

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, September 18, 1952.

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

QUESTIONS.

RADIUM HILL HOUSING.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—In reply to a question that I asked on Tuesday regarding housing at Radium Hill the Minister of Lands, in the absence of the Premier, indicated that the bulk of the houses built so far had been allotted to skilled personnel, administrative staff, and to persons in one or two other categories. A number of married men are employed at the field on lesser tasks and they are suffering great hardship through having to maintain themselves there and their families elsewhere. They see, of course, some merit in providing accommodation for key personnel that are hard to get, but they would like to know whether it is the intention of the Government to build further houses at the field and whether they will receive consideration in the allotment of them?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It is the intention of the Government to build further houses at Radium Hill and to give the type of worker referred to by the honourable member the opportunity of housing. I think he appreciates that in all new ventures it is not possible to turn the handle and produce a complete town, with all amenities, overnight. For instance, the problems we had at Leigh Creek and Whyalla are only now reasonably solved, but I assure the honourable member that the housing programme at Radium Hill will be enlarged from time to time and that all categories there will be given a fair opportunity.

TOTALIZATOR FAULT AT BALAKLAVA.

Mr. PATTINSON—Today's *Advertiser* contains a report about the automatic totalizator which developed a mechanical fault at the Balaklava races yesterday, "ran amok, declared fantastic dividends for five races, and was then closed down before the last race." The report suggests that a mechanical fault "had caused the electrically-operated totomobile to declare unusual and liberal dividends," but today's *News* reports a statement from the manager of Automatic Totalizators Limited suggesting that the fault might have been a human one. The incident reinforces a doubt that has been exercising my mind for some time—whether it is possible to check an automatic totalizator during the progress of its operations.

Under the old method the police could substantially check the dividends on every race by taking a count of the number of tickets issued on each horse.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order. I think that the honourable member is now giving information.

Mr. PATTINSON—Will the Premier obtain a report from the Commissioner of Police as to whether an automatic totalizator can be checked, or whether it is possible to set or rig a totalizator in advance to pay consistently small dividends? I am not suggesting that that has been done or could happen here; I am only asking the question to make assurance doubly sure. Has the Premier's attention been drawn to grave allegations made by the police in New Zealand of fraudulent manipulation of the totalizator mechanism so that the correct number of tickets was not recorded on each race? Is he aware that the New Zealand Prime Minister (Mr. Holland) and his Cabinet have the matter under consideration and that Mr. Shand, Q.C., has visited Wellington for a discussion on the matter at police headquarters? Will the Premier obtain a report to allay any suspicion, however unfounded, that such a thing could possibly happen here?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will bring the question before the notice of the Chief Secretary, under whose department the matter would come. I am sure he will accede to this request and obtain a report, but I am not certain whether it will be obtained by police officers. If it is a matter connected with totalizator mechanism it may be necessary to get a technical officer to examine it.

Mr. SHANNON—It is understood generally, from the statements of those concerned at Balaklava, that there was some defect in the mobile automatic totalizator which caused the abnormal dividends declared by the machine involving the company in a considerable loss, variously estimated at some thousands of pounds—I have heard one estimate of £7,000—although only about £3,000 was invested on the machine. If such a defect is possible is it likely to occur in the reverse direction, thereby denying the investing public of their rightful dividends by returning them much lower amounts than those to which they are entitled? If this is likely will the resultant surpluses revert to the proprietors of the machine? If this is possible, has the Premier considered the desirability of instructing an officer of the Betting Control Board to be in attendance to police the operations of totalizators?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Without knowing much about the technical set-up of totalizers I would presume that it is possible for instruments of this description to make mistakes. That has been shown by the recent experience at Balaklava. Already there is a close check upon the result of the operations of totalizers because under the legislation I believe the surplus fractions go to certain charities. Because I did not have the information I informed the honourable member for Glenelg that I would obtain a report which would obviously take into consideration all matters that have been raised. I believe the operations at Balaklava were unusual and if there had been any doubt in the minds of the Auditor-General or the police about totalizer operations some report would have been issued. I will have every angle investigated to see that the machines are, in fact, carrying out the purposes for which they were designed.

Mr. STEPHENS—When inquiries are being made, will the Premier ask his officers, in the event of a big loss being made, who would be responsible for it? Would the responsibility rest with the racing body or the totalizer company? Will he inquire into the financial position of some of these totalizer companies?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government has no authority to inquire into the financial position of any private persons or companies unless there is some suggestion of default in their public obligations or of evading taxation. Even then the inquiry would have to be instituted under a specific law and under strict secrecy. The general affairs of a company are outside the province of our investigating officers. The press report, to my mind, made it clear that the company would accept full responsibility for payment of any loss and would pay out on all winning tickets. There was no hesitation on the company's part in saying that.

Mr. Stephens—Will you wait until a company defaults and robs the people before you take any action?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Had the honourable member listened to Mr. Pattinson's question he would have seen that the matter of protection of the public was fully answered. The investigation of the affairs of a company against which no charge has been preferred seems to me to be a matter outside the Government's province and not in accordance with the traditions of this country. The Government will see that the public is protected in regard to these machines.

QUALITY OF MEAT PIES.

Mr. HUTCHENS—It has been brought to my notice on a number of occasions by constituents of mine, and I have noticed first-hand, that pies sold as meat pies in the metropolitan area contain no meat whatsoever, but only what appears to be syrup or thick gravy. In view of the prices charged, will the Premier ask the Prices Commissioner to investigate the complaints and, if they are found to be correct, get him to issue a warning that if such practices continue action will be taken to fix a price in accordance with the nature of the commodity supplied?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will have the matter examined.

EGG PRICES.

Mr. McLACHLAN—A letter appeared in yesterday's press from "Frustrated Producer," a resident in my constituency, complaining about the prices received for eggs from the Egg Board. Can the Minister of Agriculture throw any light on the accusations contained in the letter?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I noticed the letter in yesterday morning's press and asked the chairman of the Egg Board if he could give me a report on the matter. He states:—

With regard to the comment on South Australian egg prices by "Frustrated Producer," Rendelsham, I have to report that with the meagre details appearing in the statement, it is difficult to know how the 3s. difference in price between the producer and consumer is arrived at. The present wholesale buying prices of the board are:—First quality hen 4s. 1d., first quality medium 3s. 6d., second quality 2s. 9d., and ungraded 3s. 1d.

All these prices are less 4½d. per dozen handling charges which are paid by the board to the grading agents for the receiving, candling, grading and selling, and 1½d. per dozen, the amount of pool levy. The 1½d. per dozen is the only amount retained by the board and it is used for administrative costs, equalization and other matters associated with board control. Where applicable, cost of freight would also be deducted (estimated not to exceed 1½d. per dozen). There is a retail margin of 6d. per dozen allowed to the retailers for the selling of the eggs.

In the circumstances it is difficult to understand how the prices could have got so low as "Frustrated Producer" suggests he is receiving. Possibly the eggs were not up to the standard necessary even for second quality price.

CONTROL OF TRAMWAYS.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—During the recent Parliamentary recess the Treasurer conferred with representatives of the Adelaide City Council and other metropolitan councils concerning the management of the tramways, and he is reported in the *Advertiser* of September 12 as having said:—

If a Bill were introduced separately from the Budget involving £500,000 taxation it would probably not be passed by Parliament.

The inference is that Parliament would not favour raising the sum and that the Treasurer proposed to do it by including it in the Budget. I am not anxious about the raising of the money, but the spending of it. Before this money is spent will a Bill on the matter be introduced so that members will have an opportunity of full discussion on it?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The honourable member has been a member of Parliament for a considerable time and is not unaware of the procedure governing the expenditure of money. No Government can spend money unless it is first appropriated by Parliament, whose chief function is to control such expenditure. Members will have a full opportunity to see how much money is proposed to be spent on behalf of the State and precisely how it would be spent. This matter would come before Parliament in two ways—in the form of the authority to spend the money as contained in the Appropriation Bill, and also in the form of legislation which would approve of the arrangement made in connection with it.

TRANSPORT OF EYRE PENINSULA SHEEP.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—I understand that the Premier received a deputation last week from the Wheat and Woolgrowers' Association of South Australia, which I was unable to attend because of absence in the country. At this deputation the question of transport on Eyre Peninsula was discussed. I am particularly interested in the transport of surplus sheep from Eyre Peninsula, a matter that I have ventilated here on a number of occasions, and the problems associated with which are by no means solved. It is apparent that the killing capacity at Port Lincoln is limited. I saw figures, only yesterday, indicating that the percentage of sheep which will qualify for export on Eyre Peninsula is comparatively low, under 50 per cent. This means that the disposal of sheep rejected for export will be a very serious problem. Moreover, I understand from a letter I have

that operators on Eyre Peninsula are not buying sheep because of the limited space available at Port Lincoln, and consequently the market for sheep is extremely depressed. I would like to have a reply to my question today because this week-end I am going to my district, where there is a lively interest in the matter. Can the Premier say whether any decision has been made to provide a free road for bringing sheep right through to the metropolitan abattoirs? I can inform him authoritatively that the rate for carrying sheep right through by road from my district is 10s. a head, whereas via Port Pirie it is 13s. a head, which means a considerable difference, and perhaps all the difference between profit and loss in the disposal of the sheep.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It is true that the deputation mentioned this and other matters in regard to transport from Eyre Peninsula. The request of the deputation was twofold. The first matter was that sheep should be permitted to come across here because of the congestion at the Port Lincoln freezers, and because the graziers on Eyre Peninsula considered that by the time the Port Lincoln freezers would be in a position to take sheep for export they would have lost their bloom. It was considered that the season had gone back somewhat because at the time there were dry conditions. The second matter was that carriers bringing sheep over should be allowed to have a free road to take commodities back to Eyre Peninsula to enable the carriage of the commodities to be undertaken economically. I had that same request from another deputation at Port Lincoln, but on investigation I found that some of the matters which the deputation presented had not been fully examined. I found in actual fact that there is more capacity available to slaughter on Eyre Peninsula than there will be on the mainland. Almost immediately after the deputation was received by me the first notice was given by the abattoirs that pending the completion of the lambing season the board regretted that it would not be able to handle sheep for export. Actually the chain at Port Lincoln is not working to capacity. Last week it was having some difficulty in getting sufficient stock to maintain its operations. The Transport Control Board will consider all cases on their merits, and I assure the honourable member that every attempt will be made to see that Eyre Peninsula, in common with other parts of the State, gets the very best possible service.

PROCEDURE ON QUESTIONS.

Mr. FRED WALSH—I have been in this place for about 10 years and know the procedure followed by the Speaker, Sir Robert Nicholls, regarding the asking of questions. It may not be strictly in conformity with Standing Orders, but I do not know the procedure that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, follow in calling upon members. I have risen, as you have advised members that you desire them to rise, and have understood you have taken a note of my name. Is one expected to rise up and down like a cork every time he wants to attract your attention, and is your procedure different from that of the Speaker?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Dunks)—Firstly, I think the expression “rise up and down like a cork” is unparliamentary language and I would not expect any one to follow that course, but it has been the procedure for a number of years for the Speaker to take a nod or the flick of a finger from a member who wants to ask a question. I do not like it and I said I thought the proper procedure was for a member to stand if he wished to ask a question. I follow that procedure when a member stands, and if I think he wants to ask a question, make a note of his name. In due course, if he still looks as if he wants to ask a question and makes any movement as if he were going to rise in his place I call on him. I intend to follow that procedure as I do not think it too much to ask the member to make a movement two or three times, if necessary, until he is seen by the Speaker. I had intended calling on the member for Thebarton next. I think I explained previously that Standing Orders cover the matter and I intend to continue to carry out that practice.

ALLEGED RACING CONSPIRACY.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Has the Premier anything further to report in reply to the question I asked on August 19 in respect of the disqualification of a trainer and jockey because of an alleged conspiracy at the Berri races on June 7?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have a number of papers in my bag; but I am not sure whether this is among them. If it is not I will see that the honourable member has a reply tomorrow.

SWEETMAN'S ROAD DRAIN.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked on August 12 regarding the drain on Sweetman's Road?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The question was asked some time ago and the reply is dated accordingly. The Commissioner of Highways reported that work was stopped on Sweetman's Road in order that labour and equipment could be transferred to locations where drainage was extremely urgent, as housing areas were either liable to or had actually suffered from flooding. The Sweetman's Road drain, although unsightly in its open condition, does not involve any such liability of flooding houses. While it is not at present possible to state a time for the resumption of work this will be done as soon as the more urgent works are completed. I will obtain a more up-to-date report as to when the work is likely to be done.

INTEREST RATES.

Mr. STOTT—Can the Premier say whether any conclusion has been reached by the Loan Council in connection with the fixing of interest rates? If the State Bank intends to raise interest rates how does that coincide with the announcement of the Premier that he is definitely in favour of levelling rates?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have formally asked the Chairman of the Loan Council to call a meeting for the purpose of considering the question of interest rates which have been raised by some semi-governmental authorities in Australia. The position is that a large number of semi-governmental bodies are scrambling for money on a market that does not appear to be adequate for their purposes, and consequently there is a tendency for competitive rates to be offered. That is a position which requires the attention of the Loan Council. I have publicly announced that I have formally requested a meeting of the Loan Council and I believe that as a result of that suggestion Victoria has also asked for a meeting. I did hear, over the air, that the Premier of Tasmania was in favour of a meeting, but I do not know whether he has made any formal request. Under the Constitution if three States formally ask for a meeting it must be held. I believe this is one of the most serious matters concerning us at present. Interest rates have been rising very rapidly and, if we force them up to an abnormally high level, it must most detrimentally affect the economic progress of this country. It has always been and always will be the policy of the State Bank to keep interest rates down to the lowest possible level, but, when money available to the bank is available only at an increased cost, that cost

must be passed on, as the bank could not remain in business very long by borrowing money at a high rate and lending it at a low rate, for it must cover its administrative expenses. Within those limits both the State Government and the State Bank are anxious to keep the rates of interest stable. I point out that to my knowledge South Australia and Queensland are the only two States where semi-governmental bodies have not raised money at a rate in excess of 4½ per cent. All the other States have been raising loans at £4 12s. 6d., with a tendency now of even that rate to be firmed up.

LAND SETTLEMENT AGISTMENT FEES.

Mr. BROOKMAN—I draw the attention of the Minister of Lands to a letter in yesterday's *Advertiser* written by a prospective settler on Kangaroo Island, who questioned the right of the Land Board to charge agistment fees for stock. Is the Minister prepared to consider that letter and bring down a report?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have not seen that letter, but I shall be pleased to read it and bring down a report for the honourable member.

HOUSING TRUST CONTRACTORS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I feel compelled to ask the following question because, through ever-increasing costs, the capital cost of homes being erected by the Housing Trust is becoming too great for many purchasers. I have a copy of an agreement between Martin Housing Limited and certain of its employees, which I am prepared to submit to the Treasurer and other members for their consideration. Mr. Dallwitz, formerly Principal Architect of the Housing Trust, has relinquished that office to become manager of this company. The agreement includes the following words:—

Indemnify and keep for ever indemnified the builder from all actions, claims, suits, and demands which may be brought against the builder for or arising out of any of the works done by the subcontractors or for any act or thing done or omitted to be done by them or either of them or any servant, workman or agent of theirs in relation thereto.

That indicates a violation of the principle referred to in answer to a question by me the other day, that the Housing Trust endeavours to obtain contractors who observe award rates and conditions. I believe it is the Government's policy—and it would be the policy of the Opposition—to observe conciliation and arbitration in industry. I ask the Premier,

did Mr. Dallwitz, when overseas, say that workmen would be brought here under a guarantee of employment for two years at award rates, and were they informed by an officer of the Migration Department in England that they could earn up to £25 a week under award rates? Were the men told that carpenters engaged on the erection of pre-fabricated, imported homes would receive £165 per unit, and that bricklayers would receive £17 for each chimney erected? I do not know what plumbers' or painters' rates were quoted, but I believe they would be in accordance with the other high rates offered. I understand that the men have been working on week-ends, particularly on Sundays, like the employees of the Orlit Company, to earn an extraordinarily high weekly income. Will the Premier examine this matter to see if it is not breaking down an important principle of Australian industrial conditions? Was Mr. Dallwitz responsible for recruiting the labour, and if it is not possible for the company Mr. Dallwitz is manager of to observe the contract system laid down by the Housing Trust, will the trust endeavour to get another contractor to carry out the work as normally carried out by the trust?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I am sure every member agrees that it is desirable to keep the price of houses down as much as possible. One of the big causes of the recession in the other States in the building industry arose out of the fact that housing costs got beyond the price which people could afford to pay. I am equally certain that the Housing Trust, of all housing authorities in Australia, has done its utmost to keep the price of its houses down to an economic level. I have no information about the other details the honourable member has mentioned, but I will secure it and let him have a reply in due course. Obviously, I could not know the details of a whole host of contracts, but I understand that the agreement he is concerned about is one that offers incentive payments, and that is probably the cause of all the complaints he has raised.

SALARIES OF WOMEN POLICE.

Mr. FLETCHER—Has the Premier a reply to a question I asked last Tuesday about a suggested cut of 25 per cent in the salaries of women police?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—For many years women constables have had their salaries fixed by Cabinet, and for some time they were fixed on the basis of the salaries provided by the

Arbitration Court for male constables. The general principle of the Arbitration Court is to fix the women's wage at 75 per cent of the men's on the ground, I believe, that a man usually has to support a wife and family, whereas usually a woman does not have to support a husband. For many years the salaries of women police were fixed by Cabinet on the basis of the total wage of a constable, but in recent years there have been a number of recommendations against that procedure because it has gradually become inequitable and resulted in officers in the Women Police Department getting salaries much higher than those of women in other Government instrumentalities who have had their salaries fixed by the Arbitration Court. As a result, the salaries of women police have risen far above those of females employed in hospitals, gaols, and other institutions. In some instances they get salaries higher than people in other departments who are doing very responsible work. There has been no cut in the salaries of women police, but the last time the matter came under review Cabinet decided not to continue to base their salaries on 100 per cent of the male constables' rates: that the basic wage adjustment would not be passed on to them as it was to the men.

HOUSES FOR DEFENCE PERSONNEL.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Can the Premier say whether any preference is afforded by the Housing Trust to persons because their employment is associated with the country's defence programme?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—On a number of occasions during the past eight or 10 years 10 or a dozen requests have been made by the Prime Minister for special consideration to be given to key personnel brought out by the Commonwealth Government for special scientific defence work of the highest order. This had reference mainly to work carried out at Salisbury in connection with the Woomera rocket range. If the Housing Trust receives a direct request from the Prime Minister, through the State, it tries to meet our national obligations fairly. We have insisted upon the Prime Minister personally making a request in each case and nobody can get in except in cases that are fully justified. Mr. Chifley, when Prime Minister, made similar requests to those made by Mr. Menzies, but they have been relatively few.

REMARK IRRIGATION TRUST ACT
AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Minister of Lands) brought up the report of the Select Committee, together with minutes of proceedings and evidence.

Report ordered to be printed.

Bill taken through Committee without amendment. Committee's report adopted.

ADVANCES TO SETTLERS ACT
AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the Hon. T. PLAYFORD and read a first time.

ELECTRICITY TRUST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the Hon. T. PLAYFORD and read a first time.

THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GAS COMPANY'S ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Bill taken through Committee without amendment and Committee's report adopted.

SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT
BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 17. Page 574.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This is a short and simple Bill and provides the necessary legal authority for the appointment of another judge of the Supreme Court. As it is 26 years since the panel of judges was last increased and the population of the State has increased from 561,000 to 723,000 in the interim, apparently there is sound justification for the appointment, which is strongly recommended by the Chief Justice in a report presented to Parliament. I noticed that when the Premier introduced the second reading and after he had referred to the increased population he added, "Naturally the business of the court increases with the growth of population." I do not agree with that remark. I was one of those in my callow youth who had visions that the public, by education, example, and the desire to live according to the golden rule would be made so much better that, even if the population increased, the demands on the courts would decrease. I do not know whether someone in South Australia set a bad example or whether something is wrong with the general community system of education and enlightenment, but, unfortunately, we are now asked to

accept the position that it is a natural concomitant of an increase in population that there must be an increase in court work, entailing the services of additional judges.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—Could not many of the cases be civil cases?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—There is a grave difference of opinion among members whether some of the civil cases should go before the courts, but I notice that the Chief Justice's report mentions that in recent years there has been a tremendous increase in divorce cases. If I had my way they would not come before the court. I believe in the dictum, "Those whom God have joined together let no man put asunder." If the people adhered to that there might not be so much increase in crime. I agree with the reasons advanced by the Premier for the appointment of another judge, and offer no objection to that part of the Bill. Another part relates to the issue of commissions to practitioners of the court enabling them to take the place of a judge on circuit work in certain circumstances. Under the present law if the judge or practitioner named in the commission is unable to attend the circuit session, only another judge can take his place. The Bill provides that, in such circumstances, the Governor may appoint another practitioner to carry out the duties. This is a necessary amendment.

Mr. Shannon—Do you agree with the seven years' qualifying period?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Before any practitioner can be appointed now he must have served the qualifying period. I can see no reason why the man who takes the place of another should not possess the same qualification.

Mr. Shannon—He might not have had seven years' experience.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The term of seven years as a practitioner before the Supreme Court was incorporated in the Act many years ago to ensure that persons appointed to perform circuit work should have a certain qualification and experience. That has remained constant over the years and I see no reason why we should not insist on the same qualification for the substitute practitioner to be appointed. I support the second reading.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment. Committee's report adopted.

PUBLIC OFFICERS' SALARIES BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 17. Page 574.)

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—This is a simple and short Bill, which I do not oppose. I understand that it makes up to the Auditor-General and the Police Commissioner money they have lost through their salaries not being subject to cost of living adjustments. In explaining the Bill the Minister said that if this continued they would lose £198 by the end of the financial year. It is regrettable that under the law the salaries of these public officers are not subject to cost of living adjustments. This is not a new matter as far as the Opposition is concerned, because on August 21, 1951, page 387 of *Hansard*, the Leader of the Opposition said:—

In effect, the proposed amendment standardizes the Auditor-General's salary at £2,300; but whereas salaries paid to some other public servants at the same level are subject to a cost of living and marginal revisions, the salary of the Auditor-General will not be so subject. This is unfair to the Auditor-General if further cost of living and marginal revision adjustments take place upward, and unfair to the State if they take place downward. The same principle applies to the Commissioner of Police under the proposed amendment of the Police Act.

The Bill represents the only reasonable act the Government could take to deal with this injustice to the public officers. I regret that they should be subject to criticism through the need to pass a similar Bill each year. Mr. President Morgan held that view and the Government should correct the position. Members of Parliament spend considerable time, at much personal cost, in dealing with public matters, and if it is right for the Auditor-General and the Police Commissioner to be treated as they are under this Bill members of Parliament should be treated in the same way.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—The honourable member has raised the important point as to whether the salaries of these officers should be subject to automatic adjustments or whether they should be subject to control by Parliament. Over a long period this and other Parliaments have been rather particular about their prerogatives regarding certain officers. When the salaries were considered by the President of the Industrial Court not long ago he specifically pointed out that these three officers held positions in some ways comparable with those of judges, and in those circumstances he recommended

that they should not have automatic adjustments, but that their salaries should be fixed by Parliament and not by the Executive. These officers hold very special posts involving reports to Parliament and administrative work of the highest importance to Parliament, and their salaries should be fixed by the Legislature. I would deplore just as much as any member of the Opposition that officers of their standing, who have rendered such signal service to the State, should suffer any salary disability. For instance, Mr. Bishop has the very highest ideals of service, and I do not know whether all members are aware of the considerable financial sacrifice he made when leaving the Commonwealth Public Service in order to return to the State Service, for which he has a very great love. His seniority was such that he would undoubtedly quickly have become the head of the Commonwealth Taxation Department, but he returned to the State and has rendered it magnificent service in many ways. However, he is an officer of Parliament, and it has always been considered that Parliament should fix the salaries of its officers rather than it should be done by the Executive. I give the assurance, however, that if the occasion arises again the Government will see that the matter is again brought before Parliament.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2—"Increase of salaries and payment of cost of living allowances."

Mr. FRANK WALSH—From the explanation just given by the Treasurer to the House it would appear that it is vital to ask Parliament, on each occasion the necessity arises, to make adjustments to the salaries of these officers if they are affected by considerable increases in the basic wage. Further increases in the basic wage may occur while Parliament is in recess and I should like to know whether, in that event, there is any way by which their salaries could be adjusted accordingly. On the other hand, I have no desire to see their salaries reduced in the event of the basic wage declining.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I would like to give the Committee the precise recommendation made by President Morgan when he dealt with this matter at the same time as he dealt with the salaries of members of Parliament and others. It was as follows:—

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. If so, provision, I believe, could be made in the Supply Bill which is brought down in June of each year.

I know it is idle to make forecasts, but I believe that the basic wage increases will tend to be less sharp in the future, as the State's economy tends to become stabilized. I assure the honourable member that the matter will be watched closely, and if it is shown that these salaries require alteration so frequently as to be irksome, we will have to examine some alternative.

Clause passed.

Remaining clause (3) and title passed.

Bill reported without amendment; Committee's report adopted.

URANIUM MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 19. Page 429.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill is one of the most important measures that this Parliament has been called upon to consider for some time, not only because of the importance of its subject matter but because the wide provisions it contains cut right across some of the ideas of freedom and justice that many Opposition members have held for many years. It was heralded, when first mentioned some weeks ago, by a spate of press criticism in which all manner of suggestions were made in opposition to the Bill. That was before members had any idea of what the Bill contained, before they had the benefit of the Premier's second reading speech and before they had an opportunity of looking at the Bill. The press apparently knew all about it and got busy in their opposition to the principal features of the Bill. This, of course, had members guessing as to what the Bill would provide, but it shows that members generally have much wisdom because they did not rush in to follow the press lead but waited to see the Bill's provisions and to learn all the reasons for its introduction before passing final judgment. Some members may have been doubtful about these new-found champions of freedom and democracy that indulged in criticism of the Bill because it was the first time anything of that nature had emanated from that source. Be that as it may, I think this early

criticism did some good. There has been an unfortunate tendency in recent times for Ministers to give meagre information when moving second readings of Bills, but, this time, whether because of the criticism or an afterthought I do not know, the Treasurer had an addendum to his prepared second reading speech which was interposed at a certain period and which contained more words and infinitely more information than the original speech. To that extent the House is richer as a result of the early criticism which heralded the introduction of the Bill.

In considering the measure we have to bear two things in mind—firstly the great importance of our natural resources, the development of which this Bill is intended to protect to some material extent, and secondly the degree to which we have to sacrifice principles which many of us hold near and dear in order to effectively protect the development of those resources. The value of the main field, which will be assisted by the passing of this Bill, can be assessed to some extent by the amount already spent upon it by the South Australian Government. When I say “the South Australian Government” I include the South Australian Parliament, because Parliament has made this money available on appropriation at the instance of the Government and it must take the responsibility in the final analysis for the expenditure of that money. The total expenditure on exploration and development of uranium in South Australia to June 30, 1951, was £387,000, made up of £293,000 at Radium Hill, £69,000 at Mount Painter, and £25,000 elsewhere. In addition the Estimates for the year 1951-52 provided for the expenditure of £2,882,000 on the development of certain State resources. The Treasurer in explaining the item said:—

This represents an increase of £575,000 over last year's expenditure and the principal factor contributing to this increase is the necessity to considerably expand exploratory and developmental work in connection with the mining of uranium at Radium Hill.

I assume that £575,000 is to be added to the £293,000 which had been expended on the development of Radium Hill prior to June 30, 1951, giving a grand total of £868,000 which has been or is in the process of being expended by the South Australian Parliament on these deposits.

The Hon. T. Playford—In addition there is the amount set out in this year's Loan Estimates.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, nearly £4,000,000. From time to time reference has been made

to the great value of uranium to Australia and to the question of whether it should be developed by State or private enterprise or a combination of the two. This matter should be viewed in its proper perspective, and one of the best articles I have read on it was the following contained in the *News* of June 23:—

Australia's uranium is a priceless national asset. In the light of recent scientific advances, it can transform the outlook for Australian industry and Australian development. It can mean as much as the discovery of coal and oil in the middle decades of last century meant to America. It can be the starting point for Australia as a big nation. Is Mr. Menzies now bartering away this tremendous long-term opportunity for a short-term financial gain? The public does not know much of what is going on in the Prime Minister's negotiations in Washington, but enough has come out to cause extreme anxiety. On Saturday it was reported that Mr. Menzies was about to complete “a big uranium deal” with America, which would permit dollar restrictions to be lifted and enable U.S. luxury goods as well as aircraft and arms to be imported. Well and good—if it can be managed without sacrifice of Australia's own future. But today Australians were stunned to read that Mr. Menzies in Washington is “pressing for Australia to retain a quota of all current uranium production for stock-piling and ultimate domestic use”. Why “pressing?” It is not usual for the owner of a valuable possession to plead for the right to do what he likes with it. Mr. Menzies should remember that the uranium deposits do not belong to any Government of the day or to a few departmental bureaucrats in Canberra. They belong to the people of Australia. Nothing binding about the development and use of the uranium fields should be settled without the full knowledge and approval of the Australian people. Yet a Government, which after all has only a limited term of office, seems to be engaging in negotiations which may affect the control of this new and vast asset for a generation or more. No-one can question that Mr. Menzies is in dire need of American and Canadian dollars. No-one can question the desirability of getting modern tanks and planes off American and British production lines which would be far in advance of anything we could build for ourselves in the next few years. No-one questions the desirability of supplying the western world with uranium for defence needs. But Australia must insist that it retains complete control of its own uranium.

It has been suggested from time to time that, rather than develop Radium Hill as a State enterprise as at present, it should be handed over to the Commonwealth. Although we have been told that the Commonwealth has entered into certain arrangements with the United States of America, we have not been told their nature; but in any event it has been

authoritatively announced that the Commonwealth is entering on the development of uranium deposits in the Northern Territory on the basis of either a partnership with private enterprise or a complete reliance on private enterprise. However, we do not know the implications of such an arrangement, and in this regard I must mention one or two important factors. Firstly, security must be considered, for I fail to see how it is possible to completely maintain the security, which the Premier says is desirable and which is provided for in this Bill, if we are to depend on some private employer or employers to control the men engaged in the work of mining and treating uranium. Moreover, I fail to see how the interests of Australia can be properly served if private enterprise is to develop this highly important mineral, for it is entirely different from all other minerals in that it has no commercial value and cannot be sold except on a Government to Government basis. Nobody knows what price Governments are prepared to pay for uranium, and I think that is just as well. Under those circumstances how is it possible for private enterprise to develop and market this mineral in the interests of the nation? I admit that private enterprise can perform functions such as those which it is performing at Radium Hill: for instance, sinking a shaft; but in the interests of Australia we should retain complete control of the development, treatment, and marketing of this mineral.

There would have been an easy way out of this problem for this Parliament. An Act passed by the Commonwealth Parliament in June provides for all the controls provided for by this legislation and, in some instances, for much severer penalties for offences. As members know, Commonwealth legislation can only apply in Commonwealth territories or to undertakings owned by the Commonwealth Government, and whilst we retain control of our uranium deposits the security blanket provided by the Commonwealth legislation cannot apply in this State. It would have been an easy way out for Parliament to take the advice of the people who criticize the Premier and this legislation and hand the whole thing over to the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth legislation, however, is more severe, in many respects, than that we are asked to approve now. I am pleased we have decided to consider this legislation seriously and to continue the development of the field in the interests of

the nation, but having regard to the importance of having its control in the hands of our Parliament.

Some provisions of the Bill cut across many of the things I believe in, but I have to ask myself whether this legislation is likely to be less effective than that to which I have just referred. As a layman, I would much rather be tried under this legislation than under the Commonwealth Act, which was passed by unanimous vote in the House of Representatives, which shows that the Federal Parliament appreciated the necessity to make sacrifices in the interests of security.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—Some members of the Federal Parliament said the Commonwealth legislation did not go far enough.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—One member from this State said so, and that it should have been extended to provide against people taking photographs even outside the uranium area. That brings me to the point that this Bill does not have general application. It only applies to the mining and the treatment of uranium, so most of the people of this State have nothing to fear from it. Only those engaged in the development or mining of uranium and evilly disposed have anything to fear. I realize there is some slight risk of innocent people being brought before the court, but I believe the Bill can be amended in that respect without weakening its effectiveness. The main provisions are contained in proposed new sections 4a, 4d, 4e, 4f and 4i. I do not think that the provision in regard to taking an oath of service and secrecy has much value, although the Premier said that those charged with the maintenance of security felt it had. I believe the person who is a spy or a traitor will not hesitate to take any oath if it will help him to secure the information he wants for those engaged in his nefarious trade.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—It provides another ground on which such a person may be charged.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I do not know about that, because I cannot find any provision in the Bill prescribing a penalty.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—Couldn't he be penalized under the Oaths Act?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Perhaps, but if so only a minor penalty could be imposed. If the provision is of any value let us leave it in the Bill, as I cannot see that it will harm anybody who is well disposed. Proposed new section 4d provides that a person shall not enter, be in, or fly over a prohibited area unless he is the holder of a permit granted under this

section authorizing him to do so. New section 4e deals with the wrongful handing over of records, photographs, sketches, plans and other information from a prohibited area. The next provision, a very proper one, refers to wilful damage to and interference with works. New section 4i provides that the officer in charge of a prohibited area or any member of the Police Force may detain a person for the purpose of search. These provisions all refer to "prohibited areas" and I desired to know what were likely to become prohibited areas. As Parliament had adjourned on account of the Royal Show I wrote to the Premier on August 22 for this information. My letter stated:—

I would be pleased if you would inform me as to the nature of the considerations which will determine what areas, buildings, processes, etc., will be the subject of proclamations as provided under the proposed new section 4b of the Uranium Mining Act Amendment Bill.

On the same day the Premier replied as follows:—

In reply to your letter of today's date, in which you request information on the considerations which will determine what areas, buildings, processes, etc., shall be the subject of a proclamation under the proposed new section 4b of the Uranium Mining Act Amendment Bill now before the House of Assembly, I desire to inform you that by this clause it is desired to proclaim certain specific buildings and areas; example of the type of buildings to which the proclamation will refer would be chemical treatment plants where highly secret processes will be used, technical laboratories and pilot plants where similar processes will be involved, and probably to one laboratory engaged on analytical and other general work. It seems that the proclamations will be issued in respect of very limited areas or places where highly secret processes will be evolved or worked. The Premier went on:—

While it is desired that we would not have ill-disposed persons in the mining area at Radium Hill, for example, the general area would not be proclaimed, but we would move on persons concerning whom any real doubt existed. There would be, however, one building at Radium Hill which it would probably be necessary for us to declare, as mineral processes will be undertaken there. Summarized, the purpose of the clause is for limited areas where highly secret work is being undertaken. The clause would not have general application: indeed, the necessity of providing a 24-hr day guard will naturally limit the security points to the absolute minimum.

The receipt of that letter put a different complexion on this clause. I could see it would only apply in restricted areas and that the persons engaged in those areas would naturally be highly trained personnel who would be

subject to the most intensive screening before being employed, and that those workers engaged in mining and handling the ore in a general way would have nothing to fear from the clause. Proposed new section 4i states, *inter alia*:—

(1) The officer in charge of a prohibited area, or any member of the police force, or any person authorized by the Minister may without warrant detain for the purpose of search, and search—

(a) a person who is in the neighbourhood of, or within, or leaving or entering a prohibited area.

This provision needs amending because it seems that it would be possible for a person to be detained for the purpose of search, but for the search not to be carried out for a considerable time. That would amount to a form of imprisonment without charge or trial. In Committee I will move to insert "forthwith" before "search" second occurring in the fourth line. If a person were found to have infringed the law he would naturally be detained and prosecuted, but if he were found to be innocent he could be released immediately.

Mr. Macgillivray—Couldn't he sue for wrongful arrest if he were innocent?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—He would not be arrested unless under reasonable suspicion.

Mr. Macgillivray—Shouldn't a person be compensated for wrongful arrest?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—No. An officer can detain anyone found in the vicinity of proclaimed areas. He must have a reasonable suspicion before he can detain him. A man has no right to be within the area without a permit.

The Hon. T. Playford—There will be a permanent guard on all the entrances and a person could not be there except surreptitiously.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—That is so. Section 5 of the Act provides for the necessary security and penalties for people who break any of the regulations. I think that the maximum penalty is £200 or six months' imprisonment. People might be innocently suspected by a security officer and brought before a court. They would naturally have to defend themselves, probably at considerable expense. I want to discourage any over-enthusiastic security agent from arresting a man unless he has really good grounds for suspecting that he has done something wrong. We could have a lower general penalty in cases where persons are innocent, and even if they break the law without any subversive motive. Motive is the thing to which we should give the greatest consideration.

Where it is shown that there is no ulterior motive the penalty should be less than that provided in the Bill. More stringent penalties could be provided in cases where it is shown that the motive is subversive or unworthy. It is also provided that courts hearing charges may consider an affidavit from the Attorney-General that certain evidence and the names of witnesses should not be published. That is something which we are not used to.

Mr. Pattinson—It is not unique.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—No, that right is exercised in cases where unsavoury evidence might be tendered.

The Hon. T. Playford—Magistrates are empowered to suppress the publication of evidence if they consider it is in the public interest to do so.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—That is so. This legislation is designed to put a blanket over highly secret processes. I do not cast any reflection upon justices of the peace, who provide a most useful function in our judicial system. They deal with many cases and bring a wealth of commonsense and local knowledge and perhaps sympathy into their judgments. They take the place of magistrates, particularly in sparsely populated areas, where it is impossible to station a magistrate.

Mr. Pattinson—Even if they pre-judge a case.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes. A court which exercises the powers proposed by the Bill should be presided over by a magistrate. At first I thought cases might be heard by judges of the Supreme Court in chambers, but some of these offences might be committed a long way from Adelaide and if a defendant is required to be in chambers to watch his interests it could mean two trials, as well as delay and expense. Where courts of summary jurisdiction hear these charges they should be presided over by a magistrate. Where persons are charged in the Supreme Court, the judge will naturally decide whether the evidence should be treated in the way I have suggested. It is in the interests of South Australia that the Bill become law, and that we retain control of the development of our uranium resources. We should provide such security as will enable us to be assisted by people of good-will, who know more than we do about the truth of uranium, without any danger of secrets which are entrusted to our care escaping into the hands of potential enemies behind the Iron Curtain. With the amendments I propose to move in Committee I support the second reading.

Mr. PEARSON secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.10 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, September 23, at 2 p.m.