HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, October 14, 1952.

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

QUESTIONS.

FINANCE FOR PUBLIC WORKS.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Last Saturday's *Advertiser* reports that the Premier, in speaking at Milang, made a strong plea for the judicious use of central bank credit for major developmental works. The report states:—

"Lack of money was hampering every Government in Australia today," Mr. Playford said. "It was closing down Government works and, in every State except South Australia, was causing Governments to sack thousands of men." Mr. Playford said he did not know to what extent central bank credit should be used for amenity works. "Probably we have to be cautious there," he added. "I am certain, however, that the use of central bank credit is justified in every way provided it is directly associated with works that are immediately productive." The Premier said that farmers or private individuals could obtain bank credit to develop land or a business and there was no reason why the Government should not do so. He instanced land development, irrigation and transport among the projects for which a Government should be able to obtain bank credit.

Do the works which I understand were approved by the Co-ordinator-General and the Loan Council, but which have had to be closed down because the amount agreed upon by the Loan Council was later reduced, come within the categories mentioned by the Premier, and, if so, will he at the next Loan Council meeting strongly press for the use of national credit to make up any deficiency between the amount which may be borrowed and the amount of £247,000,000 which the Loan Council approved for the carrying out of these works?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The remarks I made at Milang were directed more particularly to the question of whether at this stage in Australia's development it would be advisable to use bank credit to tide us over the immediate problem or whether there would be any objection to it. I said that, whatever might be the position with regard to amenities, as far as direct reproductive works were concerned it was something that any business man would do in the ordinary course of events in his business. He would not hesitate to go to a bank for an overdraft if it would enable him to improve his production. I see no reason why directly reproductive works could not be financed from the Central Bank. The Loan programme which was submitted on behalf of this State was approved by the Co-ordinator General and was a part of the loan programme of Australia, totalling, I believe, over £300,000,000 which included some works which would be directly re-productive, and some of an amenity or social nature which could not be classified as directly reproductive. Subsequently, after the money for South Australia had been allotted, the State Government, as a matter of practice, did its utmost to put its money as far as possible, into directly re-productive work, but it was not possible to do that in every instance. On the general question of whether it is possible to get additional funds, I would certainly be in favour of it and would support it.

PENSIONERS' FUNERAL BENEFITS.

Mr. LAWN—The matter which I now raise was raised either last session or in the previous session by the member for Semaphore. I have now received a letter from some of my constituents advising me that for some years they have been paying into a pensioners' fund on behalf of their late mother and that she paid into it before that. On her death they were instructed to see a certain undertaker. They went to an undertaker of the same surname, but unfortunately he had different initials from the undertaker they had been told to see, and consequently they were refused payment of the £10 benefit provided by the Civil Pensioners Association. When this matter has been raised in the House previously, it has been said the Government has no control over such funds, but I point out that in Victoria this type of society has now been controlled by the Government. I refer to an article in the Melbourne *Truth* of Saturday, June 14, which refers to the investigations carried out by the Government. It is headed "Thousands of Old Folks Lose: Funeral Fund Closure," and contained the following:—

Thousands of Victorians—the final figure cannot yet be estimated—who have for years poured sixpences and shillings into funeral benefit schemes today face the prospect of a pauper's funeral. Last November the State Government passed an Act giving funeral benefit organizations six months to be registered.

Mr. McArdle (the Registrar of Friendly Societies), who had the responsibility of inquiring into this matter, found an unholy mess among the organizations in Victoria. Will the Premier further consider this matter with a view to his Government taking similar action to that taken in Victoria?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If the honourable member will let me have the papers on this matter I shall be pleased to trace it back to see what the problem is.

RAIL TRANSPORT: DAMAGE TO TREES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The Loveday Primary School where a special effort is made to teach children the love of trees and country life generally, has established a nursery which is known throughout the State and in other parts of the Commonwealth. The children, who number 80, grow the trees and sell them to augment school funds. I understand that last year its total return amounted to £150. The trees were sold at less than one-third of the current market values, 75 per cent of them to other schools as an incentive to them to grow trees. The following is portion of a letter which appeared in the *Advertiser* last Saturday, written by the headmaster at the Loveday school:—

Under instructions from the Railways Department, we have to purchase good, strong cases provided with tops to ensure safe delivery. All trees carried on country lines, especially in the Murray district and South-East, have arrived promptly and in excellent condition. But it is a different story when our trees have to pass through the Adelaide station. On three occasions this year the cases have arrived at their destinations broken to pieces and the trees destroyed beyond hope of recovery. In one instance a carefully packed case of trees was sent from Barmera to Bruce (Mid-North) by passenger train to ensure speedy delivery. On arrival six days later, the case was smashed, and the trees so damaged due to rough handling, that only one of 16 could be planted. We endeavour to inculcate in our children a love for trees in a practical way. It is bitterly disappointing for them to have their trees, so patiently grown and packed destroyed in this way. We might overlook the complete destruction of our trees, but to be charged by the railways the exorbitant price of £1 7s. 10d. for freight is adding insult to injury.

Will the Minister of Railways go into this case and ascertain whether the freight charges could be remitted, seeing that the goods were destroyed, whether it would be competent for the Railways Department to recompense the Loveday school children for any loss they have sustained, and what is more important, whether he will have inquiries made as to who caused the damage and see if he can be held personally responsible?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I saw the letter referred to and immediately asked the Railways Commissioner to obtain a report along the lines mentioned as regards responsibility for damage, and until it is received I will refrain from any further comment. However, immediately it comes to hand I will make it available to the honourable member.

HOMES FOR AGED PEOPLE.

Mr. DAVIS—Does the Government subsidize old folks' homes in the country, or has such a subsidy ever been considered? If not, will the Government consider the matter?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not remember any grants being given for this purpose, but if the honourable member will place his question on the Notice Paper I will have inquiries made to see what the position is.

Mr. McALEES—How many flats have been built in the country for aged pensioners and, if none, will the Government consider providing them?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—As I explained in a debate recently in the House, the question of assistance for pensioners has been placed, by the Constitution, under the control of the Commonwealth Government, which makes certain financial assistance available to pensioners under the old age pensions scheme. I know of two homes that have been built in the country for old people, not necessarily for pensioners, and a number have been established recently in the metropolitan area. The Government has given a liberal interpretation to the building materials legislation to enable that type of accommodation to be provided, but I will obtain a direct reply on the question of subsidies. I do not remember any Government at any time providing subsidies in this State for the purpose mentioned by the honourable member.

Mr. RICHES—Can the Premier say whether the Commonwealth Government has built homes for aged people in any State, and whether it is generally accepted by the Commonwealth that it has a responsibility in connection with aged pensioners beyond the actual payment of the pension? If there is any doubt about the constitutional responsibility in connection with the aged, will the Premier attempt to have the matter discussed at the next Premiers' Conference?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Commonwealth has always dealt with this obligation by setting out the pension to be provided. The amount of the pension is held to include the provision of necessities, which covers accommodation. The Commonwealth provides a pension which it considers sufficient to maintain aged pensioners and provide them with the necessities of life. That has always been the position. There is no constitutional ambiguity

about the matter. The payment of pensions is a feature of which Australia should be proud, and it has been maintained by various Governments at various rates. I believe the amount of the pension was recently raised.

FLINDERS STREET SCHOOL LIGHTING.

Mr. LAWN—Has the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Education, a reply to my question of August 21 regarding the lighting at Flinders Street school?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—As I indicated previously, the work involved is rather extensive and includes about 74 lighting points and 17 general purpose points. Because of the difficulty of securing the necessary materials and money for such work it often means that if one job is undertaken another has to be delayed or even suspended entirely. Having regard to all the circumstances, the importance of the work mentioned is recognized and will be proceeded with during the present financial year.

BULK HANDLING AT PORT LINCOLN.

Mr. PEARSON—The members of the Australian Wheat Board visited Eyre Peninsula last week and, according to the *News*, the chairman (Sir John Teasdale) made the following statement:—

We looked into the suitability of Port Lincoln for bulk handling in the future. It is obvious development can come only after the proposed wharf has been built. It will possibly be some years before bulk handling becomes a practical proposition there.

Those remarks appear to highlight the importance of the new wharf project at Port Lincoln, and if bulk handling is to be dependent upon the establishment of a new wharf every possible effort should be made to have it erected at the earliest possible moment. When he was at Port Lincoln on September 12 the Premier told a deputation that the Government regarded the building of the new wharf as an urgent work. In view of the statement of the chairman of the Wheat Board, can the Minister of Marine indicate when the wharf project will be submitted to the Public Works Committee for examination, and can he say what progress has been made towards the completion of the new plan?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The matter of proceeding with improvements and wharf facilities at Port Lincoln is not in any way dependent on bulk handling. Irrespective of that, the Government still regards the completion of better facilities at that port—in view of our faith in the future of the State—as urgent. All available staff—and the technical staff is always limited—will be utilized for doing first things first, and amongst them are the plans for the Port Lincoln harbour improvements. I cannot say what progress has been made, but I will get further details for the honourable member and make them available through the House. The work will proceed as early as circumstances will permit.

CONTROL OF THALLIUM SALES.

Mr. FRED WALSH—A number of deaths have occurred in New South Wales recently from thallium poisoning. The Government there takes a serious view of the matter and, I understand, will introduce legislation prohibiting the sale of thallium to the public without a doctor's order. I do not know whether the position is covered in South Australia by the Food and Drugs Act but, if not, will the Premier consider prohibiting the sale of thallium without an order from a doctor?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will get a full report for the honourable member and let him have it in due course.

SUBMISSION OF SCHEMES TO PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Under the heading "Acts and Regulations Contravened" the Auditor-General, in his report for the year ended June 30, 1952, states:—

The Railways Commissioner has commenced two works each of which, according to section 3 of the Act, is a "public work," but the Public Works Standing Committee had not inquired into them, as required by section 25 of the Act. As a result, moneys have been unlawfully expended on those works.

The Auditor-General also said that a dwelling-house was purchased out of the trust fund and subsequently let to one of the officers of the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science. On the next preceding page of his report the Auditor-General said that the Crown Solicitor was of the opinion that the railway scheme should have been placed before the Public Works Committee and that the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science did not have any authority to spend money on purchasing the home referred to. I ask the Treasurer why the railway scheme was proceeded with without being referred to the committee and who will be responsible for the payment of money for the property purchased by the Institute?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Parliament has established a council to control the affairs of the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science and the Government has not any direct control

over it, or how it spends its money. That matter could only come before Parliament by a direct recommendation. It appears from the honourable member's remarks that although the council did not technically have the authority to purchase the house, I have no doubt that the house was required in connection with the work of the council, and I cannot imagine that Parliament would object to any authority providing accommodation for its employees. The term "public work" has been defined on many occasions by the Crown Solicitor but it is not always easy to interpret. For instance, whether a number of vehicles, each one not costing more than a certain sum, should be regarded as a public work or whether a collection of such vehicles under a programme is a public work, is one question. Furthermore, occasions sometimes arise where a *bona fide* estimate is given at less than £30,000, but owing to altered circumstances, such as basic wage adjustments, the work when completed may exceed that sum. I will see what the particular work was in this instance, but I am sure the Railways Commissioner conscientiously believed it was outside the terms of the Act. It may be something that had been done by custom for many years without the matter of authority having ever been raised. Members know that despite the change in the value of money the Government has never hesitated to submit schemes to the committee; in fact, it has always welcomed the inquiries that take place.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Isn't the re-laying of a certain length of track, estimated to cost £49,452, a public work, or cannot the Act be altered?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The re-laying of a line has never previously been considered to be within the terms of the Public Works Standing Committee Act, but as ordinary maintenance work. To place an interpretation as mentioned by the honourable member on a public work does not clarify the matter. Under that interpretation, the Railways Commissioner could not lay one railway sleeper anywhere because he would have to put in many more sleepers, and ultimately the total cost would be more than £30,000. It would not be a new work but maintenance of work already done. I will examine the position for the honourable member.

WASHING MACHINES.

Mr. HUTCHENS—According to an article in this morning's *Advertiser*, certain people in Victoria, having installed washing machines, thought they were free from the encumbrance of having to provide a laundry. The article said:—

> Washing machines notwithstanding, the laundry is in Victoria for keeps. The law says so. This odd anachronism is disclosed in the current issue of a Victorian Health Department bulletin, which makes it clear that people planning a home with a washing machine, or installing one in their present house, cannot save space by converting what would have been (or is) a laundry into a workshop or small bedroom. The Uniform Building Regulations makes it mandatory that every home should have a laundry.

Can the Premier say if the law in South Australia is similar to the Victorian law and, if so, will he consider amending it in order to save much-needed building material in short supply?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not believe the law in South Australia follows the same lines as that quoted by the honourable member. The Building Materials Committee is an advisory body and I cannot remember a similar matter coming up for consideration in South Australia. I will examine the position to see if there is any similarity in the law.

BLANCHETOWN FERRY.

Mr. STOTT—Last night whilst travelling back to Adelaide from the Loxton show I had to queue up for two hours on the other side of the river at Blanchetown before being able to cross in the ferry.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—What about the Swan Reach ferry?

Mr. STOTT—It is not open. All the people were incensed and some very uncomplimentary remarks were made about the Minister of Works and the Government, because of the lack of bridges across the river. Included in those waiting to cross the river were judges who had attended the show and were travelling back home. As soon as the Public Works Committee's report on the construction of bridges across the river is available, will the Government give urgent consideration to the matter, and in view of the decision of Parliament last week will the Government consider making a grant to have a bridge built across the river?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not know what decision the honourable member refers to as being made in Parliament last week. A ferry to duplicate the service at Blanchetown is being built and will be placed in commission as quickly as possible. The matter of building bridges across the river has been discussed for some time and is contained in a reference at present before the Public Works Committee.

It is very costly to build bridges and up to now the materials necessary have not been available. Whether the future financial position and the availability of materials will enable an allocation to be made is something on which I would not like to speak now. I can speak with some knowledge of the prevailing financial difficulties of State Governments. With the exception of South Australia, I believe every State Government is now engaged in putting off very large numbers of its employees. They are not able to maintain the standard of employment in various departments. A few minutes ago I spoke by telephone to the Premier of Queensland and he told me of the difficulties Queensland was having in this matter. I had an urgent telegram from Victoria this morning asking for support for an increased rate of interest to enable a very meagre amount of work to be continued in one Government department. Whether it will be possible to consider the financial obligation involved in respect of bridges is something on which I cannot express a view at present.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Can the Premier say how it is possible for the Government to allocate £500,000 to the tramways system of Adelaide, as well as unlimited amounts in future for an unlimited period, if he cannot find sufficient money to build at least one bridge across the River Murray at Blanchetown? Blanchetown is probably the keystone of the Sturt Highway in South Australia, in view of its importance to interstate traffic.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The honourable member overlooks the constitutional position with regard to the spending of public moneys in this State, for the Government does not allocate money to the Tramways Trust or the Highways Department. It is Parliament that, after having these matters submitted to it, decides where the various sums shall be spent. The amount that is being spent this year on the tramways has been decided by Parliament so far as this House is concerned and will be considered in the Legislative Council this week. Cabinet can spend no money except when backed up by an appropriation of Parliament, although for unusual expenses of a small amount—I think up to a total of £300,000—the Government is given an overall appropriation. With that exception, Parliament requires all amounts to be itemized and submitted to it in the Estimates.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I agree that Parliament was responsible for the decision to pay £500,000 to the Tramways Trust, but is it not a fact that the Government must be finally responsible for finding that money and that, if Parliament did not support the Bill granting that amount, such lack of support would be looked upon as a vote of no confidence in the Government and put it in an invidious position? Could not the money to build a bridge at Blanchetown be allocated in the same way as that amount was granted to the Tramways Trust, for, with the support of Government members, Parliament is just as well able to grant money to build bridges as it is to maintain the Tramways Trust?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—In the first place the Government is limited as to the amount of money it can spend on any public work, and there is no doubt that a bridge across the river would be a public work, but until the Public Works Committee, which has the general question now before it, brings in a report the Government is legally unable to take any action. What action it will take then will depend on the overall position of the finances of the State and on the materials which may be available. Secondly, the position with regard to roads and bridges has already been decided by Parliament, and they are now financed by the proceeds from the petrol tax and motor registration fees. Parliament has laid down that general plan for financing roads and bridges instead of the method of financing by means of the Budget, because it has been its experience that in times when State finance is difficult the roads always suffer. Consequently, in the last depression when the Hill Government reversed that position, Parliament took an adverse view of that action and later the Butler Government restored the position which exists today—that motor taxation is used to build roads and bridges for the benefit of the travelling public. As I explained during the debate on the Tramways Trust Bill, there are certain matters which the State Parliament can do without jeopardizing the grant recommended by the Grants Commission, but the State cannot spend money from its Budget on capital works without jeopardizing that grant, for the Grants Commission insists that money for capital purposes shall be provided by loan and money for revenue purposes by taxation. The honourable member suggests that we should provide money for capital purposes by taxation, but if we did a corresponding amount would be struck off this State's grant. I assure the honourable member that this matter will receive the best consideration this Government can give it.

TOURIST BUS SERVICES.

Mr. MOIR—Can the Minister say if it is correct that one of our leading South Australian tourist companies, which brings visitors from other States to South Australia to view our beauty spots, has recently been refused a permit to conduct bus trips within a 25-mile radius of the General Post Office, whereas companies sending buses from other States have a permit to take tours inside this radius and even conduct trips whilst in South Australia, such as was done this weekend to Victor Harbour?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The facts are not known to me, but speaking generally I would say that restrictions on road transport in South Australia are less than in any other State in Australia or, as far as I know, other parts of the world, even where the Government does not own the railways. In this particular matter I think there is an argument between the Tourist Bureau and the bus proprietor. I shall make inquiries and let the honourable member know the facts as soon as possible.

SUSTENANCE PAYMENTS TO SOLDIER SETTLERS.

Mr. STOTT—Can the Minister of Lands say whether there has existed at Loxton a dispute between the Government and certain soldier settlers regarding sustenance payments, whether that dispute has been settled, and, if so, what is the basis for the new allocation of sustenance payments?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—From time to time there has been a slight difference of opinion on the question of sustenance payments. Sustenance is provided by the Commonwealth Government and a certain amount has been fixed per settler according to the number of his dependants. The settlers have at all times been dissatisfied with the amount allocated, but they have been permitted to plant catch crops, and the benefits from some of those have been considerable. Recently three settlers wished to go away from their blocks for about 12 or 14 weeks on a special job as inspectors for the Dried Fruits Board, and, after consultation with the Commonwealth Government, it was agreed that they could go away, but that their sustenance payments would be stopped. I felt that it would not be reasonable to expect taxpayers to pay them sustenance for the period while they were away from their blocks and earning perhaps over £18 a week. Finally, it was agreed that they should receive their sustenance for one month, but that it would be stopped for any further time they were absent from their blocks.

PORT LINCOLN FREEZING WORKS.

Mr. CHRISTIAN (on notice)—

1. What number of sheep, lambs, pigs, and cattle were slaughtered at the Port Lincoln Freezing Works in last season?

2. What was the cost per head in each case of slaughtering, treatment, etc.?

3. Can the Minister of Agriculture give a dissection of the costs and show how they are allocated?

4. What were the charges levied in each case on producers or other operators?

5. What numbers of stock would have to be treated to cover costs?

6. How many tenants are leasing portions of the works and who are they?

7. Are these tenancies profitable to the department?

8. If so, what is the net profit therefrom?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The replies are:—

1. The number of stock treated at Port Lincoln works during 1951-52 were:—Lambs 17,741, sheep 50,148, pigs 3,558, and cattle 1,759.

2 and 3. The costs per head were:—Lambs 13s. 3d., sheep 15s. 4d., pigs 37s. 11d., and cattle 89s. 6d. In addition to these costs, which cover slaughtering, grading, wrapping, freezing, and placing f.o.b., there are the costs resulting from the production of tallow, treatment of by-products, and fertilizers and manures, drying of skins, and labour incurred on extra storage. The losses on these operations are part of the total cost of operating the works. These losses are not allocated amongst the various classes of stock. The Port Lincoln works were designed and built to treat up to 300,000 sheep and lambs and 30,000 pigs per annum under export conditions. With such a small year as 1951-52, all costs are out of proportion because of the number treated in relation to the capacity of the works.

4. The charges for the treatment of stock under the above varying conditions for 1951-52 were as follows:—Under export conditions—Lamb, mutton and pigs 2 $15/16$d. per lb., and cattle 2½d. per lb.; local abattoirs—All classes of stock 1½d. per lb.; bacon factory—All classes of stock ¾d. per lb.

5. In 1944-45 the following stock was treated at Port Lincoln works:—Lambs 142,782, sheep 143,853, pigs 28,353, and cattle 2,221, and during this year the works operated at a small profit. Going on our present operating costs, charges and values of offals and by-products, it is considered that the works would meet all costs if similar numbers of stock were available for treatment.

6. There is only one tenant on the Port Lincoln works at present, namely, Lincoln Bacon Specialists Ltd., who lease the bacon factory.

7. On the basis of profit and loss, the tenancy is not profitable to the department, but the charges for services recovered from the lessees assist in reducing the over-all costs of the works. In addition, revenues are received from the company for general storage of meat. If the number of stock stated in 5 were treated at the works it is considered that the bacon factory would also meet costs. The lease, which has 10 years to run, was originally granted with the idea of encouraging pig production on Eyre Peninsula by having a bacon factory established at the works.

8. Nil—*vide* No. 7.

UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES.

Mr. LAWN (on notice)—

1. How many persons, male and female, were registered as unemployed in South Australia as at October 3, 1952?

2. How many were in receipt of unemployment benefits?

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

1. At September 26, 1952:—2,010 males, 518 females, a total of 2,528.

2. At September 27, 1952:—814 males, 140 females, a total of 954. Figures are not available for 3rd October, 1952.

The Regional Director has pointed out that the 2,528 persons registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service include the 954 in receipt of benefit. Further, the number registered (2,528 persons) does not necessarily reflect the correct number out of work on the date indicated. Some persons may have obtained employment by their own efforts between the date of registering with the Commonwealth Employment Service and the date mentioned and not had sufficient time to notify the Employment Service. Others may have neglected to notify jobs secured.

SAVINGS BANK ADVANCES.

The Hon. S. W. JEFFRIES (on notice)—

1. What are the "statutory bodies" to which the Savings Bank of South Australia has advanced £12,280,122?

2. What was the amount advanced to each "statutory body"?

3. What is the rate of interest payable by each "statutory body" in respect of such amounts?

4. What rate of interest is payable on the £50,000 advanced by the bank under the Industries Development Act, 1941-1949?

5. What is the average rate of interest paid by local government authorities on debentures given to the bank?

6. What is the rate of interest paid by private borrowers under mortgages to the bank?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The General Manager of the Savings Bank of South Australia reports:—

1. and 2. These are bodies operating under statutory authority. The loans are all Government-guaranteed as required by the Savings Bank of South Australia Act.
3. From 2½ to 4⅛ per cent.
4. Three and a half per cent.
5. Rates range from 3⅜ to 4¾ per cent.
6. Three and three-quarters to 4½ per cent.

ROAD TRANSPORT PERMITS.

Mr. MOIR (on notice)—

1. What is the policy of the Transport Control Board on the issue of permits to owners of semi-trailers and other large vehicles, both Diesel oil and petrol driven?

2. Is the Minister of Railways aware that some owners, including returned servicemen who have invested all their savings in the purchase of these vehicles for a livelihood, have been refused permits during the last two months to haul some goods, thereby causing hardship, by making it uneconomical to undertake a trip with a half load?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Chairman of the Transport Control Board reports:—

1. The policy (and the obligation of the board) is to co-ordinate road and rail transport in keeping with the provisions of the Road and Railway Transport Act, 1930-1939—"An Act to provide for the co-ordination of passenger and freight transport by railways and by vehicles used for carrying passengers and goods on roads, and to provide for the control and licensing of persons operating such vehicles." A great number of individual owners and many carrying firms are operating under licences from the board. A rapid co-ordinated system of road and rail "door to door" transport is now in operation interstate. If application is in respect of an individual trip each case is considered on its merits and the board in issuing permits is obliged to have regard not only to the provisions of the South Australian Act but also to the policy of other States in relation to the type of goods to be carried.

2. The board does not investigate the financial position of a carrier in deciding whether or not a permit shall be issued. In most cases the applications are made by the consignors, without intimation of the name of the carrier concerned. It is not practicable to divert freight from established services to increase the payload of a carrier who wishes to make up a full load for a large vehicle.

Mr. MOIR (on notice)—

1. Is it the policy of the Transport Control Board to refuse permits for the cartage of goods interstate unless there are special circumstances?

2. Is it a special circumstance that—(*a*) although the goods can be carried by rail, they are perishable and may suffer deterioration by rail transport; or (*b*) the goods are required urgently interstate and carriage by rail would interfere with the efficient supply of the goods; or (*c*) the goods are of a nature that might be easily and substantially damaged by rail transport?

3. If not, what circumstances are considered special?

4. In assessing special circumstances, what period of time does the Transport Control Board regard as a maximum for the carriage by rail from Adelaide to Melbourne and from Adelaide to Sydney of—(*a*) perishable goods; (*b*) goods urgently required; and (*c*) other goods?

5. What are the comparative freight rates per bale for wool, by rail (where no previous contract is held) and by road transport?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The chairman of the Transport Control Board reports:—

1. As mentioned in the previous reply, the board is bound by the provisions of the Road and Railway Transport Act and by the policy of the other States in relation to interstate traffic.

2. (*a*), (*b*), and (*c*), and 3. Factors of special circumstances are taken into consideration by the board in conformity with the policy determined by the Act and every case is treated on its merits.

4. A great deal of misconception prevails about the ability of the railways to transport perishables. Railways handle the vast bulk of such commodities as fish, meat, butter, eggs, vegetables and fruit, and refrigerator vans have been provided by the various railway systems for the purpose of carrying perishable goods.

5. Such wool as is conveyed by road is almost exclusively carried by privately-owned vehicles and in any case the Transport Control Board does not fix a freight rate for road haulage for interstate dispatch, this being a matter of negotiation between the consignor and consignee, and the board has no means of making a comparison.

TRAMWAYS TRUST'S FINANCES.

Mr. LAWN (on notice)—

1. What is the total amount of principal the Municipal Tramways Trust has repaid to the Treasury?

2. What is the total amount of debt outstanding?

3. What is the total amount of interest the trust since its inception has paid to the Treasury?

4. What is the rate of interest the trust pays on its debt to the Treasury?

5. What is the total capital cost of the metropolitan tramways and bus system?

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

1. £1,644,506.

2. £5,393,927.

3. £5,206,868.

4. 3¼ per centum per annum to 3⅞ per centum per annum.

5. £6,391,125.

SECTION 36, HUNDRED OF GAMBIER.

Mr. FLETCHER (on notice)—

1. What was the price paid for section 36, hundred of Gambier, containing 4 acres, now being offered for sale by the Lands Department as portion of Clover Estate?

2. What was the cost of improvements placed on this land by the department?

3. How much has the previous holder of this block paid in rent for this property?

4. Is it the intention of the Federal Government to reimburse the State for any losses on this project?

5. On whose advice was this property recommended and purchased?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The replies are:—

1. £12.

2. £2,221.

3. 6s. per annum charged, plus instalments on account of improvements.

4. Yes, in accordance with the agreement between the Commonwealth and the State.

5. State and Federal officers.

SCHOOL RECREATION AREAS.

Mr. TAPPING (on notice)—Is it the Government's intention to consider amending the Recreation Grounds (Joint Scheme) Act, 1947, to provide financial aid for councils desirous of purchasing land, other than land adjacent to schools, for recreation purposes?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The general financial position of the State does not permit consideration of this matter this session.

FREIGHT RATES ON BUILDING STONE.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (on notice)—

1. What is the cost of freighting a ton of building stone from Mount Gambier to Adelaide?

2. What is the cost of freighting it from Morgan to Adelaide?

3. What are the respective mileages?

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

1. Building stone is not normally handled in consignments of one ton, but in truckloads according to the type of truck provided. Under these circumstances one narrow gauge truckload of stone loaded at Mount Gambier would be charged at the rate of 72s. 6d. a ton from Mount Gambier to Adelaide.

2. The cost of freighting stone consigned in a broad gauge truck from Morgan to Adelaide, subject to the truck being fully loaded, would be 41s. 3d. per ton.

3. The mileages between the respective points are:—(*a*) Morgan to Adelaide 106. (*b*) Mount Gambier to Adelaide 303. There is a special rate in operation between Mount Gambier and certain adjacent sidings from which stone is freighted to Adelaide of 54s. per ton, subject to the consignor loading not less than 38 tons of stone per consignment. This special rate was instituted to provide full loads for gondola cars at the transfer point at Wolseley. There is an additional reason for the apparent difference in the rate for the 106 mile haul as compared with the 303 mile haul. This is due to the application of the tapering rate for truckload goods of this nature.

LARGS NORTH WATER PRESSURE.

Mr. TAPPING (on notice)—

1. Is the Minister of Works aware of the low water pressures in the Largs North area?

2. If so, can he indicate when an improvement can be expected?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The low pressures in the Largs North area at times of peak consumption are caused by the rapid residential and industrial development on LeFevre Peninsula in recent years. A new 24in. diameter main is now being laid from Port Adelaide to Osborne and this is giving progressive improvement as sections of the main are brought into use. It is anticipated that the work will be completed towards the end of next month.

FLYING DOCTOR SERVICES.

Mr. RICHES (on notice)—

1. Is it the intention of the Government to subsidize the operations of the Flying Doctor service (S.A. Division) this year?

2. If so, to what extent?

3. If not, why not?

4. Is it the intention of the Government this year to subsidize the Flying Doctor Service operating from Ceduna?

5. If so, to what extent?

6. If not, why not?

7. What progress has been made with the proposal to establish a new Flying Doctor base at Port Augusta?

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

1. Yes.

2. £1,000 per year has been provided for many years.

3. *Vide* No. 2.

4 and 5. The Government does not subsidize the air transport used by the Bush Church Aid Society of Sydney and Tasmania in the conduct of hospitals and hostels on Eyre Peninsula. These institutions receive financial support through local organizations which are subsidized towards maintenance contributions, to the extent of £1,800 last year. Considerable sums have been granted for capital expenditure to provide that accommodation and further grants are pending.

6. *Vide* Nos. 4 and 5.

7. No finality has been reached.

COUNTRY KINDERGARTENS.

Mr. RICHES (on notice)—

1. Is the Treasurer aware—(*a*) that the S.A. Kindergarten Union cannot grant affiliation to country kindergartens unless they are supervised by a fully qualified teacher; (*b*) that no qualified teachers are available; (*c*) that several country kindergartens are being conducted by public spirited citizens pending the appointment of a teacher with the necessary qualifications?

2. Is it the intention of the Government to grant a subsidy based on cost of establishment and maintenance of those kindergartens?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government makes annual grants to the S.A. Kindergarten Union and this organization controls the distribution of the funds.

SWABBING OF RACEHORSES.

Mr. FRED WALSH (on notice)—When was the last occasion prior to October 4, 1952, that a swab was taken of a winning racehorse in the metropolitan area?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—On September 27.

ACQUISITION OF LAND: HUNDRED OF BRINKLEY.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER laid on the table the report of the Parliamentary Committee on Land Settlement on acquisition of land in the hundred of Brinkley.

Ordered to be printed.

BUILDING OPERATIONS BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council with amendments.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Road Traffic Act, 1934-1951. Read a first time.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 3).

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

In Committee of Supply.

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

That towards defraying the expenses of the establishments and public services of the State for the year ending June 30, 1953, a further sum of £5,000,000 be granted; provided that no payment for any establishment or service shall be made out of the said sum in excess of the rates voted for similar establishments or services on the Estimates for the financial year ended June 30, 1952, except increases of salaries or wages fixed or prescribed by any returns made under any Act relating to the Public Service, or by any regulation, or by any award, order, or determination of any court or other body empowered to fix or prescribe wages or salaries.

Resolution agreed to, adopted in Committee of Ways and Means, and agreed to by the House.

Bill introduced by the Hon. T. Playford and read a first time.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Supply already granted by the House in Supply Bills Nos. 1 and 2 totals £11,500,000. It is estimated that expenditure to the end of October will total £13,000,000. The Budget will be introduced next Thursday, but further supply will be required to cover expenditure until the Appropriation Bill is passed. I estimate the amount required at £5,000,000. This Bill follows the usual form of Supply Bills and makes provision for the issue of a further £5,000,000.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages without amendment.

Later it was returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

CORONERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. M. McIntosh for the Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to make some alterations in the jurisdiction and procedure of coroners. It is based upon suggestions made by the City Coroner (Mr. Cleland) which have been under consideration for some time and in its present form has the approval of both the Coroner and the Government's legal advisers.

The main amendment of the law proposed in the Bill is to take away what might be called the criminal jurisdiction of coroners. Under the present law it is laid down that a coroner must, on an inquest into a death, decide how, when and where the deceased came by his death; and if the death was due to murder, manslaughter or negligent driving, who was guilty of that offence. Similarly, on an inquest into a fire the coroner must find the cause and origin of the fire, and if he finds that any offence punishable in the Supreme Court was committed in connection with the fire, he must report whom he finds guilty of the offence. On finding a person guilty of an offence the coroner has power, and is indeed required, to commit him for trial. These coronial powers have in recent years been much criticized, not only by the City Coroner and other persons in Australia, but also in England. The question has frequently been asked whether the practice and procedure of a coroner's court is appropriate for a criminal investigation in which a person is not only liable to be committed for trial, but also to be declared guilty of a serious crime. The criticisms in England led to the appointment of a committee of inquiry under the chairmanship of Lord Wright. Some eminent criminal lawyers, including Sir Archibald Bodkin, who for many years was Director of Public Prosecutions, were on the committee. On the question of the jurisdiction of the coroner, the committee recommended that "the coroner's jurisdiction should be limited to the question of how, when and where the death occurred, and this investigation of facts should be clearly distinguished from the trial of liability, whether civil or criminal . . . The coroner should no longer have power to commit any person for trial on a charge of murder, manslaughter or infanticide and the inquisition should not name any person as guilty of one of these offences."

The reasons in support of these recommendations were set out in some detail. The committee pointed out the very great difference between the procedure before a magistrate or justice on the preliminary hearing of a criminal charge and the procedure of a coroner. Before the magistrate the only inquiry is whether there is sufficient evidence to commit

the accused for trial. The accused knows what the charge against him is and attends the proceedings as a defendant. The laws of evidence are strictly observed. If the accused is committed for trial he knows in advance the full details of all the evidence against him and cannot be found guilty until he has had the fullest opportunity of putting forward his defence. On the other hand, in the coroner's court a person may be committed for trial and declared guilty of a criminal charge without having received any prior notice that there was any charge against him and notwithstanding that the legal rules of evidence have not been observed. "The power of coroners to commit (for trial)" said the committee, "is out of accord with the modern administration of the criminal law." It is proposed, therefore, in this Bill to take away what I have called the "criminal jurisdiction" of coroners so that they will not have power either to commit for trial or declare any person guilty of any offence. This, of course, does not mean that there will be any gap or defect in the machinery for bringing offenders to justice. It merely means that proceedings for criminal offences arising from deaths and fires will be dealt with before justices or magistrates and in the Supreme Court in the same way as other offences.

There are a number of other amendments in the Bill and I will explain them in the order of the clauses. Clause 3 sets out the circumstances in which the coroner can hold inquests in cases of death. Under the present law the coroner cannot hold an inquest unless the death occurred within the State. It is proposed to extend this jurisdiction in two ways. The first is to give the coroner power to hold an inquest whenever the body of the deceased is within the State. It sometimes occurs that though the body is in this State the death occurred elsewhere, *e.g.*, on shipboard, or there may be no evidence to show where the death occurred. In such cases it may often be expedient to hold the inquest here. Secondly, it is proposed to give the coroner power to hold an inquest if a person ordinarily resident in the State has died an unnatural or violent death outside the State. This would cover the case where a person usually resident here is drowned outside the territorial waters of South Australia. These, of course, are discretionary powers only and the coroner need not hold an inquest if he thinks that an inquest will be held or ought to be held in another State.

Clause 4 is related to clause 3 and provides that where the body of a person who died outside the State is within the State the coroner may order its removal to any other State where an inquest is to be held. Clauses 5 and 6 contain amendments of the principal Act carrying into effect the proposal which I previously explained, namely, that the coroner is to limit his inquests to the question of how, when and where a death or fire occurred without determining the guilt of any person or committing any person for trial.

Clause 7 contains some further amendments for the same purpose. It states that if a coroner after commencing an inquest into a death or fire is informed that a person has been charged with an offence in connection with the death or fire, the coroner must adjourn the inquest until the criminal proceedings are finally disposed of and need not resume it unless he sees some sufficient cause for doing so. Further if, before an inquest on a death or fire is held, the coroner is informed that a criminal charge has been laid, he shall not commence the inquest until the charge is finally disposed of. Clause 8 enables the coroner to direct that the evidence at an inquest shall be taken down in shorthand only, where he considers that formal depositions are not likely to be required. Clause 9 enables a coroner to make arrangements for the evidence of a person able to give relevant evidence on the matter in issue in an inquest to be taken by a justice. It also provides that a coroner may accept affidavits as evidence, but in any case where an affidavit is received the witness may be called for oral examination or cross-examination. These provisions are inserted at the request of the City Coroner to avoid the trouble and expense of bringing witnesses from a distance to testify to formal or minor matters only. Clause 10 is an amendment consequential on the provision that the coroner is not to commit any person for trial.

Clause 11 enables the coroner to issue a warrant for the removal of any dead body to a place for a *post-mortem* examination. Under the present law a coroner has power to order a *post-mortem* examination, but nothing is said about removal of the body to a suitable place for that purpose. It is desirable that every *post-mortem* should be held in properly equipped premises and in order to ensure this, it is necessary that there should be power to remove the body to such premises. Clause 11 also contains a provision that a summons to a witness at an inquest may be served by post. Clauses 12 and 13 deal with burial orders. Such an order is required under the Births and Deaths Registration Act for the burial

of a body in respect of which an ordinary certificate of death is not given. The form of "Warrant to bury" prescribed in the Coroners Act is of ancient origin and is not altogether in harmony with the language of the Births and Deaths Registration Act. Clauses 11 and 12 therefore substitute a form which more accurately complies with the requirements of this Act. Clause 14 repeals a provision of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act which enables a coroner to commit a person for trial on a charge of killing by negligent driving. This is a purely consequential amendment rendered necessary by the alterations in the coroner's jurisdiction which I have previously explained. I commend the Bill to members. It has already received consideration in another place, where the principle has been accepted. It is in conformity with the modern practice of giving the accused person the benefit of any doubt.

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

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 9. Page 875.)

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—This is a simple Bill that has already received consideration in another place. At present friendly societies are experiencing some difficulty in carrying out the purposes for which they were formed—to supply medical aid and financial assistance to members. During the years of their activities they accumulated considerable sums of money, which were invested wisely as a safeguard. Now they are affected by Commonwealth legislation, which seems to change more often than the moon and is more unpredictable than the weather. The time is long overdue when the Commonwealth Government should assume control of friendly societies and provide a co-ordinated medical service. It already controls social services. If the Commonwealth Government had complete authority to deal with friendly societies, social services, medical services, and hospital accommodation, the lot of the people would be improved, and there would be a better understanding of the position and an easier access to the institutions which care for the people. The present system seems to be somewhat cumbersome and creates additional difficulties for people in poor health. The provision in the Bill which permits members to pay fees for specified items and still retain a vote in the affairs of the society, and the provision permitting the management committee to vary contributions without the sanction of members other than that expressed at an annual meeting, are both good. I understand there is some opposition to clause 5 from members of friendly societies, for they feel they will be subject to increased contributions without having a voice in the matter, but I point out that subsection (2) of the proposed new section 10b. states:—

> If the variation is not so submitted or if at the meeting a resolution approving the variation is not carried, then the variation shall, as from the time the general meeting is concluded, cease to have any force or effect.

Therefore, if approval for the new rates is not given at the annual meeting the variations will not be effective and the new rates cannot be charged against the members as from that date. The provision which authorizes the management committee to nominate persons other than those mentioned in the present Act to countersign cheques is a wise precaution long overdue, for it will greatly assist those persons serving in a part-time office in the interests of the community. When this Bill was introduced in another place attention was drawn to the fact that today private chemists are not prepared to enter into an agreement with friendly societies to supply medicine to members on prescription, and much concern has been expressed by friendly societies on behalf of their country members because, according to the Pharmacy Act, the number of establishments which may be operated by the one pharmacist is limited. From my study of the speeches made at the time that provision was introduced in 1942, I believe that that amendment was accepted because it was felt to be necessary as a war-time measure, and I draw the attention of the Government to the unsatisfactory position operating today in many country centres because friendly societies are not permitted under the Pharmacy Act to establish chemist shops to provide facilities for their members. The Act should be amended so that friendly societies, which for many years have performed such great work, will be better able to carry out their functions. I support the Bill.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—I speak on this Bill mainly to draw attention to the desirability of investigating pensioners' associations and similar organizations which require pensioners to contribute toward their funeral expenses. When instances of hardship resulting from the activities of such associations have been raised in this House, the Premier has stated that the

Crown Law Office has investigated these matters and that such funds are not controlled by the Friendly Societies Act. A similar position existed in Victoria until November last, when the Victorian Government amended its Act to make it obligatory for all pensioners' associations to apply for registration, and Mr. McArdle, Registrar of Friendly Societies, was given the Herculean task of investigating the affairs of applicant societies to see whether they fulfilled the requirements of the Act, but until the end of May, although a few applications had been received, all had been refused registration. Additional staff had to be appointed to help Mr. McArdle investigate the affairs of these societies. The Victorian Act provides that all such organizations must be registered in accordance with the Friendly Societies Act and that their affairs must be supervised and their accounts subjected to an annual audit, but apparently, from investigations made, none could meet those requirements.

Mr. Whittle—Are those societies still carrying on?

Mr. LAWN—I understand they are not.

Mr. Whittle—What happened to the money held by them on behalf of pensioners?

Mr. LAWN—Mr. McArdle has the task of winding up those societies, and after paying legal debts the contributors will no doubt receive some of the money paid in.

Mr. Whittle—Probably a small proportion of it.

Mr. LAWN—Yes. Mr. McArdle feels there will be little left for the pensioners. In June an official assisting Mr. McArdle is reported as saying, "We never imagined for one moment the extent to which this was going on." That gives some idea of the financial position of these societies. Mr. McArdle also has the task of trying to salvage something for members of those societies, but he is not very hopeful and finds himself in a most unhappy position when called upon to give them advice. Though the pensioners appreciate his sympathetic attitude, they say they cannot believe that the societies to which they have contributed for so many years are actually in the position in which the Registrar says they are. They say they are too old now to again start saving for a decent funeral. Although reluctant to admit it, the Victorian Government feels that there will be very little left for the pensioners. In this State such societies are not subject to legal control and there is no-one to see that the money paid in by the pensioners goes into trust funds. South Australian societies are obliged to provide a funeral of a certain money value. Some members of this House may have parents who have contributed for some years to such funds, and unless their parents have given them details of such membership, on their death the first thing that will be done is to give them a decent burial. Later, a pensioner's card may be found on going through their effects, but family members should know at the time of the death the details of such membership. I have with me a certificate issued by the Pensioners' Association which states:—

> Civil Pensioners' Association.—I, the undersigned, here certify that the late..... was a financial member of this association and is entitled to the concessions allowed by you as undertakers.

The undertaker's name is specified and there also appears the date and the signature of the secretary of the association. In the case I have in mind the daughter, acting on behalf of the other children, went to the association and produced the necessary financial card and obtained a certificate authorizing the undertaker to bury her mother. She then took the certificate to an undertaker, whose surname was the same as that appearing on the certificate and he, apparently not knowing the position, attended to the funeral, and changed the Christian name on the certificate to his own and then returned the certificate, but the association refused payment. It always refuses if the dependant of the deceased pensioner does not go to the undertaker nominated. Dependents have no legal claims against the association in the circumstances mentioned. The Director of Friendly Societies in Victoria has had experiences of thousands of similar cases. I urge the Government to include an amendment making it obligatory for all pensioners' associations in South Australia with funeral benefit funds to be brought within the scope of the Act, and to direct the Director of Friendly Societies to carry out the necessary investigations.

Mr. WHITTLE (Prospect)—Those members of the House who have been associated with friendly societies for many years realize that the whole outlook of their operations has been changed during the past decade as a result of the introduction of the Commonwealth social services scheme. I would not say that as a result their operation has been rendered no longer necessary, but they have not the same appeal now. I should think there were very few new entrants into such societies, some of which, under capable management, have accumulated considerable funds. Their functions associated with hospital benefits have changed entirely. It has been mentioned that the Act

has been amended six times in the last 14 years, but other Acts have been amended every session during the last 15 years; therefore, it does not necessarily mean that the friendly societies do not know their own minds. The position is that conditions have so changed that the Act requires periodical amendment. A large number of men and women spend much of their leisure time in the interests of friendly society work. These bodies not only provide medical benefits, but also funeral benefits.

Mr. Lawn mentioned that one family had suffered because it had not followed instructions given by the Civil Pensioners' Association. I do not see that such a case is on all fours with the work done by friendly societies. I am sure the honourable member has submitted a genuine case, but I should not like any insecurity to be felt by pensioners following on his disclosure. The work of the organization he mentioned is on similar lines to that of the Victorian body he quoted, although the same set of circumstances do not necessarily apply in South Australia. To my knowledge many families in South Australia have received from the pensioners' fund the amounts they expected to receive for the burial of their parents. I do not know whether the honourable member submitted a case strong enough to convince the Government, but I consider his remarks warrant investigation. I should not like to think that a slur was unintentionally cast on an organization which, in the eyes of many pensioners, is reputable and in which they have a large interest. Any suggestion of insecurity in such matters should be investigated by the Public Actuary. I support the member for Adelaide in this respect. Pensioners, least of all, should be open to exploitation by any company or individual, but no reputable organization should be brought under a cloud of suspicion as a result of Mr. Lawn's disclosures. In view of the many improvements in our social benefits schemes in recent years it is necessary that the Friendly Societies Act should be reviewed.

Mr. FLETCHER (Mount Gambier)—I support the Bill, knowing that it has been requested by the Friendly Societies Association. I am pleased to know that there exists such a spirit of harmony and good fellowship between the various societies. The amendments made to the Act from time to time have been rendered necessary by changing circumstances. The Act has been closely policed by the Public Actuary, who would not allow any amendments detrimental to the interests of the members of the societies. I have been closely associated with friendly societies for many years and appreciate the wonderful work they have done. Their work has, in fact, been the fore-runner of the social services rendered today. The pioneers of the societies should be remembered for their yeoman services. I remember in my own home in my youth how religiously a shilling a week was put aside to make provision for medical and funeral benefits. Men in the early days were not concerned so much about medical expenses as about making provision for a decent burial.

The member for Prospect just mentioned the position of some of the so-called benefit societies or companies in another State, but we are more or less in the same position here in that anyone can form a mutual benefit society or company without having to obtain the approval of the Public Actuary or prove that they have sufficient funds to meet liabilities. However, those who pioneered friendly societies were placed under the supervision of the Public Actuary and were not allowed to squander a society's money. Before they could increase benefits the Public Actuary had to make sure that sufficient money was available. Many societies have amassed much money because they were not allowed to spend it. I deplore the laxity in many companies. Perhaps an investigation would disclose that some of them were not in a position to meet their possible future obligations. The Bill has the wholehearted support of the friendly societies and I commend it to the House.

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

ADVANCES TO SETTLERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 9. Page 881.)

Mr. RICHES (Stuart)—This measure is designed to liberalize in two directions the advances which the State Bank can make to settlers. The bank will be able to make larger grants to settlers desirous of effecting improvements to their properties and for the purpose of erecting houses on their properties. Further, the scope of the legislation will be widened so as to enable not only holders of Crown leases, but also owners of land in fee simple to obtain advances. This was not a controversial Bill when introduced by the Treasurer; indeed, the Leader of the Opposition indicated support from this side of the House, but apparently some members opposite

thought, "Here is a bandwaggon and we may as well jump on it." If, perchance, they find they have been taken for a ride and that the ride is a little bumpy, that is their own look-out. Apparently members opposite could not find much to speak about and then referred to the necessity of encouraging land settlement in this State. I remind them that this State has been penalized by having had a Liberal Government for the last 20 years. Further, even when the Labor Party has been in office there has been a Liberal majority in the House of veto, so any responsibility for lack of sufficient land development must surely lie at their own door.

The Bill will not help to encourage land settlement; not one additional settler will be placed on the land, but it makes the lot a little easier for those who desire to borrow money and may assist the scheme the Premier announced a few weeks ago for the Housing Trust to provide accommodation on farm properties. It seems that the State Bank will be the only institution likely to offer reasonable advances for homes on farm properties. As far back as 1927 similar amendments to the advances to settlers legislation were before the House. The speech that the Hon. T. Butterfield delivered then could well be delivered to the House today because his remarks are singularly appropriate to the present time. In 1927 there was a Bill that sought to increase the amount of money the State Bank was permitted to advance to land settlers. Then Mr. Butterfield said:—

I regret that the amendment is not as extensive as I would have preferred. The chief amendment is in connection with clause 14 of the original Act. It enables the bank to make a larger advance than hitherto to farmers who are operating this particular matter with the State Bank. The Government would have been well advised to have provided a new clause instead of section 14, and left the bank unlimited . . . In view of the increased cost of agriculture and increased values of land the limitation, whilst it has been enlarged from £850 to £1,200, is still to some extent restrictive because there are not many farmers today who do not exceed these limits. The cost of implements, superphosphate, labour, and so on makes the operations of the average farmer today very much greater than was the case in the past. However, this is only a machinery measure and I do not believe it will be the last attempt to amend the Act. In my opinion the bank manager and the board should have been left free to exercise their own judgment in the matter as far as possible. The limitation is crippling in some directions.

That is my present feeling. It is a mistake for Parliament to limit the amount in the legislation. Costs and prices and circumstances have changed, and I cannot see why the State Bank cannot be trusted like other banks to make advances without the imposition of a serious limitation. The argument advanced in 1927 in favour of the removal of the limitation is a valid argument today. All members will agree that values have changed. I would like the Government to take definite action to make land settlement easier for those desirous of going on the land. Large numbers of young men are anxious to take up land husbandry, but will not have the opportunity to work their own land because money is not available to them. From inquiries I have made I know that young men in my district who have sought means of getting finance to go on the land to start in a small way have discovered that there is no lending authority, Government or otherwise, prepared to assist them. I have mentioned in this House the case of two young men who have plant and the offer of some sheep and who are anxious to go on the land beyond the present area of settlement to try their hand at turning unoccupied land into account, but the Government will not give them permission to use their own resources, let alone assist them. The Bill provides that whereas previously advances from the State Bank were limited to Crown leaseholders advances can now be made in connection with land held in fee simple, but it is assistance to settlers who are not already well established and who want to go on the land that is required. Such settlers cannot have their applications for finance considered unless they have much security. I support the Bill.

Mr. McLACHLAN (Victoria)—I, too, support the Bill. This is another proof that the Playford Administration is doing everything possible to encourage land settlement and to bring about increased primary production. I listened with interest to Mr. Riches but I cannot agree that this legislation will not bring about further land settlement. Possibly his remark in that regard was an indication of his lack of knowledge of rural conditions. It is only reasonable that if a man has enough money to buy a block and can get financial backing from the Government to enable him to build a home, he must have the confidence that is so vital to people with the pioneering spirit. In my district there are large areas of undeveloped land. During the Address in Reply debate I referred to people who would benefit from this type of legislation. They have gone to our virgin country with a limited capital and

many of them are in financial difficulties. This legislation will help them. Because of rising costs it has been found necessary to increase the amount in the Act. Today the primary producer earns more money because of the increased prices he gets for his commodities, but costs of production are increasing. Although he may finish the year with a greater profit than he did about 10 years ago, because of the change in values the purchasing power of his money is reduced. The Bill is characteristic of what is being done by the Playford Government. The legislation has already come in for much favourable criticism and there is considerable expectation by settlers in my district.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (Chaffey)—My first reaction to the Bill is that although such a Bill may have been important some years ago it is not so important today. I do not think land settlement has been held up because of a shortage of funds, but largely because of Governmental and departmental interference with primary production. On various platforms leaders of political thought in every State, and in the Commonwealth, have said that primary production should be increased. They point out the responsibility to feed not only the people of Australia but the starving millions elsewhere in the world. We must have exports to pay for the imports needed by our great cities. It is well-known now that the activities of the primary producers are largely for the benefit of people who live in the cities. I once read an article that said that the people of Australia would be astonished at the amount of primary production needed by our capital cities. The Commonwealth primary producer has an almost impossible task in meeting the calls made upon him. Our ever-growing cities are clamouring for more primary production. Over 60 per cent of the population of South Australia resides in the metropolitan area. We are dependent upon those who have to put up with the hardships of primary production. This Bill is simply a gesture, for if a young man is not in a position to assure the financing of his own settlement this Bill will not help him much, especially with regards to housing. From time to time the Government has very rightly stressed the need for reasonable amenities in country areas, saying that unless such amenities are provided families cannot be expected to live there. Up to the present up to £1,000 has been made available to any settler desiring to build or improve a house on his property, and I remember the time when that amount represented more than the average primary producer thought he would ever have at his command, but today such a sum is not worthwhile, considering the cost of housing, and the Government proposes to increase it to £1,750. I understand that the Housing Trust, under agreement with the Government, is prepared to build houses for primary producers, but how many is it prepared to build for sale at that figure? If it is not prepared to build either at that sum or a little more, then how can the primary producer be expected to build a house with the aid of such an advance?

Land settlement today is not limited by finance alone, for there are hundreds of qualified young men who have spent their lives in primary production, who are second to none in the Commonwealth in type, and who are prepared to go on the land if it is available, but the tragedy is that while there is vacant land it cannot be developed. All members have been approached by qualified ex-servicemen who have applied for but cannot get the land they require, and, while this measure may do a little good in incidental cases, this Government is simply shirking the whole problem of the settlement of the open spaces of South Australia. In view of the need for increased primary production, unless Parliament is prepared to face up to the real problem, Bills such as this, which are largely red herrings, will not solve that problem. We must adopt a real, live, forceful policy of putting on to the land young, qualified, energetic men who are prepared to use their own initiative and finance and to take on the whole of the responsibility of producing our primary products. Until we do that Bills of this nature will be of little use.

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley)—I support the Bill, but criticize the general conditions that make it necessary. The State Bank has a high-sounding title, yet I do not suppose there is another financial institution in Australia so shackled by restrictions. In spite of those shackles it is a wonderfully successful bank within the limits imposed on it by Statute, and over the last 25 years it has given remarkable service to the people, particularly settlers and more particularly those along the River Murray and on the West Coast. It is time it was allowed to be a State Bank and ceased to be a puppet which jumps when strings are pulled and must stop when it is not allowed to function and which may function only under Statute. The funds at its disposal are voted

by Parliament out of Loan Funds, but that is a ridiculous position, for no private bank in South Australia has any such restriction imposed on it. The State Bank has a certain amount of money which it may lend, and more than that it may not lend. It is time it was released from its shackles and allowed to operate as a bank, for it has grown up, and surely the officers who have built it up to what it is may be trusted to run it as officials of every private bank in this State are permitted to run their banks. Further, it is time the State Bank was strengthened in relation to its activities in such matters as advances to settlers and where it has to get its funds. The honourable member for Torrens had a series of questions on the Notice Paper to which he did not receive adequate replies, but an extraordinary fact revealed by such replies was that the South Australian Savings Bank has invested £48,750,000 of its total assets of £71,000,000 in Commonwealth Government securities, whereas that amount should not be there but should be available for settlers under such legislation as this. Of the enormous amount of £71,000,000, mortgage loans total only £9,250,000, and yet we are pouring money into so-called safe investments of Commonwealth stock. The savings of South Australians should be invested in South Australia for the advancement of country areas, and for that reason it is time the State Bank and the Savings Bank were amalgamated and the resources of both used to that end.

This Bill will not do a great deal toward making advances available to settlers. In his second reading speech the Premier said the amount of £1,200 was fixed by legislation in 1927 as the maximum which might be advanced for improvements and that it was now proposed to increase that amount by 100 per cent, but 200 per cent would be nearer the mark. Even then the conditions attaching to such advances would make that amount of little use, for a man must have the landed assets as a security before obtaining the loan. If we are to develop South Australia it must be done more on the calibre of its people than on anything else, and there are people today who, apart from any sudden calamity, are worthy securities for such advances. We must get away from the archaic idea that money itself is sacrosanct and that before a man can obtain an advance from an institution he must first almost kill himself and his family to secure the assets necessary to obtain a loan which amounts only to a miserable pittance, whereas if that loan had been available when the enterprise was started the State would have advanced to a greater extent much sooner. This sort of thing is holding back the financing of this State, and it is time we liberalized our policy, but perhaps that is too much to expect from a Liberal Government.

Although I must vote for this Bill because it is an advance on the existing legislation, the legislation that controls and holds in submission the State Bank is the thing that will have to be tackled, and I would like to see the State Bank put on its own responsibility for making advances and placed in the same category as the private bank which suffers no such restrictions except those placed upon it by the Commonwealth Government in relation to its Central Bank holdings. The State Bank should be worthy of its high-sounding title and not one dependent on a sustenance policy which may be the result of current political opinion. I think that is entirely wrong. We should amalgamate the tremendous forces existent in the Savings Bank and the State Bank. This would be all for the good, and the result would be a bank capable of granting credit. We would then have achieved something. Amendments to the Act are merely tokens of the change in everyday values.

Mr. FLETCHER (Mount Gambier)—The Bill is a move in the right direction and has my support. I was somewhat astounded last week to learn the true position regarding advances when I received a request from a young returned man and his wife, who live in my district and desire to enlarge their property. I explained the case to the Lands Department officials, but they regretted that so far as they knew there were no means whereby the couple could be assisted. After five years' war service this man returned and bought a small place near Mount Gambier, but after a short while sold it and bought another farm of 11 acres. He is now milking five cows, which is a fine achievement on such a small area. These people are the type who would be supported to the hilt by anyone knowing them, but there is nothing in our legislation to provide the help they require. I hope that as a result of this Bill they will receive assistance which will enable them to increase production. Those returned men who to date have not applied for land are more or less prevented from getting assistance. In later years practically no land has been purchased for those young men who were unable to go to the war, and no encouragement was given to this type to go on to the land, but this legislation will

probably result in getting such men interested in land settlement. It is the very small landholders, especially in South-Eastern districts in close proximity to the larger towns, who, on their 10, 12 or 20-acre blocks are producing the greatest quantity of milk for cheese and butter manufacture. I am closely associated with a factory near Mount Gambier and the manager has often told me that the smaller settlers are its backbone.

Many men and women are quite worthy of the assistance provided under the Bill. I hope that the authority delegated to decide what assistance shall be granted will not adhere strictly to the letter of the law. Each case should be considered on is merits. A man with no money could, by encouragement and financial assistance under the Bill, become a useful producer. Many young men and women in my district started out on the land almost penniless, but with the assistance of those with money are today useful citizens. I wholeheartedly support the Bill and hope that a broader outlook will be adopted in selecting the persons to whom money is allocated.

Mr. HEASLIP (Rocky River)—I have no desire to jump on the bandwaggon, as has been implied by Mr. Riches against those favouring the Bill. I believe that all those supporting it do so because they realize it is a genuine effort on right lines to help those who desire to set themselves up on the land. The Bill should greatly assist those who are without capital. Without capital no-one can successfully undertake primary production. Even when one has obtained a property, further capital is still required for improvements and machinery. I feel that the Bill will assist in no small measure those who have got so far but can get no further without a little extra help. The extension of the amount allotted to each settler for improvements from £1,200 to £2,400 will result in increased production. The amount for providing a house is to be increased from £1,000 to £1,750. Although several speakers seemed to think that the advances for these two activities were too small, I do not agree. If we are to have the right type of persons on the land, we should not spoon-feed them to the extent that nothing is left for them to achieve. This sort of assistance can be taken too far. The tendency today is to spoon-feed the whole population. This policy is carried out to such an extent that as soon as a person wants something he turns to the Government instead of using his own initiative and the hands given to enable him to help himself. I cannot understand the argument of the member for Stanley. He said that if we are to develop Australia we must depend on those prepared to go out and help themselves, but he then condemned the State Bank because it did not provide them with enough financial assistance. Money is not everything. A man who is not prepared to go out and work for it does not deserve help. I would not like to see the people spoonfed to such an extent that they could get everything they desired, and not having earned it, then lose the lot to someone else. It has happened before and I do not want to see it happen again. Many people have spent the best part of their lives and given everything they had to build up assets, but have then met with disaster and someone else had come in to reap the benefit. I believe that the Bill, by providing additional money for necessities, will be of benefit to settlers and result in increased primary production. I have much pleasure in supporting it.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 4 passed.

Clause 5—"Advances for erection of dwellinghouses."

Mr. STOTT—I move to strike out paragraph (*b*) and insert in lieu thereof:—

(*b*) By striking out "one thousand pounds" in the second line of subsection (2) and inserting "two thousand four hundred pounds."

This would enable the bank to advance up to £2,400 to any primary producer for the purpose of erecting, enlarging, or altering a dwellinghouse on his holding. The Committee has just passed a clause enabling the bank to advance up to £2,400 to a settler for the purpose of effecting improvements to his property, so my amendment seeks to alter the Act correspondingly in regard to housing. Obviously, an adequate house cannot be erected today for £1,750, which the clause provides for, especially in country districts. Primary producers will be unable to increase production until they obtain sufficient labour, but we must provide proper amenities before we can expect people to go into the country. I think I am being conservative in fixing a limit of £2,400: if a house cost £2,900 the settler would have to find a deposit of £500. The bank may have many applications under this clause because many farmers will desire to take advantage of a recent amendment of the Commonwealth taxation laws allowing a 20 per cent annual depreciation allowance on the capital cost of erecting farm dwellings.

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS (Minister of Agriculture)—I ask the Committee to reject the amendment. The limit of £1,750 was not fixed by a stab in the dark. Before the Government decided that that was an appropriate sum it inquired from the Housing Trust and builders what kind of a house could be supplied for that amount. Actually, the Housing Trust undertook to supply and erect houses within 100 miles of Adelaide for £1,480 for small structures and about £1,750 for the larger type. During Show Week one of the small types was on view at the trust's yards at Torrensville. Many farmers saw the house and said they would be glad to have one on their property. They publicly praised the Government's scheme to make such houses available at a reasonable price. Mr. Stott thought a satisfactory dwelling would cost over £2,400, but some costs facing builders in the city are not met in the country. For instance, a building block in the metropolitan area costs £200 or £300, but farmhouses will be erected on the farmer's property. Further, there will be no expenditure on deep drainage.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I oppose the amendment. The sum of £1,750 is mentioned in the Advances for Homes Act and it covers the cost of purchasing land and providing amenities. An ex-serviceman can borrow up to £2,750, and that also covers the cost of land and amenities. I did not see the type of house the Housing Trust proposes to build for settlers, but from what I read in the press it seems a reasonable proposition for the time being, with further improvements being made later. The amount mentioned in the Bill is sufficient.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I support the amendment. If members agree with the Premier's statement that the Government will provide extra amenities for country people they must support the amendment. It is not a mandatory amendment. It does not say that the State Bank shall do something, but merely gives the power to do it. The Act applies only to people directly engaged on the land and there is the further limitation that no advance can be made unless there is sufficient equity in land on which the house is to be built. There is no need to further safeguard the funds of the State Bank. In opposing the amendment the Minister said that the Housing Trust could build a house for £1,480, if within 100 miles of Adelaide, but many of our primary-producing lands are beyond that distance from the city, and despite the eulogies of the Minister the type of house to be built by the trust is not suitable for country people. I believe in bricks and stones. South Australia has more stone building material than any other State, and it is a tragedy to build so many pre-fabricated houses, which will fall into ruin long before they are paid for. We had the tragedy in the South-East of timber-frame houses being built in areas more subject to grass fires than any other part of the State. The Government still believes in building cheap houses for country people. The making of an advance under this legislation is not a squandering of money, as an advance can be made only if there is sufficient security. It is true that country people do not have to pay for the cost of deep drainage installation, but the builder of the house must provide some form of sanitation. He will not put up with the pit system, and the cost of an improvised system in great. The city versus country controversy has arisen in this debate, and some country members have become purely Government members. Country people must have decent homes in which to live and one cannot be built for £1,750. Because of inflationary conditions, the amount of money needed to build a house today will be insufficient next year.

Mr. HEASLIP—I resent Mr. Macgillivray's statement that I have become purely a Government supporter. Although last week I voted against the Government this week I intend to vote for it because of the people who will benefit. Had Mr. Stott proposed this amendment in clause 7 I probably would have voted against the Government again, but I think he has lost the true perspective of the situation. He is asking for amenities which men in their early days cannot afford; it is something they must earn. If he were asking me to support the giving of more money for the clearing of land or the provision of water and fencing which would enable the farmer to produce more I would support him, but £1,750 is sufficient for a young man setting out to carve his way in life.

Mr. Stott—What about the man who is already established?

Mr. HEASLIP—He will not need nearly so much, but even £1,750 will provide a far better house than I had when I started. I do not think it is too much to expect a young man to work his way up, and if he is the type we want to develop our country he will be only too pleased to be able to get £1,750. I oppose the amendment.

Mr. STOTT—I am surprised at some of the arguments advanced, and it is obvious that some members do not realize what the clause

means. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition argued strongly in support of the clause and cited the extra cost of sanitation in the city. Admittedly that is a cost, but has he forgotten that the country man has to pay freight on timber, doors, windows, etc., and that this would probably eat up the difference? In any case is not a country person entitled to proper sanitary conveniences? This clause is designed to attract rural employees to the farm. Under the Commonwealth Income Tax Assessment Act the farmer cannot get the 20 per cent annual depreciation allowance if he erects a house on his own property to live in, but only if he erects one for an employee; that is what I am driving at. To attract rural employees they must be given better facilities than was the case years ago. Talk of the pioneering spirit is excellent, but if the man already established wants to expand his operations and produce more he must have rural labour to do it. Why should a farm worker be restricted to a prefabricated house? for, according to the Minister, it would cost £1,480 to do that. What will such small places be like when the temperature is over 100 degrees in the summer, or in the depth of winter? I am filled with amazement, consternation and surprise to hear that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will not help us. The first question an employee asks is "Where is the school?" and his wife wants to know what sort of home she is going to live in. If they are satisfied they are likely to remain in the country. There is no danger of the money being squandered, for the bank will not make advances unless it is satisfied that there is ample security. The farmer in 30 bushel country may like to provide a better type home for his employees, so why limit him to a prefabricated house?

Mr. MICHAEL—The honourable member is carried away with his own enthusiasm and has been talking about something entirely different from what I understand the Bill proposes, which is to help those who have some difficulty in getting finance in the ordinary way. I have always understood that the State Bank was not designed to help the man who can go to an ordinary bank and get assistance. By limiting the advance to £1,750 help will be available to a greater number than if we made the limit £2,400. I agree that if a man wants a stone house he should have one, and I believe that rural people are about the only ones who will build stone houses today, provided they can find stonemasons. Fortunately many farmers have building stone on their own property. With an advance of £1,750 the farmer by his initiative will still be able to build a decent house, therefore I oppose the amendment.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I oppose the amendment. Clause 3 increases the maximum amount for advances for improvement to settlers from £1,200 to £2,400, but when that vital provision was before the Committee no amendment was moved. The rate of interest charged the settler on a loan of £1,750 will not be less than 4½ per cent, and rates of interest generally are rising, therefore he would be saddled with an interest bill of at least £78 15s. a year, which could easily prove too much. Few landholders desire to go in for elaborate additional accommodation for their employees, and the settler who is taking up farming in anticipation of the continuance of current ruling prices for wool, barley, wheat, or dairy products may be embarrassed by a high interest bill if the prices of these commodities should fall. I am not asking for any particular type of home to be built; if stone houses cannot be built timber-frame homes should be built, but even for those homes certain skilled labour will be required. The best type of accommodation possible should be built with the money to be advanced.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Although the member for Chaffey said that this debate had resolved itself into a struggle between city and country interests, I appreciate the opinions expressed by those men who have had experience on the land, especially those of the honourable members for Rocky River and Light. Although a metropolitan member, as the son of a farmer I know something of the difficulties under which the man on the land has carried out the important work of primary production. In the years following World War I. the undoing of many farmers was their practice of overborrowing. During the early post-war years prices were high and some farmers felt that they would remain high and borrowed accordingly, but later prices dropped. This Bill provides for loans to be made to those in need of advances.

Mr. Stott—They must have the security.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Yes, but I fail to appreciate the argument that the man on the land should be able to borrow to such an extent as might prove his undoing. Reference has been made to the type of home which might be provided for the farm worker, and I believe that satisfactory accommodation could be provided with the aid of a loan of £1,750, therefore I oppose the amendment.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. LAWN—I, too, oppose the amendment. I believe the general standard to be permitted as an advance on homes is that laid down in the Advances for Homes Act, and I would follow that general principle unless there was some valid reason why it should be departed from. I was struck by the rather naive suggestion of the member for Ridley. He asked the Opposition to support his amendment because it was in the interests of the rural workers who deserved good homes—in fact, he almost made them mansions. At one stage I wondered whether I would not be better off in taking a rural job if his amendment succeeded.

Mr. Stott—The rural worker would not have to pay for it.

Mr. LAWN—Every taxpayer in the State would help to pay for it.

Mr. Stott—The advance is all paid back.

Mr. LAWN—I would like to see the man who could pay it back—he would have to pay 30s. a week as interest for a start. The member for Ridley mentioned settlers who were getting 30 bushels an acre from their land and suggested that they would be more likely to get the full advance from the State Bank than settlers in poorer areas; but such a settler would be rich enough to build a mansion without assistance. The first principle that should be observed in regard to these settlers is to provide a standard living wage and a fixed working week for rural employees. At present these settlers can employ workers at less than the basic wage and make them work a 60-hour week, so the employees deserve more than the mansion that could be built for £2,400. If the member for Ridley is interested in rural welfare let him make a plea to country representatives supporting the Government to assist in bringing rural workers under the Industrial Code which prescribes a decent standard of living and a decent working week. In June I was motored through the rural areas of the Dandenong Ranges and was told that two years ago many workers left the land and obtained employment in small factories which were built in those areas. The position became so bad that primary producers applied for a 40-hour working week, which was granted by determination of the Wages Board. As a result of that award rural workers left the factories and returned to the land and the industry flourished again. During my term in this House the Leader of the Opposition introduced a Bill to amend the Industrial Code to bring—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN—Order! The honourable member will not be in order in pursuing that.

Mr. LAWN—I do not claim to represent the rural workers, but some metropolitan members do, including the members for Goodwood and Glenelg, so country members are not the only ones who represent rural workers. I would not support a proposal to permit settlers to borrow up to £2,400 from the State Bank because in the final analysis the taxpayers will have to pay. The people represented by the member for Ridley and other country members could not go broke at the moment if they tried. The wool cheque this year has already exceeded last year's cheque, yet those who benefit from it want taxpayers to permit the State Bank to lend them money to build homes.

Mr. QUIRKE—The relevant part of section 12a, which this clause amends, reads:—

> Every advance under this section shall be made subject to the following provisions:—The dwellinghouse erected, enlarged or altered by means of the advance shall be used for the purpose of residence by the primary producer or by a member of the family or an employee of the primary producer . . . . No advance shall be made except upon the security of a mortgage of the estate and interest of the primary producer in his holding.

It is therefore not the taxpayers who have to pay. The amendment would increase the amount advanced for building a house from £1,750 to £2,400 either for the owner, his family, or an employee. Anyone would think by the arguments submitted that it was compulsory for the full amount to be advanced. A settler might want only £200 or £500. The Housing Trust asks £2,500 for an ordinary prefabricated house in the metropolitan area, so one can imagine what type of house could be provided in the country for £1,750. In effect the member for Adelaide says that unless rural workers come under the Industrial Code they must sleep in a stripper. Such an argument is spurious. No house of any substance could be built in the country for £1,750. An amount of £2,500 would provide a house of only minimum standard for a worker in the country. If a man has an equity of £2,500 in his property, why should he not get an advance beyond £1,750? The advance should equal at least the price of a house sold by the trust in Adelaide. I support the amendment.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—One or two important factors have escaped the mover of the amendment and I want to correct his statements. I do not think they were advanced to cloud the issue,

because the facts are perhaps not available to him. He said that the State Bank is tied up under the Act, but that is not so. It is just as free as any other bank in South Austraia to lend money for any purpose that falls within its jurisdiction. All the State Bank is doing is to administer the moneys made available to it by Parliament each year.

Mr. Riches—How much will it be this year?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It is very limited. The Loan Estimates have been passed this year and if a large amount is made available to some settlers, none will be available for others. All the arguments used as to what it costs to build a house relate to dwellings built under the Homes Act. Parliament has taken the view that it is desirable to help as many as possible with the limited amount of finance available from the Loan Council for the purpose. If the State Bank or the Government under the Homes Act ceased advancing money for home building tomorrow there would be a complete slump in the building industry. Most of the financing for home building is from money provided by the State Government and the Commonwealth Bank. This year the Government has made available to the State Bank £1,000,000 under the Advances for Homes Act.

Mr. Macgillivray—You have made a monopoly of building in the State.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No. We are assisting building when others are not prepared to do it. We are not stopping them. At present, notwithstanding all the talk of lifting restrictions, the banking institutions in the main are not in a position to make new advances. If the amount is made greater for one settler, the balance left for others is that much smaller. This Bill is not looked upon as ushering in the millennium, but is designed to meet present-day conditions. Until the Government moved in this matter not one honourable member had sought to increase the limit of £1,200. This is an entirely new idea.

Mr. Stott—It is only because of the Commonwealth Government's taxation proposals.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Those proposals provide for a recoup up to a limit of £2,000 over a five-year period. The Bill provides for a maximum advance of £1,750, which is about nine-tenths of the value of £1,950, which almost corresponds with the Commonwealth Government's £2,000. This matter was before Parliament when the Loan Estimates were under discussion, yet no member raised the point the honourable member for Ridley is pressing now. The State Government has made available every penny it possibly can for housing this year and is providing housing in a manner that no other State is doing. We are trying to stabilize the whole approach to community problems and we will start off on an absolutely wrong basis if we have an unsatisfactory housing scheme. I point out that the Loan Council has not raised one public loan this year. Notwithstanding that, South Australia has maintained a housing programme as high as any in the history of the State. I assure members that all available money has been fully committed. As some members do not seem anxious to have this legislation placed on the Statute Book I move that progress be reported.

Mr. STOTT—I take strong exception to the Premier's remarks that, because a member desires to move a legitimate amendment, he wants to delay the passage of the Bill. I oppose his motion that progress be reported.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—On a point of order, Mr. Acting Chairman, I take strong exception to the Premier's statement that members who are criticizing the Bill are not desirous of seeing it placed on the Statute Book. That statement is a personal reflection on me and I ask for its withdrawal.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN—I do not think that is a proper point of order. I think it was merely an expression of opinion by the Premier.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I shall not withdraw unless you direct me to, Mr. Acting Chairman. My remark was merely an expression of opinion. Members have been debating this matter nearly all the afternoon and, in my opinion, they have unnecessarily delayed the Bill and do not seem anxious to get it finalized. Other arrangements for debate tonight have been made. One member has to go away tomorrow and the Leader of the Opposition has agreed to go on with a certain matter to enable that member to make his speech tonight.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN—I cannot see how the opinion expressed by the Premier can be taken as offensive. If it could, I would ask him to withdraw. Even if it is unpleasant to the member for Chaffey I cannot rule that it is offensive.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—When the House met on Thursday I said that, in my opinion, a certain decision was not democratic. That was merely an expression of opinion, but because the Premier objected I withdrew it. I now object to his remark that members do not

seem anxious to have this legislation placed on the Statute Book, and ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr. LAWN—I oppose the motion that progress be reported—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN—Order! The honourable member is not raising a point of order?

Mr. LAWN—No.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN—Standing Orders provide that there can be no discussion on a motion that progress be reported.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I am not debating the motion that progress be reported. The Premier's remark is a personal reflection on me. I have as much right to be protected here as the Premier.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN—I do not think that the Premier intended any reflection on the honourable member.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—If he did not intend it he should withdraw, like a gentleman.

The Committee divided on the motion that progress be reported—

Ayes (25).—Messrs. Brookman, John Clark, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunnage, Goldney, Hawker, and Heaslip, Hon. C. S. Hincks, Mr. Hutchens, Hon. Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. Lawn, and McAlees, Hon. M. McIntosh, Messrs. McLachlan, Michael, O'Halloran, Pattinson, and Pearson, Hon. T. Playford (teller), Messrs. Riches, Tapping, Teusner, Frank Walsh, Fred Walsh, and Whittle.

Noes (4).—Messrs. Davis, Macgillivray (teller), Quirke, and Stott.

Pair.—Aye—Mr. Shannon. No—Mr. Fletcher.

Majority of 21 for the Ayes.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

BARLEY MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 9. Page 874.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—When I saw this Bill at the top of the Notice Paper today, and as it was introduced only last Thursday and I had been absent in the country until nearly 1 p.m. today, and thought I might wish to move one or two amendments, I asked the Premier if he would agree to postponing the debate until tomorrow. He agreed, but subsequently I learned that the member for Flinders, who is interested in this measure—particularly as a member of the Barley Board, and one I think we should hear—would not be in the House either tomorrow or Thursday. I, therefore, approached the Minister in charge of the House at that time (the Hon. C. S. Hincks) and said I would be prepared to resume the debate this evening. I think this is a type of arrangement necessary to be made from time to time in order to facilitate the proceedings of Parliament. We have our different views on principles and I yield to no one in my support of those principles which I believe in and shall espouse at all times. As I see it, it is the duty of an Opposition to fight for its principles with all the ability at its command but not to use any tactics, other than fair argument, in order to make its point. This Bill re-enacts legislation first passed by this Parliament in 1947 for a duration of five years. It now becomes necessary for the legislation to be re-enacted or allowed to lapse. I have always believed in the stabilization of primary industries under marketing schemes and because of that I supported the legislation introduced in 1947. That was brought down to perpetuate the barley marketing scheme promulgated by the Federal Government during the war under its war-time powers. Regulations were made for the constitution of an Australian barley marketing scheme and for the establishment of an Australian Barley Board. In 1947 it was considered that the Commonwealth powers could no longer be used to sustain the scheme and this House was asked to consider legislation which was the result of an agreement between South Australia and Victoria, the two principal barley growing States. This Bill is intended to continue the operation of that system. I agree with the amendments brought down by the Government for the better working of the scheme. The first deals with the remuneration of the members of the board. So far their remuneration has been the result of agreement between the Victorian and South Australian Governments, but it is now proposed that it shall be fixed by the Ministers of Agriculture of South Australia and Victoria. If they fail to agree they may appoint a third person to determine the issue. However, there is no provision for the contingency that the two Ministers may fail to agree on the umpire.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins—The position will stay put.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—In that case the unfortunate members of the board may lose considerably in carrying out their duties.

The Hon. T. Playford—What happens if they do not have a Minister of Agriculture in Victoria?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—That is also a very moot point. Even if they have one they may not have him for long. Again, the Minister there may agree with our Minister on the remuneration, but a week later there may be another Minister of Agriculture in Victoria with a different view. However, I think the principle of the Ministers of Agriculture fixing the remuneration to be a sound one. In these days of the changing value of money it seems wise that some provision more elastic than the present should be incorporated. The Bill also provides that the board may expend moneys on conducting research into methods and seeds and other matters to improve the barley-growing industry. This is something we should all commend. The board will be given power to charter ships. It is considered that the board may have this power now, but to clear up any legal doubts such a provision has been included, with which I agree. Most of our barley is grown on the two peninsulas and adjacent to small ports so it is certainly desirable that the board should have the right to engage in intrastate sea transport. Further, under the interstate marketing of barley it is necessary that the board should have the opportunity of engaging ships. Indeed, I understand that recently a small ship was chartered to carry barley to Tasmania and bring back timber to assist our housing programme.

Another clause deals with fractions. Another Statute legalizes the use of the totalizator on race-courses and provides that the fractions which are undistributable because of their small denominations are to be devoted to charities, but under this Bill it is suggested that the fractions, which are not immediately divisible because of the cost of paying the money to those who are entitled to receive it, should be placed in a trust fund and used to meet the incidental expenses of the barley marketing scheme. Two or three points are not adequately covered by existing legislation. Firstly, the board has wide powers under section 9 of the Act to engage in marketing of barley subject to certain considerations about getting the best price. Secondly, under section 18 the board also has power to dispose of barley in the interests of the growers and to meet the needs of the community, but those sections are not sufficiently explanatory. We should give a direction to the board that in fixing the price of barley for local consumption regard should be had to the cost of the commodities that are made from the barley. The producer should get a payable price in all circumstances. In years to come we may be able to establish a more permanent scheme that will guarantee him a payable price. At present there is an extraordinary demand from overseas for our barley. Overseas buyers bid against each other for barley, which is apparently scarce in most of the countries in the Northern Hemisphere. The time is not far distant when the overseas demand will not be as great and there will not be the high price that we have today. I have noticed with some concern a recent drop in the price of lead. It has dropped £40 a ton in the last three or four weeks. It is remarkable how the price of many of our primary products follow the price of that base metal.

We should not become too optimistic about the selling of barley overseas indefinitely at about 20s. a bushel. At the end of this year Marshall aid to Europe will cease. Much of the demand for our barley from European countries has come because of the Marshall aid to those countries. When they are thrown back on to their own resources we will probably finding them growing the coarse grains which characterized their agriculture in days gone by. I do not want our people to be unduly exploited in order to build up a high price for barley. As I have said, the grower is entitled to a fair price for his product, but it is difficult to determine a fair price because until recently barley has been considered as a rotation crop, to be grown on stubble land to allow the soil to rest rather than be used continually in growing wheat. It is difficult to arrive at a true basis for fixing a payable price for barley. Therefore, I do not suggest that we should try to fix a South Australian or an Australian price. I would like to see a direction given to the board to consider this matter, and, if I get the opportunity, I shall move in that direction in Committee. The board should have regard to the true requirements of Australia as regards quantity and quality. It is provided for to some extent in the 1947 legislation, but there can be no harm in making the position more specific by means of this Bill. With these reservations I support the second reading.

Mr. PEARSON (Flinders)—I thank the Leader of the Opposition for making it possible for me to speak on this matter tonight. As he said, he approached me this afternoon

and said he preferred to wait until tomorrow before speaking, but I told him that because of an important engagement in my constituency I would not be in the House tomorrow, and therefore at some personal difficulty he made arrangements to meet my request and spoke tonight. I thank him sincerely for his courtesy.

The Bill is a simple one and seeks to continue the operation of the 1947 Act that set up the Australian Barley Board as now constituted to take over from the wartime board that operated under Commonwealth National Security Regulations. As the Minister said in introducing the Bill, there is no doubt that the operations of the board have met with the general approval of the barley growers, and it is their unanimous desire that the legislation should be passed to continue the operation of the board. In making that statement I think the Minister was aware that a number of public meetings had been convened throughout the barley growing districts of the State, at which farmers were invited to express their opinion on the continuation of the board. At those meetings no dissentient voice was heard. Therefore, it would not appear necessary to further consult the growers. The 1947 Act provided for a poll of growers, but that does not appear to be necessary in this case.

The Bill does not change any of the vital principles of the 1947 Act. It merely makes a few minor amendments that are machinery matters. During the operations of the board they have been shown to be necessary. I want to say a word or two about the amending clauses. In clause 5 the board seeks legislative authority to conduct certain experiments directed towards achieving an improvement in the standard of seed and in the standard of barley produced with a view to a further increase in the quality of our barley. It is already a fact that Australian barley, and in particular South Australian barley, is known throughout the world for its very superior quality. There is no barley grown elsewhere in the world, except possibly in some parts of Europe, that can successfully compete on the world market with Australian. The board feels that it would be proper for it to continue its researches into a still further improvement and seeks legislative authority to spend such small amounts of money as may be necessary from time to time in conducting experiments. Incidentally, these have already commenced in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture. It may become necessary to make experiments into the possibility of bulk storage of barley. The information we have does not indicate that we can successfully store barley in bulk for any lengthy period of time. It is done in other parts of the world but only under costly handling conditions, and with the installation of elaborate equipment.

The board also seeks authority to enable ships to be chartered for the movement of barley between South Australian ports, or beyond if so decided, because of the extreme difficulty in the past few years in getting coastal freight to move grain from out of the way ports. The board has no desire to enter into competition with any shipping interests or become in its own right a charterer of ships to any extent. It seeks merely to overcome a difficulty which has arisen, and if the necessity for the chartering ceases in the near future the board will be happy to relinquish that portion of its activities.

Mr. Hawker—Who charters ships now for the export of barley?

Mr. PEARSON—Chartering for that purpose is wrapped up in the terms of the sale. If the sale is on an f.o.b. basis the buyer provides the freight, but if it is a c.i.f. sale the seller provides it. Then it is necessary to go on the world's market for freight and get it at the best possible conditions. This legislation refers to the movement of barley interstate and intrastate. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the undistributed fractions which occur in the board's accounts from time to time. The board seeks to disburse as fully as it can the moneys which are in its hands. It usually computes the last dividend to about three or four decimal places, but because of the volume of barley handled there are certain small amounts which remain undistributed, and which are impossible to distribute economically. These accumulate over the years into a useful sum and the board seeks authority to carry them forward from one year to the next so that they may be ultimately disbursed to growers, whose property they actually are. The Auditor-General, who audits the accounts of the board, is definite on these things and requires the board to deal with its accounts in a way which he can approve. At present the 1947 Act does not give the board authority to transfer funds from one pool to another.

The clause relating to the extension of the board's term provides that it shall continue for a further five years.

Quite a number of growers' meetings carried resolutions asking for a 10-year period. The Minister, in his second reading speech, explained that the Government considered that five years would be a proper term; indeed, a prudent term, and with that decision the board has no disagreement. The fact that the growers asked for 10 years would merely indicate the confidence they have, not necessarily in the board's members, but at least in its management and is a very nice gesture for the board to receive. The only advantage of a longer term would be that if the board desired to enter into a long-term arrangement for, say, the bulk handling of grain, or any other purpose which involved the expenditure of money, the longer period would give it a better chance to work out its affairs.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins—There would have to be legislation to enable it to do that.

Mr. PEARSON—At least I agree that it is a moot point and the board would probably automatically seek a special enactment to put the matter beyond doubt. For the present, as far as I am aware, the board does not have any such plan in view. I should like to give some information as to the working of the board and the development of the barley industry which may be of some interest to members. The total quantity of barley handled during the four years which the board has operated is 69,910,000bush. Of that quantity 54,600,000bush. have been grown in South Australia, which is an indication of the predominance of this State in the industry. Indeed, outside of South Australia and Victoria very small quantities of barley are grown; probably not much more than half to one million bushels annually in any other one State. The total sum paid to growers in the four years of the board's operations is £40,400,000, of which practically £32,000,000 have been dispersed to South Australian growers. In the present year it is expected that the board will pay some £12,300,000 to South Australian producers.

The Hon. T. Playford—What is that per bushel?

Mr. PEARSON—In round figures, subject to trading operations for the remainder of the cereal year, about 15s. 6d. Administrative expenses have been quite low, as the following figures show:—

	A bush.
No. 10 pool	6.104d.
No. 11 pool	6.813d.
No. 12 pool	7.80d.
No. 13 pool	8.166d.

Those figures include the cost of licensed receivers' and country agents' remuneration, but not freight charges on growers' accounts. An interesting comparison can be found in the relative productive value of the industry in South Australia. A great deal has been said in the last year or two about the falling off of wheat production and the increase in barley. I cannot find a great deal of evidence to support the assertion that barley has replaced wheat; rather, I think, it has increased in its own right, and although wheat production has shown some decline it is relatively not as great as the increase in barley. The figures of the yield per acre are rather interesting and barley has consistently outyielded wheat. In 1945-46 the total wheat yield was 21,000,000bush. at an average of 9.72bush. an acre. In the same year we produced 7,000,000bush. of barley at an average yield of 17.12bush. an acre. The following years were somewhat similar, but in 1948-49, whereas we grew 26,000,000bush. of wheat at an average of 12.67bush. an acre we grew 12,000,000bush. of barley at an average of 17.35bush. an acre. Barley production continued to increase for two or three more years until in 1950-51, although we grew 30,000,000bush. of wheat the average was only 16.74bush. an acre, whereas we grew 16,700,000bush. of barley at an average yield of 21.8bush. an acre. Taking the five-year period preceding this year we have grown an average of 29,000,000bush. of wheat an 13.63bush. an acre, compared with 13,000,000bush. of barley at an average of 20.29bush. an acre. I think those figures are significant in so far as they give some idea of the relative economic value of the cereal to the agriculture of South Australia.

Mr. Christian—Of course little barley is grown in the outside country where wheat is grown.

Mr. PEARSON—I agree. Barley is necessarily grown in the kinder areas where the spring is somewhat longer and the rainfall higher to enable quality grain to be produced, and that undoubtedly explains the higher yield per acre. It does not detract from the point I have made that in the areas of the State where barley can be grown successfully it is relatively a much better product from the farmer's point of view. Dealing with the value per acre of one as against the other I find that in the three-year period 1948-49 to 1950-51 the average value to the grower per acre of wheat was £8 19s. 10d. and of barley £10 5s., which is 25s. an acre better. Of course, there are all sorts of factors which come into the relative values. Wheat has been stabilized at

controlled prices for home consumption and under overseas agreements, but to a great extent during the same period barley also has been controlled by orders of the Prices Commissioners, and our selling price to the Australian consumer has varied between 5s. 6d. and 11s. 2½d. a bushel. At all times it has been much lower than the value we could have got at the same time for overseas sales. Therefore relative values can be somewhat misleading, but they are factual values which have accrued to the growers.

Mr. Hawker—Would you have been able to sell the whole crop overseas?

Mr. PEARSON—Yes, twice over without difficulty in some years.

The Hon. T. Playford—What are the prospects this year?

Mr. PEARSON—Quite strong. I would prefer not to quote figures at this stage, but there are strong inquiries from the usual buyers for a lot of barley and negotiations are in progress for a forward sale. The indications are that the market is just about as good as it was this time last year. Since about 1945-46, at the end of the war, production has more than doubled in South Australia. In that year we produced 7,500,000 bushels and in 1951-52 the board has handled nearly 17,000,000 bushels, and it is of interest to note that the increase has been spread over a big area of the State. When I was a lad it was accepted as a fact that barley could not be grown successfully in areas remote from the sea and that was the reason given for the quality of the barley grown on Yorke Peninsula. Barley is now being grown successfully in parts of the State remote from the seaboard, particularly the Murray mallee areas. Of the 17,000,000 bushels grown in 1951-52, 2,800,000 were grown on Eyre Peninsula, 7,000,000 on Yorke Peninsula, 2,500,000 in the Murray mallee and 4,300,000 in the remainder of the State, which shows the very wide dispersal in that period.

I agree with the Leader of the Opposition when he said that it would be extremely dangerous to expect a continuation of prices on the level which has prevailed in the last few years. As an illustration of that may I say that since the board's operations began export values have risen from about 9s. 6d. a bushel to about 24s., which shows the wide fluctuations which have occurred in that four-year period.

Mr. O'Halloran—What are the current export values?

Mr. PEARSON—Somewhat under £1 a bushel; they have yet to be established by testing the market. Of course it could quite easily happen that the reverse could apply in a similar period, and Mr. O'Halloran sounded a wise note when he said that it would be unsound to base prospects on present values continuing. It is impossible to forecast just where values will level out—if they do. We can at best hope that they will remain, if not at the present level, at least at a payable one.

The Hon. T. Playford—Is the present overseas demand for barley for malting or for food purposes?

Mr. PEARSON—The interesting fact about our export barley is that all of it goes to the production of foodstuffs. The barley we are selling to Japan, which has come in as a strong buyer in the past few years is processed and used by the Japanese as a substitute for rice. After putting it through a process of pressing it is quite palatable with a flavour similar to that of rolled oats. Information received from the Trade Commissioner for Australia in Japan, Mr. Menzies, suggests that the Japanese have developed a strong taste for this product, and that even when rice supplies return in sufficient volume to enable all customers to be satisfied, the Japanese will probably buy our barley because of their taste for it as a food. The barley which goes to the United Kingdom, our other principal buyer, is usually used as coarse grain for livestock which eventually becomes meat for human consumption. To those people who say the barley industry is unethical I point out that every bushel we export is assisting to meet the present critical world demand for foodstuffs. Further, as the industry is at present constituted we require for brewing, malting, drying, pearling and other purposes about 6,000,000 bushels annually, and the demand is increasing slightly. As our export is about 12,000,000 bushels annually, two bushels of barley are exported for every one bushel retained in Australia, which means that about two-thirds of Australian barley is going directly to the production of human food.

With regard to the amendment foreshadowed by the Leader of the Opposition, I point out that the Barley Board was not set up to be in any sense a stabilizing factor in the barley industry but purely as a means of marketing to receive it from the growers, to sell it to those who might want to buy it both inside and outside Australia, and to distribute the proceeds of sales to the growers.

Mr. O'Halloran—Stabilization was suggested before the board was set up but was rejected by the growers.

Mr. PEARSON—Yes, two or three schemes were proposed. One envisaged stabilization and another straight out marketing, and the growers voted for a straight out board. I do not want to be involved in a discussion on the merits or demerits of stabilization, but it has been a very simple matter for the board to operate as a marketing board and quite easy for it to return good prices to the growers in the days when markets were so buoyant. Mr. O'Halloran said that his proposed amendment would require the board in fixing the price of barley to Australian consumers to have regard to its effect on the industry. He also used the term "exploiting the home consumers." I do not think he meant the term in its worst form but rather that it would be improper for the board, having been given price fixing authority to unduly exercise its power in an extreme manner.

Mr. O'Halloran—I meant it rather as a sign post than as a prohibition.

Mr. PEARSON—I accept that, but during the period preceding July this year the board always operated under price control and the Prices Commissioner's determinations have been on bases from about 6s. to 11s. 2½d. a bushel. During that period various estimates have been made of the loss sustained by the growers under price control, and, although it is a little difficult to compute what are really unassessable factors, some people have estimated that price control has cost the growers about £10,000,000.

The Hon. T. Playford—The honourable member will agree that the Prices Commissioner took the recommendation of the board in each instance.

Mr. PEARSON—Not entirely. His job, as the board understood it, was to base his price on the cost of production factors in the industry and the board made submissions to the Prices Commissioner based on evident increases in cost. By and large the Prices Commissioner did accept the board's recommendations on that basis. At no time did the board approach the Prices Commissioner and ask for a price which had any relation to the export price. The Prices Commissioner made his determination on the board's submissions as to increases in cost of production in industry, and I believe that was his proper function. Only once did he reduce the price asked for by the board, and then only on a technical point which he disallowed. I do not state that as a complaint against the Prices Commissioner, but merely say that various people have assessed the so-called losses to the grower at a certain figure. Neither board nor growers by and large thought it proper that the Australian industry should be saddled with fluctuating overseas parity. Growers of most other commodities do not expect their price to be fixed on that principle, and it is an accepted fact that the home market and economic conditions within the country should be kept as stable as possible and that all concerned should make some contribution if necessary to that set-up. Under this Act there is no suggestion of stabilization, and the Act says quite clearly that the board shall pay out from each pool, all the money it receives.

Mr. O'Halloran—There is even a provision as to fractions.

Mr. PEARSON—Yes. The barley grower has made a considerable contribution already to the economy of the country during the years that price control has operated.

Mr. O'Halloran—At one time when it was unsaleable overseas a fairly high price was paid for barley for local manufacture, but I bought surplus barley as sheep feed for 1s. 6d. a bushel.

Mr. PEARSON—The honourable member can tell me nothing of which I am not aware about the low price of barley then, for I grew barley on Yorke Peninsula in the 1930's when we received 1s. 7d. and 1s. 8d. a bushel for prime barley in new cornsacks after carting it 14 miles to the nearest reception point. Growers who experienced those conditions are quite satisfied with the operations of the board today. As regards beer and other products manufactured from barley, the cost of the raw material is a negligible factor in the price of the finished product. The manager of the board, Mr. Tomlinson, in a statement said:—

> The first point that must be recognized is that one bushel of barley is used in the manufacture of 35 gallons of beer. Thirty-five gallons of beer, with barley at the cost of 16s. 6d. per bushel, shows that the barley content of a gallon of beer is 5.66d. per gallon. The significant facts are that if barley growers of South Australia and Victoria gave the barley to the brewers, the brewers could only reduce the price of beer by one penny per bottle of three-quarters of a pint, or approximately one-farthing per 7oz. glass.

That effectively disposes of the story that the grower of barley is putting up the price of beer. When the Leader speaks of a fair price for barley to the consumer within Australia there is really not much in it, because if the price were raised to 33s. a bushel, which is

twice the present price, it would still only increase the price of beer by 1d. a bottle. I do not think there is much fear that the operations of the Barley Board will have much effect on the ultimate price of beer to the consumers. The board realizes, however, that high prices for barley do create problems for consumers other than the technical processes of malting and brewing. I do not suggest the board proposes to run wild in the matter of prices but even if it did the Prices Minister could easily invoke price control again, and he would be fulfilling his proper function if he was not satisfied that the board was doing the right thing.

The Minister was good enough to compliment the board on its management and work, and as one interested I think mention should be made of the services rendered by the chairman, Mr. Spafford—the ex-Director of Agriculture—who brought a wealth of administrative and technical knowledge to the job. The general manager, Mr. Tomlinson, has won and held the confidence of growers, and wherever he addresses meetings he is cordially received. The same applies to other officers of the board—the secretary, Mr. Angel; the assistant manager, Mr. Martin; and the treasurer, Mr. Seymour. The growers and the board are well served by faithful and efficient officers who devote their entire energy to the work of the board, and on behalf of the growers I express appreciation of their work. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Mr. STOTT secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 9.18 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, October 15, at 2 p.m.