HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, August 21, 1952.

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

QUESTIONS.

RADIUM HILL MEDICAL SERVICES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—A few weeks ago I asked the Premier a question relating to the provision of hospital and medical services for Radium Hill, and he indicated that consideration was being given to the provision of an aerial ambulance and hospital services at Port Augusta. I conveyed that information to the people on the field, and I have received advice from the local branch of the Australian Labor Party that Radium Hill could be better served by an arrangement with the existing Flying Doctor Service at Broken Hill and the use of the Broken Hill Hospital or, as an alternative, perhaps some arrangement could be made to use the existing hospital facilities at Peterborough. Can the Premier say whether, before any final decision is reached, a conference will be held with these and other responsible people at the field to ascertain the wishes of the majority of residents there?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Broken Hill Flying Doctor Service is already very heavily taxed, and the necessity for the provision of an additional centre in the northern part of this State arises from that fact. Every effort will be made to see that a proper service is provided at Radium Hill, and, as the district develops, so the hospital services will be automatically developed. Broken Hill is in another State and we have no right to send patients there, for it is outside the jurisdiction of this Government, nor am I sure that adequate facilities are available there for them. However, the general statement I made earlier still stands: steps will be taken to see that all health matters at Radium Hill are adequately dealt with.

PRICE OF CORNSACKS.

Mr. HEASLIP—For some weeks there has been much speculation throughout country areas amongst primary producers regarding the cost of cornsacks for the coming season. It is well known that the Wheat Board has on hand large quantities of cornsacks which were bought on a high market and that cornsacks arriving in Australia today cost only about half the cost of those on hand. Can the Premier inform members regarding the price of cornsacks for the coming season?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The prices charged for cornsacks is a matter completely in the hands of the Australian Wheat Board, the authority appointed by the Commonwealth Government. It is true that the Australian Wheat Board purchased a very large number of sacks—I believe sufficient for the whole of next year's Australian wheat harvest—at the phenomenally high price of about 70s. a dozen at the peak of the market. The South Australian Government has decided to decontrol the price of cornsacks. The position has been unsatisfactory for quite a time and, instead of the averaging system being maintained by the Wheat Board with regard to this year's sales, we understand the practice is to be on the basis of "first in, first out," which will ultimately lead to a phenomenally heavy fall in the price of the sacks at the expense of some producers. We believe the price should be averaged out as the new sacks come in so as to prevent one section of producers suffering as a result of the very heavy fall which must arise, as I understand the present overseas price of sacks is about 35s. a dozen.

Mr. HEASLIP—It seems that the Wheat Board must either make great losses on cornsacks or charge a price which will be exorbitant in relation to present-day prices. Is the Premier prepared to take up with the Federal Government the easing of the restrictions on import licences, which are now confined solely to the Wheat Board, so as to enable other firms to import both wool packs and cornsacks?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If any person is interested in importing sacks and asks me to forward his application I shall have great pleasure in doing so. I doubt very much whether under present circumstances an application would be granted because there are already in Australia sufficient cornsacks to completely provide for next year's harvest, and as the Commonwealth Government is actually the owner of the sacks and has advanced money on them I have great doubts whether it would permit a competitor to come in on the fall of the market.

TOURIST SERVICES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Last Tuesday I asked the Premier a question dealing with Bonds Tours services and said that I understood this company's work had been taken over by the Tourist Bureau, not only without compensation, but without any explanation of

why the contract had been terminated. The Premier replied, "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." I interjected, "Could the unsatisfactory factors be made known to the company concerned?" I understood the Premier to say that he would get further information. Is it now available?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No, but I will see that the honourable member gets it in due course.

RAILWAY MAINTENANCE WORK AT COUNTRY DEPOTS.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Speaking on the debate on decentralization last week I suggested that additional railway maintenance work might be done in country railway depots to assist in decentralizing population. I understand the Minister of Railways has some information from the Railways Commissioner on what is proposed to be done in this regard at Peterborough. Can he now convey it to the House?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I think I can go further and say, in the words of the Commissioner, not only what is proposed to be done, but what has been done. The Railways Commissioner has told me that over a number of years several country depots, including Peterborough, have been carrying out maintenance work on locomotives and rolling stock. At Peterborough, which is principally concerned, the maximum amount of maintenance work that can be undertaken with the available staff is now in hand. The department cannot undertake construction work as this would mean the duplication of machines, staff and equipment, and this could not be justified. However, a wheel turning lathe will shortly be installed at Peterborough, and on completion of the construction of a number of houses, additional staff will be transferred to Peterborough with additional tool equipment. It can be seen that it has been the policy of the department over a long period to do the very thing for which the honourable member is striving.

ELECTRIC LIGHT FOR TRURO RAILWAY STATION.

Mr. TEUSNER—Has the Minister of Railways a reply to the question I asked on August 7 about the extension of electricity to the Truro railway station and to employees' homes in that town?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Arrangements are being made with the Electricity Trust to extend services to the cottages, and that work will be done departmentally.

Mr. Teusner—Does that apply to the railway station?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—If that is not done departmentally I will ask why and bring down a reply.

HOUSING TRUST CONTRACTORS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Is it the usual practice for contractors engaged by the Housing Trust to abide by the ruling award rates and conditions for their employees?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I presume it would be. The Department of Industry polices awards and makes inquiries if any complaints are made that employees are not getting the award rates. The officers would see that proper time books were kept and the appropriate rates paid. At the request of the Chief Inspector of Factories I lodged complaints in respect of two employers in another industry where awards were not being observed. As I do not know who the contractors are in the present case I can only give a general answer.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Will the Premier ascertain from the Housing Trust whether it is correct that Orlit (S.A.) Ltd., under its contracts with the Housing Trust, has engaged labour in all trades under piecework conditions and, apart from the men working the normal 40 hour week, the firm is commercializing on their services on Saturdays and Sundays, thus not observing what is the normal working week and also the normal award rates and conditions? Will the Premier see if it is practicable to ensure that the company shall revert to the procedure it adopted when it first received the contract?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It is not the Housing Trusts's duty to police awards, but to call for tenders and accept those that are satisfactory and see that the work is carried out properly. If there is any doubt whether an award is being properly observed, the proper authority to investigate it is the Chief Inspector of Factories, who is the officer in my department controlling this particular activity. If the honourable member believes that any company—and he has mentioned one— is not carrying out an award, I will have an investigation made to see whether there is anything in the award that prohibits piecework and whether the award is being properly carried out.

Mr. Frank Walsh—I am looking for the highest standard of workmanship.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Housing Trust officials examine the standard of workmanship in the construction of a building, and no doubt a satisfactory standard of work is being maintained. The question is whether there is an infringement of the award, and that is a matter which can be determined simply by reporting it to the Chief Inspector of Factories.

BUTTER FREIGHT RATES TO RIVER AREAS.

Mr. STOTT—Has the Minister of Railways a reply to the question I asked recently about railway freight rates on butter to the River Murray areas?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Railways Commissioner reports:—

With reference to the extract from *Hansard* of August 13 regarding a statement by Mr. Stott that in the Murray areas of Waikerie and Loxton and nearby parts freight is paid to the Railways at the rate of 7s. 2d. a box on butter bought at Murray Bridge, whereas if it is freighted at Mile End the freight is only 3s. 1d. per box, less than half the other charge, and the Honourable Minister's request for a report on such statement, I have to advise the Honourable Minister that the comparison made by Mr. Stott is based on two different services. When butter is forwarded from Mile End it is forwarded by freight train, and in most cases to country storekeepers who have a contract with the Railways Commissioner to place all their business by rail, the rate being 3s. per box to Waikerie, whereas a similar box of butter forwarded by freight train from Murray Bridge to Waikerie would be 5s. per box, the contract rate being applicable only between the metropolitan area and the storekeeper in the country town concerned. The charge of 7s. 2d. referred to by Mr. Stott represents the parcels rate on a box of butter from Murray Bridge to Waikerie forwarded by passenger train.

That is altogether a different aspect. The Railways Commissioner continues:—

The passenger train rate would be reduced to 5s. 9d. if the charges are prepaid in accordance with our regulations. When inquiries were being made in connection with this complaint, it was ascertained from one factory at Murray Bridge that the butter was being forwarded on the request of the customer at Waikerie on a "to pay" basis. Previously this customer has been forwarded butter at a prepaid rate of 5s. 9d., but the change was made at his own request.

Some of the butter is sent by freight train and some by passenger train. Again, some people have a contract at a preferential rate on the undertaking that they will give all their business to the railways. This arrangement has been in operation over a long period,

and if there is any further information the honourable member wants I will get if for him.

CHURCHILL ROAD, PROSPECT.

Mr. WHITTLE—Churchill Road, Prospect, has become of increasing importance because of the large industries established nearby in recent years, and because of the greatly increased employment at Islington Railway Workshops. Apart from the traffic to these works, big numbers of workers travel on this road to and from work on their bicycles. For a number of years the Highways Department has promised the council that it would regrade and reconstruct the road, but could not undertake the work owing to the scarcity of cement, large quantities of which would be required for drainage. As there is likely to be a big increase in cement manufacture early in the new year, will the Minister of Local Government take up the matter with the Highways Department and see what priority can be given to this very important and at present dangerous road, particularly that section between Rose Street and Islington Road? How long can the council expect to be kept waiting for this important work to be undertaken?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The honourable member was good enough to indicate that he intended to ask this question, and I have obtained the following report from the Highways Commissioner:—

The length of Churchill Road (portion of the Adelaide-Dry Creek main road No. 61) within the city of Prospect is one mile seventy chains. Of this length 20 chains adjacent to the Islington Workshops was widened to an average width of 34ft. with a bituminous hot-mix surface in 1946, and, in conjunction with a length of approximately 1½ miles in the adjoining municipality of Enfield, has been since maintained by this department. The length between the Torrens Main Road and the Irish Harp Road has a bituminized surface and is in reasonably good trafficable condition. The reconstruction of this length cannot be undertaken until improvements to the stormwater drainage have been completed, and this cannot be commenced until cement is more readily available and more urgent works elsewhere have received attention.

The honourable member said that cement would soon be more readily available, but that is only relative. There are still many urgent works requiring cement, including housing, and I am afraid that at this stage the Highways Commissioner, who has a knowledge of the various urgent road works throughout the State, would not be prepared to say what priority should be given to this particular

road. I will forward this further question to the Commissioner and give the honourable member the latest information available when it comes to hand.

FLINDERS STREET SCHOOL LIGHTING.

Mr. LAWN—I understand that the Flinders Street School is a practising school in conjunction with the Teachers College. The school committee made a request in writing to the Minister of Education to have the lighting brought up to date by the provision of a standard system, and also to have additional power points installed to enable strip film projectors to be used. The application was made to the Minister on July 4, 1945, was acknowledged by him on July 11, 1949, and referred to the Architect-in-Chief on April 2, 1950. An illumination engineer made an investigation and reported favourably on the application. I understand that the Director of Education now claims that there are very few dull days in Adelaide and that the request is not justified. I am also informed that the Director has been invited to visit the school on a dull day, but he has persistently refused. If what I have said is correct, can the Minister representing the Minister of Education say why the department takes so long to handle such a simple matter? Does it propose to rectify the position?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will obtain a report from my colleague. The honourable member asks why the department takes so long to handle such a simple matter. The multiplicity of work waiting to be done makes it not a simple matter, but a compound one, because the works involved run into many hundreds of thousands of pounds, which Parliament has not yet entrusted the Government to raise. I do not know why this work has missed its order listed. That will be for the department to indicate.

WHEAT TRANS-SHIPMENT.

Mr. HEASLIP—Has the Minister of Agriculture any further information to give following on the question I asked on August 14 regarding trans-shipping wheat at Gladstone from the narrow to the broad gauge?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I have obtained the following information from the State Superintendent of the Australian Wheat Board:—

(1) The production of wheat in the Adelaide division is insufficient for requirements of metropolitan flour mills and produce trade. The Adelaide division comprises the area beyond Tailem Bend and near northern towns.

(2) This deficiency is made good from supplies drawn principally from the Wallaroo and Pirie districts.

(3) Due to past experience in transport difficulties it is deemed advisable to move wheat longer distances early in the season and retain supplies closer at hand.

(4) Excess freight costs are recovered from the consumers.

FRUIT FLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, by message, recommended to the House the appropriation of such amounts of the general revenue of the State as were required for the purposes indicated in the Fruit Fly Act Amendment Bill, 1952.

PARLIAMENTARY ADJOURNMENT.

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

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, September 16, at 2 o'clock.

Motion carried.

LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONTROL OF RENTS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD, having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act, 1942-1951. Read a first time.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time. Its principal purpose is to extend for another year the operation of the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act, 1942-1951. It will be recalled that, during last session, some important and, in instances, far-reaching changes were made to this Act as a result of the recommendations of the committee which, under the chairmanship of Mr. W. C. Gillespie, S.M., inquired into the operation of the legislation. These recommendations, and the consequent amendments of the law, dealt with all the phases of the legislation. The law relating to evictions was altered somewhat in favour of lessors, provision was made for a raising of general rental standards as applied to the control of rents, and many other matters were dealt with.

The result of altering the basis for the fixation of rents, of course, brought about a flow of applications to the South Australian Housing Trust for fixations of rent and during the period from January 1, 1952, to July 31, 1952, about 9,500 applications were made, of which almost all were made by

lessors. In the earlier months of the year, the trust was inundated with these applications and, as was expected, could not deal with them as fast as they were received. However, the trust dealt with this flow of applications with expedition, and up to July 31 had made provisional fixations of rents in about 8,800 cases, and is now dealing with applications at a rate which is faster than the rate at which applications are being received. As was also expected, the effect of the 1951 Act was to bring about some increase in rents. Final fixations of rent have been made in the case of 6,147 dwellinghouses and the net result of rent fixations in these cases has been to increase the average rent by 6s. Since the Act came into force to January 1, 1943, the trust has finally determined the rents in 34,785 cases.

The Government is of opinion that, at the present time, there is no reason to alter the main provisions of the Act, that the rental standards provided for by the 1951 Act should be left unchanged, and that no alterations in policy should be made in the provisions of the Act dealing with such matters as evictions, protected persons and the other basic provisions of the Act. Consequently the Bill, in addition to extending the duration of the Act for a further 12 months, does not do any more than make a number of minor alterations to the law which are considered to be necessary. It is not proposed by this Bill to make any alteration to the general policy of the existing Act. The following is an explanation of its clauses.

Clause 2 is of some interest. It will be remembered that under section 46 of the amending Act of 1951 it was provided that, if the Act and its various amendments were reprinted under the Amendments Incorporation Act, the sections and other provisions of the Act could then be renumbered. This has been done and a reprint of the Act has been made and is included at the back of the 1951 annual volume of statutes. The numbering of the sections has been altered so that, for example, what was previously section 26am is now section 72. Clause 2 is necessary to provide that where any clause refers to a section of the principal Act, it is to be construed as a reference to the re-numbered section as embodied in the reprinted Act.

Clause 3 makes an amendment to the definition of "dwellinghouse" in section 4 of the Act. Section 4 defines a dwellinghouse as any premises leased for the purpose of a residence and goes on to provide that it includes parts of premises, and premises where a substantial part is used for residence and the remainder is used for various business purposes. In a recent case in the High Court on the Construction of a similar Act of another State, it was held that the effect of a somewhat similar definition was to provide that any premises, any part of which is leased for residence, is a dwellinghouse. This is obviously contrary to the intended policy of the definition and the effect of clause 3 is therefore to provide that a dwellinghouse is to be premises the whole or a substantial part of which is let for residence.

Section 17 of the Act provides that where the Housing Trust makes a provisional fixation of rent either party to the lease can object to that fixation. If one party objects, he is required to supply a copy of the objection to the other party, who can reply to that objection. Section 18 provides that, before the rent is finally fixed by the trust, the trust is to consider any objection made to it. The section, however, does not require the trust to consider any reply made to the objection and clause 4 remedies this omission.

Part IV. of the Act deals with the control of the rents of caravans and, under this Part, the Housing Trust is given power to fix schedules of maximum rents for caravans and rents for the use of land on which caravans are placed and for various amenities such as sanitary, laundry and other facilities. The trust has fixed scales of rents for the metropolitan area. Section 36 provides that where a person receives an amount as rent of a caravan or the rent of land associated with the letting of a caravan, he is to give a receipt. Some persons who let caravans, which are placed upon their land, have found a loophole in the Act and are making a practice of giving a receipt for a sum which is stated to be for hire of the caravan and the rent of the land, without specifying the amount attributable to each purpose. So far as the person hiring the caravan is concerned, he is informed of the total amount payable and is not given any details of how it is arrived at. It has been apparent that in instances the total rent so paid is in excess of that fixed by the trust as the maximum rents for these various items, but in the absence of specific amounts being stated on the receipts the trust has been advised that there is no evidence upon which a prosecution can rely. Clause 5 therefore provides that, in circumstances such as these, the receipt is to state separately the amount of rent attributable to the hire of

the caravan and the amount attributable to the other purposes. If the receipt does not give this break-up of the amount then, in the absence of proof to the contrary, the amount shown in the receipt is to be deemed to be rent paid for the caravan.

The various ground upon which notices to quit may be given are set out in section 42. As originally enacted the various provisions of this section provided that a notice to quit could be given for the recovery of the possession of premises where they were reasonably required for the occupation of the lessor or reasonably required for other purposes. By amendments in 1949 and 1951 the word "required" was struck out and the word "needed" substituted. However, in one provision, namely, paragraph (*r*) of subsection (6) the word "required" still remains although, to be consistent with the other paragraphs of the section, this should be altered to "needed." Clause 6 makes this alteration and, in addition, inserts the word "reasonably" before "needed" in conformity with the other paragraphs of the subsection. Clause 7 is another drafting alteration. Paragraph (*c*) of subsection (1) of section 49 provides that, when proceedings are instituted in a court for recovery of possession of premises upon one or other of the grounds set out in the paragraph the court is to take into account whether reasonably suitable alternative accommodation has been available to either of the parties. Among the grounds dealt with in this paragraph is that set out in paragraph (*k*) of subsection (6) of section 42 which provides that notice to quit may be given where premises have been occupied by a person in consequence of his employment and he has left that employment. Subsection (5) of section 49 provides that where proceedings are taken on the ground mentioned in paragraph (*k*) the court is not to take into account any of the matters set out in subsection (1) of section 49. It follows, therefore, that the reference to paragraph (*k*) in paragraph (*c*) of subsection (1) of section 49 is inconsistent with subsection (5) of that section and should be deleted. This is done by clause 7. Section 60 of the Act provides that, where a person gives notice to quit on a ground such as that he needs the premises for his own occupation and the court orders possession to be given to him, he commits an offence if he sells or leases it without the consent of the court within a period of 12 months. In 1951 the penalty for this offence was increased from £50 to £500. From time to time offences under this section are reported to the Housing Trust but the experience of the trust is that these reports are not received until after six months after the offence has been committed and therefore it is not possible to prosecute. The increase of the penalty in 1951 clearly indicates that this offence is considered a serious one and clause 8 therefore provides that complaints for offences under this section may be made within 12 months of the commission of the offence instead of the usual six months laid down by the Justices Act.

Section 68 provides that the Housing Trust may, on the application of the owner of any premises, issue an exclusion certificate to cover the letting of the whole or part of those premises. The effect of such a certificate is to exclude the particular premises from the operation of the provisions of the Act relating to the control of evictions. At the present time, there is no power for a lessee, who desires to sublet under circumstances which justify the issue of an exclusion certificate, to make an application under the section and clause 9 provides that such a lessee may apply for an exclusion certificate but he can only do so with the consent in writing of the owner.

Part VI. of the Act deals with protected persons and section 72 contains definitions which set out what is a protected person. To be a protected person a person must, among other things, have been engaged on war service during any war in which His Majesty became engaged on or after September 3, 1939, but before the passing of the amending Act of 1951. As the definition of war service stands, there is considerable doubt as to whether this includes service in Malaya and some little doubt as to whether it includes service in Korea. Clause 10 therefore provides that the operations in these two theatres are to be deemed to be wars in which Her Majesty has become engaged. Clause 11 makes a drafting amendment to section 75. This section provides, in general, that a dwellinghouse is deemed to be unoccupied although a person has entered into occupation contrary to subsection (4) of section 74. Subsection (4) was repealed as the result of a recommendation of the Committee of Inquiry but the consequential amendments which should have been made to section 75 were not made. This is done by clause 11.

Clause 12 deals with arrangements to evade the Act which are becoming more or less common. The Act, both as regards rent control and the control of evictions, applies to premises which are leased, and instances are now

occurring where the owners of premises are permitting others to occupy the premises or parts of them, under documents which are described as licences and the point is taken that the premises are not leased. These so-called licences provide, in effect, that the licensee is given the right to occupy the premises and is required to pay a fee of so much per week or other period. Obviously, these are brought into existence to defeat the intent of the Act and it is proposed by clause 12 that where any such licence, arrangement, or agreement provides that a person, in consideration of payments made to another person, is entitled or authorized to occupy any premises, that arrangement is to be deemed to be a lease for the purpose of the Act whilst the parties will be deemed to be the lessor and lessee of the premises, and the payments to be rent. The test under this provision will be the right to occupy and if a person is given that right he will be deemed to be a tenant. Clause 13 extends the operation of the Act for another year until December 31, 1953.

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

BUILDING OPERATIONS BILL.

In Committee.

(Continued from August 20. Page 495.)

Clause 5 passed.

Clause 6—"Prohibition of demolition of dwellinghouse."

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I am concerned about sub-clause (1) (*b*). If a landlord alters any dwellinghouse so as to make it uninhabitable he should be compelled to reconstruct it.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Local boards of health do not condemn premises which are capable of being patched up satisfactorily, but take into account the grave housing shortage, so the honourable member need have no fear that the boards will run wild under this provision, which is necessary because we cannot have this legislation in conflict with another Act. Under the Health Act local boards have power to order the demolition of a substandard house and the owner is liable to prosecution if he does not comply with the order. We cannot have a provision in the building operations legislation making an owner liable to prosecution if he complies with such an order from a board. In short, we cannot have it both ways.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I accept the explanation, because I have never queried the judgment of local boards of health, but my point is that the owner should be forced to make the dwelling habitable instead of merely being liable to a fine if he does not.

Mr. FLETCHER—What steps have been taken by health officers concerning condemned houses? For the last 10 years the health inspector at Mount Gambier has been trying to keep people out of three houses in one street which are a menace to health. No sooner does one tenant go out than another comes in. Perhaps they are there for only a short period, and are not eligible for trust homes. The time is long overdue when these damnable hovels should be demolished and the tenants provided with trust homes, but applicants have no hope of getting such a home until their applications have been in for a year or two.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Each month I see the schedule on which the trust allocates its houses. A number of factors are considered, one of the most important being the present housing accommodation of the applicant. Other points taken into account are the duration of the application, size of the family, whether the applicant is a returned soldier, and whether he would be a desirable tenant. I can assure members that the trust tries to alleviate the most difficult cases first. As regards sub-standard houses in the country, there is no divergence of views as between the Director of Building Materials and local boards of health. When a board makes a recommendation the director gives it full consideration. Under this provision boards of health have power to make orders if they believe the circumstances justify it, without the consent of any authority. Existing penalties have proved adequate, there having been no evasions by people who would be prepared to pay a fine.

Mr. SHANNON—It has come to my knowledge that where a notice has been served on the owner of a sub-standard home to make it hygienic time has been allowed for this to be done. Often these places are unfit for habitation because of damp walls and faulty roofs. To put some of them in order the owner would be faced with such a bill of costs that he would have no hope of ever recouping the expense from rent. From a purely business point of view he would do better to demolish the structure than attempt reconstruction, and then build a new home. This would be the proper approach to the problem and would

result in getting rid of many eye-sores. Obviously, the owner would not build such a house for his own use. I want the Premier to understand that my proposal involves giving the owner the opportunity to build a home to let. I believe that in certain factory areas within the City of Adelaide sub-standard houses still exist, and it would appear that they should be demolished to enable the factories to be extended, and then the people could be removed to better surroundings. That should be encouraged rather than discouraged. I am afraid that the administration of this clause may prevent some desirable improvements in housing conditions.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The type of home mentioned by the honourable member has been considered by the Director of Building Materials and I can assure him that such cases always receive favourable consideration. This applies when a person owning a sub-standard house is prepared to demolish it and provide other accommodation in its place. The clause is necessary because industrial buildings are being erected in housing centres. Some firms are prepared to buy eight or ten houses adjacent to their factories, and without such a provision they would evict the tenants without considering whether they had alternative accommodation. Before a house is allowed to be demolished consideration is given to whether, with reasonable expenditure, it could be put into reasonable condition. The houses are first inspected by an officer of the Building Materials Office, and, if necessary, the Director himself makes an inspection. It is laid down that before a person can be evicted from such a house other suitable accommodation must be provided. Under present administration there is a difficulty, because under one Act an order can be given for the demolition of a building, but it cannot be lawfully carried out under this legislation. The clause corrects the position, so that either authority may approve demolition.

Mr. TAPPING—Yesterday I said that a number of houses at Semaphore had been condemned for years, but that the council had not inflicted hardship on the occupiers. Under the clause those houses might be demolished forthwith. I think too much discretion is given, and I would be happy if it were provided that after the condemnation order has been given the Minister must approve the demolition.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If a local board of health orders the demolition of a house and the owner does not comply he commits an offence, but at present he cannot demolish the house unless approval has been given under this legislation. At present if a local board of health condemns a house it does not follow that it will be demolished.

Clause passed.

Clause 7—"Control of the use of certain building materials."

Mr. FRANK WALSH—A person may have a permit to use certain building materials, including red bricks. Under this clause will the restrictions still apply, or will he be able to get the building materials freely?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—When this Bill is passed previous legislation dealing with this matter will not operate. Under the clause a person will be able to buy bricks without having a priority order. There will be freedom to buy and sell bricks. The manufacturer will be able to sell bricks to anybody: there will be no restrictions. If we had to wait for all priority orders issued previously to be given effect to, particularly in regard to galvanized iron, it would be perhaps three or four years before the clause could operate. Under it all building materials mentioned will be free of control. Restrictions dealing with building materials under previous legislation will disappear unless this Bill provides further restrictions.

Clause passed.

Clause 8 passed.

Clause 9—"Issue of permits."

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Some people may have had a permit since January 1, 1949, to build a house not exceeding a certain cost. Under this clause, unless an increase is approved by the Prices Commissioner, will they have to abide by that permit? Why is there a need to go back to January 1, 1949? Can the Treasurer indicate whether there are many buildings to which the embargo will apply?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not think the clause will apply to many buildings. A permit may have been issued for the overall cost not to exceed £2,300. When the contract was let there would be references to rises and falls in costs, and during the intervening period the rises may have brought the cost of the house to more than £2,300. The clause safeguards the position of a person who entered into a contract. No increase in the cost can be made unless approved by the Prices Commissioner. The provision is an advantage to the person having a house built.

Clause passed.

Clauses 10 to 21 (inclusive) passed.

Clause 22—"Powers of Treasurer to provide temporary housing accommodation."

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I understand that the temporary housing programme authorized two years ago is nearing completion, and, although there may be good reasons for the retention of this provision in the legislation, it would be wise for the Treasurer to state those reasons so that members may determine whether the clause should remain.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The temporary housing programme under this legislation first operated in connection with military camps which this Government took over from the Commonwealth for conversion to housing accommodation. Since then, to meet the urgent needs of people living in deplorable conditions in sandhills, cellars, and other such places, a number of temporary houses have been built. The approved programme is almost completed, but there are still some outstanding amounts to to be paid and, I think, some contracts to be finalized. It is not proposed at this juncture to begin another emergency housing project, and I hope that conditions will not deteriorate so much as to make that necessary, but this clause is necessary for the completion of the programme already approved.

Clause passed.

Clauses 23 to 25 passed.

Clause 4—"Regulation of building operations"—reconsidered.

Mr. QUIRKE—I move to insert after subparagraph I. of subclause (2) the following paragraph:—

1A. The construction of any dwellinghouse (other than a dwellinghouse such as is referred to in paragraph 1 of this subsection) when—

(*a*) the total area of the dwelling (including all outbuildings appurtenant to the dwellinghouse) does not exceed or, if completed, will not exceed 18 squares; **and**

(*b*) no materials of any of the kinds mentioned in subsection (1) of section 7 are used in the construction of the dwellinghouse or any outbuilding appurtenant thereto.

The purpose of this amendment is to allow anyone to build houses with materials other than the scarce materials enumerated in the Bill. Such houses would then be available for sale, and I am convinced that this would mean, particularly in country areas, the erection of a considerably greater number of houses, as today there are contractors who are willing to undertake this work.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—As I indicated last evening, I do not object to this amendment.

New paragraph inserted.

Mr. QUIRKE—I move to insert after "paragraph I." in paragraph II. of subclause (2) the words "or IA," which is an amendment consequential on that already agreed to.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Title passed.

Bill reported with amendments and Committee's report adopted. Bill read a third time and passed.

FRUIT FLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS (Minister of Agriculture)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is for the same purpose as the previous Bills dealing with the campaign for the destruction of fruit fly. In January of this year, after investigating reports received by the Department of Agriculture, the Government deemed it advisable to make a regulation preventing the removal of fruit from certain areas in Adelaide and the southern and eastern suburbs. In April a further regulation was made prohibiting the growing of certain plants in the same area. In accordance with the policy previously approved by Parliament it is proposed that persons who suffer loss as a result of these regulations or action taken under them will be entitled to compensation. The Bill provides for this and will also apply to any further regulations prohibiting the growing of plants which may be made during the current calendar year. As this measure involves considerable expenditure I have obtained the following report from the Chief Horticulturist, Mr. Strickland, whom I commend for his work in the eradication of this pest:—

From the late summer of 1950 no evidence of fruit fly was found in Adelaide suburbs or elsewhere in the State until January 27, 1952, when a restricted establishment of the pest was discovered in Hutt Street, City. The measures employed in previous outbreaks, *i.e.*, fruit removal, bait spraying, and DDT spraying were implemented immediately. Simultaneously a close check was radiated from the garden in which the pest was found. This check showed no sign of fruit fly infestation other than in several adjoining gardens in the vicinity of the Hutt Street report, and indicated that the occurrence was very much more restricted than those of 1950 and earlier years.

The outbreak stimulated public interest and co-operation to the extent that, subsequently, 531 householder reports of suspected fruit fly were received from throughout the city and all suburban areas. A reference map shows how completely the metropolitan area was covered by these volunteer reports. Every report was investigated, and all proved negative.

For the information of members I have brought down a map of the metropolitan area which shows clearly where each report came from. The allotments are shown on the map by red dots. There were 531 reports from the metropolitan area and the hills district around Blackwood. This indicates the tremendous amount of work done by the Horticultural Branch of the department in keeping down this pest. In not one case did an investigation show that fruit fly was present. The department's officers and I are very pleased that people are alive to the necessity of reporting their suspicions of outbreaks, and that is why I have brought down this report, to show that householders are conscious of the need for giving the fullest information to the department. The report continues:—

In addition to the implementation of eradication measures in respect of the Hutt Street outbreak, and the checking of volunteer fruit fly reports, inspections and trapping measures have been continued in all areas where the pest occurred in 1947, 1948, 1949, and 1950. These latter measures have indicated continued freedom of the previously infested areas. This is evidence of the effectiveness of the actions taken in preventing fruit fly gaining the suburban establishment which would be followed inevitably by infestation of our main fruit-growing districts. The costs of the campaign in each year since 1947 and the total cost to date are tabulated as follows:—

Year of Outbreak.	Eradication Costs (Excluding Payroll Tax).	Compensation Costs.
	£	£
1947	91,698	18,288
1948	65,850	17,621
1949	76,047	50,167
1950	125,322	50,520
1952	47,879	—
	£406,796	£136,596

Compensation costs have not yet been computed for this year; this Bill is for the purpose of enabling the Government to pay it. The total over-all cost since 1947 is £543,392. Those figures indicate the tremendous amount of work that has been done by the department in eradicating this pest, and it is pleasing to know that its efforts have been successful. When I visit other States and see what has happened from fruit fly infestation, particularly in Western Australia, Queensland, and New South Wales, I think the fruitgrowers of this State should realize what the Government has saved them from. This is the only State that can embark upon methods for complete eradication. Our officers have been asked by departments in other States for information to help them deal with the pest. I am sure the House will view the measure sympathetically.

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

LAND SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 19. Page 441.)

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley)—I appreciate the value of the Land Settlement Committee. As one of its original members I know that a great amount of work done in its early days was most valuable, and I know that it has continued its good work. I regret that the committee has not been given all the work it could have done. I listened with great interest to the Premier when he was replying to the motion of the Leader of the Opposition on decentralization. He referred to the action taken under the Land Settlement Act for the acquisition of land. Little, if any, land has been compulsorily acquired under that Act. In the main, the land has been voluntarily ceded by the owners. Of course, sometimes it was necessary to point out to them that there was power of compulsory acquisition, but I compliment those from whom land has been obtained on the generous manner in which the majority accepted their responsibilities, realizing that they could not fully develop all of their holdings. Most of the land has been acquired in the South East; I know of none that has been acquired north of Adelaide. The Premier said that the only reason for taking land from an owner was that his administration was bad and he had failed to make good use of the land, which should be worked in the interests of all. Under those conditions, he said, the land should be acquired and the landholder fairly compensated. In the lower north are large areas which should be acquired by the Government. I know of 11,000 acres in a 24in. rainfall area which is not being worked to the best advantage. If it is of any interest to the Government I shall be pleased to give the name of the owner

because, in order to adhere to the Premier's statement, there is every reason for the Government to take action.

Mr. Brookman—Is the land producing anything at all?

Mr. QUIRKE—Yes, but most of the 11,000 acres has been cleared and is arable, yet it is not producing anything like it should.

Mr. Brookman—You realize that land never produces as much as it should theoretically?

Mr. QUIRKE—Yes. I have even been told of the production of a statistical cow, though I have not yet met such an animal. At one time the Hill River Estate in the 24in. rainfall area carried sheep, but it was certainly under-developed. It was cut up and now vast areas of it are under lucerne instead of growing tussocks of grass. The 11,000 acres to which I referred could be subdivided into 11 farms and would carry many times the number of sheep that there are today, and a greater effort could be made to subdue the hoary cress which has become established under sharefarming. If it were administered differently perhaps we could make the 11,000 acres into an ecomonic unit, but I believe that smaller areas, say, 500 acres in some parts, under good farmers, not under wheatgrowers, could be made to produce more than the 11,000 acres ever will under the present set-up. I do not believe in taking land from people unless it is not being used to the best advantage—and this area definitely is not.

We are producing perhaps a greater diversity of produce today than ever before in the State's history. This is being done because of an accident of fortune—the high price of wool—which enabled farmers to do many things they were striving to do and could not accomplish. It is all very well to say that we want more wheat and cannot pay for our imports without it, but I hope our soils will never again be massacred in the way they have been. Today there is just a thin veneer. A couple of dry years and one drought year could do immense damage. Much of our country is very heavily stocked and if the stock is not taken off when the dry period comes the good that has been done will be undone in a few years.

There is work for the Land Settlement Committee extending far beyond that to which members have been asked to give attention. It would make a most valuable contact between this House, the actual agricultural processes and the rural life of the State, acting in co-ordination with the Agricultural Department. Why should we not use the committee in that way? Why should it not be empowered to inquire into other phases of agricultural and rural production. There are many problems, and the committee has proved that it can give valuable reports to the House. It has done so on other matters and I have not the slightest doubt that if its activities were extended it could put valuable evidence before members.

I trust that the committee's next term will prove more fruitful than the past two years. It has not been used according to its ability. It is not the committee's fault; it is the fault of those who have to refer matters to it. I could mention a dozen matters affecting the rural life of South Australia, vital to this State, which could be referred to the committee for report. The evidence which would come from such reports would be extremely helpful to members. I support the Bill.

Mr. GOLDNEY (Gouger)—It has already been mentioned that only two of the original members of the committee are still on it—the chairman, the member for Light (Mr. Michael) and the member for Chaffey (Mr. Macgillivray). Members will recall that not long after the formation of the committee the Minister of Lands (Mr. Hincks) was a member, but on his promotion to Ministerial rank I was appointed to the vacancy. Next to the original members I have the longest service and my experience on the committee has been most pleasant and educational. One aspect of land settlement, although it does not concern the Land Settlement Committee, is that of the dual control of soldier settlement. It is a pity that the purchase of single unit farms in the early days of land settlement was not more vigorously pursued. Before a single unit farm could be purchased it had to be submitted to the Commonwealth for approval. Moreover, it could not be bought for any particular ex-servicemen, but had to be placed in a common pool from which the name of the applicant was selected. The committee has done a tremendous amount of work in the higher rainfall areas. The Mortlock estate on Eyre Peninsula was recommended for purchase several years ago. The committee made a hurried inspection of this estate, but soon realized it was most suitable for soldier settlement. It was one of the best purchases the Government has made and men who are settled there are doing extremely well.

I am particularly pleased at the development of certain areas on Kangaroo Island. Prior to becoming a committee member I had never visited Kangaroo Island, and my first

impression of the country was that it was of very poor quality. Several years prior to the inspection an area was cleared and members were able to see the wonderful progress that had been made in pasture development there. Today, after a lapse of several years, the progress of pasture development on the island is amazing. Anybody who visited Kangaroo Island four years ago and made another visit today would be both amazed and gratified at the great change. Kangaroo Island has an assured rainfall. Liberal dressings of superphosphate and the application of certain trace elements to virgin land has made it most valuable. I support the Bill for an extension of the committee's life.

Bill read a second time, and taken through committee. Committee's report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.17 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, September 16, at 2 p.m.