason why an increase in the deposit on a bottle was approved. The storekeeper is expected to pay the deposit to the consumer, but unless the consumer can return the bottle with the 6d. label on it he cannot get the deposit, and likewise the storekeeper is unable to get the

deposit from the manufacturer. The suggestion has been made that there should be a deposit of 6d. on every bottle, then 6d. would be paid on every bottle returned. I know that frequently the 6d. label is lost from the bottle when it is taken in and out of the refrigerator, and even if the bottle is returned with the label on, it often disappears while being handled at the premises of the storekeeper. I know of no other industry that the consumer is expected to finance. It seems wrong that consumers should have to provide the capital on which drink manufacturers operate. If we are to have proper price control the present position must be reviewed. It is time we admitted that only the Commonwealth can do it properly. The Government has decided to allow the Commonwealth control butter and cheese prices. The Opposition has told the Government that the Commonwealth should control all prices. I hope my remarks will be noted and bear fruit. I will not discuss other aspects of price control, except to say that I agree with the remarks of other members on this side that, to satisfy everybody, the Commonwealth Government should control prices.

Mr. McLACHLAN (Victoria)—I did not intend to speak on this Bill, but I think I ought to say a few words following on interjections by Mr. Fred Walsh. Mr. Lawn has given us his experiences in regard to empty bottles: here is an experience I have had. At Naracoorte there always seems to be a shortage of bottles around Christmas time with the result that a number of people with families find it hard to get enough drinks. It seems that the people with more money available have been able to buy their drinks earlier in the year and hold them until Christmas time. To improve the position local manufacturers raised the price of a bottle of cool drink to 1s., and in no time there were many bottles of drink available. A lot of duck shooting goes on in the South-East and, as everybody knows, with it a considerable quantity of alcohol is always consumed. On one occasion, when counting the ducks shot, it was noticed that one man, who had collected five or six dozen empty beer bottles proceeded to break them. When he had finished he was asked why, and he said, "Every one of those bottles has a Pick-axe brand on it and each bottle contained West End beer. The beer is sold at 2s. 3d. a bottle, and that means that the kiddies are robbed because when they return the empties they get only a halfpenny a bottle. So each time I see a Pick-axe bottle I break it." That is probably one reason why there is a shortage of bottles. I support the second reading.

Mr. FRED WALSH (Thebarton)—Because of some statements made by Mr. Lawn and Mr. McLachlan I think it is necessary to acquaint them with the true position. The deposit on a bottle is not imposed by the manufacturer for the purpose of making a profit, and in saying that I am not in any way protecting the interests of the employer, because that is not one of my principles. The object of the deposit is to ensure the return of either the bottle or the crate. Both members will appreciate that it is not possible under present day conditions to get a bottle or a crate for the amount of deposit. The Prices Commissioner has gone into the matter and that is why he allowed an increase in the deposit. Whatever the deposit on the bottle or the crate it is refunded either by the manufacturer to the storekeeper, or by the storekeeper to the consumer.

Mr. Lawn—What if the 6d. label is lost?

Mr. FRED WALSH—I am sure that the consumer will look after the 6d. sticker, and so will the storekeeper. It is a very poor business man who does not check up on deliveries, and if the storekeeper finds one or two bottles broken he will undoubtedly draw the attention of the driver to it. Mr. Lawn said that many bottles go to other States, but they would be of no value to business people in the other States because they have on them the brand of the manufacturer. The Pick-axe bottle is manufactured by the Australian Glass Manufacturers Company, and is under the control of the Adelaide Bottle Company, of which the breweries and the wine and spirit people are shareholders, and it determines the price of the bottle. Springfield Brewery has to get its bottles from anywhere, and that is why it uses any make of bottle. If bottles manufactured for Woodroofe's or Ladd's go to other States they are of no value in those States because they cannot be used by other people. That upsets Mr. Lawn's argument. I do not think any aerated water manufacturer is making an excessive profit, or has done so for years. The Lion Brewing Company pays dividends, not on the profits from the manufacture of aerated waters but from hotel rents and other matters in which it is interested. However, that is not the case with people who have no interests in hotels. Generally they have backyard competition to compete against; I could name a number of people who, by

adding a number of ingredients to water, in backyard premises, call it aerated water and sell it at the same price as the *bona fide* manufacturer who pays decent wages and provides amenities and conditions in conformity with arbitration awards. I agree that the State cannot effectively control prices because of the differences of opinion between them and the questions of politics that arise. Whereas New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania may agree on certain aspects, the other States on those particular aspects may act to the absolute contrary.

Mr. O'Halloran—And there is the impact of section 92 of the Constitution.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Exactly. The difficulty could be overcome either by a successful referendum which granted powers to the Commonwealth Government or by the States delegating their authority to the Commonwealth Government—and there was a time, in 1943, when this State was quite happy to do so. It is possible that the States would be pleased to dispose of their responsibility for price control, but I am not so sure that the present Commonwealth Government would be very happy to assume it. Nor does it follow that Commonwealth control of prices would be an unqualified success. It is true that the Commonwealth was able to use the subsidy system to keep down the cost of living, but it would be very difficult to ask any Commonwealth Government, of whatever political creed, to pay subsidies if it lacked the power to control prices. For example, the price of meat might be controlled in the city, but the big cattle raiser determines what quantity of meat shall come to the market and if he does not get his price he simply refrains from sending cattle down, thereby creating a shortage in the city I do not believe that price control is a panacea of all our ills, but it could be of great assistance in controlling rising prices, apart from the influences of imported goods. I know there is a tendency to say that if the price of this, that or the other controlled our ills would be overcome, but I am not convinced that that would be the case. I know that the Prices Commissioner in this State personally as a man of integrity who carries out his duties to the best of his ability. I know he would do nothing inimical to the great masses of people and so I feel that I must support this legislation.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

LAND SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 7. Page 329.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill seeks to continue the existence of the Parliamentary Land Settlement Committee for a further three years after the expiry of the Act on December 31. I was one who welcomed the innovation of this Committee some eight years ago and still think that there is useful scope for its functions, but considerably more use could have been made of it than has been the case in latter years. When it was first established there was a spate of enthusiasm and large areas of what were classified as under-developed land were referred to the Committee for inquiry and report to ascertain if they were suitable for acquisition, improvement and subdivision for the settlement of returned servicemen. During the early years of its existence the Committee had a rather busy time and presented a number of valuable reports. I do not think that much land was compulsorily acquired under the provisions of the Act because landowners, being aware of the powers of acquisition, were amenable to reason, and so a considerable area in the South-East was acquired under the provisions of this legislation, particularly in the lower South-East. However, in the course of time resistance arose, in circles very close to the Government, to the continual reference of areas to the Land Settlement Committee. I remember one member in this place waxing very indignant about the whole thing; he said that the implications of this legislation were Communist in nature and that the whole thing should be removed from the Statute Book. Although that course was not followed I have noticed that the scope of inquiry has not extended very far since that time and I think there has been a tendency in recent years not to prosecute the opportunities for land settlement to the extent possible even under existing legislation. I admit that they are limited because land must be certified as under-developed before it can be referred to the committee for inquiry. Consequently during the past year or so very few properties capable of being subdivided into a considerable number of holding capable of substantially increasing our primary production potential have been referred to the committee. In areas such as southern Yorke Peninsula and Kangaroo Island apparently little except the native fauna is likely to be disturbed as a result of inquiries

and reports by this committee. Much valuable work has been done by the committee and it could do even more if the Act were amended to enable it to inquire into the possibilities of any surplus land being acquired for closer settlement. In those circumstances the qualification "under-developed," which is the limiting factor on the activities of the committee today, would not be the over-riding consideration in determining whether or not certain areas were proper subjects for investigation. Irrespective of what happens in the political field, sooner or later the pressure of public opinion and the necessity for an increase in food production will force whichever Government is in power to amend the legislation on the lines I suggest. In saying that I am not out to be unjust to any individual or to deprive him of rights in land, which he has secured under the law without giving him fair and adequate payment for those rights of which we are depriving him in the interests of the community, but in the final analysis the interests of the community must be paramount over the interest of individuals, for, unless we hearken to what is happening overseas, the time will come when people will come to Australia and by force of arms take this land from the present holders. Then it will be no use showing to the invaders freehold titles as a defence against their encroachment. In this country there is a great demand for increased production, a demand than can be met not by building up secondary industries in our metropolitan areas but only by ensuring a balanced production based on the effective occupation of land by the greatest possible number of people and the working of that land to the utmost degree consonant with the maintenance of the fertility of the soil. Although this committee at present cannot investigate on those lines, the mere fact of its being kept in existence for a further period of three years will enable it to do something along the lines on which it has been working, and during that period it may be possible to amend the Act so as to enable it to do more useful work in the interest of land settlement with a view to increased production.

It is often said that no Australian desires to go on the land at present and that the Government should seek migrants who are land-minded and for whom land could be made available, but I frequently receive inquiries from young Australians, many of them ex-servicemen who have abandoned the idea of obtaining land under the War Service Land Settlement Agreement, who have capital of their own, and who, if the land were available on reasonable terms, would be prepared to settle on it The number of these inquiries has grown in recent months, and there is scope for the cultivation of these opportunities not only in the interests of the present community but the future security of the State. I support the second reading.

Mr. MICHAEL (Light)—The sole purpose of this Bill is to extend the life of the Land Settlement Committee for a further three years. The Leader of the Opposition expressed pleasure at such a step, and I agree with him, for the committee has done valuable work. The member for Chaffey and I are the only original members still on the committee. I have been chairman for some years now and have been able to appreciate to the fullest extent the work of the committee. In its early years it did some important jobs on land settlement and I ask the Government to make more use of it today. Constituted as it is, it cannot do its work without acquiring much information which must be of value to the State, and, even though present circumstances mitigate against the acquisition and development of land being carried out to the same extent as in the early years of the committee's existence, I believe a good deal of work can yet be done. Many hundreds of qualified ex-servicemen are waiting to go on the land, and the Government should leave no stone unturned in an efforts even at this belated time to make land available for them. In addition, many qualified men now resident in the city are anxious to go on the land in spite of the amenities available in Adelaide. During the last week or two we have been told that, because conditions may not remain as easy in the city as they have been in recent years, there may be a greater desire among those who have left the land to return to it. On September 27, 1951, I asked the following question in this House:—

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

if so, has it considered the action to be taken to ensure that a fair proportion of that expansion shall take place in South Australia?

The Premier replied:—

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

I do not know what work has been done in that regard by the State authorities, but I believe the committee could give valuable assistance to the Government in finding out those parts of the State which are suitable for dairying. I believe there are many such areas and it is only by making a thorough survey of the State's potential that we can find out where they exist. With the expansion of our industrial population in years to come there is bound to be a considerable shortage of dairy products, vegetables, and other primary products. Areas suitable for gardening and dairying which are near the centres of population and which were suitable for gardening or dairying have been used for home-building projects. Much less capital is needed to start business as a dairy farmer or gardener than is needed to start business as a wheat farmer or grazier, and prospective dairy farmers and gardeners could be financed comparatively easily. The committee has done much work with regard to areas in the South-East, Kangaroo Island, and lower Eyre Peninsula. However, between the Tailem Bend-Pinnaroo and the Tailem Bend-Bordertown railway lines there is a great tract of over 1,000,000 acres with a good rainfall which is practically untouched and which is capable of great development. It would be necessary to make roads into the area so that people could develop it, but from the little of it I have seen and from inquiries I have made I believe that in that area there is much land which could be developed.

Mr. Whittle—Is the Australian Mutual Provident Society developing that area?

Mr. MICHAEL—No, the society is developing land nearer Bordertown. The area to which I refer will not be easy of access until roads are constructed, but from the information available it seems that a large area of it could be developed under proper methods. Much of the land in the middle and upper South-East is practically untouched. The Land Settlement Committee recommended a proposal for drainage of the area south of drain L-K, and this work has been commenced, but the committee asked for more detailed information about the area north of the drain. However, the information has not been received. Again, land in the Coonalpyn Downs is being developed by the A.M.P. Society and by other people. In addition to the land being developed between Meningie and Keith there is a considerable area south of this and north of a line between Lucindale and Kingston which is worthy of investigation. The committee has visited this locality and, although a great deal of it will need drainage, I believe it could be profitably settled.

I have mentioned only a few parts worthy of investigation by the Land Settlement Committee. Land development in South Australia has great possibilities. The committee has investigated some areas along the River Murray and the lakes, although it has not yet found an economical way of developing and irrigating them, but the information gathered will be of great value when it is possible to go ahead with the proposal. I am glad that it is proposed to extend the committee's term for another three years because it has performed a useful service during the past 7½ years and has given the House valuable information. The Leader of the Opposition stated that we must increase production; if we do not other people will do it for us. Investigations by the committee have been of great value to the Government and are an important factor in raising the food production potential of the State.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—I support the Bill. The member for Light, who is chairman of the Land Settlement Committee, said it was most desirable that the powers of inquiry of the committee be extended. He said the committee should inquire into the possibility of developing land for dairying. My opinions on this subject have not altered since I expressed them 12 months ago. I believe that it is essential for the terms of reference to the committee to be extended. I understand that the committee visited Milang to see if an area there was suitable for growing vines. I believe that its recommendation was not favourable, but that if it were given another reference it could bring down a report acceptable to Parliament and in the best interests of the State and say whether the land was suitable for dairying or for other

purposes. What has become of its representations and to what use is the land suited? The committee must have had something in mind when it sought another reference. No-one will say there is no need to increase dairy production or market gardening activities.

The member for Light referred to an area between Tailem Bend and Pinnaroo. I do not know whether he believes it could be developed for any particular purpose, but he is a primary producer and probably has something in mind. If a proposal to develop this land were submitted to the committee it could investigate it. Can the Minister of Lands say whether, before a project is referred to the committee, it has to go before the Lands Department or the Land Board? If so, the department or the board should be asked why more schemes have not been referred to the committee. I believe the committee explores every avenue available to see what land is most suitable for, and when it makes its recommendation the Government, or Parliament, should insist that the land be used for the purpose recommended.

Mr. Brookman—Would you insist that land be used for the purpose the committee recommends?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—If not, what is the value of an investigation? The committee was asked to ascertain whether land at Milang was suitable for a certain purpose and it reported that it was not, but it should be asked to report whether it is suitable for any type of production. I recently attended a welcome to Dr. Kiernan, the Irish ambassador. He said that the Irish system was to have a planned economy coinciding the development of their land with the development of their secondary industries. After their land is put into production their secondary industries are developed. I believe that a similar method would succeed here. I would like to hear more from country members. They may know of suitable land which could be investigated by the committee. It should carry out more investigations with a view to settling ex-servicemen on dairy farms.

Mr. BROOKMAN (Alexandra)—I support the Bill. The honourable member for Goodwood implied that land should be farmed only for the type of production the Land Settlement Committee recommends as most suitable for it. Thank goodness this country has not reached the stage at which a farmer is obliged to grow whatever a committee may dictate. About a year ago the honourable member for Goodwood made certain remarks about soldier settlers in the South-East on blocks recommended for dairying on which they were growing wool. Farmers so far have been permitted to pursue whatever line of production they think best and that is the only practical way they can operate. That principle should not be disturbed. I favour an extension of the Land Settlement Committee's existence because it has done valuable work and will do more valuable work in future.

The methods by which the Government is acquiring land in this State can be improved. It should look for land, not wait until it is offered. When land is offered, the Government does not decide quickly enough whether to buy and the seller is uncertain for a longer period than if he were selling to a private person. The long delay puts sellers off offering more land to the Government. Selling land is a pretty big transaction in a person's life and he wants to get the business finished. If a private person desires to buy land he probably obtains an option for a week or so, makes necessary investigations and purchases it if it is suitable. He knows that no-one else can buy the land during the period of his option.

Mr. Macgillivray—Dual control by Commonwealth and State does not aid the expeditious settlement of purchase.

Mr. BROOKMAN—I appreciate the interjection. That is one of our biggest troubles and it is not easily remedied. The State Government should approach the Commonwealth and point out the position. I know a man of high principles who sold land to the Government because he wanted to help soldier settlement, but the transaction took so long that he now says he will never willingly sell land to the Government. He would rather go to a private buyer because he knows he will not have to wait so long. No State department can make decisions as quickly as private persons. The State should be enabled to act quickly and it did so in the purchase of Campbell Park when land was offered by auction. Only a few days were available, but the Government made an arrangement with the seller, the Land Settlement Committee made an investigation, reported favourably, and the land was purchased. If the Government takes less time in making decisions about purchasing land more will be offered.

There is another side to the question. If a private person wants to purchase land he approaches land agents or examines press advertisements. I do not know whether any Lands Department official peruses advertisements of land for sale, but I believe a number of areas of land have been sold which have

not been considered by the Government. I often attend land sales and wonder whether the desirability of its purchase by the Government has been investigated. Much land is changing hands and I can see no reason for compulsory acquisition. All the land it requires could be bought by the Government if it acted like a private buyer. I support the provision for the extension of the life of the Land Settlement Committee, but there is no need for it to be a permanent body such as the Public Works Standing Committee. I agree that the committee's term should be reconsidered, as provided in the Bill, in three years.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (Chaffey)—As the member for Light, who is Chairman of the Land Settlement Committee, pointed out, he and I are the only two remaining foundation members. That being so, I take this opportunity to express the great pleasure I have had in serving on the committee. It is a line of work in which I have been interested all my life, and I feel that I have gained a tremendous amount of knowledge because of associations with various Government officers and members of the committee. I have gained much more from the committee than I have ever been able to give it. Its heyday was in the early days of its existence, when the members worked with a fervour which could be likened to that of a religious evangelist. The Government of the day gave the committee much work to do and I think it faced up to it admirably. Week after week its members were engaged in tours of various parts of the State and also the other States so that they could place before Parliament the best information available from experts. Therefore, I feel that the committee has played a material part in the development of the State's primary industries and in the settlement of ex-servicemen. However, it has no responsibility in the settlement of these men. When land is acquired on the committee's recommendation the Government is then in duty bound to give first priority to ex-servicemen.

It was considered that there were two parts of the State particularly suited to intensive development. One was along the banks of the Murray at Loxton, where the committee examined land and recommended a developmental project which is now one of the largest irrigation schemes in the State. The committee examined many estates in the lower South East and recommended the acquisition of large areas which have since been settled by returned servicemen. I regret that the committee has not been given more work to do, particularly in the South East. Although tens of thousands of acres have been acquired from private owners, it was done with their willing help, and actually the acquisition has benefited them. The closer settlement of any area increases local land values. Often huge areas are held in few hands and are in no way developed, growing natural grasses which carry stock only for a short period of the year. Land values in such areas are very low, but when closer settlement takes place and the land is sown to pasture, enabling stock to be carried over the full year, values are naturally enhanced. Because of the money the owner receives from the Government, he is in a position to develop the remainder of his country, so he is not detrimentally affected by having portion of his estate taken away. I believe that South Eastern land owners are now carrying more stock than when they had larger areas. The committee not only examined land in the lower South East, but also areas in the upper South East, mainly near Bordertown and Keith. The development of these areas has been possible because of the use of trace elements, but the committee also took evidence from settlers who had grown pastures which carry at least two sheep to the acre without the use of any trace elements.

The next area for development which came before the committee was on Kangaroo Island. When one thinks of the development on Kangaroo Island one immediately associates with it the name of the late Mr. H. L. Rymill. He developed land there when practically everyone in South Australia considered that prospects were hopeless. One exception was Mr. Rowland Hill, who was in charge of the experimental land scheme. Like Mr. Rymill he had intense faith in the future of the Island, and I feel that he has done more than any other to develop this area. I rejoice with him that he has at least seen some return for his enthusiasm and work over the years. The committee recommended the acquisition not only of land, but also of a township at Tumby Bay, with churches and hotels. It was a grave responsibility, but one the committee was able to carry, and I believe that its action has been of benefit not only to the settlers concerned, but also to the Government and the people of South Australia, because there was no loss as a result of the acquisition.

The committee also recommended the development of land on lower Yorke Peninsula—probably some of the worst land the committee had referred to it. I am not suggesting that

use cannot be made of it. I believe that with settlers suited to this type of country, men with the necessary knowledge of how to develop it, comfortable holdings will be established. Settlers for this area must be hand picked. It would be hopeless for me to make a home there because the country is so foreign to everything I am used to. Unless a man knows the country and has great faith in it, I believe he would be a hopeless failure. For instance, I do not think a farmer from the Murray mallee, however good he was, would be happy to get some of the country in the vicinity of Warooka. Mr. Brookman mentioned the committee's recommendation for the acquisition of Campbell Park and Campbell House. During the session I have asked questions regarding this property, because I am perturbed that settlers have not already been placed on it. The committee recommended that early steps should be taken to acquire and settle this land, because it was a going proposition and carrying stock, and lent itself to immediate closer settlement.

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

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I drew the attention of the Minister of Lands to a statement I heard recently that instead of some of the Campbell Park land being made available for ex-servicemen it had been leased to a stock and station company. The Minister referred to the difficulties of settling ex-servicemen, but some of these so-called difficulties are not acceptable to me: they appear to be more excuses than anything else. He said that one difficulty was that the property was affected by sand drift. I remember seeing one or two small portions affected by sand drift but would it not have been possible to fence them off and leave them for development by the settlers themselves, or have the department seed them down to pasture? The settler would be interested in the property as much as a stock and station company, which would need the land only for agistment purposes. I do not want anyone to think that the committee recommended the acquisition of land with such a major difficulty as sand drift. Although there were some sand drifts they represented only a minor difficulty on that property. The Minister said another difficulty was that the acreages were not as large as at first thought. Those who know anything about land adjacent to the River Murray, or to the lakes into which the River Murray flows, know that acreages appear and disappear with the fall and rise of the river. When it is low there is obviously a larger acreage than when it is high, especially in flood time. The Campbell Park Estate has 12 miles of fresh water river frontage. The argument about acreages is not vital, because the acres which disappear in flood time are the least important.

There is a feeling that recommendations of the committee should not be taken too seriously, but the committee consists of practical men: most of them have had a life-time of primary production. They have had to earn a living from the land and because of that have a greater knowledge of land matters than any Government officer, whose knowledge is usually along theoretical lines. He has not been called upon to earn a living from the land in the same way as members of the committee. Mr. Brookman said that he hoped the committee would not become a permanent body. I do not think that is a matter of importance because the legislation continuing the existence of the committee can be re-enacted as long as Parliament desires. It is said that the committee should be on the same basis as the Public Works Committee, but I point out that that committee can last only so long as Parliament desires. If the Land Settlement Committee were on a semi-permanent basis like the Public Works Committee I would be satisfied.

I was pleased to hear the unanimous opinions from both sides of the House about the useful work done by the committee. As a foundation member of it I take pleasure in hearing such remarks. The only criticism against the Bill is that the Government has not used the committee as it should have done. I support that view. A tremendous amount of work was done by the committee in the early days of its existence and the desire to work is still there. The committee is waiting for the Government to ask it to examine other matters. We hear criticism of people who are not prepared to accept responsibility or to work to a greater extent, yet here is a committee ready and willing to carry out any responsibility given to it by the Government. I hope the Minister takes up this matter with Cabinet so that the committee can assist more in the development of our primary industries. I have mentioned the South-East, the West Coast and Kangaroo Island, but there is a large stretch of country between Adelaide and the area just beyond Port Pirie. Not one reference about that land has been sent to the committee. I told the Minister on one occasion that one man held an aggregation of seven farms and I gave all the details, but nothing has been done in the

matter. Recently the Leader of the Opposition said that if we wanted more production from our farming areas we must put more men on the land, men who would have a personal interest and responsibility in the land on which they were settled. The seven farms held by the one man are not being used as they should be. They would be better used if that farmer had his original farm and the other farms were held by six new settlers.

Mr. O'Halloran—The improvements have probably been destroyed.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—That is most likely. The Minister has given evidence of the tremendous increase in production in the South-East since it was subdivided and ex-servicemen settled. I have heard similar evidence from New South Wales. Recently the Minister gave figures showing the production on certain large estates prior to acquisition compared with production since subdivision. For our subdivision purposes we should get land that has not been fully developed. There are still tens of thousands of acres in good rainfall country that could produce more food for the Commonwealth and the Empire if handed over to settlers instead of being left neglected as at present because of the heavy taxation that follows full development. I support the second reading.

Mr. PATTINSON secured the adjournment of the debate.

BUILDING OPERATIONS BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 12. Page 364.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill embodies the Government's realization that it has failed to control building materials effectively. The Opposition has felt unhappy about the method of control of building materials, and the establishment of certain priorities ever since it became evident that some form of control was necessary in order that the available materials could be diverted to the channels where the greatest good would result from their use. We have in this place frequently urged the Government to adopt a more simple yet more effective form of control in order that home building may derive the maximum advantage therefrom. However, the proposed legislation is apparently a step towards abandoning any attempt to do so. The proposed repeal of the Building Materials Act and the substitution of legislation which purports merely to control building operations are, I think, sufficiently conclusive as to the absurdity of the half-measures which the Government has taken to control building in the interests of the community. The Bill has one advantage in that, by removing most of the dead wood which has accumulated as a result of the various amendments of the Building Materials Act, it is starting off anew and is, for the moment, at any rate, reasonably intelligible. What will happen if amendments are made in order to deal with certain eventualities I hesitate to offer a forecast. Even so it could have been clearer, for the Bill contains provisions which do not seem to be appropriate in legislation of this nature.

One of the changes to be effected by the Bill is the abolition of the system of priorities which was supposed to have operated under the Building Materials Act. As the Premier said, "With two exceptions it is not proposed to exercise any control over the disposition or use of any specific building materials." But, imperfect as the priority system has been because of the refusal of the Government to exercise complete control over materials, it has afforded some protection to *bona fide* home builders, whereas under the proposed legislation there will be no such protection. Suppliers will not even have to pretend that they are observing some order in the supply of materials to purchasers, and supplies will tend to be snapped up by those who can afford to do so. The abolition of even the imperfect system of priorities will have an inflationary effect.

The reasons given for the proposed relaxation of controls are (1) that supplies of building materials have increased appreciably and (2) that the labour position has eased. However, I should like to be re-assured as to the appreciable increase in supplies of building materials. The supply of building bricks, which could have been greatly increased by Government action, is quite inadequate. In general, there are insufficient supplies of practically all kinds of building materials. There may be some degree of reliability in the statement that the labour position has eased, for unfortunately we have been learning this very rapidly in recent months. We are told by the press that skilled building tradesmen are now migrating from Australia to New Zealand where, according to the secretaries of industrial organizations over there, employment is still offering. This is a most deplorable state of affairs at a time when so many worthy people are still seeking adequate homes; indeed, homes of any type. It is regrettable that, because of financial policy over which we

have no control, the rate of building should be slowed to such an extent as to create these conditions.

The principle of the Bill seems to be that if a person wishes to build a home for himself or his employee, he will not have to apply for a permit if the proposed dwelling, including outbuildings, is not to exceed 18 squares, but if he wishes to build a larger home he will have to obtain a permit. The majority of homes to be built under this provision will, I think, be less than the 18 squares and therefore most home builders will be freed from the necessity of applying for a permit. The number of persons seeking building materials will consequently be greatly increased, and the increase is likely to be sudden. The person of moderate means will, I fear, be greatly prejudiced in the race for materials. The Premier has said that the time has not arrived for the complete relaxation of controls and that the resources of the building industry should be devoted principally to the provision of dwelling houses. One can agree with this because there are still thousands of people without adequate or even decent accommodation, but the question that arises is whether it will result in more houses being built and, if so, whether the right people will get them.

Despite the elaborate provisions of the Buliding Materials Act, the real controls during the last two or three years have been economic. As costs have risen more and more people have been forced to abandon their intention to build, and apparently the Government is prepared to rely on this form of control. Rising costs have forced the Government to abandon the limit of £2,200 prescribed for non-permit houses. The reason given by the Premier for repealing this provision is that a person will not build a bigger house than he reasonably needs and that under existing circumstances there is no reason why the limitation on costs should be continued. While there is to be no limit on the cost of a non-permit house, there is to be a limit of £300 on a non-permit business building, although it is difficult to understand how such a building of three squares could be erected for that amount. To be consistent there should be no limit for either or there should be the limits or both.

Some aspects of this legislation require little more clarification than was given by the Premier in his second reading speech. The Bill permits the building of houses up to 18 squares. Clause 4 (2) 1 (*a*) contains this somewhat obscure phrase, "The total area of a dwellinghouse does not exceed or, if completed, will not exceed 18 squares." I would like to know when a house is a completed house. Almost any dwelling standing today could have additions, so what is to be the test of a completed house? Is it the laying of the foundations? We remember in the days of more rigid control some people "inadvertently" laid down foundations for larger houses than were permitted at that time and as a result of their provision for the future they became liable to penalties. The existing limit is 12½ squares so that the proposed 18 squares represents a considerable unexplained increase. I used the term advisably for the Premier offered no explanation of it. A house of 18 squares is a relatively large one; it could be of the dimensions of 36ft. x 50ft. or 45ft. x 40ft., and such a house, planned by a modern architect, would provide more effective accomodation than old fashioned houses of the same area. Here again I think we should consider the economic aspect to which I referred a few months ago.

In last Saturday's *Mail* some opinions were expressed by architects from whom that paper sought advice, and the consensus of opinion was that the greatly increased building costs would not allow people of average means to build homes of 1,800 sq. ft. One architect expressed the opinion that it cost about £90 a 100 sq. ft to build just after the war, say in 1947, and he considered it would cost about £300 today. If those figures are considered too high I can offer some choice of comparison. However, if we take lower figures it still places the cost of building houses of this size beyond the reach of the person of average means. The cost of an 18 square house at £200 a square would be £3,600, or £1,400 more than the limit now permitted for a non-permit house. At £250 a square the cost would be £4,500 and at the figure quoted by the architect, £300, the cost would be £5,400. Therefore I cannot visualize this increase in the permitted size of a home making any substantial contribution to the provision of homes for those most desperately in need of them. Rather will it give those who have means and who desire to build a larger type of house the opportunity to do so irrespective of the cost and to the detriment of the genuine home seeker who will be deprived of the available materials. Quantities for the 18 square house would be considerable and the result will be the building of fewer houses. Moreover, contractors will be more likely to take contracts for the larger houses as this would decrease the expenses

involved in moving equipment from building to building in order to earn the same amount from a series of contracts as could be earned from one. Persons desiring to build smaller houses will lose in the race for materials. Although the limit of 1,800 square feet includes outbuildings, these may be erected 12 months after the completion of the home, so there will be a tendency for the house itself to occupy the full area allowed. It might be better to provide for separate limits, say, 1,600 square feet for the house and 200 square feet for the outbuildings. Subclause (2) of clause 4 states:—

The carrying out of any of the following works shall not be a contravention of this section:—

1. The construction of any dwellinghouse where—

(*a*) the total area of the dwellinghouse (including all outbuildings appurtenant to the dwellinghouse) does not exceed or, if completed, will not exceed eighteen squares; and

(*b*) (i.) the dwellinghouse is constructed at the cost of a person upon land in which that person has a registered interest and that the dwellinghouse is constructed for occupation by that person as his permanent and principal place of residence;

How will "occupation" be interpreted, if the owner changes his mind after occupying the house for only a short time? The legislation provides that the occupier must occupy the house within three months after its completion, but, so far as I can ascertain, that is the only provision in the law relating to permanent occupation, so that, if within a few months after the completion of a house for the occupation of the owner as his principal and permanent place of residence he desires to vacate it, he may make a profit in disposing of it to a person urgently requiring a home. There should be a more specific definition of "occupation" and a person, if he desires to relinquish occupation within a short time after his home is completed, should be made to state his reason to some competent authority before permission is granted to him to do so.

Clause 4 also provides that it shall not be a contravention of the law to construct a dwellinghouse "for occupation by a person employed or to be employed" by the owner. Is it a good thing that an employee should be housed by his employer? I have heard it argued that it tends to tie an employee to his job and make him amenable to less advantageous conditions of employment than he should be expected to accept because of the fear of eviction if he should leave his job. The present Act provides that persons may, without a permit, build homes for the occupation of persons to be employed on the land, but here again there is the undesirable feature that the employee is tied fairly securely to his job in these days of acute housing shortage.

Clause 4 provides that it shall not be a contravention of the law to "construct any building or structure (other than a dwellinghouse) the total area of which does not exceed or, if completed, will not exceed three squares and the total cost of construction of which does not exceed or, if completed, will not exceed £300 (exclusive of the cost of any painting)." This provision applies to both business premises and domestic outbuildings, but I suggest that those should be considered separately, for there are very different implications in the erection of a building as an outbuilding and in erecting it as business premises. Yet here both are limited to a maximum cost of £300 and a maximum area of 300 square feet. There can be no real reason for the limit of £300 in view of the architect's quotation of £300 a square to which I have already referred, as I cannot see how it will be possible to erect anything approximating 300 square feet within the price limit set. There is to be no limit to the area or cost of outbuildings on farms and, though it is desirable to encourage primary producers to erect the necessary outbuildings to enable them to increase production, they are certainly given a steep preference over the ordinary business man who may be engaged in handling their products in a secondary way, and the extension of whose business may be just as essential to an increase in food production.

Under clause 4 the construction of any building or structure or the carrying out of any addition or alteration to any building or structure pursuant to and in accordance with the conditions of a permit issued by the Minister shall not be a contravention of this section. What will be the basis of a permit? Is the present cost limit to continue? The Premier should tell members whether future permits granted will be endorsed with the maximum permissible cost, and also whether the maximum cost endorsed on existing permits is to be waived in view of the provision of this clause.

Pursuant to clause 4 the Governor may by proclamation declare that the carrying out of any work of any kind prescribed in the proclamation shall not, if carried out in compliance with the provisions of the proclamation,

be a contravention of this section, and any such proclamation shall have effect notwithstanding that the provisions of the proclamation relate to matters provided for in subsection (2) of this section.'' What kind of work is to be the subject of such a proclamation? Will it involve buildings to be restricted to a maximum area of 300 square feet and to a maximum cost of £300 or some other type of building not specifically mentioned in the Bill or in the Premier's second reading speech? The conditions under which a proclamation could be made should have been specified in the Bill, for a proclamation could be issued which would remove the vestige of control contained in this Bill, but I claim that that type of action is not as effective as legislation by Bill.

Subclause (4) of clause 4 provides for a penalty not exceeding £100 to be imposed on a person guilty of a first offence under the legislation and in the case of a second or subsequent offence a penalty not exceeding £500, but I suggest that some other form of penalty might prove more appropriate. The present legislation provides for a stop notice to be served in the case of a serious infringement of the law. Will there still be power to issue such stop notices as an alternative for, or perhaps in conjunction with the imposition of one of the penalties named in the Bill? That point is not very clear and the Premier should give the House more information on it. Before the amending legislation providing for the issue of a stop notice, some people were prepared to pay the monetary penalty in order to get a house completed, and the stop notice which was incorporated in the legislation has had a most salutary effect. A man finds that he has spent a considerable sum and almost completes his building, when he is discovered and a stop notice served on him telling him that he cannot complete his building until the notice is raised. Some of these notices have operated for long periods—in one case for three years or more. Last year's amending legislation provided that a person could apply to the Court for the lifting of a stop notice after it had been operative for 12 months.

Clause 5 provides for restrictions on the use of local cement and cement products and states that ''the Governor may make regulations declaring that no person shall use or cause to be used any such cement or any such cement product for any purpose specified in the regulations'', but if these restrictions are included in the Bill, why should it be necessary to make regulations? Subclause (4) of clause 5 states:—''This section shall cease to have operation after February 28, 1953.'' I am a little concerned that this provision may be a little over-optimistic. Frequent forecasts have been made that the cement position would shortly ease and that in a few months there would be adequate supplies for all purposes, and I remember when controls on the use of cement on certain types of work were removed and after a few weeks clamped on again, in some cases more severely than before. What will the position be if supplies are inadequate on February 28, 1953? Provision for the issue of a proclamation when supplies are considered adequate would have been the most businesslike way of dealing with the matter. If supplies are adequate and their permanency is guaranteed on February 28, 1953, a proclamation could be issued removing cement from all forms of control.

Clause 7 limits the use of burnt building bricks and galvanized iron and water piping manufactured in this country. If it is proper to have a provision to control the use of cement until February 28, 1953, why not have a provision to ease the limitation on the use of other essential building materials if greater supplies warrant it? Does the Government consider that the control on these materials will have to be retained until after December, 1953? There is a confusing array of categories and uses in paragraphs (i.) to (viii.) of clause 7 (2) (*c*). This leads one to believe that the Government thinks these controls will have to be re-enacted before December, 1953. Clause 9 (1) states:—

> The Minister may issue to any person a permit in writing for any purpose specified in this Act. The issue of any such permit shall be in the discretion of the Minister and, without limiting that discretion, the Minister may take into account whether or not the issue of a permit would bring about the employment of persons in the work to be authorized by the permit who could otherwise be employed in the construction of dwellinghouses.

That gets perilously close to direction of labour, because if the Minister is satisfied that the employment of building labour on a certain project may be detrimental to the erection of dwellinghouses he may refuse a permit. I do not object to the provision. I believe, as I have said before, that the building of dwellinghouses should have priority in times of housing shortages, but members opposite occasionally criticize anything in the nature of direction of labour. This was particularly so during the regimes of the Curtin and Chifley Labor Governments during

the war when it was necessary to direct labour into certain channels in order to maintain the war effort, but now that that danger does not exist they are prepared to accept, to some extent at any rate, the principle of direction of labour when it suits their Government to introduce legislation with that object.

Clause 4 deals with the regulation of building operations, but what is the meaning of "for occupation by that person as his permanent and principal place of residence?" Does that visualize a man having more than one residence. I thought we frowned on such a thing in these days of housing shortages. I should welcome a precise statement of what is intended by clause 4 (2). I do not think the Bill will do much to improve the desperate housing position of many of our unfortunate citizens, but in the belief that it may be of some little assistance by enabling those who can afford it to build bigger houses, thereby enabling others to occupy the houses they vacate, I support the Bill.

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—I should have thought the comments and criticism of the Leader of the Opposition would draw some support from members opposite. Apparently his criticism was so well founded that there was no answer to it. I join with the Leader of the Opposition in his criticism of the way in which the present legislation has been administered. We have often spoken of "control" under the Building Materials Act. The Act would have a more appropriate title if it were called the Building Prohibition Act because sometimes a man, having been granted a permit to build, could not go ahead, even if he had the money, as he could not get materials. The department concerned should have ensured that those granted permits would get the necessary supplies. I share the belief of the Leader of the Opposition that the Bill will not do much to improve the housing position, but I hope it will be passed quickly because many suppliers of necessary materials have been withholding stocks hoping that soon they will not have to worry about controls or fill in a host of forms. In his second reading speech the Premier said that a person desiring to build a dwellinghouse up to 18 squares for his own use would be able to do so without obtaining a permit. I understood that at present a person who had built a house and disposed of it could not get a permit to build another. Perhaps there is a loophole in the Bill that would enable a person to build a house, live in it for a short period, and then dispose of it and build another. If this is so, the proposed legislation will permit speculators to operate.

The Bill proposes to allow buildings other than dwellinghouses to be erected without a permit if they do not exceed three squares or cost more than £300. The restriction as to cost is unnecessary because no-one could build three squares for £300 today. However, it may be of assistance by allowing people to extend their commercial establishments. For some time some small business people rendering a valuable service to the community have desired to extend their premises and I hope that their plans will not be prejudiced by applications from big concerns. A progressive young man suffering from war injuries built a shop to serve a newly settled area. It was built of straw, but when the business grew he sought a permit to extend, but was not granted it. Strangely enough, the Housing Trust built shops with red brick to compete with him. That man is still struggling to provide himself with adequate premises. A fire occurred in another establishment in the early hours of a Saturday morning. The company concerned employed its workmen on cleaning up the debris. On the Monday preparations were being made to erect a new building and within 14 days work had commenced. This building is nearing completion and a large amount of imported oregon and cement has been used. I believe a permit was granted because the Building Materials Office felt some sympathy for the employees. Clause 4 (3) of the Bill reads:—

> The Governor may by proclamation declare that the carrying out of any work of any kind described in the proclamation shall not, if carried out in compliance with the provisions of the proclamation, be a contravention of this section. Any such proclamation shall have effect notwithstanding that the provisions of the proclamation relate to matters provided for in subsection (2) of this section.

In effect, the Government may, by proclamation, set aside the Bill to meet certain circumstances. If Acts include provisions which could have unsatisfactory repercussions Parliament should meet more regularly than for one small session a year. In his second reading speech the Premier said:—

> It will be recalled that the existing Act provides for control over the use of various essential building materials. . . . In general, the supplies of building materials have increased appreciably and, in addition, the labour position has eased.

Red bricks are the most used material in our building industry. The rate of production of

these bricks is unsatisfactory and to suggest that there has been an increase is misleading. The figures I have secured from a reliable source reveal that in 1950-51 red brick production was 45,000,000 bricks, but in 1926, when we did not have modern machinery, it was 83,000,000. We have previously heard Ministers state that during their term of office they had done much to improve the position by increasing the number of machines, but their arguments fall flat when we realize that we are only producing 50 per cent of our 1926 production. To suggest that we have had a sufficient increase in production to permit an increase in the size of buildings is just eyewash.

By introducing this Bill the Government acknowledges that it has failed to use effectively the provisions of the present legislation. I view it with disappointment but do not oppose it.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—Clause 3 (1) (*b*) of the Bill hardly meets the requirements of what is permissible under the Act, and proposes to reduce the area now permitted under the normal permit system. It states that "area" means the total of—

> The superficies calculated in accordance with paragraph (*a*) hereof of every verandah, balcony, porch, and similar structure attached to the building or structure.

I shall have more to say about this clause in Committee.

Clause 4 should also be amended, because there is no provision in it for the control of speculation builders. So long as a person has an interest in an area of land and desires to erect a building upon it, if he can prove ownership of the land he may, without a permit, erect a building not exceeding 18 squares. I realize that he may use such a house for his own occupation but the Bill does not deprive him of the right of acquiring another section of land for the purpose of building, and he may own another house already. He can build a house, dispose of it and make a huge profit.

Mr. Macgillivray—What is your real objection to private enterprise building homes? Do you suggest it cannot build as cheaply as the Housing Trust?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The Building Materials Act is designed mainly to provide homes for the people, but we are now only producing 45,000,000 red bricks per annum and they are the only reasonable material to use in a home. I do not criticize people for trying to obtain a home through a contractor, nor do I wish to deprive the contractor of his rights as a businessman, but it would be better if we had some safeguard to prevent speculation building. I moved an amendment last year to prevent people building homes and disposing of them at an unreasonable price.

Mr. Macgillivray—Why not let them sell at a reasonable profit?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I will give an instance illustrating my contention. One person obtained a permit and erected a house. Before disposing of it he purchased another block of land and erected a house not exceeding 12½ squares. Say the first house cost £2,100 to build; he sold it for over £4,000. That was an unreasonable profit. I do not think there was that value of labour in it. That is why I am opposed to speculation builders. I see no limitation in the Bill upon a person erecting a home not exceeding 18 squares on a piece of land in which he has an interest. There is nothing to prevent a man who has erected a house and purchased another block from disposing of the structure and building another. As there is nothing in the legislation to compel a man to live in a home, it is speculative building. The Bill is an entire contradiction of what the Government has advocated in its policy of building homes for the people. It will not give to those people now registered at the Housing Trust the right to acquire a home in the near future. Very few of these people could find sufficient money to build a home of 18 squares.

Mr. Whittle—They could build a smaller home.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Yes, but they would have to compete for materials against those who could afford to build a home of 18 squares. They would not be in the race to obtain supplies.

Mr. Whittle—A home of 18 squares might be wanted for a man and wife with six children, but one of 10 squares might meet the needs of a man and his wife.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Even under the present Act a man with a wife and six children could obtain a permit to erect a home of 15 squares, but I doubt whether he would be in a position to finance a house of 18 squares. It would appear that Government supporters have forgotten the hardships which exist among those needing homes. This week I had brought under my notice the case of a man and wife with one child. The police officer at Edwardstown has a warrant to evict them, but the Housing Trust has no other accommodation to

offer them. Yet, members opposite tell me that such a person, with the removal of building restrictions, can erect a home of 18 squares. Because of the administration in this State, and also in the Commonwealth Parliament by a Government of the same colour, people generally are not in a position to finance the building of homes. During the last four months the State Bank has not made one loan available to persons desiring to purchase homes already erected and available for sale. Whereas the Savings Bank was advancing money to home builders up until May at the rate of 3¾ per cent, the rate is now 4⅛ per cent, and as from either September 1 or October 1 it will be further advanced to 4½ per cent. The Housing Trust, which is recognized by the Government as its authority for building homes, is offering five-roomed dwellings of solid construction at £2,850.

Mr. Macgillivray—We should give private enterprise a chance.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Let us see what the Government has done towards providing accommodation. It is not a Socialist Government, however it might desire to practise a form of Socialism. It does not measure up to the Australian Labor Party's socialistic ideas. Private enterprise is largely responsible for this Bill, and like the Government, it has forgotten the need for homes for the ordinary people. The Government has lost sight of the fact that there are still thousands of families which have no hope of being housed by the authority set up by the Government, namely, the Housing Trust. The passing of this Bill will worsen their position because fewer houses will be erected. The trust will go on the market for money to enable it to undertake its operations, but because of the increased interest that will be demanded for money borrowed it will have to increase its charges to the people, and this in turn will reduce the number who will be in a position to purchase its homes. I am still waiting to hear whether the Government intends to let some of the homes which have been imported and are being erected for sale. They have not the same value as the solid type buildings erected by the trust. There are people, at present paying high tariffs in a migrants hostel, who will want houses, but this legislation will not help them. In addition, there are the many people who are still awaiting a Housing Trust home. It is said that the demand for labour is falling off, but if this Bill is passed the position will become worse. The only good point in the measure is that an owner will be able to sell his house and build a larger one of about 1800 square feet. The Bill will help the speculative builder.

I am not satisfied with clause 6, which prohibits the demolition of a dwellinghouse. If anything is intended by subclause (1) (*b*) the partly demolished house should be reconstructed and made habitable. Clause 8, which refers to the notice to cease unlawful construction of a building or structure, and clause 9, which deals with the issue of permits, require more explanation. Last session the Government said it desired all the building materials available to be used for the construction of houses for people badly in need of accommodation. The housing position has not altered to any degree, yet the Bill proposes to lift some of the controls on building materials. I have been told by Housing Trust officials that the housing position is getting more difficult each day. I am perturbed at the small quantity of solid materials to be made available for the building of houses. Cement blocks and bricks cannot meet the position in the same way as red bricks, for which there is no substitute economically. The demand for finance to purchase Housing Trust homes has increased considerably, and I am perturbed at what might happen as a result. The Bill will not assist the ordinary housebuilder. I support the second reading, and shall have further comments to make in Committee.

Mr. LAWN secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 9.11 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, August 20, at 2 p.m.