HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, October 15, 1952.

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

ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE.

A message was received from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor recommending the House to make appropriation of the several sums set forth in the accompanying Estimates of Expenditure by the Government during the year ending June 30, 1953, for the purposes stated therein.

Referred to Committee of Supply.

QUESTIONS.

BARBED WIRE EXPORT TO CANADA.

Mr. HEASLIP—Under the heading, "Canada orders Barbed Wire from Australia," the following appears in today's *Advertiser*:—

One of the most significant dollar orders to be received by Australia has just been completed in Canada. Canada, dissatisfied with the performance of the American-type military barbed wire which has been supplied to its troops, has asked Australia to supply its needs exclusively.

Will the Premier inquire into the export of this wire in view of the fact that primary producers cannot even now get their full requirements and without such requirements cannot produce to their fullest extent?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will bring the question under the Prime Minister's notice and ask him to make the necessary investigation.

COUNTRY ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Some time ago I had the honour of introducing to the Premier a deputation representing all the councils between Barmera and Renmark, and one of the subjects dealt with was whether the Premier, under the Electricity Supplies (Country Areas) Act, could advance money to the Renmark Irrigation Trust so that power could be provided to the Paringa district. He was unable to give a reply at the time, but assured the deputation that one would be given in due course through the member for the district who introduced the deputation. He knows that from time to time I have approached him on this matter, and he said that although he was unable to give a reply then, in due course I would get an answer which I could forward to the councils represented at the deputation. In today's *Advertiser* the following appears:—

The Renmark Irrigation Trust today received advice that a Government grant under the Electricity Supplies (Country Areas) Act, has been allowed, not exceeding 50 per cent of the cost of supplying power to the Paringa township area, for which a special crossing of the river will be necessary. Most of the materials are now available and the estimated cost is £7,672.

Is it in accordance with his principles as Leader of this Parliament to overlook in that manner a private member who has gone to the trouble of organizing and introducing a deputation? Does he think that it builds up the status of members of Parliament if they are ignored in this way by semi-Governmental bodies? The Premier will remember that I have already complained to him personally about the attitude of the Electricity Trust, which has simply refused to answer letters sent to it. Is it the Premier's policy that this should happen or will he give instructions that it shall not happen again?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I regret that the honourable member did not receive a reply direct, as I had assured him I would send it direct. I point out that the deputation which was arranged covered a number of matters and the one mentioned today is not normally handled by the Treasury, but the Minister of Works. I actually set the machinery in motion to see that it received consideration, and indeed took an interest in the decision and discussed it with the Electricity Trust, as I had promised the deputation. After it had been approved it went back to the department where it would normally have been dealt with. The Minister of Works has assured me that he did not know of the assurance I had given, and that is why the application was handled in the ordinary way. I regret that the advice was not forwarded through the honourable member, but I can assure him that the remarks made at the deputation did in fact set this matter going and lead to the decision, of which I know he will be pleased to learn.

Mr. TEUSNER—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked recently about the extension of electricity supplies to Springton and Eden Valley?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I discussed this matter with the chairman of the Electricity Trust, who informs me that the extension to Springton involves 55 residents, with a capital expenditure of £6,620, 21,000yds. of line, five transformers and other services. It will not be possible to commence the scheme before early in 1954. The Eden Valley extension involves 43 residents, with a capital expenditure of £6,270, and the chairman hopes that it will be possible to commence the work later in

1954. Four transformers and other services and 14,870yds. of line will be required to complete that activity.

Mr. McALEES—About six months ago I was promised that electric power would be supplied to my district by December. The people there have been anxiously waiting for it to be connected. Will the promise be fulfilled?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have heard nothing to the contrary, but I will check up and let the honourable member know the exact position later this afternoon.

BLANCHETOWN FERRY.

Mr. STOTT—In his reply to my question yesterday the Premier said that an additional ferry would be installed at Blanchetown. I have here a letter dated April 30, 1952, signed by his secretary. It states, *inter alia*:—

It is not possible to install an additional ferry at Blanchetown at the present time as it is imperative that several of the other river ferries be replaced, otherwise the services may cease altogether. The old approaches at Blanchetown would not be suitable for operating a new ferry without expensive underwater re-construction.

Can the Premier clarify the situation, in view of his statement yesterday? Will an additional ferry operate, and is it intended to alter the approaches to allow two ferries to run?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Minister of Local Government has been most concerned at the delay that has occurred at Blanchetown and has had a number of conferences with the director concerning what additional steps can be taken to lessen it. Since that letter was forwarded to the honourable member the director has been able to inform the Minister that he is now in a position to duplicate the service operating at Blanchetown and the construction of the additional ferry is well under way. Of course, additional approaches will have to be made to enable it to operate effectively, but it is the quickest way of getting some relief at Blanchetown and, as it will duplicate the present service, to that extent it must give great alleviation.

Mr. Stott—Is one to be used for lorries exclusively and the other for motor cars?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I think the new ferry will be a large one and be used for all purposes.

SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

Mr. McKENZIE—Parliament has been humbugging the question of soldier settlement for years. I have two applications in my pocket from two brothers, qualified farmers, whose father was an Anzac soldier and a good farmer in the Mallee, but these boys cannot get land. These are only two applications out of many that come my way. We certainly owe these people something: we promised them the world when they went away to defend this country, but so far they have got nothing. Will the Premier take this matter up to see what can be done to expedite soldier settlement so that these men can get into production, especially as we badly need to increase primary production?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—This State is doing its utmost to expedite soldier settlement in every possible way. It is buying land, if suitable, on every possible occasion, but I point out that we are in partnership in this matter with the Commonwealth Government and that, of necessity, means that before any definite action can be taken it is always subject to the approval of an additional department, which always investigates every matter before coming to a decision. Sometimes that department follows our recommendations and sometimes it makes counter-proposals, but even that is preferable to what has happened in the three non-agent States where land settlement, through restriction of Loan moneys, has now almost ceased. That applies to the three eastern states, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. I assure the honourable member that the Government, and the Minister of Repatriation particularly, are just as anxious to speed up land settlement of returned soldiers as he is; in fact, we are securing tremendous assistance from the R.S.L. on this matter. That body is represented on the management committee controlling land settlement in this State. All opportunities will be taken to purchase suitable land and speed up the settlement of ex-servicemen.

PURCHASE OF J.O. WOOL STORES.

Mr. HEASLIP—An article in today's *Advertiser* headed "Policy on J.O. Wool Stores" states:—

The Government intended to buy the British Government's share in Joint Organization Wool Stores and retain the stores in Government ownership, the Minister for Commerce (Mr. McEwen) said in the House of Representatives today.

In view of the fact that a ballot of woolgrowers was taken at which the growers signified that they did not desire to continue with the Joint Organization scheme, which was a liquidation or realization scheme, and seeing that the funds were to be distributed to the growers, I ask the Minister of Agriculture

what money is being used to purchase these wool stores? Is it Government money or money taken out of J.O. funds? If it is taken out of the funds what is the purpose of continuing a scheme which has already gone into liquidation?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I will seek the information required by the honourable member from the Federal Minister for Commerce and Agriculture.

LOXTON IRRIGATION SETTLEMENT.

Mr. STOTT—Can the Premier say whether any decision has been reached by Cabinet with the Commonwealth Government in regard to an extension of the Loxton soldier settlement scheme? Have extensions been approved and the details finalized, and how much additional land will there be?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have not heard that any extension has been approved, but I will verify the position and advise the honourable member as soon as possible.

ROAD AND RAILWAY TRANSPORT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 24. Page 649.)

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley)—This Bill makes a simple amendment to the Act. The provision in the principal Act proposed to be amended exempts certain persons from the operation of the Act. It is desired to have the exemption cover also members of the forces in uniform. It is extraordinary that one of the sections imposing restrictions does not apply to a vehicle of less than 32cwt. A vehicle of 31cwt. can be used without a permit, but one is needed for a vehicle of 33cwt. To me, that is foolish. Young men are being compulsorily enrolled, and rightly so, to undergo military training, but the camps are in places where it is difficult to get transport to their home town when on leave. A man can use his own means of transport without any restrictions to take relatives from the camp to their homes, and that is reasonable. The Minister did not address himself to the proposed amendment, but argued mainly that if the man in question had applied a permit would have been granted. I understand that that is the position, but it should not have been necessary for him to apply.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—I made the point that there was an arrangement between the military authorities, the railways and private operators, and that it might fall down if there were an open go.

Mr. QUIRKE—I think the arrangement has been made since.

Mr. O'Halloran—In any event the arrangement would apply only to bringing the young men from the camps to the metropolitan area.

Mr. QUIRKE—To my knowledge no such arrangement was in existence when the matter under review occurred. It is extraordinary that a 30cwt. vehicle is exempt from the provisions of the Act. A 5-ton vehicle would be safe.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—I said that the truck to be used was not safe.

Mr. QUIRKE—A 30cwt. vehicle could be a flat table top truck, and a 5-ton vehicle with sides to it could be safer than the other truck.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Flat top trucks are not safe.

Mr. QUIRKE—The Act implies that a vehicle with a flat table top and no sides and weighing 30cwt. is safe. The main thing that supports my argument is the present condition of things. In this case the military camp is necessarily isolated and the normal avenues of transport are not readily available; therefore the men must get to their home towns on leave by any means they can. Seeing that Australia has found it necessary to impose on these men the requirements of military training we should make it as easy as possible for them to take full advantage of their leave period and if the parent of one of them is in a position to convey a dozen or so trainees back to their home town on leave he should be able to do so without the necessity for applying for a permit.

Mr. STOTT (Ridley)—I support the Bill. The transport control authorities, with their restrictions on transport, are today causing a good deal of concern in country districts. Many of the lads who have been called up for military training come from farms some distance away from country towns, and they are entitled to get home on leave with the least possible delay, but under present conditions they are subject to delay, the extent of which depends on where the camp is situated in relation to their home town. A trainee may have to travel to Adelaide and stay there 24 hours before connecting up with a service to his home town, and that does not tend to keep harmony between the servicemen and the authorities. Many country people feel concerned about the shortage of labour in carrying out their production programme, and such shortage is accentuated by the necessity for

country youths to serve a period in national training camps. I see no reason why the lads should not be able to get home by the quickest route, as they would be enabled to by the passing of this Bill.

At present the Transport Control Board is acting like a bureaucracy gone haywire. During the establishment of the Loxton irrigation settlement it was necessary for workmen from the city to be engaged by the Highways Department to put roads through the various sections and by the Engineering and Water Supply Department to put down channels, but on their week-end leave these men were prohibited from boarding the bus which runs from Sydney through Mildura down the Sturt Highway, crossing the river at Kingston and Blanchetown, for that is a controlled route, therefore the local bus driver at Loxton obtained a permit from the transport authorities to carry employees of the Engineering and Water Supply Department whilst on leave, but the employees of the Highways Department were not allowed to use that service to get home every fortnight. After I had made representations some of those employees were allowed to travel by that service, but not to make the return trip unless they travelled back at a particular time; therefore men who, because they lived away from the Sturt Highway could not connect with the return service lost the return half of their fare for although they had paid the return fare they had to travel back on an alternative route. That sort of thing is not good for the community and such control should be relaxed so that people going into the country will have every opportunity to get home either weekly or fortnightly. These restrictions do not encourage people to go to work in country areas which need development nor do they help decentralization.

This Bill is confined to servicemen in uniform, and if a man is prepared to serve his country by training for its defence surely he is entitled to the best possible transport facilities whilst on leave. These restrictions do not make sense to those men who in the last war fought to retain our democratic way of life. I trust there will be no opposition to the Bill. We should encourage these young men in every way instead of discouraging them by restrictive legislation.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (Chaffey)—As has already been pointed out, this is a Bill with very limited powers. It does not do what the Minister of Railways, who opposed it, suggested, namely, upset the whole system of transport control. It has nothing whatever to do with the safety of passengers, because provisions for this purpose already apply under the original Act. All it seeks is to exempt men and women in uniform from a certain section of the Act. One extraordinary feature of the Minister's speech was that he did not once mention the Bill, but spoke all around the subject. He made propaganda out of it, and that is the kindest word I can use. He commented:—"To assume that the Act was introduced only to protect railway revenue could not be further from the truth." Obviously, that is a matter of opinion. I guarantee that 90 per cent of the people in the country would comment, "Very near the truth," for the main function of the Act is to protect railway finance against competition. Later in his speech he said:—

> At the request of the military authorities special facilities were afforded to enable anyone at the camp adequate transport to return to their homes.

When he made that statement he, no doubt unwittingly, misled the House; apparently he was repeating wrong information given to him. That information could have only one effect—to mislead the Chamber entirely on the true facts. Apparently, the Minister is confirmed in his idea because this afternoon, in answering a question by the member for Stanley, he suggested that arrangements had been made between the military authorities and the Transport Control Board to see that any young man called up to train for the defence of Australia had the opportunity to spend long week-ends at home. I shall refute that statement. Wherever the Minister's information came from it was entirely false. Had it been correct there would have been no necessity for me to approach the Premier on behalf of the young men from my district. The Premier promised to get a report, which was forwarded to me and is available to anyone who wants to see it. The relevant part of it is as follows:—

> My board is fully cognizant of the fact that facilities should be given troops to gain the fullest advantage of their week-end leave, and where no suitable railway service is available road transport is granted. In all cases it is considered by my board that suitable vehicles should be used for conveyance of passengers, and the board requires production of evidence that vehicles to be used for such purposes are covered by a certificate of safety pursuant to the Road Traffic Act.

By far the great majority of trainees at week-ends would travel to the metropolitan area, and

at the commencement of the Woodside camp for national service training purposes it was decided by the board that to most effectively move the men at week-ends railway services should be instituted. Special trains now operate at week-ends and are well patronized. Examples of railway revenue on special trains during recent week-ends are as under:—May 3 and May 5—Adelaide to Woodside, Woodside to Adelaide, value £183 15s. 6d. for 890 passengers; May 10, Woodside to Adelaide, and May 11, Adelaide to Woodside, value £140 11s. 5d. for 707 passengers.

As was interjected by the Leader of the Opposition, arrangements were made to take men from Woodside to the metropolitan area, but no provision was made for the young men from the river areas. The report continues:—

In view of the special railway service my board has restricted the operation of buses and taxicabs to and from the Woodside camp and the restriction has naturally applied also to commercial trucks. My board feels that it is in the interests of both the personnel and the State that the traffic to and from the Woodside camp should be controlled, but the control, of course, does not extend to numerous motor cars and motor bikes owned by the trainees or their friends, where no carriage for hire is involved.

Mr. Stott—Shame!

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—It is a tragedy that some trainees were taken back to the city in their parents' cars! Apparently, that is what was objected to. If the Minister's statement was correct that arrangements had been made to take men back to their home towns I would not have asked for this report. This report refutes the Minister's statement. I felt that a grave injustice had been done and took the matter up with the Federal member for the district, Mr. Downer. I explained to him that once a month all trainees go on long week-end leave, which starts at midday on Saturday. The only train running to the river areas on Saturday leaves at 7.30 a.m. The lads could not get another train until 7.30 a.m. on the following Monday, so they could not get home for their leave, as they had to be back by Monday night. That is what started this argument. Let members put themselves in the position of parents in the river areas. Perhaps there are not many opportunities for boys to get into trouble in a city like Adelaide, but any boys let loose with nowhere to go may get into some sort of trouble, and their parents rightly thought they would be much better off at home. Mr. Downer took the matter up with the Minister for the Army, proving again that the information the Minister of Railways supplied to this House was entirely incorrect. The reply from the Minister for the Army was as follows:—

With further reference to your personal representations of 4th June, 1952, on behalf of Mr. Macgillivray, M.H.R., concerning the granting to National Service trainees who are due for long weekend leave and whose homes are in distant parts of the State a concession to enable them to commence their leave on Saturdays at 6 a.m. rather than at midday, I desire to inform you that I have had inquiries made in this matter. It is advised that National Service trainees in South Australia are granted long weekend leave each month on the following basis:—Saturday, from mid-day, local leave; Sunday and Monday, home leave. In addition, trainees who are unable to return to their homes in the above period are granted leave on a Saturday once during the full-time training period so that they may have sufficient time to travel to their homes. The transport facilities to the Renmark area would require the granting of three days' leave in excess of the full leave entitlement if trainees were to return home each month. In view of the above, I regret to advise that it is not practicable to extend the period of leave on more than one occasion during the period of training of members whose homes are in distant parts.

The Minister for the Army also rejected my request, made through the Federal member for the district, to see whether the lads from the river areas could get once-monthly long leave to which they were entitled. In view of all this evidence—first, the report from the Transport Control Board and, secondly, the reply from the Minister for the Army—how can the Minister of Railways tell the House that complete arrangements have been made with the military authorities and the board for which he is the chief apologist? If the House is prepared to sit in judgment on this point there is only one conclusion to which it can come, namely, that the military authorities and the Transport Control Board have bungled the whole matter. I have no desire to deal with several other points in the Minister's speech because they are all subsidiary to the main one. Time after time I interjected that his statements were not in accordance with facts but the Minister, of course, thought that the body that supplied him with the information, the Transport Control Board, would confirm that he was correct. I think the Minister would now be forced to admit that his information was entirely wrong. He went on to confuse the matter further and said:—

The carriage of passengers for hire must be covered by a certificate of safety.

That statement has nothing to do with my Bill, for all the provisions about safety will remain. I only seek to allow the driver of a truck to

pick up a man or woman in uniform. To confuse the matter further the Minister made the following naive statement, which only brought in extraneous matter to bolster up an extremely weak case:—

There were a number of hauliers who issued papers saying that no fare was being paid, that passengers accepted all responsibility, and that the owner of the vehicle was not responsible in the event of an accident. To show to what extent this practice had developed, the board had a truck intercepted at Port Pirie. There were five people on it, and in answer to questions the owner said that none of them had paid fares and were being carried free. On being interrogated four of the passengers substantiated the statement that they had paid no fare. The fifth passenger, on interrogation, said he was a mounted constable and had paid a fare of 5s. for the ride.

Here we see the ugly hand of the *agent provocateur,* stool pigeon, or the spiv—call him what you like. How often have we read of the despicable action of some person going to a publican after closing time and telling him a hard luck story about a sick wife who needs a little brandy. The publican, out of common humanity, risks a penalty for breaking the law and supplies the brandy, but 10 minutes later the police charge him with making illegal sales. The same thing can apply in this matter. If we pass laws not having the moral support of the people we encourage the *agent provocateur,* and the Minister evidently agree with this practice. I am trying to show the type of argument used by the Minister. His speech contained only extraneous matter, such as this statement about people caught by stool pigeons who broke the law themselves in order to get unfortunate people punished. The Minister said that I introduced the Bill to bring the Transport Control Board into ridicule, but that is false. I did not introduce the Bill for that purpose, although I take strong exception to many of the board's activities. I do not want every person on the road to be picked up and given a ride, only the trainee in uniform. The main argument in this debate has centred on the Woodside camp, but the position there has been rectified. The position in regard to other places remains the same. If a trainee in uniform is picked up an offence is committed. I miss from this place the ex-member for Burnside, Mr. Abbott, for his ability to pinpoint matters. I have heard Ministers of the Crown say that a power could be included in legislation because it would never be used. Mr. Abbott used to say that if a power were included in an Act some bureaucrat would soon use it, and that when the matter went to court the law would be supported.

Mr. O'Halloran—If it is not to be used why put it in the legislation?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Exactly. We have a duty to see that Acts include powers we are prepared to support when used. If the inspector in this particular case had used a Nelsonian eye and said to the man who wanted to pick up his son and several other lads, "You are breaking the law, but I am going down the street for half an hour and if you are gone when I come back everything will be O.K.," it would have been all right, but that is not done by inspectors. They see that the letter of the law is followed, and it was in this case. A trainee should not be in the embarrassing position of being a party to a criminal act when some person good neighbourly gives him a lift to his home town. Before I took up this matter with the Federal member for the district I rang Keswick Barracks and was assured that nothing could be done, as only the Minister for the Army could act. Then I approached the Minister. It cannot be said that my proposal will upset transport control. It will not affect the income of any transport undertaking, but will provide a convenience for young country men and women who have not available to them the transport facilities available to people in the metropolitan area. There is ample provision for transport between Woodside and Adelaide. I want to help the young country men and women who cannot get transport to their home towns. The form of control in the Act inflicts a hardship and the lifting of it would not affect the major controls we have on our transport.

The House divided on the second reading—

Ayes (13).—Messrs. John Clark, Davis, Lawn, Macgillivray (teller), McAlees, McKenzie, O'Halloran, Quirke, Riches, Stephens, Stott, Frank Walsh, and Fred Walsh.

Noes (16).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, Geoffrey Clarke, Goldney, Hawker, Heaslip, Jeffries, Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. McIntosh (teller), McLachlan, Michael, Pattinson, Playford, Shannon, Teusner, and Whittle.

Pairs.—Ayes—Messrs. Fletcher, Tapping, and Hutchens. Noes—Messrs. Hincks, Dunnage, and Pearson.

Majority of 3 for the Noes.

Second reading thus negatived.

INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE (Burnside)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Industrial and Provident Societies Act provides that each such society must prepare and have audited each year a statement of receipts and payments, profit and loss account, and balance sheet, and subsequently file such documents with the Registrar of Companies; and my Bill merely seeks to remove the obligation to prepare and file a statement of receipts and payments. Such a statement discloses no valuable information to any interested person and is a completely obsolete form of account. I have the authority of the Registrar when I say that the public is amply protected by the filing of a profit and loss account and a balance sheet duly audited. Furthermore, a statement of receipts and payments is not customarily kept by a society and the necessity for filing such a statement should be deleted from the Act.

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley)—As one who takes a keen interest in co-operative organizations and who has previously opposed other proposed amendments to the principal Act, I state that the whole organization of co-operatives in South Australia will be grateful to the honourable member for Burnside for this attempt to remove from the Statute Book the archaic necessity to make up these voluminous accounts, which convey nothing and have no particular value to anybody but whose compilation occupies considerable time. I support the Bill.

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

COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE (Burnside)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

I thank members for their indulgence to me when I asked leave to introduce and read this Bill for the first time. I was not aware until a few minutes before I asked leave to introduce it that there was any suggestion that it should be founded in Committee. The Bill does not in the remotest degree impose a charge on the people or authorize the borrowing or expenditure of money as referred to in sections 282 and 410 of the Standing Orders. The Bill in part relates to the performing of certain acts by the Registrar of Companies which may relate to the transfer of property but not property which yet vests in the Crown. When I gave notice of my intention to introduce this Bill I intended only to move for a very minor amendment which would remove a cause for irritation to companies. I will deal with that amendment shortly and explain its simple effect.

Sections 129, 130 and 176 of the principal Act provide that companies shall each year file an annual return containing certain particulars relating to their capital, the names of their auditors, the date of holding the annual meeting and so on. This return is required to be filed not less than 30 days after the end of September each year. Many company secretaries fall into the understandable error of assuming that the last day of filing is October 31 whereas it is October 30. The Registrar has no alternative but to charge a late filing fee and take a statutory declaration setting out the reason for the late filing, the excuse customarily given being "through inadvertence" I have the authority of the Registrar of Companies (Mr. Briskham) to say that he approves of the amendment which will remove a minor source of annoyance and will save the consequential work in the Companies office which this mistake involves.

The next amendment is one which has been suggested to me by the Registrar of Companies himself and it follows an opinion as to its desirability from the Crown Solicitor. Under section 299 of the principal Act, when claims are made upon the Registrar for moneys which had been paid into the "Companies Liquidation Account," the Registrar may on satisfying himself that the claimant is entitled to the money pay it out. Any person dissatisfied with the decision of the Registrar may appeal to the court. Any aggrieved person has the right to claim against the person to whom the Registrar has paid the money. However, section 307 which is somewhat similar in effect to section 299 contains no similar provisions. In section 307 provision is made for the Registrar to do certain very clearly defined acts as the representative of a defunct company. When a company has been dissolved and the Registrar is satisfied that the company, if still existing, would be bound to carry out some dealing or transaction and that in order to carry it out some purely ministerial administrative or mechanical act is required, such as executing a discharge for a satisfied mortgage, transferring real property or performing a certain act, where no option or discretion was involved,

then the Registrar as representing the defunct company may do or cause to be done such act as he thinks the case may require. That is a paraphrase of the clause, leaving out the superfluous words which do not in any way affect the sense. The purpose of the amendment to this section is to provide *mutatis mutandis* the same provisions as are already, and indeed have always been, part of section 299, which deals with the payment out of unclaimed money. In effect, the only difference between the two sections is that one provides for payments out of unclaimed moneys to persons deemed to be entitled to them, whereas the other permits the Registrar to do certain acts relating to unfinished transactions of a company after it has been wound up. At present the Act allows no discretion on the part of the Registrar, allowing him to do only such acts as would have been done had the company not been wound up. It has been suggested to me that this amendment will make the administration of the Act more workable in the interests of the public as well as the Companies Office.

The last amendment was also suggested to me by the Registrar of Companies and deals with the minimum time which the registered office of a company must be kept open for the service of legal processes and the like. It has nothing to do with trading hours. The office of a company registered in South Australia is required to be open for legal purposes three days in each week for certain hours. Yet the office of a company not registered here shall be open for not less than five days in each week. The amendment brings this into line with the requirements relating to a company registered in the State. It has the merit of uniformity and in the opinion of the Registrar the public is amply protected.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD secured the adjournment of the debate.

HOMES FOR AGED AND INFIRM.

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

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

(Continued from October 8. Page 835.)

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—I propose at the appropriate time to move an amendment to bring the motion into line with the facts relating to the Government's activities in the housing field.

Mr. O'Halloran—You must have a peculiar idea of what constitutes facts.

Mr. SHANNON—I propose to move to strike out the words "it is desirable that" and also "take steps to provide suitable homes both in the country and the metropolitan area for aged and infirm persons who are pensioners," and to insert instead:—
be commended for the broad policy which it has pursued in providing housing for all sections of the community according to their respective needs.

The motion would then read:—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should be commended for the broad policy which it has pursued in providing housing for all sections of the community according to their respective needs.

Mr. O'Halloran—That is the year's funniest story!

Mr. SHANNON—Many on this side also think the Opposition was not altogether without humour in its motion—in other words, that it was avoiding certain salient factors concerning the housing programme carried out by the Government. I never think it wise for anyone to attack his enemy in his stronghold. One should first draw him out into the open where one would have a better chance of effectively "cleaning him up." To attack the Government on one of its major claims to fame, and on which it can with justice come before the public, appears to me to be a poorly chosen ground to fight upon. What is the Government's record in housing? Does it compare with the housing programme of any of the other Australian States? Has it taken into account all sections of the community? Has it done a better job than any of the sister States in providing for the housing needs of those who cannot house themselves? Numerous interstate visitors have come to South Australia to investigate its housing schemes, including the Commonwealth Director of Housing, who has expressed the view more than once that South Australia is right out in front of any of the States in its housing programme, both in meeting the demands of the time and, more importantly, in keeping down costs. In solid construction our housing costs are outstanding, being lower than in any other State, and for timber-frame structures, except in Victoria, Western Australia, and Tasmania, our prices compare favourably with other homes of timber-frame construction. The costs in the States named are lower because of local supplies of timber being available. On a population basis South Australia has met the demand of the time more effectively than the sister States.

The cost of transport of hardwoods required for timber-frame houses has increased our costs a little, although to an extent that is offset by production from our own forests.

Mr. Hutchens—Thanks to a Labor Government.

Mr. SHANNON—The present Government has done more to step up milling activities than any other Government, and shortly, when funds are available, a mill will be established at Mount Gambier, the output of which will exceed the total from all its other mills. I should not say that that is exactly side-stepping the forestry programme, which has to be planned on the basis of a 40-year rotation, the approximate period taken for trees to mature. When the milling programme is completed, the Government mills will be capable of milling all the products from its forests, and possibly supplies will be available for the other States. This timber will enable the State to barter some of its softwoods for hardwoods which are in short supply here. The Premier of Tasmania (Mr. Cosgrove) recently visited South Australia, coming here almost *incognito,* to gain valuable information about our housing programme.

Mr. O'Halloran—I think your amendment is a salvage measure.

Mr. SHANNON—Wait until I finish and then you may think it is a constructive measure. Undoubtedly, the Opposition will discover on the hustings some time next year that housing will not be a vote-catcher for them, but rather the reverse. The public will want to know, "What can the Opposition do that the Playford Government has not already done for the people?" To meet the needs of those who were not in a financial position to provide their own homes, the Government was astoundingly successful in its action, because of the rapidity with which their needs were met—faster than in any other State—and mainly because of the activities of our Premier. Some families in the hills were living in enclosed back verandahs. Many were living in caravans, and others in tents. They were conditions that no self-respecting Government would tolerate. This is a self-respecting Government and its emergency housing programme cleared up those conditions.

Mr. Stephens—They have not been cleared up yet.

Mr. SHANNON—They have, to the extent of some 2,000 homes.

Mr. Lawn—Ask the Housing Trust the position!

Mr. SHANNON—Members opposite obviously will say that these conditions still obtain, but no other Government has a record for clearing up that state of affairs equal to that of the South Australian Government.

Mr. Stephens—Look at what has been done in other States! But why wait on other States?

Mr. SHANNON—We don't wait. This Government takes the lead; other people, including Labor Premiers in other States, come here to see what Tom Playford has done. I desire to say a word or two about people whose financial position does not permit them to occupy a home. The trust, at the direction of the Premier, has undertaken the construction of groups of flats. I believe they will be for small families and couples.

Mr. Hutchens—What will the rent be?

Mr. SHANNON—We do not know.

Mr. Hutchens—Where will they be built?

Mr. SHANNON—Will the honourable member say whether the rents of trust homes here compare favourably or otherwise with those for houses erected by a Labor Government in New South Wales?

Mr. Hutchens—The rents of South Australian homes compare favourably.

Mr. SHANNON—Do you suggest that a comparable home in New South Wales would have a lower rental?

Mr. Hutchens—The homes there are better.

Mr. SHANNON—I only want to know whether or not the rents are lower in New South Wales.

Mr. Hutchens—They are not comparable homes.

Mr. SHANNON—It is impossible to nail a man down when he knows the facts refute his argument. The houses in South Australia are let at £1 or 25s. a week less than those in New South Wales. The capital cost of building is over £1,000 lower here.

Mr. Hutchens—But they are not comparable homes.

Mr. SHANNON—The honourable member seems to suggest that in New South Wales they are built of marble.

Members interjecting,

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! I remind members that this is a House of debate and the member addressing the Chair has priority. Interjections are definitely out of order and the member for Onkaparinga must not be disturbed while making his speech. Although a fair amount of latitude is given, I ask members to observe the Standing Orders and not to keep interjecting.

Mr. SHANNON—This House adopted certain recommendations made by a committee of

inquiry into our public health services to take over Northfield as part of the Royal Adelaide Hospital. It also adopted a recommendation that some portions of the Northfield institution be used as an infirmary. That was done, but because of the unfortunate outbreak of poliomyelitis, Northfield had again to be used for the purpose for which it was originally built. I believe that medical science will find an answer to poliomyelitis and that in the not distant future Northfield will again be used for infirm, bedridden cases that require not so much medical attention as ordinary, careful nursing. After all, what does the motion boil down to? It is, in effect, a suggestion that a Government, which has been doing an excellent job in the special field of housing our people, should expend greater energies in this direction. Obviously, a Government whose record is so outstanding in this field can quite rightly expect the Chamber that supports it to commend it for the good work it has done. I am really at a loss to know why the Opposition, in deciding to try to put forward some constructive ideas, did not choose another subject. I have no doubt that the Labor Party, with its policy of nationalization, could think of many schemes for the benefit of those they hope will vote for them at the next elections. When Labor Premiers have to commend this Liberal and Country Party Government for its housing schemes obviously the Labor Party here cannot put any constructive ideas before the House on the subject. If they can, why do they not place them before their own Parties in other States? In New South Wales the Labor Party is in power in both Houses of Parliament. They could then at least see how their suggestions worked in a State where the Labor Party is in office. If the Playford Administration has fallen down on its job why do representatives of sister States come to South Australia to inspect our housing activities? Labor Premiers and others come here to see what we are doing. The Opposition has chosen poor ground on which to fight. I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition is responsible for some of the moves made on his side of the House.

Mr. Pattinson—He is pushed into it.

Mr. SHANNON—I think he is pushed into things against his better judgment, and that he would prefer some of those things to be left undone. I admire him for being not only a fair debater but a reasonable man with a commonsense approach to most problems.

Mr. Stephens—I am sorry he is not here to return the compliment!

Mr. SHANNON—The honourable member is a good judge of that. Praise of me by the honourable member would cause me no end of damage in my electorate, but I have no doubt that his criticism of me will win me some votes. If the honourable member helps me in that way I shall have no complaint to make. I have noticed on one or two occasions that the Leader of the Opposition has moved in certain directions, which, according to my judgment, were things he would not want to do but was pushed into, as suggested by Mr. Pattinson. He has been ill-advised by members of his Party to do certain things, and if he has had to do things against his better judgment I am sorry for him.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—On a point of order, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, the innuendos which are being thrown about concerning the Leader of the Opposition in his absence are likely to create a wrong impression. The Opposition regards it as an unwarranted personal attack on the integrity of members on this side. Unless the matter is dealt with I shall have to take further exception.

The ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christian)—I do not think that is a point of order.

Mr. SHANNON—If I have hurt the feelings of any member on the other side I am sorry. I did not think my remark would hurt anybody's feelings. I pointed out that certain people in the Party worked along certain lines, and I did not think I was hurting anybody when I implied that votes counted in the Party room, and that when a decision was made the Leader of the Opposition had to carry it out. I did not think I was hurting the Leader of the Opposition when I said that certain moves he had to make were not thought by him to be sound and wise. I give him full marks as I think all members on this side do. We have known him long enough to know that he is loyal to his Party and an able debater; but he has to make use of poor material, and I think the Labor Party would be glad to recall some of the moves it has made this session. Flats have been suggested for the old folk.

Mr. Lawn—At £2 12s. 6d. a week?

Mr. SHANNON—Who knows that that will be the rental?

Mr. Lawn—They have been advised that it will be.

Mr. SHANNON—The honourable member lives in the future. He is making a wild guess.

Mr. Lawn—The trust has advised the applicants.

Mr. SHANNON—The flats are not yet completed. The trust does not know what the final cost of the flats will be, let alone the honourable member. Apparently he knows more than the trust. As I have gathered from the Premier, the rents will not be known until the flats are ready for occupation. We can be sure that South Australia will still be the lowest rental State in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Lawn—A rent of £2 12s. 6d. is more than one-fifth of the income of some of the old folk.

Mr. SHANNON—The honourable member's arithmetic may be right, but I understand that the trust will make the flats available to elderly people, and I know that it is useless trying to sell a Rolls Royce motor car to a man with only half a shirt on his back. Therefore the trust will not offer the flats to people who cannot afford them. The rent will have to be in accordance with the income of the people who will live in the flats, and I have no doubt that that will be arranged. I would not like to live in a flat. Early in my married life I did live in one for six months, but I swore I would never live in one again, and I will not willingly do so.

Mr. McKenzie—Support the motion.

Mr. SHANNON—No. We should support the Playford Administration. Any problems of a major size will be effectively dealt with by our present energetic and able Government. I now move the amendment I indicated in my opening remarks.

Mr. TAPPING (Semaphore)—I support the motion and congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on the fine case he presented, but I sympathize with Mr. Shannon and the Premier for having to put forward such weak arguments against it. Not once did Mr. Shannon prove that the Government has done anything for the old folk. He spoke about the housing achievements of the Playford Government, but that matter is not before the House. We are concerned about the accommodation available for old people. Mr. Shannon spoke for 45 minutes in evading the issue, which indicates to me that he had a very poor case to present. The Premier said the motion was vaguely worded, and he wondered whether the Opposition wanted collective or individual homes for the old people. We do not care which, so long as accommodation is made available for them. The Premier's remarks showed that he, too, was evading the issue. He referred to the good work done by the denominational organizations, but we all know of the good work they are doing. He tried to pass the buck on to people like the Rev. A. D. McCutcheon and the Rev. S. Forsyth. When those gentlemen have made overtures to the Government for a subsidy to assist them in their great work they have been told that nothing can be done to assist denominational organizations. By trying to pass the buck the Premier was trying to make excuses for what his Government had not done. He referred to people receiving superannuation payments and wondered whether they were included in the motion. The Opposition has in mind people on superannuation.

Every statement made by the Premier and Mr. Shannon on this motion was irrelevant. The Premier said that the Housing Trust is building the Goodman Flats. During the Address in Reply debate in August last I referred to those flats and, confirming what Mr. Lawn said, I was told that the rental of them would be about £2 10s. a week. Such a rental rules out old people because the pension they get is only £3 7s. 6d. a week. By saying that the flats are the answer to the problem is only another evasion of the issue. The Premier said that many old people do not like living in institutions, but I know that the old folk at Magill, the people in Wesley House at Semaphore South, and in the Methodist Home at North Adelaide are happy because they are domiciled with people of their own age. The Premier's remark was wrong and without foundation. I have previously mentioned the Queen Elizabeth Home which provides for old people at Ballarat. It will accommodate 598 old people and I have had the pleasure of inspecting it on two occasions. I have had discussions with the inmates and they are happy about what is being done for them. We know what is done in Western Australia as the result of holding lotteries. The profits are devoted to building homes for old people. South Australia is sadly lacking in this regard and the position must be improved. It is wrong for Mr. Shannon to suggest that there were political motives behind the moving of the motion. I resent his statement that the Leader of the Opposition had to bring the matter forward against his wish. The Opposition thought it was a good move to help the old people. Members on this side are not concerned with the State election next year but wish to help the people and feel that the Government should support the motion. Even if the motion is carried it does not necessarily

mean that anything will be done, but it does mean that this House desires that greater steps be taken toward housing our aged people.

The member for Mount Gambier spoke about the Western Australian lottery, and although lotteries are not the subject of the motion I feel confident that because of the record of the Western Australian lottery we should establish a lottery in this State, for the Government has told us that money for social services will not be so readily available this year, and the proceeds from a lottery would be able to help solve our financial problem. The Premier said that the Housing Trust had made certain temporary homes available to aged couples, but, although I have made many inquiries, I have yet to find old folk who have been housed in these dwellings for the trust has given preference to housing couples with children in these temporary homes. That principle is entirely right, but to suggest that the temporary homes are available for old people is entirely wrong.

The member for Onkaparinga said that the housing position in this State is improving, but, although 2,500 temporary homes have been built, 9,500 people have applied for those homes, and although some may have withdrawn their applications it would appear that many applicants including numerous old folk have no hope of receiving relief from that source. Members of the Government should view the motion as a State matter and as a humane step to help our old folk. They should not look at it from a political angle for I feel that the members who do the best job and the Party that presents the best policy will win at next year's election. Let us be concerned with helping those in dire need, and surely no section needs more assistance than the old people many of whom may have been discarded in the eventide of their lives by their younger relatives. Furthermore, the younger and the older generations cannot live together successfully for they have different viewpoints, in some cases as far apart as the North and South Poles. I ask members to support the motion which is tangible and logical and which has no political significance as has been suggested by some Government supporters.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—I, too, support the motion, although I regret the necessity for it. It is simply worded, although one would have thought from listening to the member for Onkaparinga that it was not. During this session I have heard much from members on the other side of the House about the economic ills of this country, and Sir Raymond Kelly, Chief Judge of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, yesterday referred to the possible political ills of Australia. Over the years the country has passed through different economic phases, including booms and depressions, and not long ago Government supporters criticized the operation of the 40-hour week saying that reversion to longer hours of work would cause our economic ills to disappear, giving us pie in the sky here on earth instead of after death. I remind Government supporters that the people who will profit by the carrying of this motion are those who worked not 40 or 44, but 60 hours a week in their earlier years. I come into frequent contact with many pensioners who years ago worked long hours, and they did not do their work with machinery but in the same hard way of which the member for Rocky River spoke last evening in reminding the House of the conditions he endured many years ago. Because those old people worked the long hours which members opposite say are desirable and by their sweat and toil benefited both the country and the present younger generation who today enjoy the conditions handed on to them, we should look after these old folk. They reared children who fought two world wars to retain the freedom we enjoy today. Is it too much to ask that in its building programme the Government should provide homes to specially cater for these old folk? Surely that is the least we can do for them.

A letter which is typical of the many I receive from pensioners from time to time and also of those received by other members states:—

I would like for you to put it before Parliament to build small cottages or flats for old age pensioners. Many of these would willingly pay 25s. a week for a place on their own. Large numbers of these people both men and women have to live in damp cold rooms. They can never have a fire to keep them warm and it's shocking under the conditions some of these poor people live. Many of them are widows and their children are all dead, and it's terrible to have to live in rooms and be bossed by the landlord. Many of the ones that lets rooms only want the people to sleep there of a night. You can cook your breakfast and then you have to get out all day. Large numbers of people living in rooms have money to pay for a small house on their own but they can't find one. In the city of Adelaide they have knocked down any amount of small places to build factories and the Government has never done anything to find homes for these people that have been turned out. If they built small houses it would be a paying proposition as these old people would always be able to pay their rent. Many of these people lost their

homes during the depression days, then when their husbands died they could never buy another.

The way that letter is written must arouse the sense of humanity in members and it is typical of many cases in Adelaide and its suburbs. This motion merely asks the Government in its building programme to cater for our old folk and contains no word of criticism of the present building programme being carried out by the Housing Trust. Has the motion caused so much panic that in an effort to save its face the Government has been prompted to appoint the member for Onkaparinga as its spokesman? I listened to practically the whole of his address this afternoon, but his diatribe contained nothing relevant to the motion. This motion is not an attempt at window dressing, and I have many other letters similar to that which I read.

Mr. O'Halloran—Every member on this side has similar letters.

Mr. LAWN—Yes, and we are interviewed many times each week by such people requiring accommodation. Such letters are not written on the eve of an election but express the sincere desires of a section of our community. When I criticized the Government in regard to its stand on the hours and wages case now before the Commonwealth Arbitration Court and said that the Government had an eye on the election, I was taken to task and told that to say such things was very low, but I suggest it is going low to say that this motion is merely a window dressing pre-election stunt for after all it contains no criticism of Government building activities. Ever since my entry to this House I have commended the Housing Trust for its building programme, and, although I made one complaint during 1950, before making that complaint I commended the Government for its efforts to build more houses. Since then I have found no reason to criticize the Government's building programme, but I ask that the old age pensioners should be considered in this regard, for they are our fathers and mothers or the fathers and mothers of the younger generation and it is our duty to look after their interests for they are a section of the community. I do not come into this place to say that I represent only metropolitan workers or that country members do not represent workers or any other worthy section of the community. I do not like this sectional attitude. I claim to represent all sections and strive to do the best I can for them all. It is quite easy to forget the pensioners, but I appeal to honourable members opposite with all the force at my disposal to support the motion.

It was evident that the member for Onkaparinga was attempting to cover up some failure of the Government. He said more than once that the subject matter was a poorly chosen ground upon which to fight the Government. We on this side are not seeking any fight: the motion is an honest recommendation to the Government to do something for the housing needs of the aged and pensioners. I give the Government credit for clearing up some of the poor living conditions of the people. Apparently, the honourable member is not in such close contact with the Housing Trust as members on this side. Only yesterday I received letters from the trust telling me that two families for whom I had appealed could not be provided with homes because there were still people in tents and makeshift shelters waiting to get a home. He was wrong when he suggested that the Government had cleared up such pitiable cases. Possibly he had sufficient influence with the Government to see that the trust attended to the needs of those living in tents, makeshift homes and caravans in his district. He said that the trust was already building homes for those covered by the motion. That is a stupid and ignorant remark. The trust is not building homes for pensioners. I know many pensioners who have applied for flats being constructed by the trust and been advised that it will cost them no less than 52s. 6d. a week. Two months ago the member for Semaphore said the rent would possibly be 45s. to 50s. a week.

Mr. Shannon said that obviously the rent for these flats must not be beyond the pockets of pensioners, but I am sure that will be so. He criticized the housing activities of Labor Governments in other States, but I remind him that the member for Hindmarsh, in the Address in Reply debate last year, gave statistics and also much valuable information concerning housing activities in the various States following upon personal observations and inquiries in those States. Although those statistics were submitted 15 months ago they have not since been repudiated by one honourable member opposite, and yet Mr. Shannon tries to brush aside the activities of Labor Governments in those States and challenge honourable members on this side. Rent in the other States is fixed upon an economic basis after consultation with the Commonwealth Government, and I understand it must approximate no more than one-fifth of the living wage. If a similar basis were applied to Housing Trust rents

here for flats let to pensioners, namely, one-fifth of £3 7s. 6d., it would be a rent much lower than the trust proposes to apply. I accept Mr. Shannon's challenge that Labor Governments in the other States do not charge lower rents than those charged by the Housing Trust in this State. Pensioners would not object to paying one-fifth of their pension to get a flat. They do not want large homes or mansions like those mentioned by the member for Ridley last night for rural workers. The figures compiled by the member for Hindmarsh last year for dwellings completed per thousand of the population included the following:—Tasmania, 29.44 per cent; Queensland, 28; Victoria, 24.04; South Australia, 21.84; Western Australia, 20.7; and New South Wales, 19.5, showing South Australia fourth on the list. I did not set out this afternoon to criticize the Government's building activities, and I urge upon the House to carry the motion. I express the hope that when the vote is taken there will not be one dissentient.

Mr. Quirke—You don't believe that, do you?

Mr. LAWN—If there were no hope in our breasts, life would not be worth living, and if we have no hope we can say that the gerrymander has fixed everything in South Australia. We must live in hope that members opposite will be game enough to practise what they preach and give effect to their Christian beliefs. If that is done, not one member of the House will vote against the motion.

Mr. STEPHENS (Port Adelaide)—I am rather surprised that such an awful amendment as Mr. Shannon's even got a seconder. I have never heard a more disgusting suggestion than the one he made about Mr. O'Halloran, and I will endeavour to show that some of Mr. Shannon's statements are untrue and that he knew they were untrue. All that the motion says is that it is desirable that the Government should provide suitable homes for aged and infirm persons. If members opposite vote against the motion it will indicate to the public that they do not favour these people being provided with homes. We on this side are not condemning the Government's building activities, but giving credit for what it has done in some instances. I condemn the man who is prepared to ride on the backs of old age and invalid pensioners and try to make political capital by introducing such an amendment. The honourable member said that the Government had cleared up the position of those living in caravans and tents. That is absolutely denied by every intelligent member of the community. Only today I spoke to the Housing Trust on behalf of two urgent cases, and because their applications were submitted only last June I was told that they would have to wait as thousands of others had already applied. I believe honourable members opposite felt disgusted when they heard the member for Onkaparinga, and that is why only three remained in the Chamber. He disgusted not only his own members but members on this side, and when we read his speech in *Hansard* members on this side will take the opportunity to notice how he has had it altered. His statement that the Leader of the Opposition was forced to introduce the motion was absolutely and wilfully untrue. There was no force about it. It was the unanimous decision of the Party that he should introduce it.

Mr. Hutchens—He has a conscience.

Mr. STEPHENS—Of course he has. I issue a challenge to Mr. Shannon when he says that the Government has cleared up the position of those living in caravans and tents. I ask any member to come with me at any time and I will show him scores of houses which are not fit for human habitation in which aged pensioners and also returned soldiers are living. I do not blame any member for opposing the motion, submitting constructive amendments, or trying to protect his own Government, but when I hear stupid excuses, such as those given by the member for Onkaparinga, that would not be made by the Premier I get disgusted. I had every sympathy for members sitting behind the honourable member. They became so disgusted that many of them walked out of the Chamber. I hope members opposite will not be led away by the trash spoken by the member for Onkaparinga. During the debate on the Address in Reply he said that the Housing Trust might lose much money through providing houses. I believe there was something undisclosed behind that statement and that a company is at the back of the move made by the member for Onkaparinga, because we know what a great supporter he is of private enterprise. I hope I shall never hear such disgusting remarks again while I am a member of this House. I wholeheartedly support the motion and hope every member opposite will give it his blessing, thereby assisting old people who have done so much for us.

Mr. DAVIS (Port Pirie)—I support the motion because it is an attempt to do something for a forgotten class—old age pensioners. I was surprised to learn of opposition to the

motion. After all, it merely asks the Government to provide for aged people. I believe that those opposing it have had no experience of their problems. The conditions under which many of them are living are a disgrace to any Government. Some pensioners in Port Pirie are living in shacks not fit for a dog. Sometimes they have been found ill in their shacks, and after they have lain unattended for some time they are almost at death's door when aid comes. Yesterday the Premier said that the Commonwealth Government assists old age pensioners, but today the pension is only £3 7s. 6d. a week. Even the rent of a shack would be at least 15s. a week, leaving them less than £3 to live on. A married couple would have less than £6 a week between them to live on, but the basic wage is £11 4s., so how can anyone expect an aged couple to live on about half that sum? It is the Government's duty to provide homes for aged people. Is it right that people in country towns should have to establish old folks homes? Such a home has been established at Port Pirie by the support of people there who pay a certain sum each week for its upkeep. There is no provision in some towns to house aged people and many of them are sent to the Old Folks Home in the metropolitan area. This means they are taken from the surroundings in which they have lived for many years and have to mingle with people unknown to them. This is often detrimental to their health. The motion asks very little, and members opposite should sympathetically consider the plight of old age pensioners. I hope they will support the motion.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—It might be wise if I first endeavoured to get the debate back on to a proper perspective following the attempt of the member for Onkaparinga to side-track the issue. My colleagues have ably attempted to do this, but I remind the House of the wording of the motion. It states:—

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

After I moved the motion the adjournment of the debate was secured by a Government supporter, ostensibly to give the Premier an opportunity to prepare a speech. When it next came up for discussion he said he desired to give a considered reply and had not had time to prepare one, so I arranged for a member on this side of the House to continue the debate. The Premier spoke on the motion last Wednesday. I mention these matters because they have a bearing on what has happened this afternoon and on the remarks I will make later. There is much of vital importance that has not yet been said on this important question, and I will not make any firm promises as to how long I might take this afternoon. It took the Premier from August 20 until October 8 to prepare his reply, and he made a most extraordinary speech after his mature deliberation. He made no effort to reply to the arguments I adduced in support of the motion and endeavoured to completely misrepresent its purpose. I thought my motion was wide enough to enable any person of goodwill to consider all aspects of the problem of providing homes for pensioners, but the Premier said it was too narrow and suggested that what I had in mind were institutional homes. I thought I made the position very clear, but lest any member has forgotten what I said I will repeat some of my remarks. I stated:—

Firstly, there should be small institutions where the restrictions on the freedom of inmates would be as few and as light as possible. These institutions should be provided for the aged of both sexes, whether single, widows, or widowers, and certain amenities for recreation and enjoyment should be provided to enable them to spend their last years in comfort, enjoying a reasonable measure of the social amenities which their more fortunate fellow citizens better endowed with worldly goods are able to enjoy. It should be possible for small gardens to be planted in these institutions and for bowling greens for the men and croquet lawns for the women to be established. I am sure the inmates of such institutions would be prepared to do most of the work required in maintaining such institutions. In fact all that would be required would be perhaps some nursing supervision to care for the minor ailments which were not of sufficient severity to require hospital treatment. Such a plan should take care of the great bulk of the single persons to whom I have referred. There should also be groups of small homes established for couples where they could live their own independent existence and where recreation facilities could be provided. Some type of nursing supervision could be provided here too so that minor ailments could be taken care of. Last but not least, instead of sending those who become senile to mental hospitals, there should be some intermediary institution to take care of such cases at much less cost to the State than under the present system.

Members can see that I visualized three types of homes. The first was for single persons, widows and widowers, with provision for segregation of the sexes and small but appropriate amenities. The second was for aged couples where they could live together so as to

prevent the tragedy which the Premier referred to and which I appreciated when I framed the motion, namely, that of aged couples being separated after having lived a long and happy life together as the result of the infirmity of either husband or wife. With those independent homes grouped together and with the nursing assistance that I suggested should be provided that tragic separation and all the loneliness and heartbreak it brings could be avoided, but is there any suggestion in the arguments of the members who oppose this motion that it should be avoided. No! When I challenged the Premier on the issue of individual homes he immediately shifted his ground and referred to the restriction of the motion to the benefit of pensioners only; he pointed out that there are many other worthy people in the community also in difficulties. I agree with him. I know the circumstances just as well as he does, but the point is that bad as their circumstances are, they are not as bad as those of the pensioners, which is proved by the fact that they are not receiving pensions. I deliberately confined my motion to the narrowest limits possible in order to get a little for those whom the member for Adelaide described as the "forgotten people." Their need, as every member on this side knows from the number of cases that come to him of people living in the most unhealthy and inhuman conditions, should be met first, and then the policy can be extended later in providing for those other worthy and deserving people whom the Premier used in an effort to sidetrack the real purpose of the motion.

The Premier contended that persons in receipt of superannuation benefits under the Public Service superannuation scheme should not be classed as pensioners. Of course all of those on lower rates of superannuation are also in receipt of part old age or invalid pensions, and many are receiving a full pensions because, under the means test, where a couple between them have an income of £3 a week that covers most of the superannuation benefits of ordinary employees in the Public Service. Therefore, although these people are superannuation pensioners they are also ald age or invalid pensioners. To prove my point I quote briefly from the Superannuation Act. Part V. is headed "Pensions and Benefits," Part II. "Grants of Pensions and Benefits," and running all through this Act the weekly payment is called a pension, and a pension it is despite what the Premier said to the contrary. As I remarked before, learning that that argument was not being very well received by the House, the Premier took a reef in his sails and set off on another track. I suppose he thought that the wind might be more propitious if he tried to fix the responsibility on the Commonwealth Government. He quoted the Commonwealth Constitution and suggested that if it were the responsibility of any Government to provide adequate housing for these unfortunate folk it was that of the Commonwealth. Let us examine the Commonwealth Constitution. Section 51, to which the Premier referred, begins:—

The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to—

Then follow a number of placitums—

. . . . .

No. (xxiii) Invalid and old age pensions.

That, in fact, means that the Commonwealth has power to make laws for invalid and old age pensioners and no other power. There is no suggestion in any of those other numerous placitums that the Commonwealth Parliament has power to make laws for the building of houses for pensioners. It has no such power. It did not have it at the inception of Federation, and does not have it now although the Constitution was widened as the result of a successful appeal to the people by way of a referendum in 1946. Section 2 of the Constitution Alteration (Social Services) Act of 1946 reads:—

2. Section fifty-one of the Constitution is altered by inserting after paragraph (xxiii) the following paragraph:—

"(xxiiia) The provision of maternity allowances, widows' pensions, child endowment, unemployment, pharmacuetical, sickness and hospital benefits, medical and dental services (but not so as to authorize any form of civil conscription), benefits to students and family allowances."

There is the latest word in the Commonwealth Constitution on the Commonwealth Parliament's power to make laws in respect of these matters, but not a word about the building of houses for aged and infirm folk or any class of pensioner. So we find that it is the responsibility of this Parliament, and all I suggested in my motion, without attempting to attribute blame, and without laying charges against the Government, was that in the opinion of this Parliament something should be done about it. The Premier concluded with his final apology for the Government. He said "Of course we are doing something very effective," and he went on to point out how a proposal had been referred to the Public Works Standing Committee for the expenditure of £90,000

on improvements to the public institution at Northfield so that Royal Adelaide Hospital patients might be transferred there, and the Old Folks Home at Magill, which for some time has been receiving certain patients from the Royal Adelaide Hospital, should become an aged persons home again. That was one of the very things I complained of in my motion. Members know, particularly those like the member for Pt. Pirie and myself who come from country districts, of the heartbreak that results from separating aged folk from their lifelong surroundings and the environment in which they have lived and learned to love, and dragging them down here to an institution in the metropolitan area, but according to this Government they have no hope of anything better while it remains on the Treasury Benches and is supported by those sitting behind it this afternoon.

Now we come to the final act in this tragic drama. Apparently realizing that the Premier had not done quite the job that he set out to do, the Government was constrained to plead that it had been charged with some offence. I repeat that I charged the Government with no offence and made no criticism of it; the whole of my speech was devoted, to the best of my ability, which of course is limited, to the making of constructive suggestions for the solution of this problem. I quoted extensively from the Nuffield Foundation Inquiry Report which shows that they have the same problems in England as we have here, and I suggested that the adoption of certain paragraphs from this report would solve our problem, as they squared up with the suggestions I have made in moving the motion. There was no need for the Government to plead guilty this afternoon; to send its counsel for the defence into the fray with his tirade of misrepresentation, for he hardly referred to my motion during the whole course of his remarks. It was an apology for the Government, and if the motion is defeated it will be an apology which will not be accepted by decent well-meaning people outside. If members opposite follow Mr. Shannon's lead and destroy the purpose of the motion, which is to get assistance for pensioners, and convert it into an encomium of the Government, we can leave until later the consideration of whether the merit has been earned, inherited or is the result of filching some one else's policy. If it is accepted as an encomium it means that the Government has done something to house some people in South Australia, but it does not mean that the housing problem has been solved. I wish it had, because then I would not have an average of two persons a day coming to me, after being transferred to Adelaide, for assistance in getting a house. I get hard luck cases from the metropolitan districts, too. After people have been to other metropolitan members without success they think that the Leader of the Opposition has some magical power in the matter and can solve their housing problem. I do my best, as I feel all members do. I pay a tribute to the sympathetic hearings I get from the Housing Trust when I make representations to them, simply stating a case for consideration, but almost invariably I am shown that despite the bad case I have presented there are other cases that are infinitely worse. Yet Mr. Shannon says that the Government has solved the housing problem, and that it is the only Government to have done so. Tasmania has completely solved the problem and it has exported building materials to South Australia for more than 12 months. The problem has been solved in Queensland, which is exporting building materials to other States and overseas. In New South Wales the problem has been solved to such an extent that workers in the building trade are going to New Zealand looking for employment, and brickyards are closing down. I hope there will be a change of heart on the part of Government supporters and that we will not in future have to charge them with a lack of sympathy for the forgotten people in our community, the aged and infirm pensioners. I hope they will accept the motion as a move in a helpful spirit, and with the view of action being taken in the interests of a deserving section of the community. When this problem has been solved we can then go ahead in an endeavour to solve the problem of other people whose housing conditions are difficult.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—If Mr. Shannon's amendments are carried the motion will read:—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should be commended for the broad policy which it has pursued in providing housing for all sections of the community according to their respective needs.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, is that not a negation of the original motion?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—According to procedure, any motion can be amended and when the amendment has been voted on members can decide whether they will vote for the amended motion. Precedent, and all the writings at our disposal, show that it has been

done. I will first put the question, "That the words 'it is desirable that' proposed to be struck out stand part of the motion."

The House divided on the question—

Ayes (14).—Messrs. John Clark, Davis, Hutchens, Lawn, Macgillivray, McAlees, O'Halloran, Quirke, Riches, Stephens, Stott, Tapping, Frank Walsh, and Fred Walsh.

Noes (18).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunnage, Goldney, Hawker, Heaslip, Jeffries, Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. McIntosh, McLachlan, Michael, Moir, Pattinson, Playford, Shannon, Teusner, and Whittle.

Pairs.—Ayes—Messrs. Fletcher and McKenzie. Noes—Messrs. Hincks and Pearson.

Majority of 4 for the Noes.

Question thus resolved in the negative.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—I will now put the question, "That all the words after 'should' in the motion, proposed to be struck out, stand part of the motion."

Question resolved in the negative.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—I now put the question, "That the words 'be commended for the broad policy which it has pursued in providing housing for all sections of the community according to their respective needs' proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

The House divided on the question—

Ayes (18).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunnage, Goldney, Hawker, Heaslip, Jeffries, Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. McIntosh, McLachlan, Michael, Moir, Pattinson, Playford, Shannon (teller), Teusner, and Whittle.

Noes (14).—Messrs. John Clark, Davis, Hutchens, Lawn, Macgillivray, McAlees, O'Halloran (teller), Quirke, Riches, Stephens, Stott, Tapping, Frank Walsh, and Fred Walsh.

Pairs.—Ayes—Messrs. Hincks and Pearson. Noes—Messrs. Fletcher and McKenzie.

Majority of 4 for the Ayes.

Question thus resolved in the affirmative.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—The question before the House now is, that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Mr. RICHES—I desire to address myself to the motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—The honourable member cannot address the House: the debate is closed.

Mr. RICHES—I desire that you reconsider that decision. I have not had an opportunity of addressing myself to the motion now before the Chair.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—What is the honourable member's point of order?

Mr. RICHES—The point of order is that we are now required to vote upon a totally different motion and I have not had an opportunity of expressing an opinion on it. My point is that I should be allowed to discuss the new motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—The honourable member has not raised a point of order. The honourable member said he had not had an opportunity to speak on this motion. He has not an opportunity to speak on what is before the House at present. He had his opportunity to speak when the amendments were brought forward. The amendments were stated while the debate was in progress and the debate has been closed.

Mr. RICHES—The only opportunity I had to speak was on a motion submitted by the Leader of the Opposition and I did so, but this is an entirely new motion of a different nature on which I have not been permitted to speak. I object to being called upon to vote without being first permitted to speak.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—My ruling is that the Standing Orders do not allow the honourable member to speak now.

Mr. RICHES—I contend that before a motion is put to the House, or before a member is required to vote, he is entitled to speak. I feel strongly on this, but I hesitate to move that your ruling be disagreed with.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—My ruling is that the honourable member has not the right to speak. I am not here to quote Standing Orders, but to give rulings. If the honourable member will quote the Standing Order under which he asks leave to make a speech, I shall be pleased to examine it.

Mr. RICHES—I move that your ruling be disagreed with.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Will the honourable member put his reason for disagreement in writing and bring it up? . . . The honourable member for Stuart has moved under Standing Orders 129 and 136 that my ruling be disagreed with because it forbids him the right to speak on the motion submitted by the honourable member for Onkaparinga. Is there a seconder?

Mr. Davis—I second the motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Standing Order 129, quoted by the honourable member, reads:—

Every member desiring to speak shall rise from a seat on the benches, uncovered, and address himself to the Speaker, and may, if he thinks fit, advance thence to the table for the purpose of continuing his address.

I suggest that that does not help us very much. Standing Order 136 reads:—

A member may speak to any question before the House, or upon a question or amendment to be proposed by himself, or upon a question of order arising out of the debate, or upon a question of privilege, but not otherwise.

Standing Order 208, under which I give my ruling, reads:—

Amendments proposed shall not be put to the House until the debate is closed and each amendment shall be then at once put and determined singly in the order in which, if agreed to, it would stand in the amended question. A proposed amendment to words which the House has already resolved shall stand part of the question shall not be put, except it be to add other words thereto. If amendments be made, the main question, as amended, shall be put forthwith.

On that I found my ruling, but as the honourable member has moved that it be disagreed with I must put that motion.

Mr. RICHES—Am I not entitled to speak to it?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Yes.

Mr. RICHES—I ask the House to disagree with your ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the first place as a preservation of the rights of members. I believe that the individual rights of members of Parliament are at stake in this issue. We have the unprecedented procedure adopted this afternoon of a motion submitted to the House being amended in such a way as to make it an entirely new motion and members not being permitted to debate it. I submit that this is not an amended motion such as is intended to be covered by Standing Order No. 208 but an entirely new motion, and I doubt whether you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, should have accepted it in the form in which it has been accepted.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! I ask the honourable member to withdraw that remark as he is reflecting on the Chair.

Mr. RICHES—I withdraw it. I did not intend to reflect on the Chair. I submit that it is a new departure that a motion may be altered in such a way as to make it an entirely new motion and that a vote may be forced on members without giving them the right to debate the new motion. I submit that Standing Order No. 136 is designed specifically to give and preserve to members the right to speak to any motion submitted to the House and that we have not had the opportunity to discuss the motion now before the House. Standing Order No. 136 states:—

A member may speak to any question before the House, or upon a question or amendment to be proposed by himself, or upon a question of order arising out of the debate, or upon a question of privilege, but not otherwise.

Neither I nor any other member has been permitted to address himself to the motion at present before the House on which the House has been asked to vote. I hope the House will accept my motion not in terms of lack of confidence in or an attack upon the Chair but solely as a means of determining procedure for the future. I hope the House will see in this a challenge to its rights and vote accordingly.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (Chaffey)—I do not feel that I should give a silent vote on this question, for it is one of first-class interest to every member, especially those who are not sitting behind the Government, that is to those who are in the minority. I have a good deal of sympathy with the honourable member for Stuart, who has taken the somewhat difficult and no doubt painful step of moving to disagree with your ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have no difficulty in accepting his statement that this is a reflection not on you, but on the Standing Orders of this House in their present form. I sought from you a ruling on the amendment to the motion because I felt that in ordinary public meetings it would not have been accepted because it is a negation of the motion, and a negative is not an amendment; but you rightly drew my attention to the fact that what might be true with regard to procedure at public meetings does not necessarily hold good as regards Parliamentary procedure, so I am not in a position to support Mr. Riches for I feel that if the ruling is wrong the fault does not lie with you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but with the Standing Orders. If it is felt that this matter should be investigated as well as the one you have already referred to the Standing Orders Committee, a meeting of that committee for the purpose should be held very soon.

Motion to disagree with the Deputy Speaker's ruling negatived.

Mr. RICHES—Have I the right, Mr. Deputy Speaker to move a further amendment to the motion of the Leader of the Opposition as amended by the member for Onkaparinga by adding words to it?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—No. The honourable member should have moved his amendment while the debate was taking place, for the Standing Orders distinctly say that an amendment must be moved and seconded during the debate on the question. The honourable member for Onkaparinga did that, and if the honourable member for Stuart had intended to do so he should have moved while the debate was in progress.

Mr. FRED WALSH—I desire to ask a question dealing with the last three lines of Standing Order No. 208, which state:—

If amendments be made, the main question, as amended, shall be put forthwith.

As I understand that "main question" means the original motion, what is now left of the main question in the motion before the House?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—The question before the House now is:—"That the motion as amended be agreed to." If the honourable member wishes it read out in its full form, as already put to the House, I am prepared to do so.

Mr. FRED WALSH—No. I am satisfied with regard to the "main question," Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The House divided on Mr. O'Halloran's motion as amended:—

Ayes (18).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunnage, Goldney, Hawker, Heaslip, Jeffries, Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. McIntosh, McLachlan, Michael, Moir, Pattinson, Playford, Shannon (teller), Teusner, and Whittle.

Noes (13).—Messrs. John Clark, Davis, Hutchens, Lawn, Macgillivray, McAlees, O'Halloran (teller), Quirke, Riches, Stephens, Tapping, Frank Walsh, and Fred Walsh.

Pairs.—Ayes—Messrs. Hincks and Pearson. Noes—Messrs. Fletcher and McKenzie.

Majority of 5 for the Ayes.

Motion as amended thus carried.

MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS TRUST ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from Legislative Council without amendment.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

No basic changes in the road traffic laws are proposed this year, but this Bill deals with several minor problems which have arisen in recent months. Clause 3 deals with the registration fees payable on vehicles of the kind known as "sanivans" and other vehicles used for the removal of household rubbish. This question was raised by the East Torrens Municipal Destructor Trust. The trust operates three diesel-engined sanivans. As a result of the increase approved last year in the registration fees for diesel-engined motor vehicles, the registration fee for each sanivan was raised from £34 13s. to £69 6s. This imposed a substantial burden on the trust, which asked that it should be given some relief. After investigating the position the Government decided that it would be reasonable to register sanivans and other vehicles used by local authorities solely or mainly for the collection or transport of household rubbish without payment of any fee. Clause 3 enables this to be done.

Clause 4 deals with the mechanical signalling devices required to be fitted to motor vehicles more than 7ft. wide. It is arguable that under section 40c of the principal Act if a trailer more than 7ft. wide is drawn by a motor vehicle which is more than 7ft. wide both the trailer and the motor vehicle must be fitted with mechanical signalling devices. Such a duplication of devices is, of course, unnecessary, and in practice those concerned in the administration of the Act have accepted the principle that it will be a sufficient compliance with the Act if one proper signalling device is fitted either to the vehicle or the trailer. It is, however, desirable that any doubts about the obligations of motorists should be removed and it is therefore proposed to enact that if a motor vehicle is itself fitted with a signalling device complying with the law a trailer drawn by such vehicle need not be so fitted.

Clause 5 deals with the duty of a motorist who is charged with in offence under the Road Traffic Act to produce his licence to the court at the time of the hearing of the charge. This provision is contained in Part II. of the Road Traffic Act and only requires a motorist to produce his licence in court in cases where he is charged with an offence under Part II. But since the enactment of Part II. there have been many other provisions inserted in the Act —*e.g.*, those dealing with insurance—for the breach of which the court may order that the licence be cancelled and it is desirable that defendants charged with breaches of these provisions also should produce their driving licences to the court at the time of the hearing of the charge. It is proposed, therefore, in clause 5 to place on the defendant a duty to produce his licence to the court on the hearing of any charge for an offence against any provision of the Road Traffic Act relating to motor vehicles.

Clause 6 deals with the rights of an insurance company in a case where a motor vehicle is

driven by a person who has stolen it or by some other unauthorized person. If when the vehicle is so driven any person is injured by the negligence of the driver the insurance company is obliged to compensate the injured person but has no right or recourse against the person who caused the injury. Although it is necessary, in the interests of the general public, that an injury caused by a person using a motor vehicle without consent of the owner should be covered by insurance, there is no reason why the law breaker himself should not be liable to re-imburse the insurance company if he can be found and made to pay. It is accordingly proposed in clause 6 that where a person is convicted of having driven a vehicle without the consent of the owner and the insurer has paid any money in respect of a claim for death or bodily injury caused by such driving the insurer may recover the amount paid by him from the convicted person. The justice of this clause will, I think, be obvious.

Clause 7 deals with the erection of stop signs at railway crossings. Under section 130b of the Road Traffic Act it is provided that the Railways Commissioner may erect stop signs on any road at or near any level crossing. It appears that some stop signs which would appear at first sight to be on a road are, in fact, on small pieces of land which have ceased to form part of the road and have been fenced in as railway property. Stop signs erected at such places are, of course, quite satisfactory in so far as they are clearly visible to the approaching traffic and there is no reason why they should not be continued but at present they do not strictly comply with the letter of the law. It is accordingly proposed to amend section 130b so as to allow stop signs at railway crossings to be erected either on or off the road so long as they are clearly visible to traffic approaching the crossing.

Clause 8 proposes that fire brigade vehicles, motor ambulances and police vehicles shall be exempt from the speed limit of 35 miles an hour in municipalities, towns and townships. At present these vehicles are subject to this speed limit. It has been pointed out by the Commissioner of Police that in the course of their duty the police are often compelled to travel at speeds in excess of 35 miles an hour and has asked that police vehicles should be exempt from this restriction. It appears to the Government that this request is reasonable. In addition, in cases of emergency, fire brigade vehicles and ambulance vehicles often have good cause for exceeding the speed limit. It is therefore proposed by clause 8 to include section 43b, which imposes the speed limit of 35 miles an hour, in the list of provisions of the Road Traffic Act from which fire, ambulance, and police vehicles are exempt. These vehicles will, however, still be subject to the sections of the Act dealing with careless, reckless, or dangerous driving.

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

ELECTRICITY TRUST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 30. Page 698.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—The Bill deals with two matters of some importance, neither of which are very contentious. The first affects the retiring age of members of the trust and the second the issuing of inscribed debenture stock. As regards the retiring age, the present position is that no member of the trust can be re-appointed after reaching 65 years. As pointed out by the Premier in his second reading speech, this could mean that a valuable member of the trust who had served for a considerable period —in fact he mentioned that two members would reach 65 soon—could not be re-appointed because their present term would not end until after they had reached that age. This would result in an anomaly because a person who had not reached 65 when he was due for appointment or re-appointment could carry on until he was nearly 70, whereas another person who had reached 65 would be ineligible. The Bill provides that members of the trust can be appointed or re-appointed and continue in office until they become 70, but no longer. I do not object to the principle of permitting a member of the trust to continue in office until he is 70. Much merit has been advanced by the Premier that it should be competent to appoint a member of the trust who has given service for a term or perhaps two terms prior to reaching 65 even though he may, in fact, pass 65 just before his time for retirement was reached. I do not think it is advisable that a member should be appointed to the trust for the first time after he reaches 65. I propose, when the Bill is in Committee, to move an amendment so that it will not be possible to appoint a man for the first time after reaching 65, but that existing members of the trust may be re-appointed, if so desired.

As regards the issue of inscribed debenture stock, this is something in the realm of

high finance with which I am not very conversant. I have not had any substantial sums to invest in stock, inscribed or otherwise. I understand that the difference between inscribed and non-inscribed stock is that with inscribed stock a register must be properly kept at the office of the undertaking and that in the event of the stock becoming lost or falling into the hands of people not entitled to benefit by its disposal it will not be competent for the transfer to be completed without reference to the office where the register is kept. That makes for the security of investors, which is becoming important today, especially when we will have a reconstituted Municipal Tramways Trust which, perhaps at some future date, will become a semi-governmental instrumentality issuing stock to meet its capital investments.

The Electricity Trust is issuing stock of this nature, having already made one issue, and it is forecast that another will be made in the not distant future. Knowing the difficulties that many people have in acquiring modest savings by means of this class of stock and knowing how grievously hurt I would be if somebody else came into possession of any stock I owned and to which they were not entitled, I offer no objection to the second reading.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4—"Retirement on account of age."

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I move to strike out "appointed for" in subsection (2) of new section 8a. It is a simple amendment which will prevent a person over 65 years from being appointed to the trust for the first time. I consider the amendment eminently reasonable.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I think the amendment is a definite improvement from the point of view of administration. I strongly hold the view that while it may be necessary to re-appoint a member who has had long experience in the work of the trust and has proved himself as an administrator, it would be far too late in life to appoint for the first time a man who was more than 65. By the time he had familiarized himself with the details of this important undertaking he would have reached the age when it would be necessary for him to retire.

Amendment agreed to; clause as amended passed.

Remaining clause (5) and title passed. Bill reported with an amendment.

HOSPITALS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 25. Page 656.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This is another of those Bills which are intended to tidy up some difficulties, real or apparent, which have been found to exist in the administration of the present law. I do not think any vital principle is involved, but I was wondering whether the Bill could not have done a little more to channel communications to better advantage than at present. Under the Act it is provided that with Government hospitals or Government subsidized hospitals insurers have to pay to the Director-General of Medical Services any amount of insurance payable on account of an insured person treated at that hospital. The amount is limited by the present legislation. All the Bill does is to place subsidized hospitals in the same category as private hospitals. According to my information, the Director-General has suggested it would be better if the responsibility of paying amounts due in relation to this type of case were restricted entirely to Government hospitals, and subsidized hospitals will be treated in the way private hospitals and community hospitals are now treated. I am at least assuming that community hospitals are treated in that manner, because I understand there is no specific reference to them in the legislation. The Bill merely classifies subsidized hospitals as private hospitals for the purpose of giving notice to and recovering payments from insurers in respect of hospital treatment arising out of vehicular accident. That is to say, the private hospital has to go to the insurer and collect from him the amount due to a person who has been injured in a vehicular accident. However, section 50 still requires the Commissioner of Police, if informed of an accident, to inform the Director-General, and section 51 still requires an insurer, if informed, to inform the Director-General. There must be some good reason for this, but as the responsibility is placed on the hospital to notify the insurer of the accident and the claim, and the insurer in his turn has to pay the hospital direct, it may have mitigated the possibility of delay if the Commissioner of Police or the insurance company, as the case may be, had to notify the hospital direct rather than that such notification should go through the Director-General of Medical Services.

The Hon. T. Playford—Would the Commissioner of Police know what hospital the person was in?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—That may be a difficulty.

The Hon. T. Playford—As it is now, it seems a round-about way.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—That is a possible explanation. The responsibility of the Commissioner of Police would be discharged on notifying the Director-General of Medical Services, and then it would be for the hospital concerned to notify the insurer that the person being treated was in that hospital and make a claim accordingly. Then the information would be transmitted from the Director-General to the hospital. The other amendment deals with the question of hospital charges. The 1951 amendment was designed to place hospitals in a more favourable position for recovering charges from insurers, but the same disability—not knowing who the insurer is—still exists, although two months are allowed in which to give the insurer notice. That may occur especially with the smaller outback hospitals which are not in a position to engage full-time clerical staff, but have to depend on voluntary or part-time clerical staffs to keep their accounts up to date and to deal with matters of this kind. The position indicates that there is need for a complete co-ordination of our hospital system so that one law would do for all these purposes. However, it is not possible to give effect to that under this Bill, and I suggest it is a matter that should receive Parliament's early consideration. Subsection (4) of section 53 of the Act limits payments to a hospital to £100 for an in-patient and £25 for an out-patient, or one-third of the total payable under insurance. With the changing value of money these amounts are probably already out of date. However, these figures represent increases and to that extent I am prepared to support the proposal. I see no substantial arguments against the amendments proposed, and indeed I believe in the main they will result in the smoother working of the system. I support the second reading.

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. Playford, on behalf of the Hon. M. McINTOSH (Minister of Local Government) obtained leave to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Local Government Act, 1934-1951.

METROPOLITAN AND EXPORT ABATTOIRS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 25. Page 660.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—Some difficulty exists under the Act in regard to the treatment of carcasses of animals that meet their death under untoward circumstances. I think the owners have the responsibility of communicating with the Abattoirs Board and either seeking permission to give them a decent burial or having the board remove them for treatment at its plant. I believe the zoo is now having difficulty in securing food for its animals and it is therefore entitled to the utmost consideration that Parliament can give it, as provided in the Bill. It will also have the effect of saving the unfortunate owners of some animals from costs involved in disposing of animals by burial or having them conveyed to the Abattoirs. In effect, the Bill places the Zoological Society outside the scope of the Act. The society will be able to acquire dead animals and take them to its own premises for the purpose of food without infringing existing legislation. I have examined this matter carefully because it was suggested the health of the community might be endangered by the indiscriminate killing of stock within the Abattoirs area, but I cannot see any danger. The only body with the right to deal with animals in the manner prescribed is a well-kown, well-established and responsible body. The other amendment proposed to the Act is in regard to the signing of cheques. The Act provides that the chairman, or two other members of the board, and the secretary, must sign cheques, but under the Bill the chairman, or any member of the board, or any officers appointed by it to sign and countersign cheques may do so. This will simplify payments on behalf of the board, and as I can readily understand there would be a considerable number of cheques to be signed, any facility that can be afforded to the board's procedure is desirable, providing there is no danger of defalcations. The clause seems to amply safeguard that possibility, and I support the second reading.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 8.15 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, October 16, at 2 p.m.