HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, September 17, 1952.

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

PUBLIC OFFICERS SALARIES BILL.

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 Public Officers Salaries Bill, 1952.

QUESTIONS.

COMMISSION ON GROUP INSURANCE POLICIES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Since the beginning of June accounting officers in Government departments have been directed to deduct a 5 per cent commission on all payments made to insurance companies under group assurance schemes. Insurance companies have refused to pay the 5 per cent commission asked of them by the Government and all moneys paid are being held provisionally and policy holders are not being credited with the amounts they pay. Can the Premier say under what authority the Government is claiming 5 per cent commission on all payments when the concession voluntarily granted by the societies is 2½ per cent? Also what is the position of policy holders when policies mature? If the policy is one payable on death to the next of kin, will the beneficiary be compelled to wait until some satisfactory arrangement has been made between the Government and the companies?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Many years ago an arrangement was entered into by the Government with insurance companies for group insurance, under which the Government undertook to collect the amounts becoming due from its employees and pay them over to the companies. The amount that was to be credited to the Government for the cost of performing this service was 2½ per cent. Today in many departments, owing to changed conditons, that amount is not profitable for such a service, for in departments where a considerable number of insurance companies operate there are relatively few employees paying premiums to any one company and in the departments where smaller numbers are involved with only a few persons under any one company the cost of collection may run to nearly five per cent. The insurance companies have, in fact, credited the Railways Department with five per cent for this service, and I believe that amount is also credited to the Electricity Trust. Moreover, new companies wishing to operate in the Public Service have offered to pay five per cent. With the object of arriving at a satisfactory arrangement the Government has been negotiating with the larger companies, which point out that the basis on which their insurance was written was a 2½ per cent commission, and state that they are unwilling to pay more than that. The main insurance companies appear to be adamant on not paying more than 2½ per cent, and it would seem that at present no agreement with the companies can be hoped for, in which case I think the Government would be obliged to honour its obligation with regard to insurance already written and to continue to collect at the present rate, but it would restrict its new business to the new companies which would pay five per cent. I assure the Leader of the Opposition that the persons now insured under these group schemes will not suffer through the negotiations now proceeding.

SLAUGHTERING OF SHEEP AND LAMBS.

Mr. MICHAEL—In view of the large number of lambs that will be coming to the Abattoirs within the next few weeks, can the Minister of Agriculture say what is the labour position there, whether there will be any physical difficulties in the way of their being able to work to full capacity, and what restrictions will be necessary on the admittance of adult sheep during the boom of the lamb season?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The Abattoirs Board, with the chains at present being worked, is in a position to kill up to 40,000 lambs or sheep, or lambs and sheep, a week by working Saturdays, and it is prepared to work Saturday mornings in order to kill that full complement. Up to the present the number of receivals at the Abattoirs has been disappointing—whether due to the cold conditions of the past two or three weeks I do not know—but the numbers are increasing rapidly, and when the stage is reached when the full time will be occupied in killing lambs, lambs will be given first priority in killing and mutton second. This will mean that in five weeks we will be able to handle at least 200,000 lambs, which is the estimate by the stock agents, the people best informed, of the number available for killing this year.

KITCHENETTES FOR MIGRANT HOSTELS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Statements have appeared in the press from time to time concerning a proposal to provide kitchenettes in migrant hostels. One was that the Treasurer, on request from the Commonwealth Government, would be prepared to ask the Housing Trust to do the necessary work; another indicated that no representations had been made for the installation of kitchenettes. Can the Treasurer say whether representations have been made to him by the Commonwealth authorities and whether the Government, or the Housing Trust, would be in a position to undertake the work if required?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Federal member for Sturt (Mr. Wilson) and the member for Prospect (Mr. Whittle) asked me, in the course of a discussion one day on the problem of hostels, whether the State Government would be prepared to erect kitchenettes at the Gepps Cross Hostel if the Commonwealth Government would meet the cost, and what the approximate cost would be. I said that I had not had any figures taken out in regard to costs, but that from a rough estimate based on other work done by the trust I believed it would be about £200 a kitchenette, or £80,000 for 400 units. I said that if the Commonwealth was interested I would be prepared to take up the matter with the trust, and I was certain the trust would erect the kitchenettes at cost to the Commonwealth. Subsequently, a Commonwealth officer associated with the administration of hostels discussed the matter with me and I repeated what I had told to the two Parliamentary representatives of the district. I believe the matter is now being considered by the Commonwealth Government because recently two Federal Ministers discussed it with me. We have no arrangement with the Commonwealth to do this work; indeed, we have not yet taken out a firm estimate of the cost. However, I think that the idea is maturing and that it would be a good thing, instead of having a hostel where everyone is obliged to use community dining rooms, to get back to the more natural state of persons occupying and using their own accommodation. This would be more conducive to good home life. I repeat that if the Commonwealth Government desires it my Government will be pleased to carry out the work expeditiously and at the lowest possible price.

URANIUM IN COPPER DUMPS.

Mr. McALEES—In last Saturday's *Advertiser* it was reported that Professor Kerr Grant, on his return from South Africa, stated that uranium might be located in many of our old copper dumps. The professor, I understand, is an authority on uranium, and seeing that we have thousands of tons of copper dumps in Moonta and Wallaroo Mines I ask the Premier whether he has considered having investigations made to see if uranium could be located in them?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—This matter was considered some time ago, and assays were made of the principal dumps to see to what extent they contained uranium. It is true that this mineral is frequently associated with copper deposits. We found that the Moonta deposits contained uranium but probably not of sufficient concentration to be worked under present-day conditions. However, another aspect has been followed up. If uranium deposits outcrop at all we can find them from the air, and this has been done. We have had under consideration—and done considerable preliminary work—the using of uranium as a pointer for the discovery of further copper deposits. So far, I do not think any success has been achieved in this direction, but it is an avenue of exploration which the honourable member can see is well worth further examination. I assure him that not only the Moonta but nearly every big known deposit in the State has been tested. Recently, one or two in the Flinders Ranges have shown some promise of containing worthwhile uranium deposits.

TOURIST SERVICES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—On August 21 I asked the Premier a question dealing with Bond's Tourist Services and the Premier replied that their contract with the Tourist Bureau had been terminated and that the bureau was 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?" Has the Premier any further information on this subject?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have a full report, but it is rather too long to give in reply to a question. I shall be happy to discuss the matter with the honourable member at his convenience and show him the factors.

PENALTIES FOR DRUNKEN DRIVING.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I draw the Premier's attention to recent press comments on the question of people driving motor vehicles whilst

under the influence of liquor. The Commissioner of Police (Mr. Green) said:—

In England not only is the driver's licence cancelled, but the vehicle he was driving at the time of the offence is banned from use. In view of the present enormous road toll, I agree with the suggestion of the New South Wales Traffic Superintendent that motorists who commit serious road offences should have their cars impounded.

Mr. Wilson, S.M., said:—

These offences are rapidly becoming the most prevalent of all offences to come before the courts and the position is alarming and a public menace.

Mr. Pattinson, M.P. (Chairman of the State Traffic Committee) said:—

It is problematical whether drinking drivers had not been one of the chief causes for the recent increase in the number of road accidents.

In view of those comments, will the Government consider including in the Road Traffic Act Amendment Bill a provision either for imprisonment without the option, or of banning the vehicle used during the offence from being on the road during the period of suspension of the driver's licence?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—After the honourable member asked a similar question last month I obtained the following report from the Commissioner of Police:—

In September, 1951, the Police Traffic Advisory Committee considered the question of increased penalties for offences under section 48 of the Road Traffic Act and subsequently its recommendations were conveyed by me to the State Traffic Committee and considered by that body before its recommendations were submitted to the Government. I therefore feel that no purpose would be served by recommitting the matter to the Police Traffic Advisory Committee. The following figures may be of interest. From 13/12/51 to 31/7/52 there were 212 convictions under this section, of which 194 were for a first offence and 18 for second or subsequent offences. Of the convictions for a first offence, 17 were for imprisonment without option of a fine and 18 second or subsequent convictions were for straight-out imprisonment.

For the eight months immediately prior to the amendment there were 277 convictions under this section, which means that for the first 7½ months of the operation of the new provisions there were 65 less convictions than immediately preceding the amendment. I do not consider that any further amendment to the punitive provisions of this section is necessary for the time being, as ample power exists for the courts, where circumstances merit it, to imprison without the option of a fine for the first offence.

If the honourable member would like to examine the report I shall be glad to make it available to him.

ALLIGATOR GORGE RESERVE: ACQUISITION OF LAND.

Mr. RICHES—In reply to a question by me yesterday the Minister of Lands, representing the Premier, stated that a conference had been proposed by the Tourist Bureau between the Bureau, the Highways Department, the district council of Wilmington, and the owner of the lease, Mr. H. N. Frick, regarding the acquisition of a certain area at Alligator Gorge for use as a tourist resort. A report from the Director of the Tourist Bureau said there had been a breach of faith on the part of the leaseholder. I understand that a conference has been held, and that rather than a breach of faith, there had been a misunderstanding. Has the Premier any knowledge of the result of the conference?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The conference referred to by my colleague has taken place between the parties mentioned and as a result I received a recommendation, which I forwarded to the Attorney-General for action. This will enable a sub-lease to be given by the leaseholder at a nominal rental for a certain area of the land to enable it to be used by the Tourist Bureau for reserve purposes. I think that the whole matter will now be equitably fixed. I do not just know where the previous negotiations got off the rails, but there appears to have been some divergence between the instructions given by the leaseholder to his solicitor and the expression of them to the department. However, I assure the honourable member that negotiations have been carried out in a reasonable manner, and I believe the solution desired by everyone has been found.

GOVERNMENT INSURANCE DEPARTMENT.

Mr. STEPHENS—Some years ago when we had a people's Government in South Australia it conducted its own insurance company, not only insuring Government departments but accepting insurance from private people. However, on a change of Government much of this insurance reverted to private insurance companies. Up till then the Government had made big profits out of its insurance, which were passed into general revenue. Will the Government be prepared to increase its insurance operations not only to cover Government departments not now covered but also to give the public more protection and thus bring in additional finance to the Government?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I suppose that 90 per cent of its insurance liability is carried

by the Government itself. An amount is appropriated each year and placed into a fund to meet the likely requirements, and this fund has been built up. The Government insures its own assets through its own insurance, with a few exceptions where there are specific reasons for not doing so. Its operations include the insurance of Government employees. The Government is not prepared to increase its insurance operations as suggested by the honourable member, as it would be competing on an unfair basis with private companies, because a private company which must pay its taxes cannot compete successfully with a Government or company which pays no such taxes. The profits the Government would make out of such insurance would be more than offset by the taxation it would ultimately lose.

REPAIRS TO ROADWAY.

Mr. FRED WALSH—My question relates to the railway line which runs across the roadway from the main railway yards at Mile End to the Chrysler Works opposite. There are considerable shunting operations at this point and it has become a danger hazard to workmen, particularly at knock-off time. The position has worsened in recent months because of the condition of the roadway, which is in a state of disrepair, and the railway lines are considerably higher in places than the road surface, resulting in some instances in men falling off their bicycles and receiving extensive injuries. The matter was taken up by the representatives of the men with the representatives of the Chrysler works, who, in turn, took it up with the local council, but because the railways are responsible for a certain width of the road the local council is not prepared to do anything. I have inspected the spot and, in my opinion, there is reason for complaint on the part of the men. Will the Minister of Railways have an investigation made as to the condition of the railway line with a view to removing any danger to cyclists and others, and relaxing shunting operations at about the knock-off time of employees in surrounding factories?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The facts as stated by the honourable member have not been brought under my notice, nor am I aware of any representations to the Railways Commissioner. I will take up the matter with the Railways Commissioner and bring down his reply. I am sure he will be glad to co-operate. I take it that the honourable member refers to a siding running into the company's works.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Yes.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The company will have to take some share of the responsibility; the district council may also have some. The issue is not very big as to cost. The issue is really what can be done to ensure further safety. The honourable member can rely on the railways co-operating in every way possible.

SALT CREEK CROSSING.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—On August 14 I raised with the Minister of Works the question of a bridge or other suitable crossing over Salt Creek near Mangalo. About that time a serious accident, almost a fatality, occurred because of the flooded nature of the crossing; there were attempts by a local man to rescue the school bus. The creek has again been in heavy flood and the same difficulties are being experienced by the school bus and residents in the area. Has the Minister been able to make any progress towards providing a safe crossing?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—As promised, I took up the matter with the Commissioner of Highways and he has forwarded to me a report by the District Engineer. The Commissioner of Highways has very concrete powers under his Act and he agrees with the statement in the report, so it can be regarded as the official viewpoint. The report says:—

Having regard to the urgency of many other bridging projects and the shortage of bridging gangs, there is no possibility of bridging this crossing for some years. I have pointed this out to the district council on several occasions. I have made several inspections of this ford in the last few years and have indicated to the district council of Franklin Harbour the feasibility of constructing a new ford a few hundred yards upstream of the existing site. The proposed new site has the advantages of avoiding the additional flow of a large tributary creek to Salt Creek and the site is on a stable section of Salt Creek which will afford good approaches and a longer crossing with the resultant reduction in the depth of water at high flow conditions. I have prepared and presented to the council a plan showing the land acquisition necessary to effect this new crossing. The council was to negotiate the land acquisition. The council has since advised that the owner of the land is opposed to this scheme and has refused to make the necessary land available. The district clerk is to interview the owner again with a view to obtaining the necessary land. It is now intended to survey the new ford site, with a view to the preparation of plans for the new ford.

I also had a word with the Commissioner of Highways, and he thinks this is the most feasible and direct way of making it a much safer crossing.

Mr. Christian—Will he help financially?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—That is another question.

WESTMINSTER HORTICULTURAL CONGRESS PAPERS.

Mr. QUIRKE—In the issue of the London *Times* of September 9 there is an account of the 13th Horticultural Congress opened at Westminster. Delegates came from 29 countries and 150 papers were to be read by speakers representing 27 countries. One paper in particular was by Professor H. B. Tukey of the Michigan State College. It said that experiments have proved that fruit trees can and do absorb nutrients through leaves and bark, and do so with extreme rapidity. I have in mind the gummosis disease devastating our apricot industry in S.A. This would probably provide another avenue of attack on the disease. Can the Minister of Agriculture arrange for the papers read at this Congress from so many authoritative sources to be made available to the people of South Australia?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS.—I have not seen the report of the Congress mentioned by the honourable member. I shall investigate the position and see if the papers read are of sufficient importance to be made available as suggested.

SULPHURIC ACID PLANT.

Mr. McALEES—On July 30 I asked the Premier a question with regard to the sulphuric acid plant to be erected at Port Adelaide. Has he anything further to report?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I took up this matter with Cresco Fertilizers Limited and I have received the following reply:—

We confirm that we expect that the production of sulphuric acid from zinc concentrates at Wallaroo and Port Pirie will cease in, say, about two years' time. However, we are hopeful that the Electrolytic Zinc Co. of Australasia Limited will continue producing at the above plants until the new acid plant to operate on sinter gases at Port Pirie and the new acid plant at Port Adelaide come into operation. No arrangement has yet been made *re* the staffing of the new acid plant at Port Adelaide, and this is something that will have to be determined when the time comes, say, in a period of about two years. We should like to point out that increased production of superphosphate will take place at Wallaroo following increased supplies of sulphuric acid being made available from the new acid plants. It is our definite opinion that there will be an increasing demand for superphosphate from the Wallaroo factories following the more intensive development of our high rainfall, mid-northern agricultural and grazing lands and the opening up of large areas of new land on southern Yorke Peninsula as planned by the South Australian Government. This development will increase the tonnage of materials handled over the wharves at Wallaroo both from the point of volume of materials coming in for superphosphate manufacture and the greatly increased flow of cereals—wheat and barley—going outward. We think that the development mentioned above will go a long way in absorbing any men who may be displaced through the closing down of the acid plant at Wallaroo.

I shall be pleased to make that letter available to the honourable member, for I realize its contents have considerable local significance.

STURT HIGHWAY.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Yesterday in reply to my question dealing with the condition of the Sturt Highway between Paringa and Renmark the Minister of Works said:—

The department is concentrating on work on the "north of the river" road and has sought and obtained through the member for Light the co-operation of the Eudunda and Morgan district councils.

As every road user will appreciate the help given to the department by councils, will the Minister ensure that the Commissioner of Highways will approach local governing bodies in the Upper Murray areas, for instance Barmera, with a view to securing the use of any plant they may have available for this work?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Some time last year, as a result of a deputation which waited on the Premier, certain councils were asked to assist with this work. I do not know whether Barmera was asked to do so by the Highways Commissioner, but if not there may have been two good reasons. Firstly, the Barmera council may have had comparatively limited plant which would have been fully utilized in its own district. Secondly, a departmental gang was working between Barmera and Overland Corner and it would have been a duplication of effort to take away Barmera plant from its own work to assist the Highways Department. However, if the position has altered since then I am sure the Highways Commissioner will be glad to receive any assistance possible towards completing the "north of the river" road.

HOMES FOR AGED AND INFIRM.

Adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. O'Halloran—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the Government should take steps to provide suitable homes both in the country and the metropolitan area for aged and infirm persons who are pensioners.

(Continued from August 20. Page 469.)

Mr. JOHN CLARK (Gawler)—I support the motion. A few months ago I heard a lecture by a medical man who had recently returned

from England, and his main theme was the fact that in both England and Australia the growth made by medical science had meant that people were living longer and that older people were much healthier than in the past. This means that we are faced with an additional problem and an additional duty and obligation, for at present in South Australia we have 35,421 old and invalid pensioners, as mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition and that number will be greatly increased in the future. The action proposed in the motion is one of the best ways of giving these people the consideration to which they are entitled, and we should not shirk this duty. The present inadequate rates of pension make the problem even more acute, and the *News*, in an effort to help the aged, has come forward with a laudable scheme which has been backed by the Government, the Opposition, and the Church and other leaders, but it is a bitter commentary on civilization as we know it and the Federal Government in particular that a newspaper, with the best intentions, must propose such a scheme.

The housing shortage is making things difficult for these old people, and I have found in my district, as other members have found in theirs, that one of our biggest jobs is the search for houses. Indeed, it is almost a full-time job. Many old people are forced to live with their children, and, although we often hear of the unhappy experiences of young married people forced to live with their parents, we seldom hear how bad it is for the old people who must manage under such circumstances. These old people have passed the prime of their lives and because of age and often infirmity they need much more comfort than they manage to get and are entitled to more consideration in the matter of housing than they have received in the past. These old people like to feel independent, and they cannot be blamed for that for they have earned that right. Many have served their country and many more have given their sons and daughters in its service in time of war. These old people have given the best of their labour, whether by the use of their hands or brains, for the benefit of South Australia and they are entitled to the independence they seek, but very often they are forced to do all sorts of things that are completely contrary to their desires.

Mr. Frank Walsh—And foreign to their natural instincts.

Mr. CLARK—Yes. Although something has been done to house the aged in Mount Gambier, Port Pirie, Riverton, and Tanunda by various community and religious organizations, generally speaking an old person resident in the country who wishes to obtain a home must come many miles to the city and leave his old friends in those parts where he has lived for many years. It is a true if a trite saying that the old friends are the best friends, and a person in such circumstances must leave his old environment just at an age when he is too old to cultivate an attachment for a new home. The motion states that it is desirable to provide suitable homes both in the country and in the metropolitan area. We do not wish to drag old people away from the town or district in which they have lived most of their lives and which bring to mind their dearest memories. Homes should be established in the areas with which they are familiar. Above all, the right type of accommodation should be provided and at a cost within their means. We should not entertain the old poor-house idea that was no credit to England not so long ago. Elderly people are prepared to pay a reasonable sum for satisfactory accommodation. They should not be asked to pay the ridiculous rents at present being extorted from many of them, sometimes for only single rooms without any conveniences. Often their premises consist of inadequate sleepouts, shacks, hovels or slums.

A few days ago I read a comment made by my predecessor, Mr. Les Duncan, when speaking on a similar matter. He said, "In the country old people are in the care of kindly neighbours without any other attention". That is true, especially in distant parts, and often the kindly neighbour has plenty to do without looking after someone else, although they do it gladly. This happens even in my own town and street. I have read about what were known in England as "Grannie Cottages". I believe they were erected in connection with big housing schemes, and they were established for aged couples. I think they had a sitting room, bedroom and kitchen, and the tenants were asked to pay the rent and keep the place clean and tidy and do the little cooking and other work required of them. Medical and nursing attention could be readily obtained, which is most important. I did not intend to speak on this motion, but this matter is so close to my heart that I thought I should say something about it. I remind members that our elderly people have, to a great extent, made this State. We often lose sight of the value of their work. We

forget, when people grow old, that they were once young. If we are not careful we forget the point of view of the aged persons. We have only to stop and think of our attitude now to certain things and compare it with our attitude of a few years ago and we may then realize that often we do not give proper consideration to the point of view of old people. If we are proud of this State that they helped to build we must give them some more tangible form of thanks than is given now. After all, it is no sin to be poor, and even less is it a sin to be old.

Mr. PATTINSON secured the adjournment of the debate.

CONTROL OF MURRAY WATERS.

Adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. Macgillivray—

That in the opinion of this House, a Select Committee should be appointed to inquire into and report upon the control of the waters of the River Murray within the State of South Australia.

(Continued from August 20. Page 473.)

The Hon. M. McINTOSH (Minister of Works)—I submit that no case has been made out for the appointment of a Select Committee to report upon the control of the waters of the River Murray. One episode has been chosen to lay a claim for such an appointment. The basis of the whole of the complaints was a physical cause outside the control of any human instrumentality. When man sets out to conquer Nature his victory can never be complete, and it is impossible to achieve perfect control over a river system extending for thousands of miles. Lake Victoria controls the levels and the flow of the river in our South Australian system, and the member for Chaffey spoke about salinity in the river and in the lake. The salinity in Lake Victoria has never exceeded 12 grains to the gallon, even in the drought of 1944-45. Last summer it contained less than five grains, and any increase in salinity in the river was not due to the water in Lake Victoria, but to seepage waters entering the river. The main cause of the seepage was probably the extreme use of water. Even if there was on this occasion room for complaints—and I will show there was not—the appointment of a Select Committee would be abortive without alteration of the Acts of Parliament which deal with the control of the River Murray system. What is the basis of the control and of the agreement that brought it about? New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia each contributed 25 per cent of the total cost, the remainder being met by the Commonwealth Government. The total cost of the scheme was £13,000,000. It is obvious that the other contracting parties would not agree to any alternative scheme for control; therefore, any resolution carried here could have no effect, nor should it have any, because I will prove that over a long period the control has been particularly efficient, well appreciated, and has done everything it set out to achieve. No better alternative has been suggested. The member for Chaffey suggested that perhaps there has not been as much co-ordination as required, but I will show there has been all the co-ordination possible. I submit that no system can be proof against all unavoidable causes. Some difficulty arose last year, but it was not of any great consequence financially. The honourable member mentioned that for a short period the river was low, but this did not affect the pumps, no Government pump being out of use for a single day. They are serviceable at any depth of the river. It was never intended that the water should be maintained at pool level at all times under all circumstances. Therefore, the statement that there was one particular instance where the water fell below pool level, that control had broken down, and that some other system should therefore be introduced, does not bear analysis. The locks and weirs have been of inestimable value to South Australia, and the agreement under which they were constructed and are maintained is the best illustration of the real Federal spirit ever achieved in Australia. The three States and the Commonwealth agreed to undertake an immense work at a cost of £13,000,000 at a time when the population was about 6,000,000—to provide head works to ensure the success of irrigation projects. Some of the irrigation areas did reasonably well before these locks and weirs were installed, but without them settlers' operations would not have been so successful. I have not had complaints reported to me over a period of years, and the suggestion that the River Murray Commission was indifferent to all those concerned is ungenerous and unwarranted.

Co-ordination of operations throughout the length of the river is, of course, necessary and this is done through the Commission's Executive Engineer, who acts as liaison officer between the commission and the various constructing authorities, *i.e.*, the State instrumentalities. The executive engineer is Mr. G. L. Harrison, who was previously Hydrographic Engineer in the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission of New South Wales and has

had many years of experience in the operation of river control works. In operating the weirs on the River Murray the objective is to maintain the river level upstream of each weir as closely as possible to the level for which the structure was designed. When small variations in flow occur the weir can be readily and quickly adjusted to the altered conditions, but the complete removal or replacement of a weir is a major task and it is physically impossible to maintain normal water levels while this task is being performed. Aside from Hume Reservoir and the several weirs above Mildura, there is an unbroken chain of 12 river structures extending from the barrages to Mildura, none of which can be operated without some effect on one or more of the others. Co-ordination of operations is therefore essential for, if each lock master acted independently and made his own arrangements, chaos would result. As the weir is raised a large volume of water is impounded, thereby automatically reducing the flow downstream. It is therefore not a matter of putting in all weirs as quickly as possible, but of co-ordinating these operations in accordance with the amount of water available to build up pool levels. Lake Victoria can and has been used to assist in these operations when it is certain that there is sufficient water upstream to replace the water released. However, the main purpose of Lake Victoria is to assure sufficient water for irrigation and other requirements in South Australia and this purpose cannot be defeated merely to prevent a temporary fall below normal level at some particular lock. In the drought period of 1944-45 Lake Victoria was very low, and I believe the member for Stanley, when he flew over the Hume Reservoir, remarked that it was merely a pool. Water cannot be provided from Lake Victoria at a moment's notice to create a higher pool at one particular lock to meet circumstances that may have arisen.

Despite all efforts and precautions and the complete co-ordination of all operations, no guarantee has or could be given that the river level will never fall below the normal pool level. Government departments fully recognize this fact and therefore all irrigation and water supply pumping plants are capable of functioning irrespective of water level. Apparently, however, a number of private irrigators are prepared to take the risk of placing the suction pipes of their pumps just below pool level in the same manner as many people build houses on low-lying land knowing full well that if a high river occurs their houses will be inundated. Most of the private irrigators along the Murray have had years of experience with river conditions and are well aware of the fact that the weirs cannot be replaced in a day. Surely, in their own interests in protecting the valuable asset they have established, they should be prepared to take the same precautions which the Government sees fit to take with the larger pumping stations and install their pumps to pump from any level. It is far easier for a man to add another length to his pipe for the purpose of pumping than to raise the level of the river several inches.

Mr. Macgillivray questioned whether the Government was guarding against salinity in the water. The weirs have done much to improve this condition and without them the salinity would reach very high proportions on each occasion when the river fell to a low level. During the last 10 years the salinity of the water in Lake Victoria has not reached 12 grains to the gallon—even in the severe drought of 1944-45. Water released to maintain the flow last summer contained only 6 grains to the gallon and the water passing Wentworth on its way to South Australia at that time contained less than 5 grains to the gallon. Any rise in salinity was therefore entirely due to seepage entering the river in South Australia and the main cause of this was probably the excessive use of irrigation water in many areas. Mr. Macgillivray is not doing Waikerie a service when he suggests it is on the verge of ruin. Actually it is one of the most prosperous areas in Australia. He said that the leaves had fallen from the orange trees because of the salinity of the irrigation water. That was probably in the days before the locks and weirs and Lake Victoria began to operate. It is known that saline water enters the river from the extensive area of high tablelands adjacent to Waikerie and this will no doubt always be the case. When mixed with a large flow in the river this is not serious and and this is where the River Murray works have played such an important part in maintaining a satisfactory flow. During February, 1952, irrigation season the salinity at Waikerie did reach 30 grains per gallon, but at that time the salinity at Murray Bridge was only 16 grains per gallon. Prior to the construction of the locks and weirs the salinity at Waikerie exceeded 100 grains a gallon on occasions. So far as my records readily obtainable and my own knowledge extends, this is the first year that any complaint has been made about any deficiency in the control. In this particular year

the combination of unusual and unavoidable circumstances caused some temporary inconvenience but it would not be correct to say that the department allowed the river to empty and the level become so low that there was not enough to work a punt. For a few day this did apply at Berri. To suggest that the River Murray Commission cannot meet the position is stretching rather a long bow. No-one at Waikerie would suggest the appointment of a royal commission because of the disabilities being suffered there owing to the condition of the water. When I was a young member of the House, take-all was prevalent at Pinnaroo, and one of my opponents was always asking, "Why does not the Government do something about it? It is ruining the country." This disease was inherent in the new country, but it was worked out. On one occasion this gentleman asked me to interview a lending institution to see if it could provide him with money against a mortgage on his farm. When I asked whether it would lend on that area it said, "No. We would not look at it. It has got take-all." If the suggestion gets abroad that Waikerie is ruined because of the water I am afraid the people there, when they want some financial accommodation, will have difficulty in getting it. They would not like to have it published that Mr. Macgillivray had said that Waikerie was being punished because of the inadequacy of control of the river. I asked Mr. Dridan (Engineer-in-Chief) to give me his views on the question, and he supplied the following:—

The sites for the locks and weirs were chosen after years of survey and other exploratory work and it was a case of selecting the best site available within a certain permissible latitude. The natural topography of the river valley is such that the weirs do not all bear the same relationship to river levels, some being lower than others. This means that replacement of some weirs can be commenced when the water is still considerably above pool level, but this is not the case at Lock 4.

This was the lock in reference to which complaints were made by Mr. Macgillivray. I again quote:—

Last December the flow fell away very rapidly with the result that some temporary recession below pool level was unavoidable.

At Lock No. 5, Paringa, it was possible to commence replacement of the weir on November 12, 1951, with the result that the level at this lock only fell 10½in. below pool level. On the other hand, replacement of Lock No. 4, Bookpurnong, could not commence until December 19, and the flow was falling off so rapidly that the level receded to 6ft. below pool level on December 27 before it began to build up to reach full pool level on January 6.

We have many efficient officers in the Government service, and included among them is Mr. Dridan. In this view I am supported by the Public Works Committee, which says that the Engineering and Water Supply Department is most efficient. I have never heard that contradicted. Mr. Dridan knows the River Murray as few men know it. He and his family have been associated with it for many years; he was engaged in the construction of the locks and weirs and is also a member of the River Murray Commission. What he could not do, I submit, was impossible of accomplishment. The report goes on:—

This did not in any way interfere with operations of the pumps at Berri, but apparently did cause some inconvenience to private irrigators who had failed to make provision for such a contingency.

First there was a complaint that the Berri punt could not operate because of insufficient water, and then there was a complaint about too much water. The whole situation may be summarized as follows. The River Murray Works, *i.e.*, Hume Reservoir, Lake Victoria, the locks and weirs and the barrages, have been of immense benefit to South Australia. They are controlled under a joint scheme, and there is no necessity for the system to be altered. It is the responsibility of the River Murray Commission, and the whole of the work is done under a co-ordinating officer. On one occasion the Renmark Irrigation Trust complained that it could not use its pumps for a short period, but over a long period of years we have saved it several thousands of pounds at different times by maintaining the river level. When the explanation was given it was perfectly satisfied. This condition is not peculiar to South Australia. Several years ago the level of the river above Lock No. 11, Mildura, fell several feet and the shire of Mildura made representations to the Minister of Water Supply in Victoria. The following is a copy of the reply by the Minister, and it is on all fours with what I said in my opening remarks:—

The question of regulation, I might say, is one over which the River Murray Commission has control, and it has this year appointed an executive engineer to co-ordinate and supervise the work of the separate State authorities in connection with the regulation and operation of all of the River Murray works from the Hume Reservoir to the Murray Mouth barrages. I might add that both the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and the River

Murray Commission have, from time to time, officially advised all authorities and the public that any pumping installations on the river should be so designed and installed that they could draw water at any level of the stream. Those private diverters who have been affected by the recent fluctuations of the river level have been those who have ignored this advice and have failed to protect themselves against river variations. The Commission can give no guarantee of any particular levels either in its main storages or in the weirs such as the Yarawonga, Euston, and Mildura and others, and with its own pumping installation at Nyah, Robinvale, Red Cliffs, and Merbein, it has provided for the maintenance of irrigation requirements regardless of the river levels. It is known that other authorities and practically all private diverters have acted similarly.

The reply from Victoria was exactly the same as Mr. Dridan's reply to the representations made by the Renmark Irrigation Trust. The honourable member suggested that the lockmasters should have more control. As I have said, there must be co-ordination between every lock as it would be impossible to expect each lockmaster to have a complete knowledge of everything happening in other areas. Now each lock has a telephone attached to it and the lockmaster is in constant touch with head office, and anything he suggests receives immediate attention. It would be futile to suggest that the lockmaster at Lock 6 or 4 or 5 could act independently of other lockmasters. There must be co-ordination. A clause in the agreement states:—

In declaring the quantities and times for deliveries of water the River Murray Commission shall have regard to the quantities and times most suitable and convenient for the purposes of this agreement.

Under the agreement everything must be co-ordinated. It is futile to suggest that we must have another form of control. Perhaps the honourable member thinks that the people along the river should have a greater say in the working of the locks. As far back as 1934 people on the lower levels of the river asked for a co-ordinating committee to be appointed by the Government. A liaison committee in an honorary capacity was appointed to work in collaboration with the existing River Murray authority. On that committee as chairman is the Engineer for Irrigation, the District Agricultural Adviser, two swamp irrigators, and two irrigators who get their water from the lakes. The committee meets from time to time and the members know why things are being done or not being done. I could explain to the honourable member that it was physically impossible to commence putting in the locks earlier. No form of control could have overcome the difficulty.

Mr. Macgillivray—Do you know whether a conference of the lockmasters was held during last year?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I think so. The locks are man-operated and are slow. We have been trying to devise at a reasonable cost some mechanization of the cranes, and that would be one of the most important subjects to be discussed. A mechanized crane has been installed at Blanchetown but it has not been entirely satisfactory. Mr. Dridan says that if we could devise a satisfactory mechanized crane it would not take long to install it. I point out to the honourable member that there has been only one complaint.

Mr. Macgillivray—More than one.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—There is no record of any other complaint. The honourable member will no doubt now agree that nothing further need be done to bring about a better understanding. No effect could be given to the motion if passed unless Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia, with the Commonwealth, agreed to waive the present system of control, and I am sure they would not do it. I do not think it would be wise to put the agreement into the melting pot for such a small matter.

Mr. Macgillivray—You say there is an advisory committee, and then you say that the State has no control over the water because it is controlled by the River Murray Commission.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Any representations made go through Mr. Dridan to the commission.

Mr. Macgillivray—In the meantime the river can empty.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—No. The level of one basin fell 6ft. Without the locks and the weirs the river would have been empty for a long time. One swallow does not make a summer, and one complaint does not make a Select Committee. In the matter under review the depth of the river and the construction of the weirs did not permit the locks to be put in earlier.

Mr. Macgillivray—Do you think the weirs should be altered?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—No. The best advice has been received. In one week inconvenience was caused, mostly to pleasure seekers.

Mr. Macgillivray—No. The whole economy suffered.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The honourable member said there was not enough water to launch paddle boats. I regret that, but that is not a subject for a Select Committee.

Mr. Macgillivray—If you cannot work the punts will you give us bridges?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Yes, when the time comes. When the people make up their minds where they want the bridges the Government will consider the matter, but we are not now considering bridges or punts, but the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into a small matter. Anything that would upset the present control or authority which found the necessary money would be a retrograde step.

Mr. QUIRKE secured the adjournment of the debate.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (CITIES).

Second reading.

Mr. FLETCHER (Mount Gambier)—I move that this Bill be now read a second time. This is a Bill for an Act to amend the Local Government Act, 1934-1951. For some time it has been the desire of the corporation of Mount Gambier, and prominent citizens in the district, that Mount Gambier and other large country towns in South Australia, should have the opportunity to adopt the title of city, but under the Local Government Act at present it is almost impossible for any town outside the metropolitan area to become a city. The Act states that unless a town has a population of 20,000 it cannot become a city. The result is that the only cities in South Australia are in the metropolitan area. The largest country towns in the State are Port Pirie, Mount Gambier, and Whyalla, but none of these towns has nearly a population of 20,000, and on the present outlook it will be many years before they reach that figure. Under the Queensland Local Government Act the Governor may proclaim a town a city, and the 12 most populous towns in that State have a population of over 7,000. The New South Wales Act provides for a population of 15,000 and a gross income from all sources of at least £20,000. Section 16 of the Victorian Local Government Act provides that the Governor may declare to be a city any borough having in the 12 months ending September 30 preceding such declaration a revenue of at least £20,000. The following table gives particulars of Victorian country cities:—

City.	Area. Acres.	Population.	Dwellings.	General revenue.
Hamilton	5,100	7,181	2,100	£25,771
Horsham	5,760	6,450	1,575	£31,930
Warrnambool	4,150	10,000	2,310	£35,256
Mildura	5,760	9,530	1,879	£31,223
Sale	5,442	5,300	1,243	£22,442
Shepparton	4,523	8,500	2,074	£31,898

The foregoing are 1949 statistics and the revenue figures do not in any case include cash earned by other undertakings such as electricity, abattoirs, etc.

Mount Gambier, which is only 80 miles from Hamilton, had in 1950 a population of 8,500, 1,875 dwellings, and revenue amounting to £26,725. This town compares more than favourably not only with Hamilton but also with most of the other Victorian towns I have mentioned, and that could be said also for Port Pirie and Whyalla, both of which are worthy of city status. Under a "Greater Mount Gambier" scheme at present being explored its population should exceed 10,000 in the near future. Port Pirie has more than 10,000 inhabitants, and at its present rate of growth the population of Whyalla should soon exceed that number.

Mr. Whittle—What advantage does a town derive from being called a city?

Mr. FLETCHER—A great advantage. Today the tourist trade is something sought after by every large country town, but I have frequently heard it said that apart from Adelaide no South Australian centre is worth visiting, for there are no cities outside the metropolitan area. By adopting this very slight amendment the House will be doing a service to our larger country towns and rewarding them for their efforts to attract industries and population to their districts. Clause 2 deals with petitions for the constitution of a municipality as a city and clause 3 with proclaiming a municipality a city. I commend the Bill to members and trust it will receive the consideration it deserves.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

Mr. CHRISTIAN (Eyre)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

I will briefly outline its purposes, detail a little of the historical background of those phases of the Licensing Act with which it

deals, and give my reasons why it should be adopted. The Bill does two things: firstly, it provides that public drinking lounges shall be approved by the Licensing Court; secondly, it extends the existing provision relating to the exclusion of children from bar rooms, to make it apply also to public drinking lounges. These lounges, particularly ladies' drinking lounges, appear to me to be a comparatively recent development. I have sought in this Bill to provide for that development, as there is nothing in the Act which either permits this growth of drinking lounges or prevents this development. For a long time we have had bar parlors and in some cases other dark and not very select drinking places in some hotels. I have no quarrel with licensed victuallers as such and in fact have quite a number of good friends in their ranks. My object is simply to regulate something that appears to have grown up without any particular provision having been made for it or without any hindrance with regard to its manner of development. In fact to such an extent has this drinking lounge practice been extended that one wonders whether the provisions of section 134 of the Licensing Act have not been completely circumvented and also whether, by establishing so many rooms in hotels for purely drinking purposes, legitimate lodging space has not been severely encroached on, for in the metropolitan area room for lodgers has become so increasingly difficult to obtain that many country people visiting the city cannot find lodgings. I am inclined to believe that lounge drinking has to a large extent locked up rooms which might otherwise have been available for lodging purposes.

Section 134 places a definite limitation on the space which can be allocated for the sale of liquor on licensed premises by providing that "no licensee shall sell or supply liquor in more than one bar-room in or upon his licensed premises or shall have more than one bar-room in or upon such premises, unless he has obtained the permission of the court so to do." Every application for such permission must be accompanied by a plan showing the position of each proposed additional bar-room, and a fee of £5 must be paid annually in respect of each additional bar-room in addition to the annual licence fee which varies from £25 to £150, according to the annual value of the licensed premises.

Mr. Shannon—It would appear that the Licensing Court has been responsible for the permission given to set up the additional facilities.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—The Licensing Court must approve of the bar-rooms set up on the licensed premises, but such rooms are distinct from drinking lounges, which do not come within the definition of "bar-room" contained in the Act and are therefore not controlled. Prior to the passing of the original Act in 1908 the licensee might have as many bar-rooms as he pleased in which to sell liquor. To what extent that opportunity was availed of in the past I do not know, but the limitation to which I have just referred, and which is contained in section 134 of the present Act, was first enacted in 1908 and was contained in section 110 of the original legislation. That limited the number of bar-rooms which could be established, and the annual fee which was prescribed at that time was not the modest £5 I referred to, but £20 annually for each additional bar-room.

Mr. O'Halloran—Do you know what the licence fees were then?

Mr. CHRISTIAN—No, but at that time Parliament placed a restriction on the amount of room or space which could be devoted in any licensed premises for the sale and, presumably, the consumption of liquor in hotels. We seem to have got well away from that, and the establishment of drinking lounges has become an accepted feature of hotels now. I am not quarrelling with that, and say that many of our modern lounges are well appointed and very comfortable; in fact, I suppose one could say that many of them are quite enticing places, but I suggest that there should be some control over the number and situation of drinking lounges and over their condition. I do not think we should any longer accept the position where any kind of cubby hole or dark corner away from daylight and the public view can be used for wholesale or indiscriminate drinking not subject to proper supervision.

Mr. O'Halloran—Hasn't the Licensing Court the power to determine the suitability of premises.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—It does not seem so. I suppose the court has a general power in that the licensed premises must conform to reasonable standards of hygiene, but it does not seem to have, so far as I can ascertain—and I have discussed it with the Licensing Court Clerk and with the Parliamentary Draftsman, who drafted my Bill—any real control over the number of drinking lounges that can be established, nor does there seem to be any standard to which such lounges shall conform.

Mr. Pattinson—What is the standard of a bar room?

Mr. CHRISTIAN—So far as I can ascertain that is not laid down in any legislation either, but the Licensing Court has the power to reject an application for additional bar rooms if it thinks the accommodation proposed is not suitable or does not measure up to its accepted standards.

Mr. O'Halloran—It also has the power to reject an application for a licence if the premises are not suitable.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—I appreciate that, but that is not the point I am discussing. I think that many licensees provide excellent accommodation in this direction; in fact, many of them supervise their drinking lounges to their own very great credit for the purpose of maintaining a high standard of behaviour on the part of their clients. This is as it should be, but there are always a few people for whom we have to legislate in any field, whether it be in regard to licensing, industrial laws, or other matters. It is time Parliament made up its mind and took some definite action to bring drinking lounges under proper control. The machinery proposed in this legislation is simply that any licensee who desires to establish a public drinking lounge shall have to submit a plan to the Licensing Court and obtain approval from it. This is necessary if we are to implement the second provision of my Bill, namely, the exclusion of children under 16 years from public drinking lounges.

Mr. Dunnage—What about beer gardens?

Mr. CHRISTIAN—They are not covered by my Bill.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Even under your Bill children will be able to be in the company of adults consuming liquor.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—The children will not be permitted to be served with liquor.

Mr. Fred Walsh—They can be on the premises.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—Yes, but I am concerned about children being in drinking lounges. It was apparently thought fit by Parliament in 1908 that children should be excluded from bar rooms. That had its genesis in an earlier provision of 1896, when a Bill before Parliament dealt with the question of preventing children under 15 years from being served with liquor. Up to that time it was apparently permissible to serve even young children with liquor in any part of any licensed premises. It is interesting to read the debate on the measure which was introduced by the then Treasurer, the Hon. F. W. Holder. The report of portion of his remarks states:—

> This was the first time a Bill of this nature had been submitted to a Parliament in this colony, which had been partly elected by women, and as it was a matter which closely affected the home they should do their best to protect children. Therefore, in clause 41 they provided that "any person holding a licence under this Act, or any Act incorporated herewith, or any person in his employ who shall supply or submit to be supplied any liquor to any child under the age of 15 years, shall be liable to a penalty of not less than £1 nor more than £5." That was a provision, he was sure, they would all gladly assent to, and it was one to which the deputation from the South Australian Brewers' Association raised no objection.

That gave rise to an amendment of the same section in 1908 under which the prohibition to serve children was extended to include their complete prohibition from bar rooms. The penalty was maintained at £1 minimum and £4 maximum, and, strange to say, that is still the penalty. The age was raised in 1908 to 16 years and, for serving with liquor, to 18 years, and subsequently it was raised to 21, but I do not know when. The most important feature of this Bill is the exclusion of children from drinking lounges. This is a logical extension of the law in respect of bar rooms. I do not know whether members have seen the harrowing and distressing things I have in public drinking lounges. This urged me to introduce this Bill, as I considered it our duty to protect children from influences which are not helpful in the moulding of their characters. I accept the fact that heredity plays the greatest part in moulding young lives and character, but science has established, and our experience has proved, that environmental influences play a considerable part also; in fact, so much so that in the animal kingdom new species have been developed by such modifications. We need to ensure for our children the best possible environmental influences we can promote, and I suggest that many of the public drinking lounges do not provide the best influence. The children are our greatest and most important trust. Anything we can do to protect their lives and characters should be done.

I acknowledge without equivocation that the greatest responsibility in this matter rests with the parents. Nothing can adequately supplant parental control and influence, but unfortunately such an influence is often sadly lacking or not exerted in the right direction. Parliament has stepped in to provide for such cases in

many other spheres. A long time ago Parliament abolished the employment of child labour. It has also legislated in respect of neglected children and has provided for compulsory education. One could name many other measures which have been designed to supplement and in some cases to supplant parental influence. Where we have numerous examples of neglect and the lack of proper influences to guide the lives of our young children, Parliament must step in and do what it did some 40 years ago—provide an exclusion provision for children under 16. The time is overdue for this to be done. During World War II., and since, drinking in hotel lounges, in many instances by young mothers, has grown considerably, and we cannot blink our eyes to it. The influences of some of these places are anything but helpful to the young people taken to the lounges by their mothers. I have seen these things. They have alarmed me and caused me great concern. The founder of our faith had occasion to reprimand his own disciples when he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." We can all appreciate the force of that remark. Who has not been impressed with the loveliness of a young child, and who has been unable to appreciate a young life which has within it all the potentialities of the Kingdom of Heaven? But if we surround children with the undesirable influences to which I have referred, we deny them the opportunity to realize those potentialities. I therefore have no hesitation in recommending the Bill for honourable member's consideration. I have not canvassed it because I think it is a matter which each member must allow his conscience to decide. I am satisfied that it is a step in the right direction, and that it will result in some good at least to the children of the State.

Mr. MICHAEL secured the adjournment of the debate.

PUBLIC PURPOSES LOAN BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

ELECTRICITY TRUST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Electricity Trust of South Australia Act, 1946-1949.

Read a first time.

SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins for the Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its principal object is to provide for the appointment of a sixth judge of the Supreme Court. Members will notice that the Bill strikes out the word "four" and inserts "five" in section 7 of the principal Act, which section deals with the number of judges. The words "four" and "five" referred to in the amendment may appear inconsistent with the idea of having six judges. They are, however, correct, the explanation being that these words refer to the number of puisne judges, and do not include the Chief Justice. The request for a sixth judge comes from all the present judges and was conveyed to the Government on their behalf by the Chief Justice. His Honour has furnished the Government with a full report as to the state of business in the Supreme Court and the factors which have brought about the need for another judge. It is now 26 years since the appointment of a fifth judge was authorized by Parliament. During that period the population of South Australia has increased from 561,000 to 723,500—an increase of 29 per cent. Naturally the business of the court increases with the growth of the population, and the statistics indicate that the increase in the work of the court has been proportionately greater than the increase of population. For example, civil cases set down for trial—including matrimonial cases—have increased from 318 in 1927 to 758 in 1951. Divorces made absolute in the same years rose from 97 to 637, and criminal cases from 272 to 372. Strenuous efforts have been made by the judges to keep the work of the court up to date. Programmes of work have been re-arranged from time to time and monthly sittings instituted in civil, criminal, and matrimonial jurisdictions. But the Chief Justice reports that the burden is now so heavy that an additional judge is urgently required to cope with the work of the court. I do not propose to read the report of His Honour to the House, but it is available if any honourable member desires to peruse it. On the information submitted, the Government has no hesitation in asking Parliament to increase the number of judges as requested.

The other provision of the Bill is a minor one. It deals with the circuit sessions of the Supreme Court at which criminal cases are

commonly tried in country towns. These sessions are held by a judge or practitioner of the Supreme Court under the authority of a commission issued as occasion requires by the Governor. Each commission has to be gazetted 30 days before the holding of the sessions. Under the present law, when a commission has been issued to a named judge or practitioner, and the named person is unable to hold the sessions, only another judge can take his place. It has happened, and no doubt will happen again, that the assignment of a judge to act as a substitute for the judge or practitioner named in a commission causes dislocation of work or is otherwise inconvenient. It is desirable that in such cases there should be power to arrange at short notice for a practitioner to hold the sessions in accordance with the terms of the original commission. It is therefore proposed in clause 4 to enable the Governor, after he has issued a commission for the holding of circuit sessions, to issue a supplementary commission to any practitioner of seven years' standing or more, authorizing such practitioner to hold the circuit sessions in place of the judge or person mentioned in the original commission. A supplementary commission will be issued only on the recommendation of the judges, and the practitioner to whom it is issued will have the same powers as if the original commission had been issued to him.

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

PUBLIC OFFICERS' SALARIES BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins, for the Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill deals with the salaries of the Public Service Commissioner, the Auditor-General, and the Commissioner of Police. These salaries were fixed by Parliament last year at the respective amounts recommended by Mr. President Morgan. In his report concerning them the President said:—

My recommendation as to the salaries which should be fixed by Parliament is that they should be fixed by Parliament at definite sums without provision for any automatic adjustment system. If necessary, owing to a substantial change in the cost of living, they must be reviewed by Parliament itself—there seems to be no wise alternative. It might be necessary for this review for some years to be annual.

It is now over a year since these salaries were fixed and in that time there have been such substantial increases in the cost of living that a review is already justified. Since the President's report the increase in the living wage has been £138 and the salaries of all public servants except those whose rates are fixed by special Acts have increased by at least that amount. One cannot, of course, foretell what the movement in the living wage will be during the remainder of the present financial year. But if it remains the same and if this Bill is not passed, the officers covered by the Bill will, by the end of the present financial year, be £198 worse off as regards cost of living increases than the other officers of the Public Service. Of this sum of £198 approximately £50 is attributable to increases which the officers failed to receive last financial year. In these circumstances the Government is advised that the appropriate course of action is to increase the salaries by £150 and to provide for a payment to each officer of £50 on account of last year's increases. If during the remainder of this year there should be any further substantial rises in the living wage, it will be desirable to review the salaries again next year.

Mr. HUTCHENS secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADVANCES TO SETTLERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

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

That the Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Advances to Settlers Act, 1930-1944.

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

NORTHERN RAILWAYS COMPENSATION BILL.

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

As will be seen from the long title, its object is to provide compensation for losses caused to the inhabitants of our northern areas by the diversion of railway traffic from the present line through Quorn and Hawker to the new line of railway to be constructed on the western side of the Flinders Ranges. The new route for the railway between Stirling North and Brachina has now been settled. South Australia agreed to accept the decision of the Royal Commission on that matter and it is now too

late to raise any further questions about it. It is inevitable that much traffic now taken by the present line through Quorn and Hawker will be diverted to the new line and that there will be some movement of population from Quorn, and some business losses in that town and possibly elsewhere. The Royal Commission recognized these facts, as does the Government. But it is the Government's policy to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that no-one shall suffer undue hardship as a result of the changes which may take place and the Government has introduced this Bill to give effect to that policy and to make its attitude quite clear.

As long ago as 1948 the matter of compensation was raised in the Commonwealth Parliament. In answer to a question asked by Mr. Russell, the Minister for Transport (Mr. Ward) said that if it should be necessary or desirable to depart from the present route, he was sure that any disturbance or loss suffered by workers would be taken into account by the Australian and State Governments, and that adequate compensation or assistance to establish homes elsewhere would be provided for them. So long as the word "worker" is interpreted in a sufficiently wide sense, the views of Mr. Ward coincide with those of the South Australian Government, which is endeavouring to secure from the Commonwealth an undertaking to share the cost of any compensation which may be found payable.

The terms of the Bill are simple. In the first place, it is proposed to establish a committee of three members, to be called "The Northern Railways Compensation Committee." Its term of office will be five years in the first instance and thereafter such term as may be fixed by the Governor. The committee will be entitled to pay any allowances at rates to be approved, and will have the powers of a Royal Commission to enable it to conduct its inquiries. Compensation will be payable under the Bill only for losses arising from reduction or cessation of traffic on the existing railway, where such reduction or cessation is caused by the operation of the new route. The exact classes or items of loss for which claims will be entertained will be prescribed by regulations. Honourable members will realize that the direct and indirect losses caused by diversion of traffic will be of numerous and diverse kinds, and until investigations are made by the committee it will be difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain all of them. Some, no doubt, are fairly obvious, but others are not. As it is not possible at this stage to obtain a comprehensive view of the whole subject, the Government considers it wise to leave the matter to be dealt with by regulations, which, of course, will be subject to Parliamentary control.

The Bill provides that claims for compensation may be lodged up to a day to be fixed by the Minister of Railways, but in any event claimants will have at least three years after the new railway is opened to lodge them. Every claim will be considered by the committee to see if it falls within the Bill, and if it does the claimant's loss will be assessed. When this has been done the actual amount to be paid to the claimant will be determined. In determining this amount the committee must take into account the hardship suffered by each claimant as a result of his loss, and any other circumstances which the committee deems relevant. Payments of compensation and administrative expenses are to be made out of money voted by Parliament, and as I indicated before we hope to have at least half the amount of the compensation recouped to us by the Commonwealth.

The purpose of the Bill is to establish a committee with authority to consider claims for compensation and make recommendations to the Government. The scope of the possible losses is not mentioned in the Bill because at this stage it is hard to know what they will be. It may be found that they are less widespread than is at present thought, and they may be greater. The position will be met by the promulgation of regulations, which will automatically come before Parliament. There are merits in the Bill. I do not believe that a person who has put his life savings into a house in the area where he is employed should suffer a loss because of the adoption of a certain public policy. This is a matter which should be considered and I submit the Bill with confidence.

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

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) obtained leave to introduce a Bill for an act to amend the Road Traffic Act, 1934-51.

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

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 16. Page 544.)

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE (Burnside)—I have not much to say on the Bill at this stage, because in Committee I shall move an amendment to clause 12. It seems to me that many

people have not generally realized the great contribution which has been made by landlords towards stabilizing our economy. I feel that they have made a great contribution also towards the problem of rehabilitating our ex-servicemen, who were, very properly, given protection under the original Landlord and Tenant Act. Legislation of this kind has given rise to a great number of problems. One of the most difficult is the problem of the genuine landlord wanting to repossess his house. I realize that from the point of view of tenants there are grave problems, particularly the problem of finding accommodation which can be afforded and which reasonably suits their domestic requirements. It seems to me that the problems have not been solved, but to some extent ameliorated by the legislation passed last year. It has been the common law practice for many years for people to enter into a perfectly legal arrangement between themselves, which the courts have upheld as not being a tenancy. It gives one party to the arrangement the right to enjoy the occupation of a room or part of a house, but does not legally comply with the definition of "tenancy." By means of the agreement, arrangement or licence, some people have been able to avoid some of the harsh effects of the landlord and tenant legislation. I am certain that a number of these arrangements, agreements or licences were made in good faith and without intent to avoid the rent fixing and other regulations of the Act. I believe also that some people deliberately avoided their legal obligations by one method or another. I do not for a moment condone any practice adopted to avoid obligation. It is the obligation of all people to accept the law. If they do not agree with it the remedy is to make representations for its amendment. I have no brief whatsoever for those who have sought to indulge in, to put it mildly, doubtful practices by entering into agreements, arrangements or licences for the purpose of avoiding the operation of the Act.

I am concerned about most of the *bona fide* cases where an arrangement was entered into, under which a person was given occupation of a dwellinghouse or part of it under certain conditions. One condition may have been that the owner would resume for himself the occupancy of the room or part of the house on a certain date, and that the occupant who was not the tenant under the Act would give up possession on that date. If clause 12 is passed it will operate harshly against those who have entered in good faith into such an arrangement. It would be better to amend the clause to protect the many *bona fide* cases, even if it means that one or two who have improperly entered into such an arrangement have their conditions slightly ameliorated as compared with the conditions which would exist if the clause were passed. I merely intimate now that in Committee I shall move an amendment which will have the effect of mitigating the rather harsh retrospective aspect of clause 12 so far as it concerns agreements, arrangements or licences which are deemed to be contracts to evade the Act. My amendment will modify the effect of clause 12 to the extent that such licences, agreements or arrangements entered into before the passing of this Bill will be brought within the ambit of the Act only with regard to rent fixation, but with regard to obtaining possession the Act will not apply to agreements made before that date.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 11 passed.

Clause 12—"Contracts to evade Act."

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The member for Burnside desires to amend this clause to bring a new class of tenant under its provisions. He desires not to exempt them from the provisions regarding rent fixation, but to exempt those who have previously been subject to these agreements from coming under the provisions regarding eviction orders operating in general with regard to leases and renting propositions. There is no justification for future agreements to be exempted from the provisions of the Act, nor for such arrangements to enjoy any concession with regard to rent fixation. Up to the present these licences have been exempt from the provisions of the Act, for it has not dealt with that type of tenure, but, although not used to any great extent in South Australia today, it is still a lawful form of tenure that has been used more extensively in the past and it should be allowed to continue. I have much sympathy with the amendment viewed in the light of eviction provisions, but only in respect of licences already issued, for I know a number of persons who have entered into a licence because they wanted their house by a specific date and knew that it was not subject to an eviction process. I do not oppose the amendment provided that it deals with licences already issued and then only to the extent of eviction proceedings, and to enable the honourable member to draw up his amendment I ask that progress be reported.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

FRUIT FLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 16. Page 544.)

Mr. WHITTLE (Prospect)—The campaign in this State against the dreaded fruit fly began in 1947 and the Government has frequently been commended on its prompt action in that regard. Until we learned of the existence of the fruit fly here we knew little of its activities in other capital cities, particularly in the suburbs of Sydney and Perth, where, although the climate, soil, and availability of water were comparable with those of Adelaide, practically no fruit could be grown and where spasmodic efforts to grow fruit had been rendered abortive by the ravages of the fruit fly. About two years ago at Gordon, a delightful Sydney suburb comparable with our Adelaide hills, I saw a good crop of oranges growing in a garden and took that as evidence of the ability of householders to grow fruit, but a few days later on visiting a home five miles away I was told that maggots were to be found in oranges which were lying under a tree. I picked up one and found a maggot lying on the ground. Much of the fruit in that State is useless because of the prevalence of the pest. Those who have seen the ravages of the fruit fly in other States realize what South Australia has been saved from as a result of the prompt action taken here. When this legislation was first presented to Parliament a plan to combat the pest had been in operation for some months. The Act merely provides for compensation to be paid to those whose gardens have been stripped. The Government did not need any power to employ men to combat the pest. Many members thought that most of the compensation payments would be paid to commercial growers. Some, including the member for Norwood, said that many householders would not claim compensation for the loss of a few oranges or figs or other fruit and vegetables.

The first outbreak was in 1947, when a large area was affected. Many commercial gardens in Mitcham and Marion and in other areas were stripped. Over £18,000 was paid in compensation in that year compared with £91,000 for the eradication of the fruit fly. The figures were a little lower in 1948—£17,000 for compensation. In 1949 compensation payments increased to over £50,000. I cannot help thinking that a large section of our people thought that they may as well be "in on this" and made claims for compensation. I do not know whether the Minister is aware of the proportion of those compensated who were private householders compared with commercial growers. Householders should have a sense of civic pride in the fact that the Government is doing something which has not been attempted in other States. A combined effort is required to keep this dread pest under control in the metropolitan area because, if it became established, it would spread to our large fruit-growing areas in the country. I know of some people who have had bushels of citrus fruit taken from their trees and, realizing that if they had the fruit they would only give much of it away, they have not asked the Government for compensation. If that attitude had been adopted generally we would not have had to pay so much in compensation. I do not wish to criticize the methods adopted to eradicate the pest, but I have seen men leisurely spraying shrubs in Light Square, and the way the men carry out their instructions, amuses passers-by. I support the Bill, but when applying for compensation greater recognition should be given to the necessity to display some co-operation generally, as people did in war time, when many subscribed to loans carrying no interest. Claims for compensation would then be fewer. I trust that it will not be long before this legislation becomes unnecessary.

Mr. MOIR (Norwood)—I wish to express the opinion of many electors of my district who have been penalized for so many years in the eradication of the fruit fly. They are very disappointed at being in a proclaimed area again. Only today one man placed his complaints before the Minister, but I have heard complaints from several during the past week. Their chief complaint is about the waste of time and material and waste of fruit. It is a considerable time since any maggots or the presence of fruit fly has been reported in the Norwood district and it seems unfortunate that a portion of my electorate has been affected by every outbreak.

Mr. Riches—Your people are complaining about the continued waste of time and money?

Mr. MOIR—Yes. We often see half a dozen men sitting on a truck outside a property and doing nothing. I am disappointed that the Government has had to continue this legislation for another year. The member for Prospect said the people are not worried so much about compensation, but about the fact that young fruit is being picked year after year and dropped on the ground without being picked up and destroyed. That is only half doing the

job, and the sooner the eradication steps can be discontinued the better because the State would be saved much money. The department has already prevented the spread of the pest. We are all disappointed that our Loan funds are not sufficient to carry out necessary works. By reducing the amount spent on the eradication of the fruit fly we would have more money to erect hospitals and schools and carry out water schemes. I hope the legislation will not be continued after this year.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—I was pleased to hear the member for Norwood say that the Horticultural Branch of the Department of Agriculture had overcome the fruit fly menace. That in itself is an admission that some good has been accomplished. If he is satisfied that the efforts of the department in eradicating the pest were successful I do not think he should have any complaints, but should allow the law to remain in operation so that the same department may, in the event of another outbreak, get busy immediately and save the State from the menace. Prior to the first outbreak we were one of the few States of Australia free of the pest.

Mr. Whittle—This legislation is not necessary to enable the department to combat it. The law only provides for the payment of compensation to householders whose fruit has been taken.

Mr. SHANNON—If I were a member representing a metropolitan constituency I would seek to have the law permanently on the Statute Book. We may wait some years before another outbreak occurs, if we get another, but if Parliament were not in session action would have to be taken and then ratified at a later date. If the department had not acted quickly during the first outbreak the pest would have spread to our fruit-growing districts in the country. We would then have been involved in great expenditure in combating it. Some States have not attempted to eradicate the fruit fly because they are frightened by the cost. New South Wales and Western Australia are so badly affected that householders rarely get a piece of fruit fit to eat. Had our commercial orchards been badly affected our markets would have been closed to us. Other States know that our fruit is clean, and we have even built up a good citrus market in New Zealand. I agree that in the early stages of the campaign there were some legitimate causes for complaint. The Horticultural Branch was forced to accept any labour offering, some of which was anything but satisfactory. I had instances reported to me of men who were supposed to be picking fruit having a game of cards and drinking. However, even with that type of labour the job was accomplished. I pay a tribute to Mr. Strickland and his officers for their effective work in protecting South Australia against the fruit fly. I heartedly support the second reading.

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—With other honourable members, I regret the need for the Bill. This type of measure demands the greatest loyalty from the public and I feel sure that support will be forthcoming. The fruit fly could be extremely detrimental to the State's fruit growing industry, and therefore every care and attention should be given to the reports of those people who suspect its presence. If its destruction is of importance to the State's economy, should not all share in its eradication? Mr. Whittle mentioned the enormous losses incurred in New South Wales, and the spread of the pest could have similar effects here. Mr. Moir criticized the employees engaged in the work of eradication, but I think his remarks were somewhat unwarranted and unfair. As Mr. Shannon said, the labour was of a casual nature, the men not being specially trained for the work. I express appreciation to the departmental officers for their efforts in eradicating the fruit fly and support the second reading.

Mr. DUNNAGE (Unley)—I join with other metropolitan members in commending the Government for introducing this legislation. Possibly my district has been more affected by the ban than any other. During all the years this law has been in operation I have received not more than half a dozen complaints about the loss of fruit. Most people have no idea of the value of their fruit, but because one man up the street applied for compensation at the rate of 10s. a case, others came to the conclusion that theirs was of equal value, and that they might as well apply for it. If compensation had not been so generous in the first instance, some would never have applied for it. Owing to the devastation of the fruit fly in New South Wales my son is unable to grow fruit successfully in his backyard. It must be picked before it is ripe and the trees are retained mainly for decorative purposes. It is a tragedy that such fruit must be wasted, and I hope that that will never occur in South Australia. One of the features of Adelaide and its suburbs is the wonderful fruit

and vegetables grown in private gardens. Complaints I have received from my district related chiefly to damage to plants other than fruit trees. One well-known Adelaide doctor lost a beautiful hedge in his driveway and attributed this to the poison sprayed indiscriminately by the fruit pickers.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins—The spray used does not kill anything. It is only a lure for the flies.

Mr. DUNNAGE—If that is true the doctor must be wrong in his contention, but it is strange that the hedge died after the sprayers had done their job. I support the Bill and hope it will be kept on the Statute Book for some time yet.

Mr. TEUSNER (Angas)—From the remarks of metropolitan members one would gather that the measure is of importance only to the metropolitan area. However, it is also of extreme importance to certain rural areas. One can imagine the result if the fruit fly campaign had been unsuccessful. The destruction which could occur to our fruit industry can be appreciated, and one can imagine the effect on the State's economy. I will submit figures to indicate what it would mean to South Australia if the fruit industry was jeopardized by the fruit fly. For the five years to 1951 the average annual production of apricots in this State was 462,000 bushels, oranges 1,041,000 bushels, apples 716,000 bushels, currants, 103,000cwt., and raisins 161,000cwt. There is no need to refer in detail to dried fruit production but I would like to mention that in 1950-51 we produced nearly 16,000cwt. of dried apricots and nearly 10,000cwt. of prunes. If the fruit fly spread into country areas, within a short period fruitgrowing would be jeopardized to such an extent that it would be impossible to export dried fruit. I say that advisedly, for I understand that certain countries place an embargo upon dried fruit coming from a country in which fruit fly is prevalent, so it will be seen that had the rural areas of our State been infected it is possible that a tremendous amount of this trade would have been lost. In recent months I have seen something of the ravages of the fruit fly, particularly the Queensland fruit fly, in northern New South Wales and Queensland, and because of what I saw and what I heard from orchardists in those States I would be only too happy to support any legislation of the nature of that before the House. The fact that compensation is offered to people who have to remove fruit or vegetables in proclaimed areas is some incentive for them to report any infestation which occurs. In view of the tremendous benefit which can accrue to the State as the result of this legislation I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.23 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, September 18, at 2 p.m.