HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, November 5, 1952.

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

QUESTIONS.

PRICE OF MEAT MEAL.

Mr. MICHAEL—Has the Premier a reply to my question of last week regarding the price of meat meal?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The matter was referred to the Prices Commissioner and he has reported that the price in South Australia is uniform with that in Victoria. However, it is a maximum price, and there is nothing to stop any manufacturer or trader with excess stocks from selling below the price fixed.

Mr. MICHAEL—In view of the fact that meatmeal is not finding a sale at the maximum prices fixed by the Prices Commissioner, does not the Treasurer feel it is time to decontrol the price?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—As I have already pointed out to the honourable member, prices fixed under the Prices Act are maximum prices and there is nothing to prevent any person from selling for less. Before the war all the surplus waste offal from the Abattoirs was made into either meatmeal or fertilizer. Sufficient meatmeal was made for the poultry industry and the large bulk of the surplus was made into fertilizer, which was sold to market gardeners and farmers for agricultural crops. More recently, for economic reasons, the Abattoirs has been putting most of the offal into meatmeal and has not been making fertilizer. Obviously there is not sufficient market for all the meatmeal that would be available in a full slaughtering season such as the present. The obvious solution is for the Abattoirs to adjust the price downwards to what they believe to be the economic limit, and then make the bulk of the remainder into fertilizer, as was done before the war.

WALLAROO ROUND HOUSE.

Mr. McALEES—Has the Minister of Railways a reply to my previous question regarding the railway round house at Wallaroo?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Following on the earnest and I might say patient request of the honourable member, I have taken up the matter from time to time with the Railways Commissioner, and I am glad to be able to inform him that arrangements are being made to complete the remaining bay of the round house. Until quite recently, the Commissioner says, it has been almost impossible to get tradesmen in the country, despite the fact that some honourable members opposite say that men are carrying their swags. In view of the urgent necessity to house staff, I am afraid that this work has been postponed. However, timber is going up this week and a start will be made within the next week or two by men at present working on cottages at Moonta.

GALVANIZED IRON SUPPLIES.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—If any additional supplies of Australian galvanized iron come to hand in the near future in excess of what has been anticipated, will the Premier consider allowing some of it to be allotted for roofing in the metropolitan area?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I believe there are large stocks of galvanized iron imported from overseas held in South Australia, and it is considered very likely there will be a very big improvement in the deliveries from New South Wales early next year. After a recent visit to New South Wales, the Director of Building Materials returned with a very good report as to the possibilities of getting enhanced supplies even before the new year. As soon as existing priorities have been satisfactorily met, consideration will be given to extending their scope. At present those priorities have not been met, In some instances priorities are even abolished when reasonable supplies are available, and that will be the position with galvanized iron.

RIVER MURRAY BRIDGES.

Mr. STOTT—I have received a letter from my district regarding a meeting held at Waikerie concerning the construction of bridges across the River Murray, and it contains the following:—

The following (remark by the Minister) is contained in *Hansard*, page 570: "When the time comes, when the people make up their minds when they want bridges, the Government will consider the matter." This meeting affirms that the majority of citizens in these areas have made up their minds, and the time has come, is in fact long overdue, when the Government should give urgent consideration to the construction of road traffic bridges crossing the river at Blanchetown and Kingston to meet the demands of and cope with the requirements of present-day traffic on the Sturt Highway.

Seeing that the people have made up their minds on this matter, has the Minister of Works any further statement to make?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I do not think a resolution by one meeting constitutes a mandate, especially as they probably represent a good many people peculiarly concerned. The honourable member should know as well as any other honourable member that the Government is not in a position to expend money on a project estimated to cost more than £30,000 until it has been investigated by the Public Works Committee. At present there is before this committee a proposal submitted by the Government for the erection of two road and rail bridges, one between Morgan and Cadell and the other at Kingston. The committee is taking evidence and its report will be available for the information of the Government and Parliament. It is open to these people who think they represent all those living south of the river to give evidence before the committee, which will assess it and advise the Government accordingly. Until the report is received the Government will not be in a position to take any steps whatever. I have had representations that the road to Loxton should go *via* Tailem Bend and Karoonda and so on, another suggestion that the road should go *via* Swan Reach, and still another that it should cross the river at Blanchetown by way of a bridge; and the people north of the river say they do not care a hang which way the road goes, so long as they get an all-weather road to the river. I do not think that because a few people get together and say they want so and so, that represents the opinion of the district and necessarily should involve the Government in the expenditure. It seems that they have scrapped the idea of the main road going through Murray Bridge, or through Swan Reach, or north of the river, so we are getting somewhere.

GUMMOSIS.

Mr. TEUSNER—Has the Minister of Agriculture any further information concerning steps taken to secure the appointment of a research officer to conduct a research into the disease gummosis die-back, the devastating ravages of which, particularly in apricot orchards in the Barossa Valley, are causing great annual losses to fruitgrowers?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I have been in communication with the Waite Research Agricultural Institute, which now informs me that applications are being called for this position and it is hoped an appointment will be made shortly. From indications it would appear that a very satisfactory appointee should be available for the position.

LIQUID FUEL DRUMS.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—Recently all the liquid fuel companies circularized their clients that in future all 44gall. drums would have to be paid for before delivery of fuel, the price being £2 for every drum. Previously the lighter type of drum in which power fuels are delivered has always been priced at £1. Has the Prices Department any control over this extraordinarily high price? If not, will the Premier have the department investigate the matter?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will have an investigation made, but I understand that the amount charged for a drum is repayable when the drum is returned, so actually the amount charged is a hire charge. For many years there was no hire charge made at all, so taking it by and large the companies, I think, have not been unreasonable in this matter. I will see if the present charge is in accordance with the real value of the drums, because I suppose if the drum is not returned the £2 would be regarded as the purchase price.

DECENTRALIZATION OF INDUSTRIES.

Mr. McKENZIE—Is the Premier aware that 60 per cent or more of the State's population is in the metropolitan area? There are no industries in the country in which country children can be employed when they leave school, consequently they have to go to the city for work. Will the Premier consider the appointment of a Minister of Industry, as has been done in Victoria, with a view to getting industries established in the country towns so as to keep people in country areas?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I point out that there is already a Minister of Industry included in the Cabinet in South Australia.

Mr. McKENZIE—I learn from members on this side that the Premier himself is supposed to be the Minister of Industry.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! I consider the honourable member's remark not a proper one and I ask him to withdraw the words "supposed to be."

Mr. McKENZIE—Certainly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Will the Premier appoint a Minister not for Industry, but for the Decentralization of Industry on similar lines to what has been done in Victoria to save country towns from the distressed condition into which they are fast moving?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The honourable member asks if we will follow the course of action taken in Victoria. I have investigated what has been done in Victoria and I find it is

not satisfactory. Indeed, political matters generally in Victoria, I think, are such as would lead no-one to follow them.

ELECTRICITY TRUST AND IMPRINT ACT.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked last week about the Electricity Trust's obligation to observe the provisions of the Imprint Act?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I have received a report which is in the nature of an opinion from the Crown Solicitor. He states:—

I am of the opinion that the Imprint Act, 1951, does not bind the South Australian Electricity Trust (hereinafter "the Trust"). In this context the trust can be regarded as "the Crown." The general rule (in the absence of express provision to the contrary) is that the Crown is *prima facie* excluded from the operation of a statute where its prerogative rights or property are in question. There is no express provision binding the Crown or its instrumentalities. If the trust were prosecuted and convicted under section 8, however, the money used to pay the fine would necessarily come from assets held for and on account of the Crown. (Section 15 of the Electricity Trust of South Australia Act, 1946.) The property of the Crown would therefore be brought into jeopardy. It, therefore, follows that the Imprint Act, 1951, does not bind the Electricity Trust of South Australia. I am assuming in this opinion that the trust carries out its own printing. If, however, an independent printer is employed, it would seem that he is subject to section 5 of the Act: there is nothing in the Act which expressly or impliedly exempts from its provisions, printers who print under the direction of the Crown or its instrumentalities.

MILK SERVICES.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Has the Minister of Agriculture any further information to give in reply to the question I asked some weeks ago about difficulties encountered by consumers as a result of milk zoning introduced by the Milk Vendors' Association?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—There are considerable difficulties associated with this matter, which is at present being investigated by the Government to ascertain whether those difficulties can be overcome.

HOUSING TIMBER.

Mr. FLETCHER—Yesterday, with other members of the Public Works Committee, I was privileged to see the prefabricated houses being erected at Gilles Plains. It seemed that the type of timber required in their erection could be supplied by the Woods and Forests Department because it is mostly 3in. or 4in. board. Has any consideration been given to the milling of that type of timber from our own forests to obviate the importation of timber from New Zealand and the Continent?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Consideration has been given to increasing the supply of timber from our own forests. Owing to the price factor, timber from South Australian forests is much in demand and is in short supply for all purposes. A large proposition has been drawn up involving the establishment of the biggest sawmill in Australia, and possibly in the Southern Hemisphere, but we have been obliged to curtail work on it this year because of the shortage of Loan funds. However, it is hoped in the near future to have the project submitted to the Public Works Committee. It is one of the projects the Government, as soon as it can get the necessary money, hopes to proceed with.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION: ACQUISITION OF LAND.

Mr. HAWKER—I ask leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr. HAWKER—During the debate on the Budget the member for Adelaide said, in effect, that the land I owned was not bought by me but was inherited from my ancestors, who got it for nothing by illegally squatting on the land. To correct that statement I will read an extract from a letter I have received from the Department of Lands. It says:—

Section 394 (the original Bungaree section) in the Hutt River special survey was purchased for George Hawker by his agent on August 24, 1842. The area of this section was 80 acres and the purchase money £80. The section was surveyed by Sgt. Forrest, R.S.M., in 1842, and the grant issued on January 20, 1843 (G.R.O. Memo Book 122, No. 249). Section 1281 in the Hutt River special survey containing 500 acres was selected by William Leigh of Country Stafford, England, in 1842. This section was conveyed by Leigh to G. C. Hawker of the Briars, near Adelaide, for £2,000 on November 2, 1857 (G.R.O. Memo. Bk. 177, No. 191). The country in the locality of Bungaree Run was originally held under occupation licences of which there are no records available other than those shown in some of the early *Government Gazettes.*

An accompanying note which I received from an officer of the Lands Department states that he has no knowledge of the terms and conditions of the occupation licences mentioned, but apparently they were temporary and insecure tenures. The document continues:—

When wastelands of the Crown leases were issued in 1851, lease No. 131 was issued to George Charles and Charles Lloyd Hawker of Bungaree. This lease which dated from July 1,

1851, contained 267 square miles, and the annual rental was 10s. per square mile. Portions of the above lease were resumed at different times until 1865 when the area had been reduced to 97 square miles, a new lease was issued to G. C. Hawker at an annual rental of £1,071. This lease was wholly resumed on August 4, 1869.

As the leases were resumed they were sold by the Government, either by auction, or by private treaty at the fixed price of £1 an acre—but mostly by auction. The prices paid at auction for the leases which my grandfather bought varied from £1 to £2 3s. an acre. To finance this undertaking he mortgaged his land extensively, and the Lands Title Office records show that between 1861 and 1880 he gave 17 mortgages on the Bungaree land for amounts varying from £500 to £22,500 at interest rates of between 6 per cent and 8 per cent.

CONSTITUTION AND ELECTORAL ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. O'HALLORAN, having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1934-1951, and the Electoral Act, 1929-1950.

Read a first time.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

I will not take up much time in explaining its provisions, because when I introduced a similar Bill last year I explained fully why it should be passed. Unfortunately, as other business became more important towards the end of the session it was not possible to get a final decision on the measure. This session circumstances arose which prevented my introducing the Bill earlier. A Bill which had some bearing on this Bill was introduced in another place by Mr. Condon, and it was not desirable or practicable for me to introduce my measure while his was being considered. Unfortunately, Mr. Condon was taken seriously ill and the consideration of his Bill was delayed. It has now been finally dealt with, and I now propose to ask for an expression of opinion by this House on desirable reforms in my Bill, which is a simple measure and deals only with three matters. Clause 2 seeks to amend the Constitution Act to abolish the property qualification now attached to the franchise for the Legislative Council, and to permit all our adult population to vote at Legislative Council elections. The Electoral Act is to be amended by clause 3 to provide that there will be a joint roll for both the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council. This would result in much greater simplicity than is the case today, and the saving of expenditure in the compilation and maintenance of electoral rolls. By clause 4 voting for the Legislative Council is made compulsory.

These are desirable reforms in order to make the South Australian Parliament, if not truly democratic, at least less undemocratic than it is at present. Even the passing of the Bill will not make our Parliament truly democratic, because of the unequal distribution of electorates for the Assembly. I tried to rectify the position in 1950, but without success. My conception of a democratic system is one where the people really elect and control their Parliament, and where they have the opportunity to speak with an effective voice. That does not prevail in South Australia at present. Under the law in British countries all men are equal. If we accept that fine and old-established principle, all men should have an equal voice in the making of the laws of the country in which they live. Are we to have laws which make it possible for a community to live as a homogeneous entity, or are they to be sectional and based on property rights that are safeguarded because of the franchise for the Council? To give some idea of the unequal political power in South Australia at present I have secured enrolment figures for the House of Assembly as at September 30, 1952, which are the latest available. I shall take the House of Assembly first. The total enrolment for the 13 constituencies in the metropolitan area is 277,407, the average per seat being 21,300. The number of persons enrolled for the 26 country electorates is 168,734, an average of 6,490. The total enrolment for the House of Assembly is 446,141, the average for the 39 seats being 11,440.

Mr. McKenzie—That is democracy!

Mr. O'HALLORAN—It would be if the electorates were arranged on a somewhat more equal basis, but by no stretch of the imagination can the present basis be called democratic. Now I shall deal with the Legislative Council. There are five divisions with four members each. The voting strength of Central District No. 1, a metropolitan division, is 52,709, representing an average of 13,200 electors for each of the four members. In Central District No. 2 there are 51,754 electors, an average of 12,900 a member. I now come to the three country electorates. The number of electors in the Southern District is 25,547, an average of

6,400 a member; in the Midland District there are 18,702, an average of 4,700; and in the Northern District the total is 19,851, or an average of about 5,000. The total enrolments for the Legislative Council are 168,563, or an average of 8,400 a member. Although there are 446,141 electors enrolled and eligible to vote for the House of Assembly, there are only 168,563 enrolled and entitled to vote for the Legislative Council. Putting aside for the moment the question of the unjust distribution of electorates in this place and the fact that that distribution prevents people from speaking effectively in their Parliament—this has been the position for many years—we have the anachronism that 168,000 people can frustrate the will of 446,000. For the three country electorates of the Legislative Council about 65,000 persons are qualified to vote, and those people can elect 12 members, who can frustrate the will of the 103,000 Legislative Council electors in the two metropolitan divisions, and also the 446,000 electors in the House of Assembly electorates. I submit that this is something of vital importance and demands this Parliament's immediate attention, and that is why I submit the Bill.

There is another aspect. We hear today much about the rights of women, the mothers of the nation, and the obligation we owe to them. In the final analysis they are the real nation builders. They are the people who take more than their share in establishing and maintaining homes, and in rearing families and sending them out into the world to become citizens. They are also the people who bear the most heartache in times of total war, such as we have been involved in twice during my Parliamentary life. Let us see how they are treated when it comes to an effective voice in the government of the State. It is not possible to obtain recent figures, but in 1938 the then Leader of the Opposition (Hon. R. S. Richards), after a motion had been carried, obtained a return showing the number of women entitled to vote for the Legislative Council in proportion to the total number of electors. At that time the total enrolment of the Legislative Council was 129,104 and the number of women enrolled 37,026—about 29 per cent. If the same basis is applied to the present-day figure of 168,563 persons enrolled, the number of women enrolled would be 48,700. Those are the few who, because they are privileged to own property, are permitted to enrol and vote for the Legislative Council and thus have an effective voice in the government of their State. The great majority of the women of this State are not given the opportunity to speak effectively in and through their Parliament, and members who support the Government are responsible for this iniquitous state of affairs. When I introduced a similar Bill last year the Premier had something to say in reply to the arguments I adduced, and, anticipating that he will use the same arguments again, I desire to refer briefly to some of them because I wish to save time so as to obtain a conclusive decision on this matter, a decision which I hope will be satisfactory to me and to the people of this State and reflect credit on this House by proving to the world that it is actuated by the highest of democratic motives. One of the first arguments used by the Premier was that there had been no serious difference of opinion between the two Houses of Parliament in recent years.

Mr. McKenzie—He wouldn't know!

Mr. O'HALLORAN—He would know very well, because since 1933—almost 20 years—the L.C.L. has had a majority in both Houses of this Parliament. It has had a majority in this House by virtue of the circumstances I referred to a few moments ago, and it is assured of a majority in the other place, not only because of the unequal distribution of Legislative Council voting strength as between the metropolitan area and the country, but because 104,000 Legislative Council electors in the metropolitan area only elect eight members, whereas 63,000 in the country elect 12, so the Liberal and Country League has the situation sewn up all along the line. It has the opportunity to stifle the voice of democracy and to frustrate those who believe in progress in accordance with the best principles and traditions of the British Parliamentary system.

Mr. Moir—What happened in 1938? Many Independents were elected to Parliament then.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—An L.C.L. Government has been in office since 1933. In 1938 a few young Liberals, and a few others who at that time had not been properly decorated with the station brand, ran as Independents and even, in some cases, succeeded in defeating endorsed L.C.L. candidates, but the House had not been long in session before the then Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. R. S. Richards, tested them out on division after division. I think he moved six or eight no confidence motions on one day, but on each occasion many of the so-called Independents were found to have the station brand stamped upon them: they voted to save the Government. They were like some

of the sheep occasionally found in the country: they probably missed the shearing and came in with a double fleece and the result was, so far as the electors were concerned, a double cross. Last year the Premier referred to the advantages of the bi-cameral system of government. For some reason he thought that my remarks constituted a direct attack upon the existence of the Legislative Council, but that was not the case, nor am I advocating its abolition today.

Mr. Pattinson—Do you believe in the maintenance of the Legislative Council in all its splendour?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—If the member for Glenelg will support this Bill, and get sufficient support to carry it, I will answer his question in the affirmative, but the Premier referred to the virtues of the bi-cameral system. I admit it may have some virtues, although I have noticed that in those countries of the British Commonwealth with which I am most familiar where they have no bi-cameral system the affairs of State seem to go along quite satisfactorily. I refer particularly to Queensland, where the Upper House was abolished in 1918; and although a Liberal and Country Party Government was elected with a big majority in the House of Assembly there in 1929 and reigned for three years, it made no effort to restore the Legislative Council. More recently, the Government in New Zealand, of much the same political character as the South Australian Government, abolished the Upper House, and apparently that country is getting along quite well with a unicameral system. All I am suggesting now is constitutional and electoral reform for the Upper House of this Parliament. The Premier said that the bi-cameral system was created by the genius of the British people and has been developed by them throughout hundreds of years with the object of securing stable and moderate government. As a matter of fact, the English Parliament was originally intended to be a one-House institution, but the Dukes, Barons and other powerful sections of the community soon realized that their traditional privileges would be threatened if the various representatives sat together, so the idea of two Houses of Parliament was introduced. The bi-cameral system was introduced in England as the product of the ingenuity of the minority who wielded political power from the beginning and who for centuries ensured by this means that they would retain it. The so-called development of the bi-cameral system has been towards the reduction of the powers formerly wielded by the House of Lords until today that Chamber is practically powerless. The history of Parliament in England has been largely that of the struggle between the two Houses, accelerated in the last 100 years or so by the spread of education and the general realization of the exploitation which has been going on for centuries. Democratic progress has been directly in proportion to the reduction in the powers of the House of Lords. Both Liberal and Conservative Governments have sought to have the will of the people expressed, when the House of Lords opposed progress, by creating new peers or threatening to do so. There is a fundamental difference between the House of Lords in England and the Legislative Council in this State. Any Government in England can secure the passage of its legislation by recommending to Her Majesty that a sufficient number of new peers be created to enable the will of the popular House to prevail.

There is another important aspect of this question, namely, the parallel reforms which have been secured through the years since the great fight for constitutional reform in 1908. Today the power of the House of Lords to frustrate the will of the Commons is non-existent. It may delay legislation for about 12 months, but cannot refuse to pass it, and in that respect the position is totally different from the position in South Australia where the Legislative Council, representative of a minority, can not only delay, but may refuse to pass legislation, and may continue to do so, and this House, the place where the people's voice is supposed to be heard, is powerless to do anything about it. Virtually the British Parliament is a single-Chambered institution. No-one takes the House of Lords seriously, and only a small percentage of those entitled to attend do so.

Mr. Fred Walsh—The average attendance is about 12.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—In 1950, 854 peers were entitled to attend the session of the House of Lords, but the quorum for business is only three and the quorum for a division only 30, which shows that even the peers do not take themselves seriously, as they do not bother to attend to discharge the duties for which they are supposed to exist. Indeed, under the various constitutional reforms of recent years they are powerless to frustrate the will of the people. The time has arrived when we in this State should make our Parliament truly democratic by giving our people the same voting

rights for the Legislative Council as they have for this House, and I am confident that, having secured that reform in the not distant future, we shall be able to secure a more equitable distribution of voting strength so that the people will be able to speak effectively through this Parliament. At present over 60 per cent of the people reside in the metropolitan area and are represented by only 13 members in this House and eight in another place, while less than 40 per cent who reside in the country elect 26 members to this House and 12 to another place. The great aggregation of people in the metropolitan area have not a single representative in the Ministry at present. What does it avail country people to have this preponderance of representation in both Houses? We have seen our land industries languishing and people leaving the country, particularly during the regime of the L.C.L. Governments during the past 20 years. City people with complaints are almost voiceless as they have little effective voice in Parliament. Parliament should take the first steps towards reform which will provide for an equal franchise for both Houses, one electoral roll, and compulsory voting for both Houses.

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

IRRIGATION PROJECTS.

Adjourned motion by Mr. Pattinson:—

That in view of the continuing and increasing annual deficits incurred in the State Treasurer's funds employed in connection with irrigation on the River Murray, an Address be presented to the Lieutenant-Governor praying His Excellency to appoint a Royal Commission, consisting of a judge, with power to call for all documents and records, to inquire into and report upon:—

(*a*) The losses sustained upon irrigation projects in South Australia.

(*b*) Whether further charges should be imposed for the supply of water to irrigation areas.

(*c*) Whether the maintenance and control of irrigation works should be the responsibility of local trusts.

(Continued from October 22. Page 1044.)

Mr. PATTINSON (Glenelg)—The annual statements published in connection with the settlement of discharged soldiers on the land after World War I. deal with soldier settlement as a whole and include soldier settlement within, and outside, irrigation areas. According to the Auditor-General's report the total deficit to June 30, 1952, was £8,952,672, of which £4,958,650 was on loan account and £3,944,022 was on revenue account. Of the loan deficit £1,371,988 has been met by the Commonwealth Government and £982,046 from the revenue of the State by the allocation of credits arising from the cancellation of securities by the National Debt Commission. Amounts totalling £3,810,738 had been written off advances, etc., to June 30, 1952. I offer no criticism of this huge total deficit of nearly nine million pounds or of the writing off of nearly four million pounds on account of these settlers.

To a large extent these losses were due to the lack of judgment and business acumen of the Governments of those days rather than to the faults of the settlers. Those Governments yielded to public pressure to settle quickly men clamouring for land. Many new areas were opened up without proper enquiry as to whether, when developed and settled, they could be worked on a commercial basis. Many of the settlers were inexperienced and unsuited to the new avocations. They lacked previous knowledge and experience and were not given proper scientific instruction. Much of the land was unsuited for the purpose for which it was used. In the circumstances it was inevitable that disappointment and financial loss was the lot of many of the settlers, that the Government incurred huge losses and that there was a large scale writing down of commitments. It is a source of satisfaction to know that the Playford Government has not repeated those errors of past years.

However, what I desire to stress is that a large number of ordinary civilians have received substantial benefits from this huge writing off, because many hundreds of them have taken the places of the original soldier settlers. According to the 1950-51 annual report of the Department of Lands (the 1951-52 report not yet being available) the original number of soldiers settled on the land was 3,008. But of the original 3,008 soldier settlers 1,666 had transferred, surrendered or forfeited their holdings and 862 had completed purchase or repaid advances, leaving only 480 settlers remaining under the control of the department. On the other hand civilian settlers under the control and supervision of the department numbered 569. The civilian settlers hold nearly as much of the allotted lands as soldier settlers.

I mention these matters merely to emphasize the fact that in dealing with these questions of State capital losses and annual deficits on irrigation projects we are considering the problems, not only of soldier settlers, but of ordinary civilian settlers who purchased these

holdings from the original settlers purely as successful business ventures. According to the Auditor-General's report, during the last five years the net cost or the burden on the taxpayer for irrigation expressed as an amount per head of the State's population is as follows:—

Population.	Irrigation cost per head.
	s. d.
1947-48—652,285	5 11
1948-49—665,139	6 2
1949-50—686,825	6 4
1950-51—711,007	7 3
1951-52—730,000	7 1

This steeply rising burden on the general taxpayer for the benefit of the comparatively few settlers has resulted mainly from the policy of the Government in failing to increase its charges to an extent sufficient to match the increasing costs of its services. Sections 73 and 74 of the Irrigation Act empower the Minister to fix such charges, terms and conditions for the supply of water as he in his absolute discretion shall from time to time determine. I have been a close personal friend and an ardent admirer of the Minister of Lands (Mr. Hincks) for exactly 30 years. I have the highest regard for his integrity and sterling worth, but if he has any failing it is that on occasion he is inclined to allow his generous heart to over-rule his wise head. With the greatest respect to the Minister it appears to me that, to say the least of it, he has continually and consistently erred on the side of extreme generosity to the irrigation settlers in fixing these annual charges.

The original conception of State water conservation and irrigation undertakings throughout Australia was that the water users should contribute by rates and charges sufficient revenue to meet the full interest, redemption, depreciation, maintenance and management costs of all works. I readily concede that this may have been an unreasonable conception. But surely the comparatively few persons who gain the direct benefit of an enhanced annual income and an unearned capital increment from our irrigation projects should make a more commensurate contribution to the cost thereof. They should at least be obliged to meet all operating and maintenance costs, and some proportion of interest and redemption of the capital costs. In America irrigators bear a far larger proportion of irrigation costs than they do in Australia, and particularly in South Australia. In this State the community is bearing all the capital cost of head works and reticulation works, and a large proportion of the working expenses. In America the irrigators themselves pay off all construction costs, besides carrying the full cost of operation and maintenance. However, once the developmental stage of opening up an irrigation area is passed, the full control and administration of the area is handed over to the irrigators themselves.

Mr. Macgillivray—Is it not a vital state of affairs for the grower to control his own destiny?

Mr. PATTINSON—Yes, and that is what I advocate. In America locally elected advisory boards determine water rosterings, fix and collect water charges, and maintain and improve channels and drains.

Mr. Macgillivray—We could well do with that in South Australia.

Mr. PATTINSON—It is pleasing for me to agree with the honourable member in this matter. I am indebted to the Parliamentary Librarian (Mr. Lanyon) for obtaining for me from Melbourne a copy of a report published last month under the authority of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission of Victoria on "Some Aspects of Irrigation in Western U.S.A." The report is by Mr. A. L. Tisdall, Master of Agricultural Science, who is the commission's chief irrigation officer. It deals with his visit to America during the period from July to October, 1951, which visit was sponsored by the commission. I am sure that the member for Chaffey, Mr. Macgillivray, to whom I lent the report, will agree that it is a highly informative and extraordinarily interesting document.

Mr. Macgillivray—I agree.

Mr. PATTINSON—One interesting feature is that in the first instance irrigation development in America was by private diversion or mutual companies involving a comparatively low capitalization. Even today this still remains the most important form of irrigation enterprise. It includes three-quarters of the 22,000,000 acres irrigated.

Mr. Macgillivray—Similar to the Renmark Irrigation Trust.

Mr. PATTINSON—It goes much further than that, because it was solely developed by private labour and private capital.

Mr. Macgillivray—The Renmark Trust started that way.

Mr. PATTINSON—Yes. Another feature is the immense development of underground surface waters. In California and Arizona, as

examples, underground water is pumped and used in enormous quantities owing to the shortage of surface waters. A further sidelight is that only about four per cent of the irrigation channels are lined.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Why pick California and Arizona? There is a big difference between those two States. California is one of the most fertile parts in the U.S.A.

Mr. PATTINSON—I merely took them as two random examples of the tremendous development of underground water supplies. The four per cent applies to all irrigation areas in the U.S.A. But the outstanding feature of the report is the constant reiteration of the statement that it is the policy in America to hand over as much of the responsibility for the operation and maintenance of irrigation districts as possible to various forms of local organizations constituted for the purpose. These irrigation and reclamation projects are turned over to the water users once the developmental stage has been passed. In turn the water users pay the full operation and maintenance costs on an annual basis.

Mr. Macgillivray—Renmark does that.

Mr. PATTINSON—Yes. I hope that the splendid effort of the Renmark Irrigation Trust will be followed in other districts, and that I will see the honourable member taking a leading part in this constructive policy. The water users also pay the development and construction costs in annual payments spread over a long period of years either at a low rate of interest or without interest. An almost universal rule in the United States is that water is not delivered to an individual until water charges are paid in advance. I do not know what would happen to some of our settlers along the River if they were confronted with that position.

Mr. Macgillivray—That is the present position. They always pay for the water first.

Mr. PATTINSON—Then I cannot understand the large amount for arrears of water rates.

Mr. Macgillivray—You know very well that there are times when growers cannot pay and the charges are debited against them. The Act says that the charges must be paid first.

Mr. PATTINSON—That is not my conception of payment in advance. I would be happy if I could go to Myer's and be charged so much for cash on delivery but get the goods at the same price when I said I had no money to pay for them. If we could set up local trusts and combine with them a system of costless credit, as espoused by Mr. Macgillivray, we would not have to worry about payment in advance or long-term credit. In America the local trust has complete control of its finances and, if payments are to be made to the central authority, they are met by the local trust as a body and not by individuals. The full charges must be collected promptly and the trust must pay its way if it is to survive as a separate business entity. How different is the position in this State! Let us take the drainage works in the Berri irrigation area as an example, and consider the following particulars of revenue and expenditure. The capital cost of the drainage works was £308,229, which was an expenditure of £39 11s. 8d. per ratable acre. The settlers' contribution towards the capital cost (with a maximum of £5 per acre) was only £34,339. I do not know much about irrigation, but I know something about arithmetic, and £34,339 out of £308,229 seems to be a very small contribution by the settlers towards the capital cost of the drainage works in the Berri Irrigation area. The operational cost of drainage for the year 1951-52 was as follows:—

	£	
Pumping plant expenses and maintenance, and maintenance of drains	8,837	
Depreciation of pumping plant	2,231	
Interest	9,527	
Total expenses of drainage	£20,595	= £2 12s. 11d. per acre.
Drainage rates levied were	3,535	= 9s. 1d. per acre.

Loss on drainage operations for the year 1951-52 was £17,065 = £2 3s. 10d. per acre.

Surely a continuance of this annual retrogression cannot be justified in these years of unparalleled prosperity. I do not suggest for one moment that the undoubted benefits of irrigation projects are confined solely to the irrigators. Very real benefits are derived by other sections of the community, but it cannot be denied that the comparatively few users of the water from irrigation are being heavily subsidized by the general taxpayers. Irrigation projects are being financed by penalizing, through taxation, non-governmental industries

which have been established by private enterprise without assistance from public revenues.

Let me refer merely by way of example to the primary producers on Yorke Peninsula, where I spent many happy years and which district I once had the honour to represent in this Parliament. There is no more highly developed or wealth producing agricultural district in the whole of Australia than Yorke Peninsula. Yet practically the whole of this development has been successfully undertaken by the initiative, enterprise and hard labour of the pioneers and their descendants without benefit of Government patronage. That large area of land was converted from a wilderness of scrub into fertile fields without the aid of modern scrub rolling machinery or deep ploughing methods, and for many years without even the benefit of superphosphates. It developed its own system of road transport unaided by any paternal Government railway system. It developed and conserved its own system of water supply. Yet it has produced wheat, barley and other primary products in unrivalled quantity and quality.

The settlers on Government subsidized irrigation blocks undoubtedly contribute large sums indirectly to the Commonwealth Government in the form of excise duties paid by the consumers of their products, but the amount of excise duties from their products pales into insignificance compared with the amounts contributed by the barley growers of Yorke Peninsula. The electoral district of Yorke Peninsula comprises county Fergusson and county Daly. I do not know the amount of excise duties which indirectly come from the products of irrigationists, but I think it is loosely stated that the growers of these commodities pay the excise whereas, as a consumer of some of these products for many years, I think I have contributed quite a large amount. It is a loose and inexact expression by producers as a whole that they pay these huge excise duties. The quantity of barley produced in South Australia for the season 1951-52 was 16,855,193bush. I will refer, not to the whole of Yorke Peninsula, but only to the two southern counties of Fergusson and Daly. This area does not include any of the area served by railways, by the reticulation of water, or a deep sea port. It is that lower portion of the peninsula which has been entirely developed by private enterprise and capital. It has had no Government expenditure for a single mile of railway or a single mile of reticulated water or any harbour or port of any significance. Of the total of 16,855,193bush. produced in South Australia in 1951-52, 4,999,154bush. came from the county of Fergusson—29.65 per cent. That was a magnificient effort by primary producers and resulted in an extraordinary contribution to the taxation resources of the Commonwealth. The county of Daly produced in that year 2,195,034bush. of barley, or 13.023 per cent of the State total. Combined, the two counties produced in that year 7,194,188bush., which equalled 42.682 per cent of the total South Australian crop. Hardly a penny of Government money has ever been spent in those two counties.

The quantity of beer and stout produced in South Australia for the year ended June 30, 1952, was 17,347,841gall., which, at 7s. 2d. a gallon, resulted in excise to the amount of £6,216,309 being collected. The total beer and stout produced in Australia for the same year was 185,000,000gall., and with excise at 7s. 2d. a gallon that equals £66,291,666. It is difficult to arrive at an actual figure of malting grade barley produced in counties of Fergusson and Daly which was actually sent to malt houses and breweries in Australia for malting purposes, but 35 per cent of the barley in South Australia was classified as malting quality, excluding Eyre Peninsula, where 47 per cent was classified as malting quality.

I readily concede that the cost of public works cannot be evenly shared by taxpayers in proportion to the benefits they receive from the construction of these works, but I consider that the distribution of costs and benefits should be as just and equitable as possible. In all the circumstances it appears to me desirable that the Government should institute an inquiry into the continuing and increasing annual deficits incurred in the State Treasurer's funds employed in connection with irrigation on the River Murray. Each year the Auditor-General calls the attention of Parliament to these losses with monotonous regularity, but the voice of this guardian of the public purse appears to be merely a voice crying in the wilderness. This Parliament takes no notice of this highly distinguished and eminent person which Parliament itself appoints to guard the public purse. I am confident that any qualified, independent commissioner or investigator would recommend that the time was overdue for the settlers to form themselves into local trusts and accept a fair and reasonable measure of responsibility for the maintenance and control of irrigation works.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer—The motion requests the Lieutenant-Governor to appoint a Royal Commission consisting of a judge, with power to call for all documents and records, to inquire into and report upon:—

(*a*) The losses sustained upon irrigation projects in South Australia.

(*b*) Whether further charges should be imposed for the supply of water to irrigation areas.

(*c*) Whether the maintenance and control of irrigation works should be the responsibility of local trusts.

Whether we support the honourable member's views or not, I believe his is one of the best prepared statements, covering a wide range of information on this matter, that has ever been presented to the House. He said he did not know much about irrigation or financial matters, but I should think he knows a lot about the law and must be a very learned member of the Bar. I congratulate him on his investigation. As regards losses sustained upon irrigation projects in South Australia, I believe that any information which could be obtained by a Royal Commission is already well-known. It is not necessary to have a judge to obtain that information, because, as the honourable member has already said, it has been made available to Parliament regularly by the Auditor-General in terms which are not and cannot be disputed. Indeed, the Grants Commission, as a Royal Commission appointed by the Commonwealth Government, has also inquired into these losses at various times, but the figures in the Auditor-General's reports are never disputed. I do not think, from the point of view of eliciting any further information, that a report of a judge could carry the matter any further.

Mr. Stott—And the honourable member admits that the Auditor-General is a high authority.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have benefited from the Auditor-General's work for a number of years, and I am sure that every member has the utmost confidence in him. The figures in regard to losses on irrigation works are set out on page 92 of his report for this year. The rates levied for supplying water this year totalled £199,000, as against £157,000 last year. The rates for drainage of seepage water were £4,600, as against £4,200 last year. The rents derived from leased land were £25,000 this year, practically the same as last year. Licence fees, house rents, and miscellaneous receipts totalled £8,200, as against £6,600 last year. The total earnings for the year were £237,000, as against £193,000 for last year. The management expenses amounted to £36,000 this year, compared with £31,000 last year, and operating expenses were £328,000, as against £265,000 last year. The total expenditure for this year was £364,000, as against £296,000 last year. The deficit on operations for this year was £126,000, as against £102,000 last year.

Mr. Shannon—So the actual loss was £24,000 greater this year.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes. On the other hand, the capital expenses this year were £142,000, which was £3,000 less than last year. The net result was a charge on the general revenue of the State of £269,000 for this year, compared with £248,000 last year. There is no authority more competent than the Auditor-General to set out the financial position of the irrigation undertakings, so the appointment of a Royal Commission would be a waste of time from the point of view of the Commissioner and would not bring forth any new facts. I think the first portion of the motion submitted by the member for Glenelg was included to ensure that those facts given by the Auditor-General were taken into consideration with other matters to be dealt with by a Royal Commission. The second portion of the motion states:—

Whether further charges should be imposed for the supply of water to irrigation areas.

The annual irrigation rates on blocks within irrigation areas administered by the Minister are fixed under section 74 of the Act, which provides that the rate on blocks shall be of such an amount per acre of such blocks, or of such an amount per block, as is determined by the Minister. In return for paying those rates, the ratepayer or settler is entitled to be supplied with such a quantity of water as the Minister determines at the time of the declaration of the rate. It is necessary, therefore, each year for the Minister to fix the rate to be declared, and in doing this consideration is given to the cost of providing the supply, the general prosperity of the industry, and the ability of the settlers to meet the rates without involving them in any financial hardship. It will be understood that the income of an individual settler is influenced not only by the prices he receives for his produce, but by the size of his holding and its productive capacity in relation to the overall cost of production. Whilst it would be true to say that many settlers, particularly those on large holdings, have prospered, a high proportion of the settlers did not share in this prosperity until the marked rise in prices which occurred in 1950-51. Although the member for Glenelg

said there had been a steep rise in prices between 1939-40 and 1950-51, during the intervening years those rises were only gradual and the industry claimed, with some justification (which ultimately led to an increase in prices) that these prices were not in keeping with rising costs of production. The price rises quoted by the member for Glenelg were correct, but they did not indicate the gradual increases over the period.

Mr. Stott—His statement was a loose and inexact one.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No, his figures were correct, but I will show that the rate of increase in prices was gradual until the last year or two. For instance, in 1939-40 the price of sultanas was £32 a ton. In the succeeding years they were £36, £39, £43, £47, £50, £53, £56, £56, £63, and £72 respectively. Then it jumped to £107 in 1950-51, while the price for this year is £104. In 1939-40, currants were £25 a ton. The prices for the following years were £29, £33, £34, £34, £42, £42, £49, £45, £53, and £66 respectively. In 1950-51 it was £91 and £92, again a big increase in the last two years. The prices of valencias were £35, £35, £37, £41, £42, £44, £47, £53, £55, £63, and £79. Again there was a big jump in the last two years—£109 and £108. The prices of apricots follow a similar pattern —£102, £105, £104, £128, £141, £144, £135, £158, £164, £175, £217, £282, and £340. In 1948-49 wine grapes were £12 10s. a ton, whereas in 1950-51 they were £20 and in 1951-52, £24. The price of citrus fruits has not been subject to quite the same fluctuations, but the price of milk has increased from 17d. a gallon to 26d. in the last few years.

Mr. Pattinson—There have been very few price reductions.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Sultanas fell from £107 a ton in 1950-51 to £104 in 1951-52.

Mr. Pattinson—That is only one instance.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—In 1950-51 the valencias were £109, but in 1951-52 they dropped to £108. In 1945-46 citrus fruits were 14s. 1d., but the next year they dropped to 9s. 5d., and in the following year to 6s. 9d. The figures quoted by the member for Glenelg were correct, but they do not progress evenly over that period, and in fact for a long period the increases did not keep up with the increased costs of production. Recently the industries made a bid for increased prices, which have been approved, as a result of which the honourable member was able to quote his satisfactory figures. In 1947 because of rising costs in the operation of the irrigation areas and the increasing losses the Government appointed a special committee, comprising Messrs. F. C. Drew, Under Treasurer as Chairman, G. F. Seaman, Economist, Treasury Department, A. C. Gordon, Superintendent Irrigation Branch, G. H. P. Jeffrey, Senior Investigating Officer, Department of Industry, C. W. Till, growers' representative, Cobdogla, and F. R. Francis, growers' representative, Waikerie, to enquire into and report upon the position. The committee's investigation showed that from 1941 to 1949 the average rise in production cost was approximately 10 per cent greater than the increase in prices for fruit and the small increase then recommended in the water rate charges was justified on the improved capital position of the settlers, rather than on their improved current income. In concluding its report the committee made the following observation:—

To persons not closely acquainted with the industry of the irrigation areas, the conclusion of this committee that the present margin between returns and costs of production are little if at all better than in 1941 may be surprising. Most of the other major primary industries, and in particular wool and wheat, are receiving returns which have increased by considerably more than have costs. The irrigation fruits industry has not been able to participate to such an extent in the great rise in world parity prices of primary products. In the earlier years of the war, agreements were made with the United Kingdom for the sale of dried fruit at prices which were undoubtedly below what could have been obtained by fully exploiting the market. The sales upon the local market, at the same time, have been subject to the control of the Prices Commissioner, and he has only permitted such price rises as have been fully supported by acknowledged increases in production costs.

From year to year a careful examination is made of the economics of the fruit industry in relation to the financial position of settlers on the small holdings or holdings of average production and adjustments considered to be appropriate have been made in the annual water rates and charges for special irrigations, and, as a result of these deliberations, the following increases have been made:—

	1947-48. Per acre per annum.	1948-49. Per acre per annum.	1950-51. Per acre per annum.	1951-52. Per acre per annum.	Per cent increase 1947-48 to 1951-52.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	%
Four irrigations	3 0 0	5 15 0	4 10 0	5 10 0	83
Five irrigations	3 10 0	4 7 6	5 5 0	6 17 6	96

Up to 1939-40 there was an accumulated profit in the areas working account which covers the running, maintenance and management expenses of the area and which is credited with all revenue, which comprises principally rents, water and drainage rates and charges, but since that year, because of the introduction of the shorter working week, increases in wages and rising costs of essential maintenance materials and firewood and other fuels used at the pumping stations, it has not been possible to arrest the drift in this account by increasing the charges for water. In order to cover the working account for the year 1951-52, it would have been necessary to increase the water rates by approximately £5 per acre or £10 per acre, if interest charges on headworks were to be provided for.

Mr. Pattinson—I pay £25 in rates on about one-third of an acre at Glenelg.

Mr. PLAYFORD—I do not dispute that, but I point out what heavy increases would be involved if we said that such a scheme must be made to pay immediately under present conditions. It has been universally accepted that irrigation schemes of a national character cannot be strictly judged on the balance-sheet of the undertaking itself and that in order to assess their usefulness, the benefits which accrue, both directly and indirectly to the State as a whole, must be taken into account. In this connection, one must consider the employment factor, which is particularly high in the fruit industry and the revenue which passes to the Crown in the form of rates, taxes, excise, etc. It has been estimated that the excise payable on the fruit processed in 1951-52 by one winery and distillery alone in one of the State irrigation areas would approximate £400,000. I realize that the member for Glenelg argues that the consumer pays this, but if the industry were relieved of the very heavy charges caused by excise on the sale of its products the industry itself would be in a more prosperous position. The question of water rates has a difficult aspect. Unfortunately, when the irrigation areas on the River Murray were first established in many instances they were established without a full knowledge of what was a maintenance area and in some instances without a knowledge of local frost conditions.

Mr. Quirke—Also without a knowledge of what constituted good irrigation land.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes, in some instances. Some River settlers have large fertile areas, whereas a considerable number of others are on areas which may not comprise a living area, being land of doubtful fertility sometimes badly affected by frost, so each year an irrigation rate must be declared which will enable the settlement as a whole to be maintained, for all settlers are not in the same position to pay. Under those circumstances great difficulty is experienced in declaring a rate which will meet all the circumstances of the area if it is to be fixed at a maximum rate.

Mr. Pattinson—I hope the Engineering and Water Supply Department will bear that in mind when fixing my rate.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I am sure they will be prepared at all times to take into account the honourable member's ability to pay. I have given much personal consideration to the question of whether the undertaking could be administered by a trust, preferably under the management of the Irrigation Department. Some years ago I represented a district which contained a number of reclaimed areas and one high land irrigation area at Mypolonga, and the question always arose whether a local trust or other organization would carry out these duties more effectively than the Lands Department, and whether local control and management would be more effective in overcoming some of the difficulties facing settlers. In America I saw a small amount of this work being undertaken by trusts, and it was singularly successful. I do not agree with Mr. Fred Walsh as to the high fertility of the soil in California. I have seen some parts of that State and I doubt whether the average fertility is as good as in our River Murray areas. There were not the same natural conditions and water had to be obtained from great depths. The Chaffey brothers came to Australia from California. When I was a member for Murray, my colleague, Mr. Morphett, and I, took up with the Minister of Lands the question of whether the State should not hand to local trusts the control of reclaimed areas. The Government said it did not think the proposal would work but was prepared to hand over the control. We were authorized to offer to the settlers the right to form local trusts that would ensure that State assets did not depreciate. For the Govment this has many financial advantages. If the settlers are responsible to a local trust there is greater co-operation, and that is borne out by results at Renmark. I understand that Mr. Macgillivray favours local trusts controlling irrigation areas. If the settlers generally

accept the responsibility of running their irrigation areas, and thereby relieving the State, it is a matter to be examined, but there would have to be the assurance that the assets of the Government, which are the assets of the settlers, are properly maintained. If they depreciated, the settlements would soon disappear. The trusts would have to carry out their functions in the same way as the Renmark trust. In the matter of overhead costs, interest and capital charges, I believe the State could take a fairly generous view. I am prepared to examine the proposition, and so is the Department of Lands. It would place the responsibility for the irrigation areas where it rightly belongs. It is not a State-wide function, and concerns only certain areas. I ask leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted and debate adjourned.

COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 15. Page 944.)

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I have obtained the following report from the Registrar of Companies in connection with the Bill:—

The Bill introduced by Mr. Geoffrey Clarke, M.P., is the result of a conference between Mr. Clarke, the Parliamentary Draftsman, and myself. When Mr. Clarke first indicated he would move for the amendments contained in clauses 3, 4 and 5 of the Bill I drew the attention of the Parliamentary Draftsman to the Crown Solicitor's opinion recommending the amendments as set out in clause 6. It is true that some confusion has arisen through company officials thinking that October 31 was the last day for filing annual returns. The relevant clauses in the Bill dealing with this matter, if passed, will help to reduce the work of this office. Clause 6 has been suggested to relieve the Registrar of any personal liability in the payment out of certain money. As administrator of the affairs of defunct companies he receives unclaimed moneys rightly belonging to shareholders. Some of those shareholders have lost their share certificates and the Crown Solicitor has advised the Registrar that under the present provisions of section 307 no payment out should be made when share certificates cannot be produced. Clause 7 will remove an anomaly as under the present provisions local companies are required to have registered offices open to the public for the purpose of serving legal processes on three days a week while interstate companies have to provide access on five days a week.

I have examined the Bill, to which I have no objection exception that I am somewhat doubtful about the position which might arise through the provision in clause 6. At present the administrator of the affairs of a company must make sure that moneys are paid to the persons legally entitled to them. Sometimes great difficulty arises in establishing the fact that a person is legally entitled to receive money. In some instances the share scrip cannot be produced. If we overcome the difficulty by relieving the Registrar of any responsibility we may find that proper care in the matter is not used.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—The clause does not deal with the payment of moneys, but with an administrative act which has no relation to the payment of moneys.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The honourable member can correct me if I am wrong, but it is assumed that the clause relieves the Registrar of responsibility in paying out certain unclaimed moneys. If that is the position, and moneys are paid out wrongly, what is to happen later when the person legally entitled to the moneys makes a claim?

Mr. Shannon—No-one is responsible.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Who is responsible? If the Registrar makes a mistake, what is to happen when the rightful owner turns up? I hope the member for Burnside will clear up the point. There could be a similar happening in the Lands Titles Office, but Parliament has not relieved anyone of responsibility if a mistake is made in a title. I do not think any claims have been made against that office, but the fact remains that if a mistake were made and someone suffered a loss there could be a claim against the office and the Government. It is easy to say that there shall be no responsibility, but the position would be difficult if, later, moneys were paid to the wrong persons. We must be cautious in this matter. I have no objection to the other clauses and am prepared to facilitate their passing, but I should like to hear a little more relating to the matter I have raised.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill is not of nation-rocking importance and I do not propose to delay it, but there are certain circumstances associated with its introduction about which I think the House is entitled to some explanation. I hasten to assure the member for Burnside that none of my remarks is intended to reflect upon him in any way. It seems to me that this legislation originated in the office of the Registrar of Companies.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—That is not completely so. I proposed it myself.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—In any event the Registrar gave his benediction to the honourable member's amendments contained in clauses 1

to 5. One would have thought that if these amendments were necessary and desirable the Registrar himself would have apprised his Minister of the fact and the Government would have introduced the legislation. The Registrar might have informed the Government during the last few years and perhaps it thought the matter of insufficient importance to warrant the introduction of amending legislation. It would appear that the amendments proposed in clauses 1 to 5 are essential and desirable and I offer no objection to them; but like the Premier, I have misgivings as to the implications of clause 6, particularly when I notice that subclause (5) includes the following:—

In this section "transfer of property" includes payment of money, and "to transfer" property includes to pay money.

That seems to imply that if certain moneys come into the hands of the Registrar following on the liquidation of assets of a defunct company and someone presents a reasonable *prima facie* case that he has a claim to receive payment out of those assets, and the Registrar makes the payment, under clause 6 he would be absolved of responsibility. As a result the legitimate claimant may later have his position prejudiced because the Registrar and his officers were not as careful as they would have been had this clause not been inserted. The member for Burnside, who has had the benefit of consultation with the Registrar and the Parliamentary Draftsman, may be able to disabuse my mind on this point; otherwise I may have to vote against that clause.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—I commend the honourable member for Burnside for suggesting one or two things which will be of great help to all companies operating in South Australia by providing facilities to relieve them of unnecessary work, but a vital principle is involved in clause 6, which relates to outstanding assets of defunct companies that are vested in the Registrar. I have considered whether or not we should relieve the Registrar from responsibility in this matter. Someone must accept the responsibility for seeing that only those entitled to any money from a defunct company receive such a disbursement. If the honourable member does not propose to relieve the Registrar of the responsibility which now devolves upon him to see that moneys are not distributed wrongly, I must have misconstrued what he said when he introduced the Bill.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—The provisions in the clause are identical with the provisions dealing with unclaimed moneys, but clause 6 relates only to some administrative act.

Mr. SHANNON—I draw the honourable member's attention to subsection (5) of section 299 of the Act:—

Any person dissatisfied with the decision of the Registrar in respect of a claim made in pursuance of this section may appeal to the court.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—The same provision is included in new subsection (3) in clause 6.

Mr. SHANNON—I agree with the Premier that some officer must be charged with the responsibility of seeing that moneys are disbursed to the rightful owners, otherwise legitimate claimants may have no redress.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—The provision is already in the Act.

Mr. SHANNON—Why, then, are you amending it?

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—Because that part does not deal with unclaimed moneys, but only with some administrative act.

Mr. SHANNON—I should like the honourable member to reply to criticism I shall make against clause 7 relating to companies in South Australia which are registered in another State. The honourable member desires to relieve them of the obligation of having their offices accessible to the public for five days a week, and suggests that they should be open for only three. Already the section gives such companies a great privilege in that they need open only three hours a day between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. If it met their convenience they would be complying with the law if their offices were open from 7 p.m. until 10 p.m. for five days a week. Obviously that would not meet with the convenience of the public. I do not know why they have been given such latitude. I would have been inclined to reduce the selection of hours so that the offices would have been open for three hours of what was considered the business day.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—The amendment brings such companies into line with those registered in South Australia.

Mr. SHANNON—My view is that for the offices to remain open for three hours a day for five days a week is not a very onerous obligation, and to reduce the days from five to three is not warranted.

Mr. Stott—It is going too far.

Mr. SHANNON—Not only that, but I think the present law is much too lax and would give a company which, for reasons of its own, was not anxious to be available to the public, an opportunity to open its offices at hours that

were inconvenient to the public, and I am not happy about that. The honourable member has not suggested any amendment to the hours, and I do not propose to move an amendment in that direction. It could not be any great hardship on a company if it were compelled to have its doors open during normal business hours. Are companies that operate here for portion of a week in a very limited field of any great moment? It is not in the public interest to allow a company to decide that certain hours shall be its hours of opening whether they suit the public or not.

Mr. STOTT (Ridley)—The Bill requires more explanation than that given by the member for Burnside in his second reading speech. He gave a short explanation, but I cannot understand why the Bill was founded in Committee of the Whole. I am concerned about new subsection (5) in clause 6, which states that the "transfer of property" includes the payment of money and "to transfer" property includes to pay money. I agree with the Premier's remarks about new subsection (4), which provides that the Registrar shall not be responsible for the transfer or assignment of any property, but a person may have recourse against a claimant to whom the Registrar has transferred or assigned the property. Capable as the Registrar is, he is not as qualified to act in this matter as a judge, to whom the matter should be referred for decision. The provision in the Bill goes too far. I agree with Mr. Shannon's contention that the office of a company should be accessible to the public for not less than three hours on at least five days each week. The member for Burnside seeks to make this apply on three days a week.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—We only ask indigenous companies to keep open on three days a week.

Mr. STOTT—I want more information on the matter. The member for Burnside contends that the way the Bill was introduced does not transgress Standing Orders.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—What does it matter now that the Bill is already founded?

Mr. STOTT—I want the matter cleared up. Standing Order No. 283, which deals with the initiation of public Bills, provides:—

Every Bill which imposes a charge upon the people or authorizes the borrowing or expenditure of money, shall be founded upon Resolution of a Committee of the whole House, submitted by a Minister, and agreed to by the House.

The member for Burnside is not a Minister, yet he founded this Bill in Committee. Under the Constitution Act a "Money Bill" means a Bill for appropriating revenue or other public money. Does this Bill deal with public money? The Registrar of Companies has a big responsibility in this matter. As I undersand it, no private member can introduce a Bill for the expenditure of public money.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! Is the honourable member speaking to the Bill or is he taking a point of order?

Mr. STOTT—There is a mystery about the introduction of the Bill, which was founded in Committee by a private member, and I want to know why.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Is the honourable member taking a point of order?

Mr. STOTT—No. The point has been raised previously about private members introducing Money Bills. Can you say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether the Bill has been properly founded in Committee?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—My ruling is that the Bill is perfectly in order. I gave a ruling when it was first before the House. I do not know whether it is necessary for me to repeat now what I said then. Under Standing Orders there is nothing to say that an ordinary Bill cannot be founded in Committee. Any Bill can be founded in Committee, but usually ordinary Bills are not so founded; but it is quite clear that a Money Bill must be founded in Committee.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—In this case it is making assurance doubly sure.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE (Burnside)—I greatly appreciate the interest that this small Bill has evoked, both from a Constitutional point of view and as regards the Companies Act itself. As regards the founding of the Bill in Committee, it was done at the suggestion of the Parliamentary Draftsman lest there be any suggestion that it was not properly founded. No public moneys are involved. I appreciate members' support of the very minor amendment in the first part of the Bill, and I will deal with the objections to clause 6 raised by Mr. Stott. Admittedly, I made a short second reading speech, but I went to great pains to explain the Bill. It is a technical one and a casual glance would not reveal its implications. I also stated that the clause had been suggested to me by the Registrar of Companies and, replying to the Leader of the Opposition, I said that my professional business brought me frequently

into contact with the Registrar of Companies, a most capable officer. It is only natural, when people have mutual interests, that they should discuss them, and I discussed with him my proposal to introduce this minor amendment dealing with the filing of annual returns by companies. He suggested two other amendments to me, one in clause 6 and the other in clause 7. Clause 6 has not a far-reaching effect so far as accountants, companies or lawyers are concerned, but it was introduced at the suggestion of the Registrar in order to facilitate certain transactions in his office which remain incomplete because of the statutory provisions that now make it difficult for him to conclude them. New subsection (5) of section 307 states that in section 307 of the Act "Transfer of property" is to include payment of money, but this does not envisage the paying out of unclaimed moneys.

Mr. O'Halloran—Why is it there?

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—The Parliamentary Draftsman thought it was necessary. Section 299 of the Act relates to unclaimed moneys which must be paid to the Registrar and which may be paid out when the Registrar has either received a certificate from the liquidator of a company or has otherwise satisfied himself that the claimant is entitled to the money. It states *inter alia*:—

Any person dissatisfied with the decision of the Registrar in respect of a claim made in pursuance of this section may appeal to the court. Where any unclaimed moneys paid to any claimant under subsection (4) of this section are afterwards claimed by any other person the Registrar shall not be responsible for the payment of the same, but such person may have recourse against the claimant to whom the Registrar has paid the unclaimed moneys.

It can be seen, therefore, that there is already provision in the Act relating to aggrieved persons. The amendment has no direct bearing on my own practice or that of any other accountant or lawyer. Section 307 deals with the outstanding assets of a defunct company. It states:—

Where, after a company has been dissolved, there remains any outstanding property, real or personal, which was vested in the company or to which it was entitled, or over which it had a disposing power at the time it was so dissolved, but which was not got in, realized upon, or otherwise disposed of or dealt with by the company or its liquidator, such property . . . is vested in the Registrar for all the estate and interest therein, legal or equitable, of the company or its liquidator at the date the company was dissolved.

The Registrar is then obliged to complete certain transactions where no discretion is involved. Some of the acts which may fall into this category are the discharge of a mortgage, though the documents may not have been prepared, or an act to comply with the law without involving any discretion on the part of the Registrar. The clause merely seeks to bring the section into line with that dealing with unclaimed moneys, which is in identical words except that they relate to unclaimed moneys instead of the Registrar performing an act. The Registrar has sought this amendment to enable an aggrieved person who feels he should have been a party concerned in the act to appeal to the court and to proceed against any person who has wrongfully sought from the Registrar the commission of a certain act.

In introducing the Bill I said that clause 7 was prompted by the Registrar who was satisfied the requirements of the public would be met by bringing section 353 into line with the requirements in regard to an indigenous company. There are many foreign companies operating in South Australia, though not necessarily in the sense that they buy, sell, and carry on business with the public, but are perhaps purely investment or holding companies which are properly required to have a registered office here and show that they are incorporated in another State. One would think that a company registered in South Australia would have much more need for its registered office to be open than a foreign company, so I can see no danger in accepting clause 7, though I do not think the wheels of industry would stand still if it were not agreed to. I have had the assurance of the Registrar that the public would be amply protected if this amendment were carried.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 5 passed.

Clause 6—"Outstanding assets of defunct company to vest in Registrar."

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I ask the member for Burnside what would be the effect of deleting new subsection (4) of section 307? This amendment takes some responsibility from the Registrar for his actions. Parliament previously placed some responsibility on the Registrar, so what grounds have we now to take it away?

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—Clause 6 has no relation to the payment of unclaimed moneys. Section 307, which is amended by this clause, deals purely with the performance of some act

by the Registrar which the company would have had to perform had it still been in existence. In reply to the Treasurer, I could perhaps retaliate by asking what would be the effect if the corresponding provision were taken out of section 299, which relates to unclaimed moneys. It states, *inter alia*:—

Where any unclaimed moneys paid to any claimant under subsection (4) of this section are afterwards claimed by any other person the Registrar shall not be responsible for the payment of the same but such person may have recourse against the claimant to whom the Registrar has paid the unclaimed moneys.

This clause is identical except that it refers to the transfer of property instead of the payment of money. Parliament has already absolved the Registrar from any mistaken payment after he has satisfied himself in the case of unclaimed moneys, and I cannot see any greater danger by making the same provision in regard to property.

Mr. Whittle—The unauthorized receiver of the money may have spent it, but he would probably still have the property.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—Quite so. As I said in my second reading speech, this puts two provisions into section 307 which already appear in section 299, but if the Premier feels that the matter should be examined more closely by his legal advisers I do not press it for the moment.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not wish to delay the passage of the Bill, but I think it is something that ought to be examined and I will get a report on it. If necessary it can be dealt with in another place.

Mr. STOTT—I am not quite happy about this clause even now, as I think it goes a little too far. The effect of it is that any person claiming to be entitled to property may apply to the Registrar for the transfer or assignment to him of that property and if he is dissatisfied with the Registrar's decision he may appeal to the court. Should not the court deal with the whole question instead of giving the Registrar complete power, for this may have far-reaching effects?

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—I think the honourable member has missed the point. Firstly, the section which deals with unclaimed money can be widely interpreted; for example, unclaimed moneys can be unclaimed dividends, unpaid wages, the payment out for shares, payments due to creditors and so forth, the paying of all of which involves a discretion, the exercise of judgment and the acceptance of proof. In this case the company has been fully wound up and is defunct. It is not a company in the process of liquidation in the hands of a liquidator. This clause deals only with some administrative act which the company would have had to do had it still existed. No discretion whatsoever can be exercised; it is purely an administrative act which the company was obliged to perform. There is no question of the liquidator invoking a discretion, or the Registrar adopting an alternative. This is what the Act describes as a ministerial act, and there is no question but that the Registrar cannot do anything but that particular act and the court is therefore not involved. The provision of which the honourable member seems to be afraid is already in the Act and forms part of section 299 which deals with unclaimed moneys.

Mr. SHANNON—The more I hear of this clause the more fearful I am of its acceptance. Mr. Clarke referred to companies in course of liquidation, but the case he stated to persuade the Committee to agree to this proposal is not on all fours—

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—It is much less dangerous.

Mr. SHANNON—I should say it is much more dangerous. A company may have been defunct for any period and suddenly some asset comes within the knowledge of the Registrar—it may be a piece of property or some investment—and obviously much of the proof he would require is no longer available because the people concerned may be dead. Quite likely the framers of this law purposely put the onus upon the Registrar to make certain that he took all precautions before he parcelled out any of the newly-found assets. If the honourable member had money in Chancery he would not get it out without providing meticulous proof of ownership, and this clause comes somewhat within the same category. The sponsor's one fear is that the present Act may delay the actual distribution of moneys due to certain people.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—That is the position.

Mr. SHANNON—Delay is not unwarranted if it makes assurance doubly sure that the rightful people get the property because there have been cases where a person fraudulently secures portion of a property and, he being a man of straw, the right that the honourable member proposes to give the unforunate rightful claimant of recourse against the fraudulent person would be worthless.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—That is the law now.

Mr. SHANNON—The law puts such an onus upon the Registrar that if he has any doubt he will refuse to pay out any moneys and then the claimant has recourse to the court.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—No, the rightful owner is wrongfully deprived.

Mr. SHANNON—Surely civil law would protect him.

Mr. Moir—Why should a rightful owner have to fight his case through the court?

Mr. SHANNON—Possibly because he has been negligent and was not awake to his rights when the company was being wound up, but if certain assets have not been distributed, why should he not be entitled to his rightful portion? If he has to go to some trouble and expense to assert his right it would be only a penalty for his oversight. Although the member for Burnside complains that my suggestion will delay the winding up of the affairs of some companies, the Registrar will not necessarily delay the winding up if he has proof. I oppose the clause.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARK—The case which was responsible for this amendment being introduced relates to a widow who was a shareholder in a company and who lost her scrip certificate. The company has been wound up and unless she can produce the certificate she will not be entitled to the value of her shares and the accrued dividends. This amendment will enable the Registrar to accept a declaration from the woman that she has lost her shares, to insert the customary advertisement in the newspapers, and to issue new scrip so that she may be paid her dues.

Clause passed.

Clause 7—"Company to have registered office."

Mr. SHANNON—I see no valid reason for giving foreign companies any privileges in this State. The law gives them too many already, therefore I oppose the clause.

The Committee divided on the clause—

Ayes (19).—Messrs. Brookman, Geoffrey Clarke (teller), Davis, Dunnage, Goldney, Hawker, Heaslip, and Hincks, Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. Jenkins, McIntosh, McLachlan, Michael, Moir, Pattinson, Pearson, Playford, Teusner, and Whittle.

Noes (15).—Messrs. John Clark, Fletcher, Hutchens, Lawn, Macgillivray, McAlees, O'Halloran, Quirke, Riches, Shannon (teller), Stephens, Stott, Tapping, Frank Walsh, and Fred Walsh.

Majority of 4 for the Ayes.

Clause thus passed.

Title passed. Bill reported without amendment. Committee's report adopted and Bill read a third time and passed.

LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 8. Page 837.)

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (Chaffey)—I suppose I am in a unique position in this State and probably in the Commonwealth with regard to licensing laws, for every licensed hotel in my constituency belongs to the community, therefore I feel I have a great responsibility when Bills of this nature come before the House to see that the views of my district are placed before members. I forwarded a copy of the Bill together with the *Hansard* report of its sponsor's second reading speech to the management of all the hotels in my district, and I have received replies from all of them. All are in favour of keeping young children under the age of 16 years out of those parts of licensed premises where liquor is consumed, and in support of that statement I have a letter written by Mr. Walloscheck, the manager of the Hotel Renmark, the oldest community hotel in the Southern Hemisphere which is well established and highly thought of not only in this State but throughout the Commonwealth and indeed overseas. The letter states:—

Further to our telephonic communication regarding children in drinking lounges, I have discussed the matter with my chairman and other members of the committee of management, and they are all agreeable that children should not be permitted in lounges where drinks are served. For some considerable time now we have not permitted children in drinking places. We have provision already available for children belonging to guests and in this provision liquor is not served in the room.

The managements of the Barmera and Berri Hotels hold similar views on the question of whether children should be permitted in parts of licensed premises where liquor is consumed, but with regard to the other provisions of the Bill I find that at least some of the hotels are not very happy. The general concensus of opinion is that the Licensing Court and its inspectors already have all the powers necessary to see that not only lounges and bars but every other part of the hotel measure up to the standards set by the court. Mr. Christian said:—

I do not know whether members have seen the harrowing and distressing things I have in public drinking lounges.

My constituents wondered where he was in the habit of doing his drinking. I hurriedly assured them that if they imagined he was in the habit of doing pub crawls in the unsavoury

sections of the city, if there are any, they were putting an entirely wrong construction on his method of life. I hurriedly explained that no man has a higher moral standard, and the well-being of the State more at heart. Although I could not say where he got his information about harrowing and distressing things, I felt there must be some peculiar action which brought him into one of those low dives in which he seems to be interested. I am glad to be able to tell Mr. Christian that his reputation is so well-known throughout the State, and in the river districts in particular where he has done much good work as chairman and member of the Public Works Committee, that there was no difficulty in my convincing my constituents that his information was either secondhand or had been obtained by accident. So far no-one in this debate has said whether licensing inspectors already have the power sought by the Bill. One honourable member says that if a hotel is not properly conducted for the sale of liquor the licence can be refused.

Mr. Christian—Is there any sanction in the Act for lounges?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I do not know, but some time ago the Renmark Hotel desired to put in a new bathroom after providing additional accommodation, but a licensing inspector said the alteration was not necessary, and the work was not proceeded with. If an inspector can decide this matter, could he not decide whether a lounge was a fit and proper place in which to serve liquor? At one time in South Australia it was said that drinking bars were the downfall of the public, and that if liquor could be served in lounges with tables everything would be respectable, and that the evils of drinking would disappear. We now have lounges, but still the critics are not satisfied. It is now said that lounges should be abolished, because they cause all the evils in hotels.

Mr. Christian—The Bill sanctions lounges, whereas the Act does not.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—It is a moot point.

Mr. Christian—Section 134 authorizes drinking bars only, not lounges.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Liquor can be sold in a bedroom to a *bona fide* lodger.

Mr. Teusner—The Act is referred to as a labyrinthine and draconian code.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The Berri Hotel has provided seating accommodation for people who drink in the saloon bar, but it is not used because the Australian habit is to stand and put a foot on the brass bar running around the counter. For some psychological reason the average Australian does not like to do his drinking sitting down. Drinking is 90 per cent a social function. I believe the average man likes to have his friends in the bar and not in the lounge, and to drink whilst discussing subjects from politics to horse racing. Obviously there is more pleasure in it when everybody stands. The Berri Hotel put in a beer garden in the open air, which is something different from the low dive where Mr. Christian has seen harrowing and distressing things. Under the Bill a beer garden could be prohibited. I do not think Mr. Christian wants to interfere with a beer garden, so in Committee I propose to move an amendment excluding open air drinking. That will permit drinking in beer gardens.

Mr. Teusner—Will children be excluded from beer gardens?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The amendment will deal only with the exclusion of beer gardens. Other parts of the Bill exclude children. The Berri Hotel is providing a place for children to be served with cool drinks and to play. I ask leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted and debate adjourned.

ELECTRICITY TRUST OF S.A. ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

Sitting suspended from 6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

THE ESTIMATES.

In Committee of Supply.

(Continued from November 4. Page 1145.)

ATTORNEY-GENERAL.

Attorney-General's Department, £18,518; Crown Solicitor's Department, £25,206; Parliamentary Draftsman's Department, £5,419; Public Trustee's Department, £43,376; Supreme Court Department, £51,644; Adelaide Local Court Department, £26,408; Adelaide Police Court Department, £26,854; Country and Suburban Courts Department, £34,774; Coroner's Department, £4,675; Registrar-General of Deeds Department, £82,637—passed.

Miscellaneous £6,237.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—Under the heading "Grant to Law Society of South Australia for cost of administration in connection with legal assistance to

poor persons'' an amount of £3,200 is proposed this year, an increase of £1,300. Is this due to an extension of the facilities granted under this heading, or to increased fees paid for legal assistance?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH (Minister of Works)—It is due to the increased number of poor persons requiring legal assistance and not to any advance in the allowance to practitioners. I understand that these services are given almost entirely free.

Line passed.

TREASURER AND MINISTER OF IMMIGRATION.

Treasury Department, £26,962; Superannuation Department, £36,102; Motor Vehicles Department, £136,558—passed.

Agent-General in England Department, £26,128.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Since the death of the former Agent-General, Sir Charles McCann, no mention has been made of the appointment of a successor. Can the Premier say who is to be appointed to the position and whether the salary paid to the Acting Agent-General is the same as would have been paid to the Agent-General?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—It is very difficult to find a person with the necessary knowledge to fill this position. When Sir Charles died the Government for some time considered the appointment of a person to the office, but ultimately decided to appoint Mr. A. H. Greenham Acting Agent-General to see how he would fill the position. I have had reports from many prominent South Australians who have visited the office since Mr. Greenham has been acting and they have spoken eulogistically of his work. While he is acting he receives the same salary as was paid to the Agent-General.

Line passed.

Land Tax Department, £75,668.

Mr. STOTT—Could there be more co-operation between Commonwealth and State officers in arriving at land valuations? There is far too big a discrepancy between the two now. Would it be possible to eliminate any duplication and thus reduce the number of officers?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I assure the honourable member that the Government has adopted a method which will completely eliminate any discrepancy in the future. The Commonwealth Land Tax Department has been abolished, so there can be no arguments between the two departments on the question of values. When the two departments functioned State assessments were consistently lower than those of the Commonwealth. I believe that was because under the Commonwealth law its Land Tax Department was obliged to consider more recent sales, whereas our law gives the Commissioner of Taxes a wider discretion on values rather than requiring him to consider recent sales, which are not always indicative of true values. The State Department is now highly qualified in its assessment work and in some areas soil surveys are being undertaken by the Commonwealth Soil Department which will be used as standards in various districts. Everything is being done to assure that our values are realistic. There are very few appeals against these assessments and, on appeal, it is rare for them to be upset. The honourable member can have great confidence in the assessments made in recent years.

Mr. STOTT—Now that the State Government is going into the field vacated by the Commonwealth Government is it necessary to have so many officers in this department?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The percentage increases in this department do not exceed those in other departments. Provision has been made in a Bill for substantial increases in land tax, and under those circumstances it is obvious that valuations will be more keenly contested in future. There has been no increased expenditure in this department apart from normal increases due to the cost of living.

Line passed.

Stamp and Succession Duties Department, £29,950.

Mr. STOTT—The position in this department must be watched most carefully. Notwithstanding care exercised by the Government, increased succession duties can deal a severe blow to beneficiaries.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—On a point of order, Mr. Acting Chairman, is the honourable member in order in anticipating the debate on a measure of which notice has been given?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN—No.

Line passed.

Publicity and Tourist Bureau and Immigration Department, £147,908.

Mr. DUNNAGE—Much criticism has been levelled against the Government for not purchasing sufficient land for tourist resorts. An item ''Purchase of land—'The Gums,' Tranmere, £3,500; Loftia Park, £2,000; and lot 52, hundred of Onkaparinga, £590'' appears. Can the Treasurer say where these properties are situated and why £3,500 is needed this year for ''The Gums'' when £6,750 was voted last year?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—"The Gums," Tranmere, is a most attractive block, largely in its natural state, and strong representations were made that it should be retained. The owners of various blocks, who had purchased them for building, concurred and agreed to sell them at a reasonable price to the Government. Of the £6,750 voted last year only £3,526 was expended, as the Government had to negotiate with individual blockholders and could not finalize all the transactions. It will require the £3,500 to complete the purchase of the property. Loftia Park is a beautiful area in the Mount Lofty district that has been highly developed for tourist purposes, and in keeping with the Government's policy of purchasing attractive areas adjacent to the city, particularly in the foothills, the Government, on the recommendation of the Director of the Tourist Bureau and the Land Board, purchased it at a figure greatly below its market value. The land in the hundred of Onkaparinga was offered at public auction by the estate of Mr. Backhouse. It is adjacent to Mount Lofty and is a particularly good scenic block. As attractive areas become available the Government endeavours to secure them because it believes that in future there will be a tendency to overcrowding, and insufficient attention is being paid to natural beauty resorts.

Mr. PATTINSON—Can the Treasurer say on whose recommendation these purchases are made and whom the Government regards as the most desirable persons to make the recommendations? About three years ago the Government set up a committee, which was rather novel, consisting of four Government officials, the town clerks of Glenelg and Brighton, each with 25 years' experience of council work, and myself, to act in an advisory capacity as regards the development of our foreshores. Members of the committee devoted 12 months of their leisure time in an entirely honorary capacity and sent a report to the Government. The Premier was so fascinated with it that 10 days had barely elapsed before he rushed to Glenelg on Proclamation Day and, before a most distinguished gathering of citizens, including the Governor, delivered a powerful speech, paying a glowing tribute to members of the committee who had recommended the purchase of four most desirable blocks on the foreshore for use as a tourist resort. The committee's report was sent on to the Public Works Committee, which adopted the advisory committee's report, yet three years have elapsed and no line appears on the Estimates for the purchase of any of these blocks. I register a strong protest against that omission.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Parliament has decided that before the Government can purchase land the matter must be referred to the Land Board for report. The Land Board is just as honourable a body as the committee mentioned by the member for Glenelg, and probably as honourable as the Public Works Committee. Parliament has decided that the Land Board shall be the authority to fix the value of land. As regards the four foreshore blocks, I believe that some of the local talent who previously recommended their purchase said that their recommendation may have been wrong. I understand one of the blocks was adjacent to Minda Home and that there was considerable doubt whether it was advisable, under the circumstances, to use it for other purposes. The last time I saw the docket the subject was before Cabinet. Approval was given for the expenditure of money on the terms that had been set out as the likely terms of purchase. Perhaps the board was not able to arrange the purchase on the terms in the recommendation. The recommendations of the committee were not overlooked. The Government's policy in regard to the purchase of land, such as of "The Gums," at Tranmere, of Loftia Park, and of lot 52 in the hundred of Onkaparinga, will be applied to other places.

Mr. RICHES—I am pleased that the Tourist Bureau has at last secured as national pleasure resorts the lovely scenic spots at Alligator Gorge and Mambray Creek. What authority is charged with the responsibility of establishing national fauna and flora reserves and wild life sanctuaries? Many people in the north think that Alligator Gorge and Mambray Creek should be set aside to preserve native timbers and shrubs and wild life that abounds in those areas.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No board has complete control of all the flora and fauna reserves of the State. The National Park is controlled by one authority and Flinders Chase on Kangaroo Island is under another. The places the honourable member mentioned have been placed under the control of the Tourist Bureau which has negotiated for the preservation of the timber and beautiful scenery there. It had the assistance of the Land Board in arranging compensation payments to the lessee of a portion of the reserves for the loss of his timber rights. This will ensure that the beautiful trees will be preserved.

Mr. STEPHENS—Last year we voted £15,131 under "Immigration." Now we are asked to vote £17,254. In view of all the troubles associated with migrant hostels I ask the Treasurer whether it is the policy of the Government to continue maintaining them? Will immigration increase?

Mr. STOTT—Last year we voted £15,190 for "Accommodation, fares, etc., of migrants," and this year £14,850 is proposed. Should not this expenditure be met by the Commonwealth?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The hostels mentioned by Mr. Stephens were established and maintained by the State. The Commonwealth paid a small amount towards their establishment and they are used in much the same way as staging camps were used during the war. They are used for migrants nominated in Australia by someone who has guaranteed to provide them with accommodation, so actually they are receiving places.

Mr. Stott—Isn't that the Commonwealth's responsibility now?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Commonwealth undertook the responsibility of accommodating migrants who were not nominated. The State still arranges to bring migrants to this country and in due course shipping is arranged for nominated persons. We have recently found that the number of migrants arriving has dwindled somewhat, but as housing accommodation has been short the Government has approved of the hostels being made available to other persons for short periods, for instance to railway workers. Further, the Commonwealth had a scheme whereby recruiting for the Australian Army was conducted in England. A number of recruits were enlisted there and in some instances the hostels were used to accommodate their families. Even people stranded in the city without accomodation have been provided with a bed. Unless the hostels are kept reasonably filled substantial losses will be made.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—The Tourist Bureau publishes a handbook called *South Australia and Its Resources,* which I presume would be paid for out of moneys voted by the line "Advertising the State." This is a most admirable handbook and I suggest that it might be more widely distributed throughout Australia. I have given copies to overseas visitors who highly commended it.

Mr. HAWKER—I have seen the book referred to and it is a good one, but in preparing a new edition more prominence should be given to the primary industries, for wheat and wool do not receive a great amount of space compared with some industries. South Australian stud breeders export both British and Merino breeds of sheep to every State, but I do not think this fact is mentioned in the book, notwithstanding that stud breeding brings an appreciable amount of money into the State.

Line passed.

Prices Control Department, £84,078.

Mr. PEARSON—I would like an explanation of the increase in salaries and wages. I note in particular that the number of section leaders has been increased from five to eight and clerks from three to four, the total increase in salaries being £2,918. In view of the gradually contracting field of price control, which I applaud, I am wondering why it is necessary to expand this personnel.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government takes the attitude that while price control exists it is its duty to see that prices are reasonable for items that are not controlled as well as for those that are. Although we do not control directly the prices of clothing and materials we have more officers checking the prices of those commodities than when they were under direct control. We have elicited some very interesting information and on occasions have redeclared items, or a particular firm, when we believed the profits were unduly high. At the time the Estimates were prepared last year the staff was much below normal and it is even now not up to the recognized establishment.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—Will the Treasurer inform me what committees now exist to advise the Prices Commissioner, for which the modest sum of £50 is provided for fees?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—We had one committee in regard to bread prices, but I thought that no longer existed and I will check up on it. The amount set down for last year was £70 and only £32 was spent, so I think this is a minor amount to provide for contingencies.

Line passed.

Building Materials Office, £10,489.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I note a considerable decrease in the amount proposed for this year. Is there still any need for the Permits Advisory Committee for which only £17 is provided for fees? What has become of the most senior officers, and is the department likely to continue for any length of time?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The number employed in the department has been considerably reduced. One senior officer has been transferred to another department and the

Director of Building Materials is now doing part-time duty as a senior auditor in the Audit Department. Other officers have been absorbed into other departments where they were required. The Permits Committee no longer exists and the expenditure of £17 was incurred at the beginning of the year before it was disbanded. I know of no cases where permits for homes are refused as anyone can build a house up to 18 squares without a permit. The type of thing that is controlled is building other than homes. The control of building materials as such has been completely relinquished.

Line passed.

Miscellaneous, £5,606,963—passed.

MINISTER OF LANDS AND MINISTER OF REPATRIATION.

Lands Department, £507,426.

Mr. QUIRKE—Members of Parliament recently visited Kangaroo Island where the Land Development Executive has been, over the last half dozen years, engaged on a vast developmental programme for soldier settlement. As early as 1946, when that project was first put forward I, with other members of the Land Settlement Committee, visited Kangaroo Island, when only 500 acres of the plateau country, now known as Parndana, showed any considerable development. I pay a tribute to the people responsible for this work, particularly Mr. Rowland Hill. Knowing it before any development took place, what has happened in the intervening years is amazing and reflects great credit upon those responsible. I well remember when we first investigated the Kangaroo Island proposal that it was Mr. Hill who had the whole scheme at his finger-tips; he knew practically every acre of that then almost inaccessible country, and to him it must give enormous satisfaction indeed to see his work brought to such a successful stage of development, with not the slightest doubt in the world that the further development will be equally successful. I have never had any doubts about the development of that primitive soil on the plateau of Kangaroo Island. It only needed the right treatment, but we should not expect too much from that soil too soon. I believe the L.D.E. is aware of that, but I make the plea now that when the settlers are placed on it not too much be expected from them because, as has happened on the West Coast, I think that this land before it reaches full development will have a period of recession when the results may be somewhat disappointing. I do not think it within the bounds of possibility that the fertility of that soil can be continuously developed without an intervening stage when there may be disappointments, and it is during that time that the settlers will need sympathetic consideration. I am not offering any comment about the actual cost of development. We are not aware of what it is, and probably it would be extremely difficult to give accurate figures at this stage, although they must be constantly in the course of preparation. When it is found that the full developmental cost cannot be landed on those settlers, then for the first time the clauses of the War Service Land Settlement Agreement will be put into operation under which it will be possible to write down the developmental cost in the interests of the settlers and apportion the amount written off between the Commonwealth and the State. If there is any land used for soldier settlement on which it will be necessary to invoke those clauses to assist settlers, I think Kangaroo Island will be in that category.

I first referred to the vital necessity of pursuing a policy of settling returned soldiers on single unit farms in 1946, and at that time some members who spoke in favour of that policy voted against it. Today hundreds of would-be settlers are being told that a single unit farm application will be considered if they lodge one. Prior to the unpegging of land values in 1948 many farms were available at reasonable prices. Can the Minister of Lands say how many applications for single unit farms have been made in the last 12 months and in how many cases negotiations for such farms have been successfully concluded in the interests of the applicant?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Since early in 1948, when approval was given for the purchase of single unit farms for soldier settlement, the department has been active in this matter, but in 1948, fewer opportunities were available than formerly. I believe that had we not concentrated on the development of virgin and semi-virgin land but rather on the acquisition of single unit farms, land development in this State would not have been as far advanced as it is today. A fair number of single unit farms have been offered over the last 12 months; I will get the exact figure for the honourable member. I believe we are coming to the time when more single unit farms will become available. Other States, particularly the principal States, which were most active in single unit farm settlement, are in very great difficulties today because of a shortage

of both finance and that type of farms. Some of the other States are only now getting under way to develop virgin land as we have done.

Mr. HEASLIP—Under "War Service Land Settlement (World War II.)" provision is made for the payment to the Commonwealth of £30,000 as a contribution under clause 7 of the War Service Land Settlement Agreement Act. Can the Minister explain this item?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—This sum is provided against the possibility of amounts having to be written off some soldier settlers' properties, particularly in irrigation areas. The same action may be necessary in other areas because of increased costs of production, particularly of superphosphate.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The Minister's argument that because this State has not actively pursued a policy of developing single unit farms it is further ahead than the eastern States in land settlement is hard to follow, for if that is correct every returned soldier settler member of this House was wrong in urging a policy of single unit settlement after the second World War. Although the development of virgin land may benefit the State and settlers, while the years have been slipping past many returned men have been robbed of the best markets ever known by Australian primary producers. Following on the policy of acquiring single unit farms in New South Wales returned soldier settlers there have paid off 50 per cent, many of the first settlers probably 100 per cent, of their capital commitments, because of high prices for their products. Would it not be possible to acquire single unit farms for settlement at the same time as the department is developing virgin land? The Government at no time intended to spend the money supplied by the Commonwealth Government in acquiring improved properties, but used it firstly to develop the State and secondly to settle returned soldiers. There is no doubt that, as the Minister said, some of the capital cost will have to be written off some soldier settlement properties in the irrigation areas, for some extraordinary costs have been incurred there. At Loxton irrigation pipes were fitted with special controls which were supposed to be automatic, but they were so ineffective that a man had to be paid to regulate the flow of water. That man's wages included heavy penalty rates for overtime. There should be no writing down of the capital cost of land on Kangaroo Island, for only a nominal charge of 5s. is made to the settlers, but the landowners who have made the greatest success of land settlement are those in the South-East, where land was made available at a price far below its true market value because it was realized that it would be made available for soldier settlement. At Mount Schank the department bought land for £12 an acre which, on the open market, would have brought up to £50. Inflation of land values has made that investment safe. Certain land that has been acquired from time to time for soldier settlement has been let out to big stock firms for agistment, and the fees paid for that service are paid to the Lands Department and not to the settler, so that the longer it is let out on agistment and not settled the more the department earns at the expense of the settler. I have previously referred to some acquired land that carried 2ft. of hay being deliberately kept idle. I know of good fruit blocks in irrigation areas being offered to the department, but in practically all instances the offers were turned down: there was always some reason for not accepting them. Since I have been in this place the Government has never initiated a debate on soldier settlement. The Estimates furnish about our only opportunity to debate it.

Mr. PEARSON—For two years I have been here representing possibly one of the biggest groups of soldier settlers in this State and said nothing about what was going on. I regret that during those two years I have had to listen to almost unceasing criticism against the Minister and his policy on soldier settlement. Blocks are allocated with the rental based either on the cost of development or on the economic value of the land, whichever is the lesser. Mr. Quirke made a good point when he said there may be a period when development, particularly pasture development, tends to fall below expectations, and that during that period it may be necessary to assist the settler. I have had many discussions with settlers on this matter. I have introduced deputations to the Minister and on every occasion he has given the assurance that, provided the settler does his part, the department will stand behind him. It is the duty of the community to see that soldier settlers are given every consideration. People who give time, at a valuable stage in their lives, to the service of their country should be looked after by the taxpayer. I have always been sincere in regard to soldier settlement, and so has the Government and the Minister, and if proof were needed it is given by the provision of

£30,000 for any writing down that might be necessary. I have had some experience of single unit purchases. One of the factors chiefly militating against the purchase of a number of single units was the formula laid down by the Commonwealth, which provided that unless a property can show by previous returns that the price is justified there will be no agreement to the purchase. In many cases that formula has proved to be unsound and has prevented the purchase of a good many farms in the semi-developed stage. This Government's policy in regard to single unit purchases has been sound, and the mistakes made after the first war are not being repeated now.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—About two years ago I had the privilege of opening the new Cooltong settlement, Mr. Macgillivray was present and supported me. I think he said that until that day he had always considered Waikerie probably the best irrigation settlement, but from what he had seen at Cooltong he was satisfied that it was the best. I accepted that in all sincerity from the honourable member, but from time to time in this place he has said that not one thing in connection with soldier settlement has been done properly. Last Monday week, at the opening of the Murray Development League interstate conference at Victor Harbour, compliments were paid in particular to the Loxton settlement. One representative from Mildura said that there must be a master hand behind the wonderful Loxton settlement. Mr. Macgillivray paid the department a great compliment tonight when the only complaint he made was that on one occasion a settler had to free a valve with a stick. That is in connection with a scheme that has cost millions of pounds. It is freely admitted that in such a scheme there must be minor mistakes. The honourable member has made many on his own block. We have called for applications from soldier settlers for agistment, and if they do not apply the land is let to other settlers. We have set aside land that can be used for agistment purposes and soldier settlers are given the first opportunity. If the honourable member has any constructive criticism in regard to Loxton I shall welcome it at all times.

Mr. QUIRKE—Members generally must be pleased that at least one member has let them know where he stands in this matter. No criticism has ever been offered by me in connection with soldier settlement development. I have not criticised the development at Loxton, nor in the main has Mr. Macgillivray. The general settlement at Loxton was approved by Mr. Macgillivray and myself as members of the Land Settlement Committee. When I was on the Land Settlement Committee with Mr. Macgillivray we approved of those holdings in the South-East which were accepted by the Government at practically gift prices and we also approved of the development of that primitive country on Kangaroo Island. We have never criticized the work of the Lands Development Executive. Only tonight I paid a tribute to its chief executive officer. What I have criticized is the sheer disregard apparent in the Government's attitude to applicants for land—not the development of the land itself. Those who have been allotted land under the soldier settlement scheme are extremely fortunate. I join with Mr. Macgillivray in saying that the best irrigation settlement in South Australia is Cooltong. Even now many approved applicants on Kangaroo Island do not know when they will get land. There has been heartlessness and cruelty in the attitude of the administration towards applicants. These men have lost opportunities in life because they refused to accept the opportunities presented to them in expectation of getting land. Their lives have been broken, and that is no exaggeration. I hope that never again will Mr. Macgillivray and I have our arguments sidetracked, and that we shall not be accused of criticizing the actual development. We have never done that. It is the Government's attitude to approved applicants which has always been the subject of our criticism and still is.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The honourable member said that a number of applicants working on Kangaroo Island would never get blocks.

Mr. Quirke—What I said was that they did not know when they would get them.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—They will get blocks and have been told so. Every man for a considerable time has known he will get a block. I can remember Mr. Macgillivray in this place, when referring to an irrigation project, saying, "The pipes are blowing up." *Hansard* will show that. The honourable member knows that in such a scheme a percentage of pipes will blow, but the percentage in this case was lower than the average. For the honourable member to say that he and his colleague have never criticized any scheme is not quite fair. The criticism of the honourable member would suggest that the settlement of applicants in this State is worse than that in

any of the other States. Only in Canberra last December two other States and South Australia met the Federal Minister and provided him with figures showing the number of applicants, and it was found that on a percentage basis South Australia had more men on the land under the scheme than the two other agent States. I am prepared to act on any criticism provided it is constructive.

Mr. QUIRKE—I do not care two hoots how many men have been settled on the land by the other States; I am only concerned with those who have not been settled in this State. There are still hundreds of men without land. Our criticism has been concerning the men who have been approved but not allotted land. I have already mentioned that single unit farms present a possible means of providing them with land. The Government's attitude to some of these men has been cruel and heartless, and that also applies to anyone responsible for it. I know these men personally and have brought them before the responsible officers.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The Minister adopts the attitude that if anyone attacks his policy it is a personal attack on him. For years my colleague and I have told the Minister that we admire him very much, but that we thoroughly disagree with everything he does as an administrator. He harps on the fact that we have been continuous critics of his policy. Under the Party system, the function of Mr. Quirke and myself is practically limited, it being futile for us to suggest any improvement. We have moved motions on the subject, and although the returned soldier members behind the Minister have always given lip service to our statements they have in every instance voted against us. The only thing that matters in this House is how a member casts his vote. The member for Flinders took me to task for criticizing the Minister, but I remind him that I have forgotten more about soldier settlement than he is ever likely to know.

Mr. Pearson—It is the first time I have spoken on soldier settlement in the House.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—By interjection you said that I had criticized the Minister. That is true, but I have done it from knowledge and hard experience. I have gone all through the rigors of soldier settlement, including the prospective cancellation of my lease. These things have put the iron into my heart. The Minister said I had stated that pipes were blowing up, but I do not recall having done so. I said that the whole system at Loxton and Cooltong was wrong. If we can spend £5,000,000 to £6,000,000 to take water from Mannum to Adelaide surely we can spend some money on our irrigation projects. The Minister always takes exception when any member criticizes the work of his department. I have never questioned his sincerity, but I do question his policy. Had a more generous policy of single unit farms been adopted our settlers could have done like those in New South Wales and paid off their capital charges. That is the real gravamen of the charge against the Minister.

Line passed.

Botanic Garden Department, £47,692.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—It is proposed to spend £1,753 on the maintenance of the Botanic Park, an increase of £453 over last year. Is any of the sum proposed to be spent on development and beautification of the park following the cutting down of a number of trees several years ago? I understood that a different type of tree from those removed would be planted. Will any of the sum be spent on improvement of the drains in Botanic Park so that motor traffic can pass in some degree of safety?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Last year £1,300 was spent on the maintenance of the Botanic Park. Certain trees were removed because they were attacked by disease. The director of the Botanic Garden reported that it was essential to remove them and that they would be replaced with trees of a more ornamental type.

Mr. DUNNAGE—A new item, "Purchase of land, Mount Lofty Ranges for Botanic Garden Annexe," appears on the Estimates, £2,663 being proposed. Can the Minister say where this land is situated? When I introduced a deputation to the Premier some time ago asking that an area be purchased for this purpose I was under the impression that the Botanic Garden would remain permanently where it is and that the annexe would be used for growing English trees.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The land in the Mount Lofty Ranges is to be used as part and parcel of the Botanic Garden beautification scheme. Efforts will be made to preserve some of the natural growth on it and experiments will be conducted with new types of trees which might prove suitable to the locality.

Line passed.

Government Motor Garage, £19,355; Advances to Settlers, Vermin Proof Fencing and Loans for Fencing and Water Piping, £4,980; Miscellaneous £22,199—passed.

MINISTER OF WORKS.

Public Works Department, £5,483; Engineering and Water Supply Department, £1,739,720; Architect-in-Chief's Department, £171,720; Government Offices, £108,797—passed.

Cemetery, £18,100.

Mr. DUNNAGE—Has further consideration been given to granting a permit to the Centennial Park Cemetery Trust to build a modern crematorium? The crematorium at the West Terrace cemetery is by no means up-to-date. It is fulfilling its purpose only because it is the only crematorium in this State. The Centennial Park cemetery is filling so rapidly that soon there will not be any land left for more graves.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Government has been desirous of getting out of the cemetery business, and it suggested to the Adelaide City Council and other bodies that they take over the control of the West Terrace cemetery, but they were not disposed to do it. Then we had applications from the Centennial Park Cemetery Trust and the Enfield Cemetery Trust for permits to build crematoriums. Those applications were fully justified, but the Government felt that if it consented it could be inferred that the necessary building materials would be made available, and we have been so short of materials for housing the living that we have not been able to consent to their use for the cremation of the dead. I am sure that as soon as the materials become available the Government of the day will give the approval desired.

Line passed.

Public Stores Department, £102,381; Aborigines Department, £87,896; Public Works £759,850—passed.

Miscellaneous, £24,864.

Mr. WHITTLE—Last year £19 was expended on administration in connection with the River Torrens (Prohibition of Excavations) Act and the River Torrens Protection Act, but it is proposed to spend £125 this year. Has the Government any scheme in mind to control excavations of the bed of the Torrens?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Provision has to be made to meet the costs of administration of the two Acts. Expenditure in regard to the River Torrens (Prohibition of Excavations) Act was previously voted under Public Works (Engineer-in-Chief's Department), but it has now been brought under "Misellaneous" and bracketed with the River Torrens Protection Act which recently came into operation. Both Acts will be faithfully administered, and provision has to be made towards that end.

Line passed.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

Education Department, £4,370,326.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Last night the member for Unley referred to expenditure on education. I do not wish to do him any injustice, but he said:—

I notice that it is proposed to vote about £4,500,000 for education this year, but I remember that when I first came here in 1941 it was £1,100,000. I wonder whether we are getting an adequate return from such a huge expenditure.

I regard that as a deliberate reflection upon the Education Department, and I am amazed that any member should have uttered such words. How does Mr. Dunnage think that he could reduce expenditure in this department? Does he think we could do with fewer Assistant Superintendents of Primary Schools, or inspectors? Would he propose a reduction in the visual aids section, or in the Psychologists' Branch? He went on to say:—

We thought that a higher standard of education would greatly help our young people, but we find them doing many things that young people did not do a few years ago. For instance, there is far more child delinquency today than there was in my day.

Does he blame the Education Department for increased child delinquency? I have always found the Psychologists' Branch most helpful and encouraging towards children, yet to listen to the honourable member one would think it was a waste of effort. He referred to allowances to teachers in training. Can we expect a higher standard of education if we do not encourage students to enter the Teachers Training College? I remember previous debates when there were complaints about the insufficient number of teacher trainees, and the honourable member's complaint seemed to be entirely out of step with present-day requirements. He said we might cut down the staff considerably, or cut out some of the payments to students. I note that there are 689 in training compared with 644 previously. It is most important to maintain the number of teachers available. The Education Inquiry Committee laid down that classes should not exceed 30 students a teacher. In some schools in my electorate classes are more than double that number and I can only hope that the Government will encourage the recruitment of teachers in every way, particularly in respect of allowances. The honourable member criticised the travelling expenses and excess board allowances in respect of boys and girls technical schools, and travelling expenses for country technical schools. These expenses fall heavily on students and young teachers, and I would

hope that board allowances may be increased. The technical education of apprentices is most vital to the continued progress of industry, with its economic impact on the wellbeing of the State, and for the honourable member to suggest cutting down the education vote was amazing. He event suggested that the number of tutors at the Training College might be reduced. I note that the present staff of tutors and lecturers is 28. They have to train 689 students, so I would say they have a full-time job. I can only regret that the Government has not seen fit to increase this vote, especially with a view to encouraging more entrants to the Teachers College.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The amount of £200,000 is provided for the conveyance of pupils to school by bus. I take it that that amount is placed on the Estimates for the purpose of providing the transport of students to area and consolidated schools in the country and also to provide transport for other children who must be conveyed to schools at the expense of the department. It has recently been brought to my notice that in my electorate the school bus service which took students from Terowie to Peterborough high school and also picked up students along the route for the Peterborough primary school has been discontinued and that negotiations are now in progress for its restoration. I understand further that the parents of the children who must use the service are to be asked to make a substantial contribution towards its cost. About 12 children were travelling by this bus when the service was discontinued. Can the Minister say whether steps are being taken to make parents generally contribute towards the cost of conveying their children to school on these buses? If so, I protest against that policy, for these services are generally introduced firstly to enable children to receive a better education at the consolidated school than they would in a smaller school and, secondly, to save the cost of sending teachers to smaller schools throughout the area serviced by the bus. Our sparsely populated area should not be penalized by the imposition on parents of substantial charges for the use of these services, nor do I agree with the adoption of the principle generally for it destroys the principle of free education by making some cost attach to the securing of education. I trust this matter will be treated as generously in the future as it has been in the past and that parents will not be asked to make up the cost of the bus services except in such cases where it is made necessary by the fact that the number of students carried in a bus does not warrant a bus service being provided in accordance with the regulations.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The department has been trying to meet a difficult position and an increase of £17,000 on last year's expenditure is provided to meet the increased costs of transport and to provide for the overhaul of buses. No restriction or constriction is being placed on the bus services provided and wherever it is possible it is provided under the Education Act that a travelling allowance shall be paid. I assure the honourable member that the widest possible privilege will be granted to children outside the areas not now provided for.

Mr. DAVIS—On two or three occasions I have referred to the book allowance for high school students. It is at present about twice what it was some years ago. It costs about £8 to provide the books for a high school student, and in order to get nearer to free education the book allowance should be increased. We are reaching the time when the parent on the basic wage or thereabouts may be unable to send his child to high school because of the high cost of books. In my district some children cannot get to school at Port Pirie because no bus service is available. This is a matter which needs urgent consideration.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Will the Minister explain the item "milk for free scholars"? There is also an item "milk for scholars," for which last year £1,100 was voted but only £5 spent. This year it is proposed to spend £200. Will the Minister make a general statement regarding the supply of free milk to school children? I do not think any school children in my district have received free milk. In any case, it would not be possible because there is not enough milk to meet the ordinary needs of the community. It would be possible to supply the children with tomato or fruit juices, if the department would pay for the distribution. There would be no difficulty in keeping the fruit juices free from infection, whereas with milk there is a great possibility of taint. The Commonwealth Government is prepared to pay for the distribution of milk, but as it is impossible to supply milk in my district perhaps the South Australian Government could point out the possibility of supplying fruit juices.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Treasurer has negotiated with the Commonwealth Government in regard to the supply of milk to school children and he will explain the details of the scheme.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The item "milk for free scholars" relates to the time prior to the Commonwealth milk scheme when various local committees arranged to distribute milk to school children at so much a pint. Some parents could not meet the cost and the Government considered it was justified in seeing that the children of those parents got their milk. Under the Commonwealth free milk scheme milk is provided without payment. The State undertook to share certain small administrative expenses. It was found that the £1,100 provided last year was an over estimate and it would appear that the amount necessary this year will be about £200. At the outset the Commonwealth stated that the scheme would be confined to the metropolitan area because of administrative problems, but more recently it has agreed that where a country local committee is prepared to arrange a supply of milk it will pay for it at the standard rate. Free milk is now supplied in some country districts. The Commonwealth has strenuously refused requests for the use of substitutes, such as cheese or fruit juices.

Mr. TEUSNER—Can the Minister say how many English school teachers have been engaged by the Education Department, whether they are permanent employees and are obliged to enter into a contract to serve for a certain number of years? I heard that last year a considerable number of these teachers had, after serving for a short period, returned to England.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Last year £2,000 was voted for this purpose but only £1,053 was expended, and this year it is expected that £1,000 will meet the position. Possibly not more than two or three teachers will be concerned. I cannot give the other information sought by the honourable member.

Mr. QUIRKE—A line appears for kerosene refrigerators for outback school residences. Can the Minister say what is an outback school residence? I know of plenty of school teachers' residences where a refrigerator would be a boon. Although £400 was voted last year, only £100 is provided this year.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Many school residences have been provided with refrigerators, and this year it is expected there will be only one applicant. A condition of the supply of a refrigerator is that the applicant undertakes to pay the rental during the period of use. The department has supplied refrigerators to most of the teachers requiring them. This is only a nominal charge to cover cost and interest.

Mr. QUIRKE—It is time all country schools situated in a water-reticulated area were equipped with septic tanks. Some of the sanitary conditions in country schools in such areas are most primitive, and in the interests of public health septic tanks should be installed. It takes months and sometimes years of continual hard work and pressure on the part of school committees to get such systems put in. One condition of house building in the Clare Corporation area is that the premises must be equipped with a septic tank system, and it should be the department's policy to so equip every country school. Can the Minister give any assurance on this matter?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The question is one for the Loan Estimates, and not for the Revenue Estimates. In view of the limited amount of loan money the department has the greatest difficulty in supplying sufficient school residences. It is a question of first things first.

Mr. STEPHENS—The sum of £50 has been provided for the item "Payment of medical expenses—Accidents at schools" on which only £6 was spent last year. Fifty pounds is a small amount to allow for medical expenses in accident cases and should be increased. It is time the service was extended to include dental expenses. We should go further in the provision of school services and adopt the system that operates in New Zealand where dental clinics are established at schools. I regret that no provision has been made for dental treatment and trust that the Government will look into the matter and treat children as they are treated in New Zealand.

Line passed.

Libraries Department, £92,403; Museum Department, £30,823; Art Gallery Department, £14,694; Observatory, £408—passed.

Miscellaneous, £672,855.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I commend the Government for increasing the grant to the Workers' Educational Association from £240 to £853. This increase is well merited and I am sure that the money will be wisely spent. The association tries to create an interest in adult education. The work of the association will have to be expanded either by an extension of its own activities or by the creation of another organization to work in conjunction with it so

as to provide adult education all over the State. I understand that the association has established some classes in a few of the principal country towns, but its activities are limited by the finances available. One of the tragedies of today is that although people have more leisure than they used to many of them have not been taught to use it to the best advantage. One way to solve this problem is to furnish greater opportunities for adult education. I hope that larger grants to the Workers' Educational Association will be made in the future.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I am glad that £98 is proposed to cover the cost of posters issued by the Royal Life Saving Society. This society does wonderful work in training young men in the art of saving life and I would be failing in my duty if I did not express my appreciation for the inclusion of this line in the Estimates. It is again proposed to grant £50 to the South Australian Public Schools Committee's Association. This line was first placed on the Estimates last year and as a past member of the executive of the association I assure members that it was deeply appreciated and it greatly helped the school committees and councils in carrying out their functions. They are doing a wonderful work in helping education in this State. They have more than carried out the purposes for which they were established, and have created good relationships between parents, teachers, and scholars. They have also encouraged parents to send their children to secondary schools after graduating from the primary. I am sure the present executive would desire me to express their sincere appreciation for the grant and I hope, when conditions permit, that it will be increased.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The line "Grants to the University of Adelaide from Commonwealth grant towards residential colleges" has been reduced from £4,643 to £3,095. How many residential colleges would participate in this grant, and does the reduction in the vote indicate a decrease in Commonwealth grants?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—This is part of the Commonwealth's assistance to universities. Under an arrangement entered into with the States the Commonwealth agreed to make available a certain sum for the universities provided the States passed it on and did not reduce their own grant to the universities. I cannot say how many colleges participate in it because the universities submit their case to the Commonwealth and we only collect the money and pay it over to the University Council. I rather think that each college gets a *pro rata* share according to the number of students, or even a flat rate, and I think it is given in the form of scholarships at the colleges.

Line passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 10.34 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, November 6, at 2 p.m.