

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, July 22, 1953.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Robert Nicholls) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Premier say whether the Government intends that the House shall sit on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, and if so, how soon?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—A fair amount of business is available, the Loan Estimates being practically ready and some important works necessitating approval, I think that from the week after next it would be advisable to sit on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, say until 9.30 or 10 p.m. I will confer with the Leader of the Opposition to see when it would be convenient for that arrangement to operate.

ABATTOIRS SLAUGHTERING CAPACITY.

Mr. MICHAEL—For a number of years considerable trouble has existed at the abattoirs in dealing with available stock in the flush season. Although the position last year was difficult it was alleviated by the long drawn out season, but this year, in spite of recent ample rains in good rainfall areas, the rainfall in many districts has been light, with the result that it will be necessary for people to be able to market their stock as soon as they are available if present conditions continue. Has the Minister anything to report on negotiations which, I understand, have taken place during the past six months between the Government and various industrial organizations, and can he indicate the prospects this year of taking stock when they become available?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The position at the abattoirs appears to be satisfactory at the moment. As a result of discussions between the board and the employees an agreement has been entered into under which the employees receive three weeks' annual leave under certain conditions and in return the employees have agreed to slaughter all available stock and work overtime at the discretion of the board. Various other matters are associated with the agreement which should be to the advantage of both the employees and the board. The manager of the abattoirs has since informed me that a considerable number of men have been trained for the work on the chain and he expects a full team of men during the coming year to handling all stock offering. It is hoped that with the full chain working it will be

unnecessary to work the overtime on Saturdays and Sundays for which the agreement provides and, so long as both sides stick to the agreement, there is no reason why all stock offering during the coming season should not be handled. Unfortunately the outlook with regard to fat lambs is not nearly so favourable as it was last year. The very late break in the season—well into the month of June—and the continuously wet cloudy weather since will militate against the early supply of lambs, and there may be a mid-season rush. I would be surprised if we handled nearly as many lambs as were handled last year.

SKELETON WEED.

Mr. WHITE—A few years ago water hyacinth was found growing on the River Murray, and by determined action the river was cleared of that dangerous weed. In 1951 Mr. Hector Orchard, the present Weeds Research Officer in the Department of Agriculture, in a report on skeleton weed, indicated that it was growing in a few areas in the Murray mallee and that it constituted a menace to all other wheatgrowing areas. Since then the weed has been reported at Caloote on the western side of the River Murray and this year at Rockleigh, 10 miles west of Caloote. The occurrence of these two patches of skeleton weed indicates that it is gradually spreading. Can the Minister indicate what action is being taken to eradicate this weed?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The honourable member will agree that a narrow channel such as the River Murray would be much easier to deal with than the length and breadth of South Australia, which would have to be dealt with in eradicating skeleton weed. Water hyacinth, since it could not spread beyond the banks of the Murray, was comparatively easy to deal with. The department took considerable steps in the early stages of the infestation in the Murray mallee to deal with skeleton weed and thought it had made some progress, but the corresponding Victorian department completely abandoned any attempt to deal with the weed in that State; therefore as quickly as it was destroyed in South Australia reinfestations came from over the border. It was therefore decided to have limited activity in dealing with skeleton weed. There is a wide divergence of opinion on the dangers of this weed. Many people in certain areas of New South Wales that have been infested for many years state it has been rather an advantage than otherwise in that country, as they have been able to use the lands

that were infested for the purposes of fattening stock for export and local consumption. However, I will get for the honourable member a full report from the Director of Agriculture on the department's activities and advise him what is now being done, but I assure him that the responsibility for the destruction of noxious weeds lies with local government bodies, and I suggest that he ask those in his district to do their job and destroy this weed. I shall be happy to confer with him with a view to bringing about that state of affairs.

URANIUM PLANT AT WEST THEBARTON.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked yesterday about the Mines Department's plant at West Thebarton?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I took up this matter with the Director of Mines and he has furnished the following report:—

It is inevitable that a certain amount of noise will be created by the operation of the plant, but action has been taken to reduce nuisance to a minimum. The main cause of complaint appears to be noise from the compressor. This has now been considerably reduced by "lagging" the compressed air receiver. The complaints regarding fumes are over-exaggerated. There is a small amount of sulphur fumes discharged but the quantity is very small. It is intended, nevertheless, to scrub the existing gases and discharge the sulphur in a manner to cause no nuisance whatsoever.

OVERSEAS CEREAL AND BUTTER SUPPLIES.

Mr. DUNNAGE—The *Financial Digest* reports that the United States of America has considerable quantities of wheat, maize and butter in storage—550 million bushels of wheat, 500 million bushels of maize, and 170 million pounds of butter. It is costing a considerable amount to store these products and I wondered whether the Premier, in his visit to the United States, had received any information from the U.S.A. Government or those associated with the industries concerned about what they intended to do with these huge quantities of cereals and butter. It will be of considerable interest to this country if they put those commodities on the world market.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I had some slight opportunity of studying this matter both in the United States and Canada. In both the United States and Canada enormous surpluses are being held. They are unsaleable at the moment on the world's markets, mainly

because of currency difficulties, but they constitute a serious threat to the price structure of commodities that we are producing in Australia. The United States has already taken some steps to protect its own markets from imports and quotas for dairy produce have been raised and restrictions placed even on the dairy produce from countries like Holland and Canada. There is an enormous surplus of dried milk, tinned pork, and wheat in Canada for which no outlet can be found. In some instances last season's wheat in Canada is still in the paddocks in heaps. It has deteriorated on the outside, but I am assured that a substantial portion of the grain is still usable. We have the fear that in the future this commodity will be placed on the world markets, either by gifts to countries who are at present short of food supplies—

Mr. Stott—And have not currency to buy it.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Or conversely by disposing of it at reduced rates to enable the marketing schemes in operation in that country to be maintained. Australia must give serious consideration to this problem. Generally speaking, the world's markets have rapidly changed from a seller's market to a buyer's, and we shall have to give much more attention to advertising our commodities abroad, and to seeing they are branded satisfactorily and are of acceptable quality. Many of our marketing problems today arise from the fact that bulk handling has destroyed our producer-consumer contact and that we have lost our marketing system in the selling of our commodities overseas. It is urgent that we take steps to re-establish this if we are to satisfactorily dispose of our commodities, particularly in the United Kingdom.

METROPOLITAN WATER RESTRICTIONS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—There were poor water pressures and restrictions in my electorate last summer and if similar conditions obtain during the coming summer school committees and councils will have to consider approaching the Department of Education to have storage tanks erected, and manufacturers will have to make provision for water storage to enable them to keep their plants running during the summer months. Can the Minister of Works say if water restrictions will be imposed this year the same as last year due to the unsatisfactory reticulation, or if an improvement in water pressures can be expected?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—There were no restrictions whatever on the use of water last year, though there was a regulation designed

to help the housewife and the man coming home from work to get adequate pressures. In order to achieve that, notwithstanding the fact that the reservoirs were full it was necessary to boost the supply occasionally by the use of bore water. Towards improving the position this year a new trunk main is being laid, and I hope that as a result the pressures this year will be sufficient for all reasonable purposes. Again I point out that we, in common with every other country, are growing more rapidly than our resources will permit us to take care of the increase. We cannot do two things at once—give more water to some people and at the same time take it to people who have none at all. The Government has concentrated on the No. 1 priority, to take water to people who have not got it, and then can concentrate on improving pressures for those who at present have more or less inadequate pressures at certain periods. The whole programme will be directed to that end. All the works the department is carrying out have been the result of deliberations by the Public Works Committee, which is a non-Party committee, and it is not possible for the Government to do further work without the authorization of Parliament after the committee's reports have been received. I hope that as a result of the expenditure this year we will have better pressures. Not only are we increasing the supply per capita, but each year we are supplying about 9,000 new homes, which is an enormous drain on the existing reticulation system.

ROAD METAL FOR VICTOR HARBOUR.

Mr. JENKINS—Can the Minister of Local Government inform me if it is the intention of the Highways Department to crush stone for road metal at Welch's quarry near Victor Harbour? The corporation of Victor Harbour, builders and Government bodies are unable to purchase $\frac{3}{4}$ in. or $\frac{3}{8}$ in. metal in the locality, and stocks of $\frac{3}{4}$ in. are also very low. At present supplies are being hauled from Rapid Bay at a cost of £2 8s. a yard, and from Adelaide at £2 10s. a yard. The latest cost of this type of metal at Welch's was under £1 and carting 5s. a yard—half the present cost. I understand the highways plant is still there and believe there is sufficient demand to warrant a resumption of crushing at a payable rate. I believe there is sufficient demand to warrant a further crushing plant. Can the Minister say whether it is the Highways Department's intention to crush stone for road metal at Welch's quarry?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The honourable member indicated that he intended to ask this question and I was thus able to obtain a report from the Deputy Highways Commissioner, which is as follows:—

Any plant which still remains in Welch's quarry near Victor Harbour would be the property of the private contractors and not of the Highways Department. In May, 1952, a loan of £1,040 was made to the Corporation of Victor Harbour to enable them to purchase 750 cubic yards of crushed screenings for the use on local road requirements as it was understood that the contractors intended to remove their plant. It is not known whether the contractor's complete crushing plant is still at the quarry. All departmental requirements for this area for the immediate future have been obtained, and it is suggested that if the requirements of local purchasers are sufficient they should take the matter of re-opening the quarry up with Quarry Industries.

It is up to the people interested to get in touch with the owners of the operating plant.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS.

Mr. JENNINGS—The question I desire to ask the Minister of Local Government concerns a controversy he recently initiated. Whether or not we agree with his statement, I think it is admitted that councils today are experiencing great difficulties. Will the Minister agree that those difficulties are caused, or at least aggravated, by the present council boundaries which, as now drawn up, appear to be the result of the dancing fancy of a lunatic? If the Minister agrees, will he sponsor a plan to re-arrange all council boundaries on a scientific and realistic basis?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—This is a very contentious matter and one of high policy. Council boundaries have been very jealously guarded by the people concerned. If the honourable member will give notice of the question it will be considered as a matter of policy. I did not introduce the controversy. I was asked to speak on one specific subject at the West Torrens Council's centenary celebrations—the significance of local government in our democracy—and I spoke accordingly, and every word I said was extolled by the people who heard them, not by the people who read or purported to have read a very short extract of those remarks.

Mr. STOTT—If a candidate for a seat on a council put forward a policy of increased rates and were defeated—as happened to Mr. Sutton, a former mayor of Mitcham and president of the Local Government Association—what remedy would the council have?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The same remedy as was available if and when the honourable member advocated increased taxation to construct the roads and bridges he wants in his district. If he had been defeated someone would have taken his place, perhaps to better advantage.

HOUSING: CLARE AND RIVERTON.

Mr. QUIRKE—The Clare Corporation has assessed the requirements of rental homes for immediate needs at about 20. The policy of the Housing Trust is not to build rental homes in towns like Clare, but approximately six to 10 homes in addition to the 20 for rental could be purchased in Clare, and the position is the same at Riverton. Can the Premier say what the trust's policy is in both towns, particularly in relation to rental homes at Clare?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—So that I can give precise information, I will obtain a report from the chairman of the trust and let the honourable member have it as early as possible.

SLEEPERS FOR WEST COAST RAILWAYS.

Mr. PEARSON—Is the Minister of Railways aware of the extremely acute shortage of railway sleepers on the Eyre Peninsula division of the railways? I am informed that if a derailment occurred which involved the replacement of a quarter or a third of a mile of the railway there would not be sufficient sleepers in the area to do the repair work. Will the Minister examine the position with his officers and also see whether a direct shipment of sleepers from Western Australia to Port Lincoln can be arranged to remedy this shortage? Will he also confer with the timber interests in that area to see whether they would combine with him in bringing in a shipment of jarrah, which is also urgently needed in that area?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The shortage is not due to want of effort by the Railways Department and the Government. The Treasurer has taken a particularly keen interest in this matter. We are short of sleepers, particularly from Western Australia. The truth is that jarrah has a better market abroad than in Australia. We have had to import steel sleepers from England. We tried to get jarrah sleepers from Timor, and I think we have even gone as far as Trinidad for them. If the honourable member can suggest where we have failed in our efforts to import supplies I will co-operate with him to see if we can get the direct shipment he refers to. Incidentally, I saw in this morning's paper a statement

that Western Australian housing has been retarded because of the want of timbers in that State.

SUPERPHOSPHATE SUPPLIES.

Mr. GOLDNEY—For some reason superphosphate manufactured during the last season had a tendency to go hard and rocky in the bags; and the longer it was kept the more evident this became. This applied particularly where the people took early delivery. I believe that toward the end of the current season some agreement was reached with the manufacturers that if the producers who had received superphosphate in that condition would return it to their works they would recondition it free of cost. This has entailed considerable expense to the producer in that he has had to provide his own transport and, if necessary, fresh bags to rebag the superphosphate. In the coming season farmers who took delivery early last year and therefore suffered most will be wary about entering into any agreement to take their superphosphate early. Has the Minister of Agriculture any assurance from superphosphate manufacturers in South Australia that this trouble is not likely to occur again?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I have discussed this matter with the superphosphate representatives in South Australia and they advise me that for the 1952-53 season owing to the shortage of sulphuric acid it was necessary to add a quantity of pure rock phosphate to produce the required amount of superphosphate and to reduce the water soluble content. The superphosphate appeared to be of excellent quality and general physical condition in the heap. Periodical inspections indicated that. Manufacturers were surprised when later on they received complaints regarding the setting of this superphosphate. They investigated the position and attributed the trouble to some complex chemical reaction. There has now been a return to the former analysis of 45 per cent water soluble phosphate from July 1, 1953, and any trouble experienced last season should automatically disappear. Farmers would be ill-advised to withhold their orders for superphosphate because of the possibility of experiencing some difficulty in getting it. Obviously, neither the superphosphate companies nor the railways can cater for all the requirements in a short period, and under those conditions producers might find themselves devoid of superphosphate. They would be well advised to put in their orders as early as possible, as in the past, so as to get supplies for the forthcoming crop.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT PAYMENTS.

Mr. STOTT—Under the Workmen's Compensation Act certain premiums must be paid by companies, firms or persons in order that claims by injured persons can be met as set out in the Act. Since the introduction of the Commonwealth Government's health benefit scheme, and with social service benefits, insurance companies which have had claims made against them under the Workmen's Compensation Act are deducting the amount received under the health benefit and social service schemes. Does not the Premier believe that if a company, firm or person pays a premium to an insurance company it should be reimbursed in accordance with the premium paid, or will the Government consider bringing down an amendment to the Act in order that a reduced premium may be payable because of the reduced reimbursement made?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The honourable member has raised an important matter. I will obtain a report from the Crown Solicitor in the first place and then advise the honourable member of Government policy on the matter after I have examined all the details. It appears to me that changed circumstances require some action one way or the other—either an adjustment of the premium, or that the full amount be paid. The Government has set up a committee comprising employer and employee representatives, with a Government nominee, to deal with the general implications of workmen's compensation. This would be one of the matters which it could properly consider.

ROAD VERSUS RAIL TRANSPORT.

Mr. HAWKER—When travelling on main roads I continually meet heavy vehicles belonging to various Government or semi-governmental departments, such as Electricity Trust, Mines Department, and on occasions the Highways Department. These roads run more or less parallel to the railway lines. Can the Minister of Railways indicate why it is that the railways are not handling the equipment and material carried on the roads by these Government and semi-governmental lorries?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Generally speaking the Electricity Trust has been dropping off poles, not along the railway line, but at points along the road. Obviously it would be ridiculous to take them to a point on the railway, drop them off, and then have them loaded again and dropped along the roadway.

Mr. Macgillivray—Private enterprise could do it.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Without any restrictions whatsoever private enterprise can run a truck anywhere if carrying its own goods. I think we have fewer restrictions on transport than any other part of the world, but at present the people who use the roads are not contributing enough to maintain them in the good order they want. The Electricity Trust and the Mines Department are not working in opposition to the railways, but in general are operating in areas where the railways do not go. They use the discretion which is allowed to every citizen to avail himself of the best means of transport available.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I understood the Minister of Works to say that road users were not paying enough money into the roads fund to keep the roads in good condition. Is he aware that the Commonwealth Government receives over £70,000,000 by way of taxation from motorists and that, if this money were applied to the purpose for which it is raised instead of being paid into general revenue, sufficient would be available to keep all our roads and bridges in good condition?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The honourable member is begging the question. I said that heavy hauliers did not contribute enough towards the cost of maintaining our roads and that there was no control in South Australia over ancillary or owners' vehicles. Whether that applies to the Electricity Trust or any big merchandise house in South Australia is beside the point. Our only control over ancillary hauliers is when carrying goods to and from other States for hire. By way of illustration I point out that such motor vehicles are charged £1 a load in South Australia, compared with £25 in Victoria and up to £140 in New South Wales. We in this State are now faced with the colossal expenditure necessary to replace roads which were once satisfactory for ordinary requirements. The question of whether or not the Commonwealth Government is prepared to pay more is not within the jurisdiction of this Government.

S.A. REFRACTORIES LIMITED.

Mr. McALEES—Has the Premier obtained a report following on the question I asked on July 21 regarding the industry which is to use Wallaroo grain distillery?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have taken up this question, but it involves the policy of a

company which is not directly under Government control. I regret that I have not yet been able to get the information desired by the honourable member. I will press the matter and get the information as soon as possible.

CONTROL OF POTATO PRICES.

Mr. QUIRKE—On the opening day of the session I suggested that control of potato prices and the activities of the Potato Board be in some manner co-ordinated, and also that a committee be appointed to inquire into the matter. Can the Minister of Agriculture indicate what action, if any, can be taken in this regard.

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I understand that there was a conference some time ago between the Potato Board, the Prices Commissioner, and the Acting Prices Minister, and that further discussions are taking place today on the same level. I believe the Premier, as Minister controlling prices, is today meeting representatives of the Potato Board and producers to discuss the matter.

SUBSIDIES FOR SCHOOL COMMITTEES.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Has the Minister representing the Minister of Education a reply to the question I asked on June 25 concerning school subsidies?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I have a written reply which I will let the honourable member have by way of letter. Speaking from memory, the amount raised by the school committees was about £84,000 and the amount of contributions from the Education Department on a similar basis was about £51,000.

HOUSING TRUST HOMES—RENT REBATES.

Mr. RICHES—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked yesterday regarding the eligibility of the tenants of Housing Trust homes for rent subsidies?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Chairman of the Housing Trust reports:—

The provisions of the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement relating to rental rebates to tenants will apply to houses to be built by the South Australian Housing Trust with moneys advanced under the agreement. These provisions will not apply to houses already built by the trust or to any other houses of the Trust which are constructed by means of funds obtained outside the agreement.

It is the practice of the trust, when allotting houses to tenants with low incomes, to allot them houses in the older groups of the trust as vacancies occur. The cost of these houses is

very much less than the cost of houses now being built and the rents of the earlier houses are substantially less than those of the later. This practice will be continued and will largely obviate the necessity for any rental rebates.

Mr. RICHES—A large Housing Trust programme is being undertaken in my district. I understand from the Premier that housing construction from finance available to the trust will not be subject to the rent subsidy, but that houses constructed from finances made available under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement will be. Will the Premier obtain a report from the trust whether any of the homes to be built at Port Augusta will be built under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, and just what action will be taken to rectify what appears to be an anomaly—the two different systems of determining rents?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—There are two sides to the question. With houses built under the Commonwealth housing agreement there is a rent rebate in cases of certain hardship. Mostly there is a higher rent of about 3s. a week, so it is not all profit.

Mr. RICHES—How is that brought about?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Under a formula accepted by the honourable member some time ago. The formula was agreed to with the Commonwealth. The rent of houses built under the Commonwealth scheme is about 3s. a week more than is charged generally under the Housing Trust scheme, and, as I have said, there is a rent rebate in cases of certain hardship. The trust will be financing practically its entire activities this year with money from the Commonwealth, so that future building will be almost entirely under the Commonwealth scheme. The houses built to date have been under the ordinary activities of the trust. I will be pleased to give the honourable member precise information as to the houses in Port Augusta that may be built under the Commonwealth scheme.

LICENCES TO ESTABLISH CREMATORIALS.

Mr. LAWN—On June 26 the Minister of Works, in reply to my question, said that the Government had before it applications from the Enfield and Centennial Park cemetery trusts for licences to establish crematoriums. Can the Minister say whether those matters have been finalized.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—No, the applications are still before Cabinet.

ROYAL TOUR: COUNTRY TOWNS.

Mr. DAVIS—It was reported in a broadcast that the Premier's secretary was to visit Whyalla, Port Augusta, and Port Pirie to arrange for the visit by Her Majesty the Queen. In view of the Premier's statement yesterday in reply to a question, can he say whether those plans have been changed and which towns will be included in the programme?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If such a report was broadcast it was incorrect. The statement may have been made by me in error. Her Majesty will visit Port Lincoln, Whyalla, Renmark, and Mount Gambier.

Mr. RICHES—Could the Premier arrange for Mr. Pearce or another member of the Royal Tour committee to visit centres which will not be visited by Her Majesty the Queen but from which people—particularly school children—may go to nearby centres which Her Majesty will visit?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The fullest publicity will be given of the arrangements made in respect of any place to be visited by Her Majesty. People in nearby centres will be fully aware of the route of the Royal progress, the time it will start, and the circumstances of the visit, and will then have the opportunity of arranging transport to enable them to see the Queen. It is impracticable for the Director of the Royal Tour to visit every country town for the purpose of making such arrangements, for between now and the time of the Royal Tour he will have his hands more than full arranging details of the tour itself. I do not think it would be reasonable to expect him to visit every town to arrange for the transport of people to centres which Her Majesty will visit. For instance, I consider the Mayor of Port Augusta is quite competent to arrange such details expeditiously and efficiently.

OIL-BURNING LOCOMOTIVES.

Mr. STEPHENS—On November 4 last year, in reply to my question about the use of oil by locomotives on the Port Adelaide line, the Minister of Railways said:—

I assure the honourable member that neither the department nor the Government likes using oil, because it is much more expensive than coal but because we could not in the past get good steam coal, we have been forced to use oil to maintain services to Port Adelaide and elsewhere irrespective of minor disabilities—and compared with the good it did this was minor. It was the urgent desire of the Government and the department to cut out the

use of oil and use coal whenever it was obtainable and fit to be used. I will ask what further, if anything, can be done on the technical side to reduce inconvenience where oil has to be used.

Since then I have received several complaints on this matter, and the following letter appeared in the *News* of June 17:—

When will the Minister for Railways (Mr. McIntosh) honour the promise he made in the House of Assembly last October that the Railways Department would alleviate the continual damage to houses along the route to Port Adelaide by converting oil-burning locomotives back to coal-burners? So far, not one oil-burner has been taken off this journey.

The existing wall cracks are getting worse, and new ones are appearing. It is criminal to plaster freshly painted homes with a dirty, greasy, slimy substance emitted from the oil. Can the Minister say whether anything further has been done in this matter or does his department intend to continue to use oil on this line even though it has been suggested that plenty of coal is available?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—This is the first time I have heard that plenty of steam coal is available. If the Railways Commissioner had plenty he would not need oil, which is far more expensive. The department has concentrated its efforts on obtaining the most economic use of fuel on the railways, and the Commissioner has made a long report on the respective merits of the two fuels. Since the honourable member raised this matter last year the question was referred to the department and I was assured that everything possible was being done. However, the question having been raised again I will take it up with the Railways Commissioner and bring down a full report for the honourable member. Obviously, I am not in the position to say how many steam locomotives and how many oil burners are in use, but it is not the object of the railways to use imported oil if we can get good Australian coal.

ROADS AND DRAINAGE FOR EMERGENCY HOUSING SCHEME.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Treasurer a report on matters I raised on June 25 concerning the construction of roadways and drainage in Housing Trust areas?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have received the following report from the chairman of the trust:—

The sum of £20,000 in question is intended to provide roads in areas where temporary houses have been built under the Government emergency housing scheme. So far as possible,

roads which will be constructed by means of this money will be of permanent benefit. In instances, the sewers have been connected to the emergency houses and in such cases it is obvious that any roads can be constructed on a basis of permanency. In many cases, however, the houses are not connected to the sewers, but septic tanks have been installed. It follows that roads which are built to serve these houses must, in due course, as the sewerage system is installed, suffer considerable damage when the necessary sewer trenches are dug. Roads constructed in these localities (and they are very necessary) will, of necessity, be largely temporary in character.

SHORTAGE OF POWDERED MILK.

Mr. RICHES—I have received reports of shortages of powdered processed milk in some of our northern towns, particularly Port Augusta. Storekeepers have advised me they have been told by salesmen that Nestle's have no such milk in their warehouses. Does the Premier know of the shortage and, if so, can he ascertain whether available supplies are being distributed to the best advantage?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government, of course, has no control over the distribution of this product, but I will see if it is necessary to take action to induce importers to bring additional quantities to this State if production here is not adequate and let the honourable member know the position.

GALVANIZED IRON SUPPLIES.

Mr. JENNINGS—Is South Australia receiving a smaller percentage of the national production of galvanized iron than when the Federal Department of Supply exercised control over its distribution? Has much of the iron brought to South Australia had added to its price the cost of road or rail transport from Port Kembla to Sydney before being shipped here? If so, will the Premier see that the iron will be shipped direct from Port Kembla to this State?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—This matter came under my notice about eight weeks ago, prior to my going abroad, and I discussed the question of supply with the manufacturers in New South Wales. They said they had adequate, even excess supplies, and would be pleased to forward the iron to South Australia. I do not think that transport is the problem at the moment. For a period road transport was used, which was extremely expensive and made the price almost prohibitive, but I fancy that the present difficulty is that large quantities were imported from abroad, some of which are now held by merchants. The imported iron is much more costly than the

Australian and possibly fresh orders have not been placed by those who have overseas stocks pending their clearance. I will get more detailed information for the honourable member, possibly by next week.

HOUSING TRUST RENTS.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Some of my constituents at Gawler who occupy Housing Trust homes are concerned at the possibility of further increases in rent because of an increase of about 20 per cent in the council assessment. Is it likely that the rents will be increased as a result of the new assessment?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have a report from the Housing Trust about the new charges that have been imposed on the trust by councils. Of course, the trust has no source of revenue to meet them except the rents they obtain from tenants. I think—this is only my opinion, and the policy of the trust is determined by the trust itself—that we have probably reached the peak in the cost of building houses. I hope that we have also reached the peak in the cost of many other services. I will make inquiries about the position at Gawler so that I can give the honourable member more precise information, but I have a memorandum here, which the honourable member can see, showing the effect of the higher rating upon the charges the trust is compelled to pass on to its tenants. He will see that in some instances councils' charges have gone up greatly, by increases both in the assessment and in the rate. Of course, they have a cumulative effect and mean that the trust is obliged to pass on the full costs to its tenants.

Mr. McALEES—It has been stated that the rentals of older Housing Trust homes are to be raised so as to enable the rents of recently erected homes to be kept at a reasonable level. Only two such homes are being built at Wallaroo each year, yet 40 families, many of whom have been in Housing Trust homes there for a number of years, have had their rents increased by 7s. Can the Premier explain this increase in view of the restricted building programme at Wallaroo?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The honourable member's supposition that the extremely low rentals of houses which have been built for some time have been raised to provide for reasonable rents for those recently constructed at much higher cost is correct. Although only a limited number of houses are being built at Wallaroo, last year the Housing Trust erected about 4,000 throughout the State—a record number. The rents are not dealt with on a

town basis but rather on a general basis, and I am assured by the Housing Trust that it will enjoy no additional financial return as a result of the recent increases.

PORT ADELAIDE HARBOUR DEVELOPMENT SCHEME.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—In reply to the question I asked yesterday regarding the purchase of land for the Port Adelaide development scheme, the Minister of Marine said that a maximum of £200 a block had been set. I should like to know who set that maximum and on what basis it was fixed?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I do not know that the honourable member is correct in his interpretation of my remarks. I repeat that I believe that not more than £4 a foot has been paid. Whether that is the limit would depend on the individual block. The Harbors Board, after getting the advice of the person entrusted to buy the land, takes his report into consideration and it does not come before the Government or myself in any way. It is rather remarkable that the indications are we are paying too little for the land; usually the argument is that the Government pays too much for everything.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Some time ago I placed before the Minister a statement which showed that land had been sold for £5 a foot, which would make the value of the block £250, but the Minister said he was not prepared to accept my statement. What steps must I take to convince him of the truth of my statement? Will it be necessary to bring along the person concerned or must I have an affidavit signed in regard to the matter?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I think there may be some room for an honest misunderstanding. I said the board had no knowledge of that figure because the board had not paid it. The question then arose as to whether someone else had paid in excess of it. It is not the prerogative of the Minister to fix the price of a block of land. In this regard a search has been made and it has been shown that certain blocks were purchased in excess of £5 a foot. Some blocks were sold for £7 10s., and some for £2 a foot. If the lady in question feels aggrieved she can take some action. She has had the block in question for 32 years and has made no use of it. She has been offered 33 per cent in advance of the amount paid. The court is open to everybody in the community. It is not for Parliament to

assess the value of land by having a talk across the chamber. It is for the court to fix the value.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I believe that some of the land for the Port Adelaide harbour development scheme has been acquired at less than its true value. The Minister of Marine has informed me in the course of correspondence and from the floor of the House that neither he nor the Harbors Board has had direct control over what has taken place in this regard. Apparently the power of acquisition and of fixing the price for the land has been delegated to a city firm of land and estate agents and the method of payment has been on a fixed or cost plus basis. The city company has delegated some of its powers to a land and estate company at Renmark which must be paid for its work. The city company could have carried out the work of writing to my constituent, which it delegated to the Renmark firm. Can the Minister say whether this land has been acquired on behalf of the Housing Trust, as is claimed by the Renmark agent, or on behalf of the Port Adelaide scheme, as is claimed by the major company and the Minister?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I do not intend to pursue this matter to the extent to which it has been pushed by the honourable member. I did not say that the Harbors Board did not know what was going on or that it had delegated its authority. It has appointed an agent to negotiate, but that negotiator must report to the board whether he has been successful in arriving at a voluntary arrangement. Where he has not been successful, so far as I know up to now no attempt has been made to compulsorily acquire the land. This matter does not come before the Minister, for Parliament has passed the legislation, and the honourable member by his silence, if not by his vote, supported it. The matter has not come before me in any respect except that I have tried to get a complete reply for the honourable member.

Mr. Macgillivray—On what basis is the estate agent paid by the Government?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The higher the price the higher the commission received; therefore he would be better paid if he bought the land at a higher price.

Mr. Macgillivray—Has the land been acquired on behalf of the Housing Trust?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I do not know the particulars of the case in question but if the honourable member will give me the letter to which he refers I will inquire.

WIDENING OF MOUNT BARKER ROAD.

Mr. SHANNON—I understand that Mr. Atkinson's butcher shop at Crafers on the Mount Barker Road is to be demolished to widen this highway. I am credibly informed that the Atkinson family has made the Highways Department buy the whole of its property, which includes land behind the building which falls away very sharply, and offers no opportunity for the erection of any suitable building to enable the family to continue its business. The property includes the area known as the Crafers Oval. As reasonably level areas for sporting grounds are not freely available at Crafers, will the Minister consider setting aside this particular area for public use for sport? This is a proposition which the local people are keen about, and they do not want to see the land cut up for building sites.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The subject matter of the question has not reached me and I do not know the circumstances of the negotiations. The honourable member's representations will certainly be considered. I will get the most up-to-date information available and bring it down next week.

APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL MINISTERS.

Mr. STOTT—The Governor's Speech mentioned that the Government intended to appoint additional Ministers. Has the Government or the Premier given any consideration to who those persons will be, and will the new appointments require a re-shuffling of the present Cabinet?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I think the honourable member's question involves a certain amount of policy. The Government has no power to appoint additional Ministers until the Constitution has been altered. That, of course, is a very important alteration, and must be considered by Parliament before any consideration can be given to it by the Government. The Government intends to introduce legislation, and if Parliament approves of it, the Government will then consider the next steps to give effect to it.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.

Mr. DUNSTAN—There have been recent statements in the press by officials of the Australian Broadcasting Commission that the future of the South Australian Symphony Orchestra is in danger and that shortly it will have to be reduced in number. Can the

Premier give any undertaking that this important cultural instrumentality will be maintained?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The orchestra was established as a result of negotiations with the Australian Broadcasting Commission. A committee undertook to raise certain sums, and there were contributions by the Government and the Adelaide City Council. I understand that the committee, which raised fairly large sums, now finds difficulty in getting sufficient funds and some adjustment is necessary if the orchestra is to be continued. As the matter involves three other authorities I would not be prepared to say that under every circumstance the orchestra will be maintained, for if I did I would probably find that before long the Government was standing the whole cost and it would become a very expensive item on the Budget. I can assure the honourable member that the Government will take all reasonable steps in the matter and be responsible for a reasonable proportion of the expenditure to assist the orchestra to be maintained. The Government believes it has done very fine work, particularly as it has been able to give performances at country towns as well as in the metropolitan area. The Government will probably be prepared to give it very liberal assistance without going to the extent of assuming the whole cost.

FORESHORE PROTECTION AT PORT PIRIE.

Mr. DAVIS—The Minister of Local Government informed the House on the opening day that a committee had been set up to allocate the £200,000 granted by the Government to repair damage done to foreshores by a storm. Country councils have no representation on that committee, and have no knowledge of what is taking place. The committee appears to consist of men "from the valley of silent men," who pass on no information to the municipalities. The Port Pirie corporation is becoming worried about the position of its town, as it expects that early next month there will be high tides. In view of the state of the town embankment, can the Minister say whether the man who has been appointed to make inspections will visit Port Pirie in the near future?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The committee was set up, I am sure, with the full support of Parliament, to go into the matter impartially. There were nominees on the committee for three councils, and Port Adelaide, which was affected to some degree, agreed to those three—the town

clerks of Glenelg, Brighton and Henley Beach—plus the Under Treasurer, Mr. Drew, Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Dridan, manager of the Harbors Board, Mr. Meyer, and Mr. Richmond (Highways Commissioner). If they are silent men it is because a silent tongue betrays a wise head. Nothing regarding Port Pirie has yet come before me and it would not, because it will go before the special committee, which is entrusted with the allocation, whether the request comes from the metropolitan area or the country. The committee advises the amount each council should receive for the restoration of public utilities which councils had previously provided. This is a committee of the wisest men, for the purpose, that Government knows in South Australia.

Mr. DAVIS—From the Minister's reply it would appear that the claims of Port Pirie will not be considered. Will he place before Cabinet the serious condition of the embankment around the town, and will he urge the Government to make it safe and accept responsibility for life and property?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I do not know what the honourable member means by responsibility for life and property. I ask the honourable member, who is mayor of the town, to submit in writing any claims he has to make. I am sure they will receive the consideration of the committee if it comes within the committee's purview, and, if not, Cabinet will consider them. Up to the present the member has only asked a question in an extempore manner. I suggest that a case be submitted for consideration by Cabinet.

SOUTH EASTERN ROADS.

Mr. CORCORAN—My question relates to main roads in my district, particularly those from Naracoorte to Kingston, from Robe connecting up with the Princes Highway at Clay Wells, from there, to Beachport, and from Beachport connecting up with the Princes Highway. The Minister has a knowledge of those roads, which will indicate to him how important they are. What is the intention of the Highways Department during the current year in relation to their maintenance? I do not speak in disparaging terms of the work done in recent years on them, but with all due respect the present method of maintaining them provides only temporary relief, and it is more or less a waste of public money, because the material goes in and it is not long before it comes out in the form of mud in the winter and dust in the summer. It is not an economic way of spending public money. As soon as

there is some bituminizing of the roads the better it will be for all concerned. I do not suggest that all the roads be taken in hand at once, but would like an assurance from the Minister that something will be done in the future, because it will provide encouragement to residents in the area. Perhaps the work can be done over a period of five years, with a certain portion being done each year. I would like to see something done towards bituminizing the roads running through Lucindale and Beachport in order to remove the dust nuisance during the summer months to people living along them. I hope the matter will be dealt with seriously and that the reaction to my question will be favourable.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I could not agree more with the honourable member's statement that much of the expenditure we have been forced to incur has been largely a waste of money. It has happened because we have not had increased revenue for the State or local government to meet the needs. Every time I say motor registrations and taxes should be increased it meets with opposition. All the money received now from motor registration, etc., goes into a fund, and under our present law most of it is under the control of the Highways Commissioner. I am therefore not in close touch with the programme. The Premier has already indicated that it is the purpose of the Government to give greater priority to roads and to put them under the control of a Minister. In the meantime I will ascertain what the present programme will permit. Obviously if we take money from one road and spend it on another we will create a vacuum and I can imagine a complaint coming from a member on one side or the other. The whole trouble is that there is not enough money to go around and it is up to us to find a remedy. I suggest that we all strive towards that end.

POTATO SUPPLIES FOR WOODSIDE CAMP.

Mr. SHANNON—Earlier in the year the commandant of the Woodside migrant camp made provision for a supply of potatoes for the camp, and he arranged for Mr. J. Paley to put into cold store about 15 tons. Today the commandant cannot withdraw those potatoes without the permission of the Potato Board, which has been denied up-to-date. Whether it will be denied in future I am not prepared to say. In the camp at present there are a number of migrants, Dutchmen and other Europeans, who are accustomed to

eating potatoes as one of their major articles of diet. It will cause considerable inconvenience to the commandant if the potatoes in cold store are denied to him, because he will not be able to provide them for the Europeans I have mentioned. I understand that Mr. McCullagh, the Secretary of the Potato Board, has told him that the Woodside camp is to be treated the same as the rest of the civilian population and to receive a certain proportion of the potatoes available from time to time as the case warrants. This question is vital to these people who are used to potatoes as a major part of their diet and who have been brought to Australia possibly without inquiries as to their eating habits. If we are to overcome certain disabilities which apply to those in control of such camps these people must be provided with foodstuffs to which they are accustomed. Can the Premier say whether the commandant of the camp may provide supplies of foodstuffs for these people in the manner indicated and be assured that supplies will be available later, or can some organization deny him the right to use those supplies?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Potato Marketing Act provides that the board shall control the marketing of potatoes in this State. The board which is composed almost without exception of grower representation, has decided that potatoes shall be fairly distributed between all members of the community. I presume that the difficulty arises from the fact that the potatoes have been sold through avenues beyond the control of the board.

Mr. Shannon—These supplies were bought through the usual avenues.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will inquire what the difficulty is and what steps are necessary to overcome it.

POTATO MARKETING ACT.

Mr. TAPPING—The Potato Marketing Act provides that a person authorized by the board may enter any premises where potatoes are stored. Recently a Semaphore storekeeper was fined £25 for refusing entry to a Potato Board officer who had no warrant. As entry without warrant is unique under our State laws, can the Minister of Agriculture say whether the Government will consider amending the Potato Act?

The Hon. Sir. GEORGE JENKINS—The question of amending the Act is one for Cabinet, which will no doubt consider it in due course. If the honourable member will give me particulars of the case mentioned I will have the position investigated.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption of Address in Reply.

(Continued from July 21. Page 92.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Acting Leader of the Opposition)—I join with the mover and seconder of the motion in expressing satisfaction at the success of the Coronation celebrations and in expressing loyalty to the Throne. I endorse their remarks of welcome to His Excellency Sir Robert George and to Lady George. We hope they will have a happy term of office in this State. I am not casting any reflections on the Chairman of Committees, but when the Supplementary Estimates were before the House on the opening day I said:—

I ask the Government to offer fuller explanations of the items on the introduction of future Supplementary Estimates. The long debate on this occasion was brought about by the paucity of information given to members.

The Chairman of Committees prevented me from pursuing that topic at that stage, but had the information eventually given by the Government been furnished earlier, the debate would not have been so lengthy. That debate indicated the real need for two sessions of Parliament each year, something that the Opposition has been urging for many years. I was invited to attend yesterday the Commonwealth Club luncheon at which the Premier gave an address following his return from abroad. When Parliament assembled I extended the Premier the courtesy of making a broad statement about his visit overseas, but I found that *The News* in its report of his speech to the Commonwealth Club contained more information about it than that given by the Premier in this House. There was no necessity for arranging for the Premier to attend that luncheon and make that address when Parliament was to meet at two o'clock on the same day. Information on such matters should be given to Parliament before being given to any outside organization. This is not the first occasion that this matter has been raised by the Opposition, and it will not be the last if the practice continues. Parliament is entitled to get information firsthand, not after it has been disclosed to other people.

I congratulate the mover and seconder of the motion on their speeches. As a result of his long experience in public affairs the member for Torrens has a most pleasing delivery, and his contributions to future debates will be interesting, even if members on this side do not always agree with him. I do not agree

with what he said about the Government's achievements, because its weight of numbers and the force of its leader can sidestep the main issue without discussion. However, he made almost a protest against the happenings on the opening day when he said that "parish pump" politics were evident during the debate on the Supplementary Estimates. I assure him that when the Opposition is not satisfied that it has received necessary information it will endeavour to get it irrespective of the time or the duration of the sitting. I do not know how the honourable member can happily support a Government that often appoints committees to inquire into various problems. I assume, when he so eloquently commended the Parliamentary system, that he desires to have it carried to its logical conclusion by having Ministers responsible to Parliament and not relying on a number of committees as at present. However, the member for Torrens dealt most effectively with legal matters and the knowledge he has acquired was revealed by his suggesting certain reforms. In this Parliament the Opposition will have a qualified solicitor in the member for Norwood to assist us in our deliberations. The Government, of course, has three, but I believe we shall be able to match colour with colour.

I commend the member for Murray, Mr. White, on his able address in seconding the motion. His predecessor, Mr. McKenzie, was also a Murray mallee farmer, and Mr. White showed he has a practical knowledge of farming. I agree with him on the importance of primary production and soil conservation. I regret that Standing Orders would not permit him to give a practical illustration of tree planting, for I am sure he knows much about it. He spoke at some length on electricity supplies to country areas. That is an important subject, but he also said that lip service has often been given to the question of decentralization. I remind him that an L.C.L. Government has had the reins of power since 1933. It is not the Opposition that has prevented decentralization for his predecessor was one of its greatest advocates. He often advocated the extension of electric power to country areas and the development of the Moorlands coalfield to provide necessary power for the district of Murray and surrounding areas. It was through no fault of Mr. McKenzie that more has not been done for the decentralization of industry and the development of that coalfield.

I propose to deal generally with some of the more important matters referred to in the

Governor's Speech; and at the outset I would like to offer a suggestion that the speech itself should be reduced in length and confined to those matters which may be regarded as the subject of Parliamentary debate. The Governor's Speech should not contain references to matters over which even the Playford Government cannot have any control—as, for example, the kind of season we have had the good fortune to experience or the "mild winter and good spring rains" that we hope to have. We expect the Government to take the opportunity at the opening of Parliament to give an account of its stewardship and to inform the House of its legislative proposals for the coming session; for they are matters on which too little information is conveyed to us.

The first topic I wish to discuss is the appropriation of £1,175,500, which was the subject of a long debate on the opening day mainly because the Government chose not to inform us at the outset what it really had in mind in appropriating that large sum from its unexpended revenue for 1952-53, or how it came to have so much money over. The fact is, of course, that the Government had over-estimated its ordinary expenditure; and, apparently, it thought up on the spur of the moment a number of emergency items on which the unexpected surplus should be spent—to all intents and purposes, during the few remaining days of the financial year. One of these "emergency items" was the construction and repair of roads, for which £500,000 was appropriated. How this and some of the other amounts making up the £1,175,000 could be spent during 1952-53 remains a mystery. Actually, the £500,000 for roads could only be an appropriation for 1953-54; and in view of the procedure adopted by the Government during the last two or three years, I am prompted to bring before the notice of members certain matters which I think should be mentioned in connection with the appropriation of revenue surpluses. If members take the trouble to consult volume Six of the Consolidated Acts of South Australia, page 719, they will find section 30 of the Public Finance Act, 1936, which reads:—

Any surplus disclosed in the revenue accounts of the Treasurer in any financial year subsequent to the financial year ended on the thirtieth day of June, nineteen hundred and thirty-six may be applied, without any further authority than this Act, to the reduction of such debits in the loan accounts of the Treasurer as the Treasurer thinks fit.

The Public Finance Act, 1936, was amended in 1938 and again in 1951—on the first occasion

to empower the Treasurer to take up shares to the value of £100,000 in Cellulose (Australia) Limited, and on the second occasion to empower him to take up a further £20,000 worth of shares in the same company. The appropriation of these amounts for the purposes mentioned was, of course, contrary to the spirit of section 30 of the Public Finance Act, and that Act had to be amended on each occasion to enable the Treasurer to take such action. I assume that if the Treasurer wishes to take similar action in the future in reference to that company or any other, the Act will have to be amended in the same way again. It seems to me, therefore, that the Public Finance Act should be amended whenever surplus revenue is to be devoted to any other purpose than reducing the public debt of the State.

Appendix 7 of the Treasurer's Financial Statement for the year 1951-52 sets out what has happened to surpluses during the past 20 years. During that period there have been nine surpluses and nine deficits—in two of the years the Commonwealth grant was calculated so as to be exactly equal to the amount necessary to balance the State's accounts. Six of the nine deficits were funded—that is, added to the State public debt—on each occasion the necessary provision being inserted in the Public Purposes Loan Act passed in the following financial year. The other three deficits were met by special grants from the Commonwealth. Of the nine surpluses, one—in 1934-35—was devoted to writing off losses in the wheat pool account, and six were dealt with in accordance with the provision in the Public Finance Act to which I have referred. The other two surpluses—for the years 1950-51 and 1951-52—were dealt with in exactly the same way as the surplus for 1952-53 has been dealt with; but it is interesting to note that the action taken was described in the Financial Statement as “carrying the balance forward in the Revenue Account”—that is, making it part of revenue for the following year—and no doubt that is how the recent appropriation will appear in the Financial Statement when it is presented to Parliament later in the session.

Although surplus revenue has been dealt with in this way for the last three years, on no occasion has there been so much dissatisfaction with the procedure adopted by the Government in dealing with surpluses as there was on June 25 last. Even the *Advertiser* administered a gentle rebuke in a sub-leader on Monday June 29, on the subject. “The Government,” the writer said, “earned no marks even from its own supporters for the way it treated the new

State Parliament last week.” Of course, the *Advertiser* was more concerned with the way the Government went about appropriating the surplus, but I am now concerned rather with the appropriation itself. It is true that the Public Finance Act does not direct the Treasurer, in so many words, to devote a surplus of revenue to the reduction of the State public debt; but the section concerned would not have been inserted in that Act if it had not been assumed the Treasurer would normally devote the surplus to that purpose using his discretion as to which particular loan account would be credited. The fact that the Act passed in 1936 refers to “any surplus that might accrue in subsequent years” clearly implies that the provision as to the treatment of surpluses is to apply to any such subsequent surplus.

The Liberal and Country League has always held itself out to be opposed to increasing the public debt and to be keenly interested in reducing it on every possible occasion. It may be assumed that that was the real reason for the passing of the Public Finance Act and especially for the provision contained in section 30. But the L.C.L.'s attitude seems to have suffered a remarkable change since then and particularly during the last few years. To what can we attribute this change? Apparently, the Treasurer has ceased to be interested in reducing the State's public debt and with it the annual interest bill. It may be of interest to members to be informed that the gross loan expenditure for 1942-43—just 10 years ago—was £2,500,000 and that last year (1952-53) it was £25,000,000 (or 10 times what it was in 1942-43). In 1951-52 it was £31,200,000. During the same 10 years the total public debt has increased from £110,000,000 to £173,000,000—excluding the £25,000,000 spent during 1952-53. These facts alone demonstrate how careless the Government has become in these matters and perhaps suggest a reason why it has chosen to ignore the provision contained in section 30 of the Public Finance Act.

In paragraph 4 of the Governor's Speech the Government asserts that “development work was carried on steadily despite the reduction in loan funds.” But what real justification has the Government for complaining about a “reduction in loan funds”? I find on investigation that the actual (gross) loan expenditure for 1951-52 was £31,200,000, whereas the amount authorized to be spent during 1952-53 was £29,000,000. This latter amount does not represent a very great reduction compared with the previous year's figure;

but we find that only £25,000,000 of it was actually spent. Thus the Government could have spent £4,000,000 more than it did. We might well ask why that amount was not spent if there was such a programme of loan works as to warrant authorizing the expenditure of £29,000,000. Yet the Government complains of a "reduction in loan funds." This is a case in which the Government was granted permission to spend a certain sum by way of loan, and yet it did not spend as much as it could have—and, presumably, as it should have.

Why was not work on the South Para reservoir proceeded with with some of the £4,000,000 which the Government did not spend? Surely, if the Government claims credit for its administration, this is a glaring example of a project, represented by the Government as a national project, which has been placed in the background. Why, also, have the people in the metropolitan area had to wait for new water services, and why has the Engineering and Water Supply Department curtailed its activities to such an extent that the backlog will take years to overtake? And what is to happen to the ever-increasing flow of new applications for services? What has been done to improve the reticulation system in the metropolitan area, so that people can benefit from a regular and sufficient supply of water when the reservoirs are full? Will the position be any better when the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline is completed? Incidentally, in connection with that particular project, it was recently pointed out in the press that in order to raise the water to a height of 1,500ft. necessary to take it over the Adelaide hills, pumping stations at various points along the line will require vast quantities of electricity—in fact, a substantial proportion of the total electricity generated in the State—and will cost about £200,000 a year to operate.

The Government is pleased to announce that the broadening of the South-Eastern railway line to Mount Gambier has been completed—at long last! This is another of the Government's projects which, when it was first announced about 10 years ago, was always just going to be completed, but which has dragged on till now. As far as this particular loan work is concerned, it should be noted that the cost during the last year or so has not been a charge on State loan funds at all, as the financing of this project has been taken over by the Commonwealth. I might also say that it was planned without regard to the comprehensive scheme for the

development of the South-East, which has since been suggested and taken up enthusiastically by the Premier. I need hardly remind honourable members that the project has been the means of political exploitation of the worst kind that the Government has ever indulged in. With what a great flourish was the official opening of the line to Naracoorte celebrated, just before an election! That was three years ago, and in the meantime only another 50 miles or so have been completed.

It has long been recognized, of course, that the Government's policy is not so much one of public works as one of publicity. The Government is always seeking to convey the impression that its many and much publicized projects will be completed soon, but the fact is that the Government has no co-ordinated plan under which any public work could be expeditiously proceeded with, and so the benefits, whatever they might be, anticipated from such works are always being postponed indefinitely. That reminds me of the duplication of the Goodwood-Marino line. The work has been in progress now for a number of years, yet we are told by the Government that it will be completed soon. I would be pleased to have some information as to how soon the work will be completed, and to what extent stations along the line will be improved. Every year we are informed that Leigh Creek production is going to be stepped up to some impossible figure, but production from that source is much the same now as it has been for some years. Only recently fuel merchants, who have been asked to popularize the use of Leigh Creek coal for domestic purposes, have had reason to complain of not receiving supplies that were promised. And one wonders when the Government now estimates the power houses at Port Augusta will be completed.

In further reference to the "reduction in loan funds" of which the Government has complained, I would remind honourable members, and the Government which has apparently forgotten the fact, that the Electricity Trust and the Housing Trust have been permitted to go on the loan market to raise loans independently; and, of course, loans raised by these semi-government bodies have relieved the Government itself of some of its loan liability to them. Later I shall deal more fully with the Housing Trust and its loans.

Paragraph 4 of the Governor's Speech ends with the assurance that the Government intends to pursue a policy calculated to maintain "stable economic conditions, coupled with a progressive increase in living standards." It

goes without saying, of course, that any Government would desire to maintain stable economic conditions and raise living standards; but we assert that the Government has had very little, if any, influence on maintaining economic stability, and we suspect that it is more interested in raising the standard of living of a certain section of the people than in ensuring that everyone shall share in the prosperity for which it might regard itself as in some way responsible. I will deal with this aspect more fully later.

Paragraph 5 contains reference to matters over which the Government could not possibly have had any influence, such as the good rains and the favourable weather which have prevailed in almost every part of the State. I would not be surprised, of course, if the Government intended to convey the impression that it was really responsible for these happy conditions, but I would say that some at least of the record wheat yield of 22 bushels per acre was due to natural causes. However, no-one will deny that the Government has done something with a view to inducing greater production, even if it has not succeeded. It has proceeded on the assumption that all that is required is to make it easier for the primary producer to produce. It has made various services available to farmers. For example, it contours their land without charge or at a very nominal fee, and in other ways it has sought to marshal the resources of the State, and some of those of the Commonwealth, to assist the man on the land. But is that in itself the solution of the problem of production? Is it the solution of the problem of maintaining stable economic conditions and ensuring that aggregate production will keep pace with demand?

As far as the wheat industry is concerned, while we may be pleased that the yield last year averaged nearly 22 bushels per acre, the total yield, about 34,000,000 bushels, was not by any means a record. For the information of honourable members I will quote the following figures for seasons during the past 20 years or so in which the yield has exceeded 40,000,000 bushels, a figure which we should at least be endeavouring to reach now, in view of rapidly increasing population and other considerations:—

Season.	Approximate Acreage.	Approximate total yield (bushels).	Average yield per acre (bushels).
1931-32 ..	4,000,000	48,000,000	11.8
1932-33 ..	4,000,000	42,000,000	10.4
1937-38 ..	3,200,000	43,000,000	13.7
1939-40 ..	2,700,000	41,000,000	15.0

During the last few years there has been an ominous reduction in the area sown to wheat in this State, as there has been in other States for practically the same reasons. In this State a few years ago about 2½ million acres were sown to wheat, but last year the area was only about 1½ million acres. One of the reasons for this decline is that it has paid producers better to raise sheep or grow barley; but, whatever the reasons, it is clear that the area sown to wheat is too small and should be greatly increased. It is true that, in spite of smaller acreages, the total wheat yield has increased slightly during the last two or three years, but we need far greater production of this essential commodity and also a guarantee, as far as possible, that we will not experience drought conditions which prevailed in 1914, when, with about 1,600,000 acres under wheat, we received a crop of 9,000,000 bushels. The position in which we have been placed in this respect is so dangerous that even the Minister of Agriculture, in an address to producers at Booleroo Centre recently, admitted that he realized the disastrous consequences that could very easily follow from it. The report of his speech in the *Advertiser* on July 2, was somewhat garbled, but the purport of it is clear. In effect, he said that we have only to have a drought year to place this State in a very difficult position, even necessitating the importation of wheat for our own requirements.

I mention this matter, however, not only because of the fact that we are in a dangerous position in reference to wheat production—we on this side of the House have stressed this aspect for some considerable time—but also because of the remedy which the Minister of Agriculture has proposed. He said that farmers would only grow what was profitable to them; and I think we can accept that as fundamental, especially under existing circumstances. Farmers have always considered their own interests first, and I do not blame them for taking advantage of conditions which this Government and other Governments have created and maintained, and under which a person may own as much productive land as he likes and produce whatever he likes on it, or even refrain from producing on it, without regard to the interests and welfare of others. But, having agreed that farmers will only produce what is profitable to them, the Minister then went on to say that they should be given some incentive to increase wheat production. We might even be prepared to agree with him to that extent but for the fact that we know the only incentive the Minister and his Party

have in mind is an increased price for wheat. The Minister argues that the farmers have gone out of wheat into sheep or barley, because there is more profit in those activities than in growing wheat. So he would have wheat prices raised higher than they are now in order to persuade them to go back into wheat. In other words, he thinks that by offering a higher price for wheat all our troubles will be ended. But if prices for wool and barley were to rise still further, we would really be placed in exactly the same position as we are today.

Prices competition, such as the Minister has suggested, is not the solution of this problem. It is clear that some comprehensive policy co-ordinating all forms of primary production is the only way of ensuring steady and adequate supplies of the commodities we need. One of the results of the Government's policy on these matters is that certain primary industries, dependent on wheat and barley, such as the dairy, poultry, and pig industries, have been placed at a disadvantage. Even with the high prices prescribed for dairy products, eggs, bacon, etc., not nearly enough is being produced, and certainly not as much as could be produced, for the simple reason that most primary producers' incomes are already too high to be influenced by an increase in price. The production of bacon, which has long since entered the luxury class of commodities, has declined alarmingly because the Government has no co-ordinated policy that would ensure adequate and increasing production of this and other commodities.

The Government is spending increasing amounts of public money on services to primary producers—not to mention the enormous concessions granted to them by way of income tax concessions which the Federal L.C.P. Government has made to them in its misguided attempt to persuade them to increase production—and still we are not benefiting from any appreciable increase in production which all those concessions and services would entitle the people to expect. Last season South Australia produced almost as much barley as wheat; but even the Minister of Agriculture now thinks this is not in the best interests of the people—and it certainly is not. The State L.C.L. Government—which, incidentally, represents a minority of the people of South Australia—is quite prepared to socialize its expenditure in the sense that it will use public money in improving productive land, and otherwise rendering it easier for producers to produce; but it is not prepared to demand some-

thing on behalf of the people, who are taxed in order to make that assistance available to primary producers. We consider that producers owe something to the rest of the community and that their debt should be paid in the form of increased production, which is the real test of wealth, and not merely in the form of income tax contributions on incomes which are inflated because prices are high. The Government has a right and a duty to ensure stability and sufficiency of production in return for assistance socially provided to producers. However, while the L.C.L. Government allows the landowner to do whatever he likes with his land in his own interests and, indeed, directs its policy towards making the producers' own contribution to production less than it should be, there will never be any certainty about production. Moreover, having regard to the high incomes being received by most of our primary producers, it is no wonder that the more the Government assists them under existing conditions, the less they will produce.

Primary producers have been left free to produce whatever they please, just as if they were contributing everything to production—as they might well have been regarded as doing in the old pioneering days, when rugged individuality and independence were the outstanding characteristics of primary producers. Of course, it was never entirely true that our primary producers contributed wholly to production—they have always received assistance in some form or other from the rest of the community—and with the passing of the years and under the particular form of socialism practised by the Playford Government, it has become less and less true. The State as such has been contributing increasingly through the provision of socialistic services—which the Government makes no attempt to conceal—but, by the same token, when the community is called upon to make services available to primary producers, it is the duty of the Government which dictates that policy to ensure that production is in the interests of the people and not merely in the interests of producers. The Government, however, by making large sums of money available to producers is merely assisting producers to become wealthy and encouraging them to plant less acreages and to do less work, while all the time there is a greater and greater need for increased production to meet the demands not only at home but overseas. In some quarters the Playford Government is spoken of as socialistic, but its socialism is all one way.

The Government has also been pleased to note that the inflationary factors in the Australian economy have been reduced. But the Government can hardly take credit for the fact that some stability has been achieved. It may be recalled that so little faith did the Government have in the likelihood that the cost of living would cease to rise as rapidly as it had during the preceding two or three years, that it made provision in the Budget for substantial increases in the living wage when estimating expenditure for the year 1952-53. As a matter of fact, a considerable portion of the surplus revenue which was appropriated in such haste on the opening day of the session arose from that provision. The inflationary factors which brought about so much dislocation and hardship were the very much increased demand for all kinds of things in the early post-war period and especially the very high price for wool obtained two years ago. Neither this Government nor the L.C.P. Federal Government could have been expected to do much about that; and as far as this Government is concerned, all it can do is to join with the people in being thankful that a certain amount of buyer resistance has taken place, which has had the effect of stabilizing to a degree the economy.

Paragraph 7 of the Governor's Speech includes a reference to the State forests—"The State's forestry and milling undertakings have been carried on throughout the year with continued success." As to this matter, I would like to offer one or two comments. One is that the State forests continue to be the star exhibit in the 'anti-socialist' Playford Government's political shop-window. Another is that we find the Government still conducts the whole enterprise as if it were purely a loan work. All expenditure in connection with the forests is debited to loan, including salaries paid to officers and others engaged in the work. While this may have been appropriate when the forests were being established and little or no income was being received, I question whether it is the correct procedure now that they are earning. It would seem that capital expenditure, such as for the purchase of land, machinery, etc., is a correct charge against loan, but other expenditure which might be described as working expenses should be treated as debits against revenue. If such a distinction were made, more loan money might be available for purely developmental purposes.

I turn now to the discussion of our railways, which I have already dealt with incidentally in

connection with the broadening of the South-East line. In reference to the question of broadening and re-organizing the whole South-Eastern system of railways—another project which has recently been given publicity—I would have appreciated more information as to the Government's actual plans. The Acting Railways Commissioner has recently stated that it was more important to have another system, but whatever may be the issues involved in and the results of any new system, I consider that there is need for a review of railway policy in that area. For example, I understand that it is the intention of the Government to preserve the Mount Gambier-Millicent spur line in its scheme of broadening the South-East lines. But that line was established many years ago, before any comprehensive development of the South-East was contemplated; and it may be that in view of that desirable development, some other rail connection for Millicent—especially for the purpose of promoting trade between that area and Adelaide—might be more appropriate. Development which has already taken place in the vicinity of Millicent should also be considered in relation to a railway system designed to serve the area. In reference to railway matters in general, everyone knows that the Government has long since abandoned any intention or desire to maintain the railways on anything like an economic basis. Huge sums have been spent on certain "pet" luxury items, while the real problems of rail haulage, such as those associated with the Eyre Peninsula system and the north-eastern line, for example, have been allowed to continue unsolved. Meanwhile, about one-tenth of the total State revenue is devoted to balancing the railways accounts.

I want now to discuss a particular railway topic, namely, the purchase by the Government of six Garratt engines, which were intended to improve the service on the north-eastern line, but which, according to all reports, have proved the failure one might have expected them to be. During the war, owing to the shortage of engine power, a large number of these engines were constructed to a modified plan, designed to adapt this class of engine to Australian conditions, and for that reason they were called Australian Standard Garratt engines. I understand that the usual procedure—producing a type and exhaustively testing it before finally deciding on the design—was not adopted in this instance. I understand, also, that the Commonwealth Railways would not use these engines and that the Queensland Government,

which did adopt them, was compelled to withdraw them from service. The Western Australian Government had the same experience. Some years ago in Western Australia Mr. Justice Wolfe conducted a Royal Commission into the acquisition of these engines, and his report was very unfavourable. The Western Australian Government then decided to write the engines off.

Now this should have warned the South Australian Government not to burn its fingers by introducing these engines to this State, but in 1951 it purchased six of them from Western Australia at a total cost, including repairs, etc., of about £94,000, or a little more than £15,000 each. I understand these engines had the words "Written Off" painted on the cabins when they arrived in South Australia. They were placed in service last year—the first in April and the last in November—and they have been a source of trouble ever since. I have reliable information that their performance has been extremely poor, despite the great amount of work that has had to be done on them to keep them serviceable. One of them did a mileage of about 28,000 in a year, the average of T class engines being about 90,000, and was in the shed for repairs and overhaul for about 150 days during that period. Owing to the great amount of time and attention that has to be devoted to these engines, other engines are neglected, with the result that, even with the additional six engines, it is doubtful whether the total effective engine power has been increased. As a matter of fact, I believe that the Silverton Tramway Company is now helping the South Australian Government out in this respect. That opinion is confirmed by reports. The press frequently reports difficulties encountered by residents of Broken Hill. If we are to foster trade with that town the Government must undertake an immediate investigation into the state of repair of the locomotives. We should do all we can for our neighbours in Broken Hill.

Paragraphs 12 and 13 of the Governor's Speech deal with electricity supplies. We are informed that the trust has recently made an investigation of long-range developments in the South-East. I would like to know what precisely the Government means by the term "long-range." I rather fancy it means that at some time in the dim-distant future an electrical system will be established in the South-East, but the Government is making the usual premature announcement in order to

persuade the people of the South-East that its establishment is just around the corner. It would be interesting to know what the Government proposes to do in the immediate future in connection with this project. The reference to the use of the saw-mill waste would imply that something will have to be done fairly soon unless the piles of saw-dust are to rise to the height of Mount Everest. In reference to the scheme itself, one would appreciate information on the trust's decisions on such matters as the location of the various generating plants and whether this comprehensive electrical net-work is to be entirely independent of the gigantic undertakings of Port Augusta. Probably on the information we received yesterday we could use some other source of power than waste mill offal and sawdust from the South-East mills. I believe the member for Victoria will be able to expatiate upon that point.

Perhaps the most pathetic example of the Government's shortcomings is its failure to face up to the problem of education—one of the most important of the Government's responsibilities. Here again, the Government has not attempted to solve the problem by adopting a comprehensive policy. In view of the tremendous concentration of population in the metropolitan area, we should have more schools and smaller schools, but the Government seems to think that fewer and bigger schools can adequately cope with the education of the citizens of the future and, indeed, it gives the impression that anything will do. Several of our metropolitan primary schools now have enrolments exceeding 1,000. As the number of children to be accommodated increased beyond the Government's expectation, various temporary detachable rooms were set up, to add to the problems of schools already too big. All this argues a lack of comprehensive policy on the part of the Government and even a failure to appreciate the educational needs of the community. Many of the classes in these schools are far too big to enable teachers to give of their best; and I suppose there is not a section of the public service more dissatisfied than the teachers. Under the circumstances, they have every right to be. Our metropolitan high schools are also far too big—one of them is now being established at another site because it has outgrown its existing accommodation. If there is one aspect of poor policy more obvious than any other, it is in the Government's dealing with

the problem of secondary education. We should have a number of high schools established towards the outer fringe of the metropolitan area where the students could be accommodated under suitable conditions but, instead, the Government has encouraged their transport into the city. Land should have been acquired in many more places in the outer suburbs so that several high schools could have been established. In any case, the land that has been reserved should have been built upon long ago. In spite of the Government's assertion to the contrary, the response to its recruitment drive for teachers has not been successful, and staffs continue to be inadequate and contain a dangerously high percentage of poorly-qualified teachers. The whole question of education policy in this State needs a thorough investigation. Perhaps the member for Gawler will have something to say on this.

I find it impossible, as it would be undesirable, to attempt to deal with all the matters referred to in the Governor's Speech. I will discuss briefly the activities of the Housing Trust and the State Bank. Paragraph 20 refers to the Housing Trust and, among other things, the Government asserts that the "demand for houses for purchase has been met." This would give the impression that all persons desiring to purchase homes have had their desire satisfied, but all it actually means is that people are no longer keen to purchase homes from the Housing Trust. It would have been more correct for the Government to say that the demand for the trust's purchase homes has been stifled by the terrific increase in price. The trust is apparently no longer in the position to build homes at a reasonable price. As a matter of fact, the trust itself has been one of the influential factors in maintaining inflation by not prosecuting a policy designed to keep the cost of its homes down. Some time ago the Government was asked to intimate the price the trust was paying for land, and the Government replied that it was not in the public interest to disclose such information; and while we can appreciate that argument, it does not dispose of the fact that very high prices are being paid by the trust apparently because it considers it does not have to bother itself about such matters. The very system it has adopted of purchasing land through an agent leads to high costs and should never have been adopted by the trust. It would be interesting to learn how much the agents have received in commission. Incidentally, when a private purchaser

wants to acquire land somewhere near land purchased by the trust, he has to pay something like the price that the trust has paid. All this helps to increase the force of inflation.

One of the results of this and other unsatisfactory practices of the Housing Trust is that the cost of its houses has risen more than they otherwise would have, and now we learn that the rent it is demanding for some of its timber-frame houses in suburbs far distant from the city is £3 or more a week, which, all things considered, is a severe imposition on workers who would normally have to occupy these houses. Now, we are informed, all Housing Trust rents are to be increased. Does the Government intend to amend the Licensing Act this session so that we shall have no more humbug with local option polls? The Licensing Court is now hamstrung by the legislation. The sooner it is given more freedom to do its job in the interests of the community the better off we shall be. I hope we shall never have another local option poll. At the last election the first person to greet me was a Government supporter who handed me a "how-to-vote" card. I received, in all, five or six such cards, including some from liquor and prohibition interests. The Government should announce its policy on this matter soon.

Mr. Lawn—Perhaps it has no announcement to make.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—It may on this matter. How much longer will the Government collect certain revenue and pass it over to private enterprise? For some time the Government has imposed impositions on one section of the community. In 1951-52 the racing clubs received £115,371 from betting taxes and the Government retained £470,117. The trotting clubs received £27,822 of the total revenue of £613,310. I will refer to what happened in 1945 when the then Leader of the Opposition introduced the Racing Inquiries Bill. He said:—

The Bill is designed, primarily, to give a small but very necessary measure of justice to jockeys and trainers. Put shortly, it provides that no jockey or trainer can be deprived of his living except after a charge and a public hearing.

I have taken an interest in certain reports appearing in the press recently which have a bearing on horse racing in this State. I assume they have been given with the permission of the chairman of the stipendiary stewards appointed by the South Australian Jockey Club. I find there is a decided variation in the punishments imposed on jockeys,

and it appears by comparison that a select few are treated most leniently. For instance, R. Cox was fined £25 for over-confident handling of his mount thereby causing the defeat of a short-priced favourite. The following week J. Devereaux, an apprentice, was suspended for a similar offence. W. Wood, an apprentice, was suspended for two months. Was it an indication of incompetence on the part of the stewards when the controlling body reduced the penalty to one month without any appeal? I understand that W. Pyers was fined £50 for riding an ill-judged race on Double Blank, a very short-priced favourite. Is a monetary penalty any hardship on a successful jockey? I say most emphatically it is not. The case of R. Holt, suspended from May 20 to July 31 for incompetent riding on First Earl. This horse led a week previously. At its next start it finished last, as forecast by Holt in his appeal. The following day the trainer notified the press that First Earl had broken down. Was this jockey more blameworthy than K. Jessup, rider of Copper Year in the Hallmark Stakes? On that occasion the stewards expressed the opinion that Jessup had ridden with very bad judgment. Jessup admitted he had ridden a bad race. The penalty was a reprimand. Are we to assume from these cases that there is an inner circle, and if so is the chairman of the stipendiary stewards aware of this?

The Premier may be able to indicate how soon those who patronize the betting ring are to be free from the obligation to pay a tax on their betting investments. It would be appreciated if he could give this information. Grandstand bookmakers should not be immune from everything. I wonder how soon that fraternity will be able to extend the odds on Melbourne betting instead of continually reducing them. I am not complaining of any particular bookmakers who reduce odds, but I expect them to lengthen them sometimes. If there is to be S.P. bookmaking, let us define it in our legislation. Perhaps the Betting Control Board desires to review the matters affecting interstate betting in the grandstand enclosure and possibly license one or two bookmakers for interstate racing.

I shall now refer to the following motion which I attempted to move in the House yesterday:—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable to appoint a Select Committee to enquire into the recent increases in rents of Housing Trust homes and into the general administration of the Housing Trust.

The Government refused my request. The Premier was able to get away with something which I considered unfair. He referred me to what he had said in 1942 when there was an amendment to the South Australian Housing Trust Act. The Bill was introduced on August 19 of that year to overcome the disability of the sales tax on building commodities. It was said that if the Commonwealth Government insisted on the tax it would mean an extra 1s. 4d. a week in the rental of the average home erected by the trust. The Bill also provided for the trust erecting houses in the metropolitan area at no greater cost than £550. In regard to the averaging of rents, the Premier then said:—

In effect, the proposal is one under which it will be possible to average rents much in the same manner as building costs will be averaged. This will result in the increase of the rents of the earlier houses, but a reduction of the rents in the later houses. The rents of all houses in any particular area would be the same and I understand that the objective of the trust would be to fix a rent in the metropolitan area approximating to the daily living wage.

According to the *Statesmen's Pocket Year Book*, in 1943 the daily living wage was 15s. 8d. According to the "C" series formula, the rent of a five-roomed house is calculated as one-sixth of the living wage. I am not clear on this matter, and perhaps the Treasurer will make it clear to me. Was there any need for the Opposition to suggest an inquiry into the present increase of Housing Trust rents? Is the trust immune from everything but its own Act? Who is responsible for the purchase of land by the trust? Who is to say whether or not the trust is doing a job in the interests of the community? If the trust buys land and finds that the cost is greater than was expected, can it borrow money at an interest rate of 4½ per cent and get a loan through the Loan Council at 3 per cent, and then set out to average rents? I would like to know how increased costs of land and overhead expenses are considered. In the Glenelg district there was a property on Morphet Road, known as Cobbin Hall, available for purchase. A Mr. O. V. Mann offered the land to the trust for about £18,000, but it was not interested. Later a Mr. Nitschke purchased it. Then the trust became interested and bought it from Mr. Nitschke for £75,000. Perhaps the Treasurer could let me know whether or not that is the correct amount. I understand the trust has plans for the building of flats on Anzac Highway, and I have been

told that land there is selling at £25 a foot. I do not know what the trust paid for its land, but if it had gone one street back from the highway it would have been better ornamentally than constructing such a building on the highway. It is proposed to build flats in the district of the member for Mitcham. Are they to be the same as those erected in my district and in Glenelg? All these things are related to the motion I wanted to move yesterday. There is a need for an inquiry. I remind Mr. Dunks that a Mr. Meyers owned some land just below the Sleep's Hill quarry and behind the quarry which the Mitcham Corporation uses as a dump. I understand that a member of the Mitcham Council who was defeated at the recent election took part in the negotiations which led up to the purchase of that land by the Housing Trust at a price of almost £1,000 an acre. It will be difficult to service that area with water, sewerage, and gas connections, and that transaction should be investigated.

Is it a fact that in 1951 the trust bought certain property at Gilles Plains for about £350 an acre and another property for more than £200 an acre? Fifty-two acres at the corner of Grand Junction and Main North Roads was purchased for about £39,000—£750 an acre. Later the trust sold some of it to the Education Department for £850 an acre. Can the Premier say whether it is not a fact that that area is waterlogged? How much will have to be spent on certain land purchased by the Housing Trust before it is suitable for home building? I challenge the Premier to prove that my figures are wrong. If they are correct, is such expenditure considered by the trust when increasing Housing Trust rents?

Is it a fact that the Housing Trust has more than 60 utilities and saloon cars and more than 20 heavy trucks and pieces of road making equipment? Much money would have to be spent on their maintenance besides their capital cost. Would such expenditure be considered when assessing rentals? Who was responsible for the importation of certain prefabricated homes which were erected on behalf of the trust? If the Government was responsible why does it not admit its error? Should people who were allotted homes years ago be forced to pay increased rents because of the cost of such an error? A thorough investigation should be made to ascertain who has made money out of the projects I have mentioned. Did the Government pay for overseas trips by officers of the Housing Trust, including a trip

by the then chief architect of the trust who advised on the purchase of certain prefabricated homes which, after he resigned from the trust, he erected on a private contract basis? Should the cost of such overseas trips be borne by tenants—some of them on very low wages—of Housing Trust rental homes?

I have details of rent increases in certain areas. At Brayville and Parkholme tenants who were allotted homes at 28s. 6d. per week in 1951 have now been informed that that rent has been increased to 35s. In the same areas rents of 42s. 6d. fixed in June, 1952, have been increased to 45s., and other rents have been increased from 28s. 6d. to 35s. The rent of a 6-roomed house occupied by a man, wife and six children has been increased from £1 18s. to £2 3s., and that of a 4-roomed house from £1 12s. 6d. to £1 17s.

Mr. Dunks—Those rents are fixed by the rent-fixing authority.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—In 1943 when introducing the legislation the Treasurer said that the rents would be averaged and I believed that the average was to be over the areas concerned. An examination of the position reveals that the first homes were allotted at 12s. 6d. per week to people on the basic wage. What is the position of an invalid pensioner today whose rent is increased to 27s. 6d.? The rent sum of 12s. 6d. was increased to 14s. 6d., 17s. 6d., 22s. 6d., and now to 27s. Those increases were supposed to be on account of sales tax, but I understand that that sales tax does not operate today. I also understand that there is very little control over the activities of the Housing Trust. I do not want to be told that the Government is not in a position to disclose certain of the trust's activities because that might have an effect on someone with land for sale. Trust homes erected on the eastern side of Ferry Avenue three years ago were let at 26s. a week, but the tenants were informed that from last Saturday the rent would be increased to 32s. Houses were erected on the western side of Ferry Avenue about 15 months ago and let at 35s. a week. Their rents have been increased to 40s., though those homes are not quite comparable to those on the eastern side. Has the trust increased rents because it has purchased land at ridiculous prices that it will not use for many years? I have no complaint to make about a Mr. Nitschke, who owned land that was offered to the trust for £18,000. Two or three years later the trust purchased it at £75,000. Did

the trust make the purchase at the latter figure because different agents handled the deal or because someone got a chop out of it somewhere? Further, why did the trust pay the ridiculous sum of nearly £1,000 an acre for land near the Sleep's Hill quarries?

I suggested last session that the Government give favourable consideration to building timber homes. I suggested that such homes should be erected in semi-detached units. Instead of erecting one house on one block the trust should consider erecting three double pairs on two blocks. The trust should improve its town planning methods. Instead of providing large frontages with meagre back yards it should adhere to the original ideas of town planning in Adelaide with streets running north and south, and east and west. Commonsense should prevail, not fantastic ideas. I am not prepared to accept the information given me yesterday by the Premier about the number of homes built for sale and the number sold. Was the number of timber houses excluded from those figures? I am sure that more than 100 homes erected for sale remain unsold. I am not blind; there are probably more than 100 empty in the Darlington area, and many more in other districts. Who is responsible for this situation? Yesterday the Premier said I would have every opportunity to place my contentions about the Housing Trust before Parliament today, but what information will I get, and when will I get it? When I referred to the trust houses built in the St. Mary's area it was suggested I was telling funny stories. I was even informed by the general manager of the trust when I asked him for a copy of a purchase agreement that it was like my cheek to ask for it and that I could not obtain one. However, I could go to any other lending institution in South Australia and be readily accommodated. I had to seek the information from the people affected—ex-servicemen who had been deprived of their rights because there was not sufficient equity in the homes for the war service homes scheme to accommodate them. We have been told that the State Bank has reached the stage where its group building of homes has been completed. I understood that State Bank homes being erected were to be reserved entirely for ex-servicemen. Housing Trust homes cost from £200 to £400 more to purchase than State Bank homes.

Mr. Quirke—And they are not as good, either.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The trust homes are not comparable. Before proceeding further on the ramifications of the State Bank, I should like to bring under the Government's notice the position of State Bank employees, who are engaged under Public Service conditions as to leave, etc., but are paid rates prescribed by the South Australian Bank Officials Association's award. If these officers are performing duties in the general bank, provision is made for promotion, but those engaged in the credit foncier department have little or no scope for promotion, although they are compelled to perform duties embracing both departments, such as security work and accounts which apply to both sections of the bank. Although the board claims that it is paying award rates there is no appeal for these officers, such as applies in the Public Service. Yet, from information I have received officers engaged by other banks doing a similar class of work are paid a rate higher than that provided by the award in recognition of their merits. I consider there is need for the Treasurer to make an investigation into these matters with a view of having State Bank officers placed on a similar basis to those in other banks. Also, would he inquire whether the bank has the power to make advances under the State Bank Act, Advances to Settlers Act, and Loan to Producers Act conditional upon the applicants conducting their trading accounts with the Bank?

Of the loans provided to the State Bank amounting to £1,050,000 for year ended June 30 last, £75,000 was not used. In the first nine months of the financial year no advances were made to purchase properties or discharge mortgages, yet at the completion of this stage £300,000 of the original provision of loan had not been paid out. However, from April 1 to mid June applications were approved, but nevertheless £75,000 remained.

Does the Treasurer want to tell me there is no demand for group homes? Under the Advances for Homes Act a person could receive an advance of at least nine-tenths of the valuation of the home, but the total advance was not to exceed £1,750. However, when it comes to the big baby, namely, the South Australian Housing Trust, it can go to the State Bank, the Savings Bank or any other approved organization and get funds and after a person has obtained an advance of £1,750 under the Advances for Homes Act he can then approach the Housing Trust and get a second mortgage. Is the Government playing

the game fairly and squarely to a Government instrumentality, or semi-government instrumentality compared with its treatment of another body? The Government authorized the Housing Trust to go on the loan market and pay 4½ per cent. Is the trust also able to get money through the Loan Council at 3 per cent, which it uses for advances on second mortgages? If that is so, how is Mr. Riches to get any relief for those people about whom he inquired in questions to the Premier yesterday and today? This matter is too important to be ignored. As to group homes, the State Bank has built premises of a higher standard than those the Housing Trust has ever built or is likely to build according to its plans and specifications. There would be a greater demand for the group homes built by the State Bank if the Advances for Homes Act were amended to provide for an advance of up to £2,500 and the taking out of a second mortgage. The State Bank has purchased Green's Estate at Seaton Park, and the trust has made representations to take it over. I would like the Treasurer to indicate whether or not the land will be retained by the State Bank.

The bank should be asked to develop a unit whereby a young couple getting married could start with two or three rooms with all modern conveniences. That would reduce their loan liability. The plan could provide for extensions being made to the house as family needs demanded. The State Bank could finance such a project. I will never agree that the rents of trust homes should be increased, particularly in view of what the State Bank has done in the building of cheap homes. The methods under which the State Bank operate, and the bookkeeping system it uses in relation to contractors, should apply to the trust. Instead of our seeing the motor vehicles I have mentioned, they could be used by the trust to do a better job in the interests of the community. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr. DUNKS secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.54 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, July 23, at 2 p.m.