

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, July 23, 1953.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### TAILEM BEND RAILWAY HOUSES: DRAINAGE.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Minister of Railways a reply to the question I asked yesterday about the disposal of effluent from Tailem Bend railway homes?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Acting Railways Commissioner has furnished the following report:—

The complaints made refer to a group of 90 of the original cottages built at Tailem Bend in the western portion of the town, at which the standard drainage consists of a septic tank at each cottage, the effluent from which is led to a soakage pit. Waste water from the bath and laundry runs down open drains to the back of the yards. At ten of this group of cottages soakage pits to take the sullage have been sunk, but the pits fill up and have to be pumped out, and are therefore not satisfactory. A start has been made on a scheme of handling the drainage from this group of cottages through bores—a method which has proved satisfactory at other cottages more recently constructed. Three bores have been put down, to which nineteen cottages are being connected by 2,080ft. of earthenware drainpipes. When these pipes have been laid, further bores will be put down and another group of cottages connected thereto. As you know, this is limestone country, and trenching for the pipes is therefore slow, even with air compressors and explosives, and as the job is a big one it will take quite a time to complete. I have, however, asked the Chief Engineer to push ahead with the work as quickly as he can.

I think the report can be regarded as highly satisfactory because the complaint has been anticipated by the Railways Department doing the best it can to deal with the problem.

#### AMENDMENT OF REGENCY ACT.

Mr. TRAVERS—Today's press reports that the Acting Prime Minister of the British Parliament has intimated that the Regency Act of England is to be amended. An earlier report from the press suggested that the contemplated amendment was designed to substitute His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh for Princess Margaret as the Regent of the Realm should certain events occur. I believe the generally accepted view to be that no such amendment would apply to any of the Dominions unless under the provisions of the Statute of Westminster such Dominion "requested

and consented" to the amendment. If that view is right it would appear that the suggested amendment presents some embarrassing possibilities in which there might be, in certain eventualities, different Regents in the different British Dominions at the one time. Arising from that situation I ask the Premier the following questions:—

1. Has the sovereign State of South Australia been consulted either by the British Government or by the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia as to the suggested amendment?

2. Is the Premier able to tell this House precisely what are the terms of the proposed amendment?

3. Has there been any "request or consent" within the meaning of the Statute of Westminster by—(a) all or any of the dominions, so as to avoid the embarrassing possibilities which I have mentioned, or (b) the Commonwealth of Australia, or (c) the sovereign State of South Australia?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—All international affairs, under the Constitution, are reserved to the Commonwealth Parliament, and the practice that has grown up over a long period—and I presume it is constitutionally correct—is that the Commonwealth deals with any matters affecting Australia overseas, but, if matters have any implications on any of the States, the Commonwealth usually takes steps to ascertain their views before any agreement is reached. South Australia has no knowledge of this particular topic, except that contained in the press or announced over the air, so I am not in a position to take the matter any further than the announcement broadcast, which I think was the first announcement.

#### PORT PIRIE HOUSING PROGRAMME.

Mr. DAVIS—According to the Port Pirie press, the Housing Trust intends to build 80 houses for employees at the proposed uranium plant. Will that interfere with the programme of the trust for other citizens of that city?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Not as far as I know, but I will make inquiries and let the honourable member know what is the over-all programme for Port Pirie.

Mr. DAVIS—Will the 80 houses which the Premier says are to be built at Port Pirie be used to house workers drawn from other parts of Australia? Will as much local labour as possible be employed in the uranium plant there?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—With regard to housing the Government does not concede that a citizen in one place has any more rights than a citizen in another. The fact that a citizen from another part settles in a town does not, in our opinion, debar his right to a home. It is considered that all citizens of this State have equal rights and they are dealt with accordingly. Where because of a particular project the State brings a large quantity of labour into a town, additional housing problems, of course, arise. I have already said that I will inquire as to the total programme so that I can inform the honourable member upon it, and then he may, if he desires, further comment on the matter.

#### YALATA STATION.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—It must be nearly three years since Yalata station was purchased by the Government and run as a sheep proposition. The Ooldea natives were transferred to the station early last year, or before that, in a hurry, but there is no one in charge of the station, which is proposed to be established as a mission, and the worst fears of neighbouring white settlers are being realized in that the natives are roaming the countryside with their dogs. They are not altogether welcome visitors to homesteads, and the dogs are doing much damage; in fact, the police officer at Fowlers Bay has been called out on a number of occasions to shoot many of these marauding animals. Apart from that, the running of the station by the Government is not proving very satisfactory, and whilst in the district earlier in the year I noticed that the property was not being maintained as it should be, in fact the improvements are deteriorating. I ask the Minister of Works whether any progress has been made towards appointing someone to take over this concern and run it properly as a mission station or sheep proposition to safeguard the interests of both the natives and the white settlers in that locality?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The question is somewhat complicated because a similar question has been asked on notice in the Legislative Council, and I do not know to what extent any reply I can give now may be regarded as transgressing upon that question. Assuming that I am not breaking any rule of etiquette between the two Houses, the position is that this property was originally bought as a home for natives who were then at Ooldea and who it was proposed should be transferred to this area. Immediately this was suggested there was an agitation in the area which the honourable

member represents, because it was considered that much of it was too good for a home for natives and the best portion should be reserved to supplement the areas of existing settlers, or become available for new settlers. Unfortunately, in the meantime there was a break-up in the system of control of South Australian natives because of internal strife in one of the missions, which withdrew from control in South Australia. The Lutheran Mission, at the request of the Aborigines Department, then assumed control of these natives, who are now stationed at Yalata, and, out of the funds derived from station proceeds, the Government is repaying the Lutheran Mission the cost of looking after them. Arising out of much discussion at the time Parliament agreed to the purchase of this station, it was arranged that the Land Board, the Pastoral Board and the Aborigines Department should decide what area, if any, should be entirely reserved for the natives, and what area, if there was any surplus, should be made available to the settlers. Obviously, that propounds a serious problem for the Aborigines Department. With the Protector of Aborigines I have for some time been discussing the best means of arriving at a solution. In the meantime the natives have been cared for by the Lutheran Mission at the cost of the department. The station itself has proved a very fine investment, inasmuch as it is showing the State a handsome dividend on the purchase money. I believe the time has now arrived for a definite decision on the ultimate use of this station. I cannot take the matter any further at the moment. It is a question necessitating not only the opinion of the three boards but the final decision of the Government.

#### POTATO PRICES.

Mr. HUTCHENS—In this morning's *Advertiser* are a photograph and an article relating to a quantity of Tasmanian potatoes which are being held in store in South Australia because the landing costs were greater than the retail price fixed in South Australia. Is it the Government's intention to fix a price for Tasmanian potatoes over and above that fixed for South Australian grown potatoes?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The marketing of potatoes throughout Australia is completely chaotic today because New South Wales has decontrolled potato prices, and there is an overall shortage. That means that any price fixed here becomes only an upset price for a further increase elsewhere. As a result of New South Wales action this week potatoes

reached as high as £58 a ton in Sydney. Consultations are taking place here with the Potato Board and all authorities interested, and they are in agreement that whatever price is fixed here it will not mean that there will be adequate supplies for consumers. Yesterday I had a conference with the potato importers, the Prices Commissioner and the Chairman of the Potato Board and I hope next week to be able to announce a programme. It is a matter of serious concern to the Government. Although Parliament passed legislation to control the marketing of potatoes, very largely in growers interests, at present it is doubtful whether 10 per cent of the potatoes being sold are in fact going through the board. Actually, they are being sold outside the board's control, and it is doubtful whether the board is fulfilling any useful purpose at present. I have this matter under my personal consideration and hope to be able to announce something more satisfactory next week.

#### SUPPLY OF SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Has the Minister representing the Minister of Education seen the letter published in this morning's *Advertiser* from Mr. Raggatt, President of the South Australian Institute of Teachers, commenting on the low intake of teachers at the Teacher's College, which has involved a falling off in the standard of teaching in State schools. Will he examine the conditions of teacher-trainees at the college and their allowances with a view to their improvement so that more teachers may be attracted to our State schools?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I saw the letter referred to and I am sure the Minister of Education, who unfortunately has been ill for some time, will have seen it. On his return I will ask him to bring down a reply to the points raised.

#### TANUNDA RAILWAY STATION.

Mr. TEUSNER—Several years ago the District Council of Tanunda made representations to the Minister of Railways for some reasonable and convenient means of access to be provided to the Tanunda railway station for the travelling public. Very frequently the access from the main approach to the railway station is impeded by shunting operations of goods trains which are at the station when the passenger trains arrive, and the public is suffering a great inconvenience as a result. At the time the Minister stated that in view of the shortage of materials the work could

not be undertaken, but he informed the council that the department contemplated erecting an overhead pedestrian bridge. In view of the availability of materials now, will the Minister ask the department to proceed with the erection of the bridge at an early date?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Loan Estimates have now been considered by the Treasurer and in due course they will be placed before the House. They show in detail the proposed work. Although, as the honourable member stated, materials are in more ample supply, and I think more money is available than ever before, unfortunately the same amount of money does not do as much work as it did hitherto, and I do not know that we are much further ahead. The point he has raised will be brought immediately under the notice of the Acting Railways Commissioner and the matter will be given full consideration in the preparation of and final decision on the Loan Estimates for this year.

#### EMERGENCY HOUSING.

Mr. STEPHENS—On page 6 of the Quarterly Notes on the work of the South Australian Housing Trust, dated July 1, 1953, there appears the following under the heading "Emergency Housing":—

The South Australian Government authorized the trust to erect 2,284 emergency dwellings for families living in makeshift shelter or in the worst conditions of overcrowding or expecting immediate eviction with no accommodation in sight. The programme is now completed and the dwellings occupied. Emergency dwellings are available now only when the persons to whom they were allotted moved out and the dwellings become vacant.

On page 7, under the heading "Flats," there is the following:—

The flats have living room, kitchen and one or two bedrooms. They are intended for married couples and others without young children. Rents are £3 3s. per week for the three-roomed and £3 10s. per week for the four-roomed flats.

Is it the policy of the Government to tell evicted people—and there are many of them—and people who want emergency houses, "We are not going to do more for you," but to tell married couples, provided they have no young children, "We will look after you and build flats for you, but only on condition that you can afford the big rent of £3 3s. or £3 10s. a week?" Can the Premier say whether it is the policy of the Government to penalise couples with young children by refusing to provide them with houses?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The emergency houses were built under special legislation passed by Parliament to enable the Government to erect a certain number of temporary houses to deal with what was at the time a very acute problem. A survey had shown that there were many people with no homes, some living in sandhills. The houses were not built by the Housing Trust as a principal: it acted as agent for the Government. The losses which will occur in connection with the houses will be borne by the Government: it was in no sense a Housing Trust activity. In regard to its own activities the trust makes a periodical survey and attempts to erect houses in accordance with the requirements of the community. For many years it erected houses purely for people with families, but Opposition members raised the point that there were many people without families who were completely neglected under the programme. The trust therefore undertook to erect a limited number of flats which would be available for aged people with no families, and who could not look after a block of land with a garden. The temporary housing work has now been completed. The trust is continuing its activities in attempting to deal with the requirements of all sections of the community as revealed by its surveys.

#### LEIGH CREEK COAL.

Mr. JENNINGS—Is the Minister of Works aware that there is grave dissatisfaction existing amongst vendors of Leigh Creek coal for domestic use, so far as taking delivery at Mile End is concerned? The Minister will remember that I spoke to him privately about this matter and he gave me an answer which I considered to be satisfactory, but since then I have had several approaches from vendors living in my district. Will the Minister have an investigation made into the matter and ascertain where the difficulty lies?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Yes. The honourable member will appreciate the difficulty from two points of view. In regard to delivery, it is difficult to ensure at all times an ample supply of the coal so that delivery can be taken off the hook, as it were. On the other hand, the amount allowed does not perhaps enable the merchants to put coal into storage for delivery later. The real objective is to take delivery as it comes from the train. From time to time rail deliveries are such that the position is difficult, but I will ask the

Chief Storekeeper to confer with the representatives of wood merchants to see whether we can assure at all times direct delivery from the pit to the consumer, thereby reducing costs and lessening the difficulties of the wood merchants. As it is the finest fuel of which I know—and I do not except mallee roots, of which I have dug hundreds of tons—I want to see it on the market.

#### ADELAIDE—MARINO RAIL SERVICE.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I understand that trains from Marino to the city during the morning peak periods and from the city to Marino during the evening peak periods are overcrowded owing to the increasing number of persons using this line and having no other means of transport to and from their work. Will the Minister of Railways investigate this complaint and ascertain whether additional coaches could be provided between 7 and 9 a.m. and 4 and 6 p.m.?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will get a full report which I hope to make available on Tuesday next.

#### DUPLICATION OF GOODWOOD—MARINO LINE.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Minister of Railways say when he expects the duplication of the Goodwood-Marino railway line to be completed?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I hope to make a full report on this matter available on Tuesday next.

#### HOUSING TRUST RENTS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Yesterday, in reply to a question by the member for Gawler regarding the possibility of further increases in housing trust rents because of an increase in the Gawler council assessment, the Premier mentioned a report from the Housing Trust, which report he later showed to Mr. Clark. On behalf of Mr. Clark who is attending an important Party function I now ask the Premier whether he will be good enough to read that report to the House?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—With the concurrence of the House I shall be happy to read it, because it has some public interest, though it is somewhat longer than is usually given in reply to a question. It is as follows:—

The reasons which actuated the South Australian Housing Trust in increasing rents of houses of the trust are set out in my minute of 13/7/53 to the Hon. the Acting Premier, a copy of which is attached hereto. As therein

stated, the purpose of the increases is not to improve the financial position of the trust but to provide a type of equalization fund by increasing the rents of the older rental houses and using the amount thereby obtained to enable rents on the newer houses to be lower than would otherwise be the case. To do otherwise would mean that tenants of the older houses would pay low rents whilst tenants of the houses newly completed would have to pay very much greater rents for comparable premises. Even with the recent increase the rents of the older houses are very reasonable. The average rental of the houses affected is £1 12s. per week, including the increases. The rent of the newer standard five roomed semi-detached house now being erected is £2 5s. per week and it will be necessary to charge about £2 8s. 6d. for houses to be built in the future under the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement. If rents of private comparable houses were fixed under the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act, they would exceed the rents of the houses of the trust in question. The effect of the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act Amendment Act, 1951, is perhaps not generally realized. That Act provided for an increase in the general rental level of 22½ per cent above 1939 standard. In addition, however, it was provided that allowance must be made for increases in maintenance costs, rates and taxes and other outgoings. The practical effect of these provisions is that the general rental level of houses which have been properly maintained is approximately 45 per cent over the rental level prevailing at 1st September, 1939. In quite a number of instances the effective increases compared with 1939 rental levels have been much greater than 45 per cent over the rents actually received in 1939: in some cases where houses were let by private housing authorities the rents fixed in accordance with the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act have been as high as 100 per cent above the rents payable in 1939. In addition, many individual houses have had rent increases greater than 75 per cent where the houses were let at rentals in 1939 less than the rentals generally charged for that type of accommodation. Maintenance costs have increased enormously since the War and there have been increases in rates and taxes. Whereas in 1939 the cost to the trust for rates per house was 11½d. per week, it is now approximately 5s. 9d. The living wage in September, 1939, was £3 18s. per week, it is now £11 8s., and the increase since February, 1950, has been £5 3s. per week. It has been quoted in criticism of the rental increases made by the trust that the rent of some of the older trust houses was 12s. 6d. before 1939. As maintenance provision now made by the trust for these houses is 5s. per week and the provision for rates and taxes is about 5s. 9d. per week, this rental of 12s. 6d. has no relation to present day conditions. This 12s. 6d. rent was in 1939 very much below the 1939 rental value of the houses, and, if such a house were privately owned and it became necessary to fix its rent under the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act its

1939 rental value would be assessed as at least 22s. 6d. per week. And, again, if such a house were privately owned and maintained in the same condition as the trust maintains its houses, and an application were made to have its rent fixed at the present time, the rent fixed under the Act would be approximately 34s. The rent of this type of house, as increased by the trust, is 27s. per week, so that the tenants are still much better off than they would be if the houses were privately owned. The trust feels that there is a reasonable expectation that building costs will not increase further to any substantial extent. If that expectation is realized, it is considered that there should be no further necessity for any radical change in the rental scale of the trust.

#### PAINTING CONTRACTS FOR TRUST HOUSES.

Mr. FRED WALSH—I understand that the construction contractor of prefabricated trust houses at Gilles Plains is Martin Housing Limited, which sublets the painting, labour only, to King and Co., Martin Housing Ltd. supplying the paints and brushes and other necessary materials. King and Co., in turn sublet some of this work to painters who work in pairs on a contract basis. These men are registered in pairs at the Registrar of Companies office. A complaint was made to Mr. King, who promised that the practice would be discontinued after the houses then being constructed were completed. There were then four men working on the scheme, but he did not carry out his promise. A stop-work meeting was held by all the painters on the job, and as a result Mr. King promised to terminate the practice from June 17. This was honoured, but subsequently it was broken, for on July 13 advice was received by the union that the firm had again adopted the scheme with four men. It is obvious that the motive is to avoid the provisions of the Painters and Decorators Board Determination, particularly in regard to fares and travelling time, annual leave and sick leave, and Workmen's Compensation Act conditions. It seems that the inspection of this work has been somewhat lax. This is to the detriment of proper construction and will later cause hardship on those who have to maintain the houses. Is it the policy of the Housing Trust to allow subletting of painting under this method and, if not, will steps be taken to see that the practice be discontinued?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will have the matter investigated and let the honourable member have a reply next Tuesday.

## ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Adjourned debate on the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

(Continued from July 22. Page 132.)

Mr. DUNKS (Mitcham)—I have pleasure in joining with the mover and seconder of the motion in extending a welcome to His Excellency the Governor. I have said previously that I considered the Address in Reply debate to be one of the most valuable discussions in Parliament because, besides giving members an opportunity of supporting a vote of thanks—for it is a vote of thanks to His Excellency for opening Parliament—it gives the opportunity to bring matters in which members are interested before the House, whether they concern their own particular district or not, to call the Government's attention to anything left undone and to give praise for what has been done. I have now listened during the life of six Parliaments to the remarks of movers and seconders of these motions, but I have never listened to two better opening speeches than those made last Tuesday. The matter contained in them was entirely different, but they were both of great educational value to members, and I feel sure that the Government, as it always does, will take particular note of the points raised and take any necessary action. However, I was rather disappointed with the speech delivered by the Acting Leader of the Opposition yesterday. There was much good matter in it, but he was too critical of the Government on many points. I agreed with him on some things, particularly concerning the Housing Trust and its activities. If he will read the *Hansard* report of my remarks when the trust, in its early days, was made the rent-fixing authority, he will find I said it was a step in the wrong direction to give the largest property owner in the State, the Housing Trust, the right to fix the rents of all properties. I believe that what I said has been proved to be correct. When I interjected yesterday, "Those rents are fixed by the rent-fixing authority" I do not think he understood what I meant. I think he might have replied, as I think he stated on one occasion, that there should be a fair rents board, but over the years the Party of which he is the Acting Leader has agreed to this legislation, so the Housing Trust is the authority fixing its own rents as it likes and telling other people what the rents for their dwellings shall be.

Mr. Frank Walsh—You are taking a narrow view.

Mr. DUNKS—I was surprised today to hear the Treasurer state what has been done for private owners. I was agreeably surprised to learn that some landlords have received increases of up to 100 per cent on the 1939 rents. Those owners have no cause for complaint. The facts given today by the Premier show that the Housing Trust rents have been increased only as an equation to bring into line with present building costs the small rents paid by those who rented trust homes in the early stages. Without this equation the people who occupy trust homes built at today's fabulous costs would be in great difficulties.

Since last session we have had a general election for this Parliament, and I want to thank the Australian Labour Party for the great confidence it must have in me as member for Mitcham in allowing my return unopposed. Last year you, Mr. Speaker, went out of the State and I had the honour of occupying your chair, and anyone who temporarily occupies the place of his leader while he is away can be forgiven a little vanity.

His Excellency delivered an excellent speech at the opening of Parliament. It is not easy for a man from another part of the world who probably has lived an entirely different life from that required of a Governor, to speak for a considerable time before a large group of people. To read for half or three-quarters of an hour before an audience is, I find from experience, very difficult. After hearing His Excellency speak at the Adelaide Town Hall on the day of his arrival, and again at the opening of Parliament, and having come in contact with him and Lady George on other occasions, I must say that we are very fortunate in having them to fill the vice-regal office. In his opening remarks His Excellency said, "We affirm our loyalty to Queen Elizabeth II.", and I am sure that every honourable member present on that occasion said "Amen" to that. Perhaps I may be forgiven if I assert my loyalty to the Crown and to Her Gracious Majesty the Queen and read the words she spoke at Capetown on April 21, 1947, on the occasion of her 21st birthday. Her Majesty then said:—

On my 21st birthday I welcome the opportunity to speak to all the peoples of the British Commonwealth and Empire, where ever they live, whatever race they come from, and whatever language they speak. I can make my solemn act of dedication with a whole Empire listening. I should like to make that dedication now. It is very simple. I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and

the service of our great Imperial Family to which we all belong, but I shall not have strength to carry out this resolution alone unless you join in it with me, as I now invite you to do. I know that your support will be unfailingly given. God help me to make good my vow, and God bless all of you who are willing to share in it.

That is an indication to citizens of this great land of what we all can do to carry out her wishes and assist her in her great task. There is a tendency today for monarchs and others in high places to be overtaxed with engagements and attention to official matters, and I am fearful that our young Queen, unless her advisers are very careful, may be overtaxed beyond her strength. When she comes to South Australia it will be the wish of honourable members that she shall not have her strength overtaxed by being asked to do too many things and attend too many functions.

Earlier I said that we had fought an election since we assembled here last year. Honourable members who were observant will have noticed that on our Party's hoardings were three words—"Progress and Prosperity." I suggest that the slogan on which our Party fought the elections was progress and prosperity, plus the Premier, the Hon. Tom Playford. Let us consider the wonderful part he has played in the destiny of this fair land since he has been leader of my Party and Premier of the State—in the advancement of secondary industries, development of the Leigh Creek coalfield, water reticulation, the broadening of railway gauges, afforestation and milling operations, the Mannum to Adelaide pipeline, which we hope will be working in another two years, the reticulation of electricity in many parts of the State, and the development of Radium Hill. He was christened "Thomas" If I had the privilege of arranging another christening I would not be satisfied with one Christian name; I would christen him "Atomic Tom"—not altogether because he has taken such an active part in the development of uranium in this State, but because of his atomic energy in moving about from one part of this Commonwealth to another and his part in developing South Australia. He has done excellent work. In our private lives we refer to him as "Honest Tom" and I think the people of the State are perfectly satisfied with what he has done. Yesterday the Acting Leader of the Opposition criticized education activities in this State. It is usual to be critical of this matter, but we must remember that the keeping open of a small primary school in the

country is expensive. Government policy now is to provide larger schools and to arrange transport for the children, thus giving them the opportunity to get a higher education.

Mr. Quirke—Have you analysed the cost of providing this transport?

Mr. DUNKS—No, but I think the honourable member will agree that the better education received outweighs the cost. We are told in the Governor's Speech that in the last 12 months there has been an increase of 10 per cent in the number of children attending schools. The number is now 108,600, and by 1960 it is likely to be about 160,000. Credit it due to Parliament because the Government can do nothing without its consent. The Estimates containing education grants must be approved here. I give full praise to the Minister, Director and officers of the department. I do not forget the great work that is done by the teachers, not only whilst teaching in the classroom, but in giving their time to attending meetings of school committees, and fetes and functions held to raise money to assist in the education of the children. I appreciate what the Government has done in my district. When I was first elected to Parliament in 1933, it was for a three member district, and the members were invited to attend the Mitcham school to see what could be done to improve it. The old Mitcham school looked more like a gaol than a school. It had an old fence in the front and was built of a type of bluestone. It had the appearance of solidity, but it certainly looked more like a gaol. The fence has now been pulled down and a lawn put in, and other work has been done, and it now looks more like a school. As the years went by it became too small for the number of children attending and I hope in the early part of next year we will be opening a new Mitcham primary school. All being well I will be the member for the district when the great event takes place. We have agitated for a new high school. The Unley high school is second to none in the matter of passes obtained by students and the education given, but there are too many children attending it. In 1933 it had 720 students. Today there are 1,152. The principal told me yesterday that in his opinion in 1954 there would be 1,300 students, nearly 100 per cent increase on the number in 1933. All these additional children are being housed in the original school. There are 15 temporary classrooms scattered over the grounds. I do not say they are distasteful or not fulfilling their part, but they are taking up room in the

exercise ground and playground. For the 720 students in the early days there was enough room, but now with the 15 temporary classrooms the position is different. Before the new school is built there may be 20 temporary classrooms. There has been an agitation for a number of years for an infant school at Highgate. I believe provision was made some time ago for expenditure on such a building, but we get the same old story that money is short and that the work cannot be carried out. The school committee would be prepared to assist in the matter. It has been keen on having an assembly hall built at the school, and has collected a large sum of money. If work on the hall cannot be proceeded with the committee might help the Government temporarily in the building of an infant school, which is so necessary.

I had a look at the hospital proposals and we ought to be satisfied with the great effort by the Government. It will not be long before the new western districts hospital is completed. Land has been prepared for a southern districts hospital. A new building for nurses has been erected at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. Our mental hospitals have been improved. At Parkside there is a new four-storeyed buildings for nurses. There have been substantial improvements at country hospitals.

I want to refer particularly to community hospital assistance in the metropolitan area. I think Semaphore was the first place where a group of people suggested a community hospital, and in its broad-mindedness and far-sightedness the Government provided assistance on condition that the people did something to help themselves. I think that was followed by schemes at Glenelg, Ashford, and Enfield. There is a movement on foot to have a Blackwood and district community hospital. There is an option over a beautiful property, which is on offer at £12,000. An architect has drawn a plan and he says it will cost £3,000 to make alterations and that £3,000 will be needed for equipment. Once again the Chief Secretary has agreed that if we carry out our part of the bargain the Government will carry on the good work of assisting community hospitals. We have an option for one month. My constituents in Blackwood, Belair and Eden, and people in Coromandel Valley, are optimistic that in a month's time about £6,000 will have been collected from residents. At a large meeting a fortnight ago I said I thought they were super-optimists, but apparently I do not know much about the financial position of

people in the hills. Of course, primary producers and orchardists have had a happy hunting ground in the last 10 or 12 years, and it may be that people in those areas have far more money than people on the plains. I told the meeting that taking the people on the plains as a guide they had a big job ahead of them. We are hoping for the best and if we cannot raise the money in one month we will do it if given a little more time. There has been some criticism of Housing Trust activities, not so much because of the number of houses built, but in other directions. I was delighted to hear Mr. Travers speak on this matter. It is easy to look at the figure of 4,000 and say "Yes, that is a lot of houses." He said that it meant 16 houses a day during the year, and that 16 houses constituted a street of houses. That conveyed more to me than the bald figure of 4,000 houses. I suggest that the honourable member did a service to the House when he explained the position in that way. It has become easier for me to understand it. Of that number 1,000 were built in the country. That is surprising because we have had questions frequently about more houses being built there.

It seems that the building of a house is a simple matter but that the provision of electricity and deep drainage is a colossal task. I pay a tribute to the Minister of Works who has done such an excellent job in co-operating with and assisting the Housing Trust, as well as in helping private builders in this way.

Mr. Davis—How has he helped?

Mr. DUNKS—By having deep drainage connected to the houses.

Mr. Davis—His efforts have not yet extended to Port Pirie.

Mr. DUNKS—Possibly, but it will not be long before people there are given what they want. Paragraph 25 of His Excellency's speech states:—

My Ministers have given careful consideration to the continuation of the legislation respecting prices. It is their policy to remove control to the greatest extent justified by trading conditions, but in their opinion, it is not yet desirable to abolish controls entirely.

For a number of years members have been told that when goods are in plentiful supply and competition is keener price control will be abolished, but I remind them that most goods are now in plentiful supply. In fact, acute competition prevails not only with regard to locally-produced goods but also with regard to goods produced in other States; yet still



we have price control. Let us try to get back to the good old days when it was a matter of the survival of the fittest and men had to work and give service in return for their income. It may be said that some business men are making profits, but if they are it is because they have had to work hard and buy well. They must pay the iniquitous pay roll tax whether they make a profit or a loss and they must act as agents for the Government in collecting sales tax.

Mr. Davis—I don't know how some of them struggle along.

Mr. DUNKS—Some of them—especially smaller traders—struggle and die, as the honourable member will see if he reads the gazette published periodically by a certain South Australian organization. The *News* of July 16 contained the following report:—

Canberra, Thursday: Retail prices of essential household goods rose more sharply in Australia between 1940 and 1952 than in any other Commonwealth country or the U.S. This is shown in the annual Labor report issued by the Acting Commonwealth Statistician (Mr. Carver). The retail price index for food, rent, clothing, and miscellaneous household expenditure rose from a base figure of 100 in 1940 to 245 at the end of 1952. Over the same period, index rises in other countries were:—Britain, 168; Canada, 183; New Zealand, 172; South Africa, 192; U.S., 190. The sharpest rise in Australia was from 170 points to 245 points between 1950 and 1952.

Is the sharp rise which took place between 1950 and 1952 a recommendation for price-fixing? Has price-fixing achieved what its authors said it would? Has it done anything to increase workers' real incomes? The answer to the economic problem is not price-fixing but competition of the sort which we knew before World War II, and which put Australia in a strong position before price-fixing operated. I support the motion.

Mr. JENNINGS (Prospect)—As a new member at the start of his maiden speech I feel that I should express my sincere gratitude to all those who have helped me and made me feel at home since I have been in this place. I include amongst those people my colleagues and also the Premier, his Ministers and particularly you, Mr. Speaker. I join with the mover and seconder of the motion in congratulating you, Sir, on your re-election to the high office which you have held for so long. I know you enjoy the confidence of all members on this side of the House, and your re-election unopposed is a fitting tribute

to the reputation you have earned for fairness and impartiality in the discharge of your duties. I refer also to the staff of this Parliament, the workers in and around this House. To say they are courteous, earnest, and co-operative is perhaps an understatement. As a new member I have been helped immeasurably by them and made to realize what an important part they play in the work of this Parliament.

The foregoing is prompted by a desire to give credit where it is due. I do not want the House to be misled into thinking that because of those remarks I am satisfied with the Parliament of South Australia or feel that it even remotely resembles what a democrat would expect a Parliament to be. Every thinking person who appreciates the electoral arrangement which allows this Government to maintain office—and the number of such people is growing daily—realize that when members opposite speak pious platitudes about democracy they are speaking hypocritically and paying lip service to something in which they do not believe. To members of the Labor Party, all of whom genuinely believe in democracy, it is nauseating to have to take part in the traditions and procedure of Parliament, knowing that this Parliament is only a masquerade of representative Parliament and that the traditions and procedure which were born with the origin of representative Parliament are here in South Australia only a facade to hide the suppression of democratic representation. Members will soon have an opportunity to discuss this matter fully, and I will reserve any further remarks on this subject until then, when it cannot be claimed that I am sheltering behind the privileges extended to a member making his maiden speech.

I turn to one of the most important issues confronting this Government, that of housing. Before I came into this Parliament I realized there was such a problem as has been unfeelingly referred to as the housing problem. I knew not only from observation but from personal experience that this problem existed, but I must confess I had very little understanding of it. Every member of this Parliament who is available to be contacted by his constituents is almost daily interviewed by people urgently needing homes. Some of these cases are distressing, and members see examples of families separated because they have nowhere to live, of sickness and discord caused by unsatisfactory living conditions and even of whole families living in one room. What can

be done to solve the problem? In these days of prohibitive building costs private building for the people who most need homes is almost out of the question, and therefore the average person requiring accommodation has no alternative but to apply to the Housing Trust. When a case is referred to a member of Parliament he usually has no alternative but to make representations to the trust on behalf of his constituent. A member does not need much experience before he realizes that such representations are usually purely formal. Replies are received from the Housing Trust which admit, over the signature of the general manager, that it is unable to help even the most pathetic cases. I already have a huge pile of such replies. I am sure members are familiar with their contents, which admit that the trust is unable to build nearly enough houses to provide accommodation for the people urgently needing them. The letters usually read something like this:—

As much as the trust would like to help the applicant it cannot do so at present. The trust realizes that this is a very deserving case, but is not able to offer any indication of when assistance can be given.

The emergency housing scheme has been completed and few vacancies occur, but for these hundreds of needy applicants are waiting. I must compliment the officer of the trust responsible for drafting its replies. He is a man of rare genius. It is amazing to find the number of ways in which he can say "No." He always means "No," but he never repeats himself.

The Housing Trust is blamed for the housing shortage, but that is most illogical, for housing is something over which the State Government has exclusive legislative authority. The trust is not to blame for the shortage, but the Government. A great number need homes and cannot get them and they have no prospect of getting them in the near future. The Government is neglecting its responsibilities. It proudly points to the fact that the trust has just completed another record year of home building, but thousands still need accommodation. Recently there has been a controversy about the increase in the rents of trust houses. Once again the trust is being blamed, but it should not be. If the Government endorses those increases it is its responsibility. On the other hand, if the Government does not think the rents should be increased it has power to prevent it, and should do so. Unfortunately Parliament was prevented last Tuesday from debating this question. It is grossly

unfair that one section of the community—the tenants of the older trust houses—should be called upon to subsidize the tenants of the newer homes. If the rents on the newer homes need to be subsidized the community as a whole should be responsible for it by a direct grant to the trust from the Government. We shall probably hear the old cry, "No money." We have become accustomed to that since the Party in office here helped their colleagues to get in office in Canberra, but I ask the Government to earnestly consider at least subsidizing the rents of prefabricated timber homes now being erected. The rents on these homes board on the fantastic. The next group to become available at Gilles Plains, in my electorate, will be let at £3 5s. a week. Such a rent is far in excess of what an average workman can be expected to pay, particularly as Gilles Plains is a considerable distance from the city and fares will be an expensive item in the weekly budget. If the rents on these houses are not subsidized either the basic wage will be forced up steeply again or the tenants, if there are not sufficient of them for their rents to be reflected in the basic wage calculations, will be subjected to a grave and perpetual injustice, for they will be paying much higher rent than that allowed in the basic wage formula. I hope that in the future the Government will take much more seriously its responsibility to provide adequate housing accommodation for the people.

Every controversy about transport in the metropolitan area seems to centre around the activities of the Municipal Tramways Trust. It seems that this suits the Government, for it allows the Premier—who is the Government in South Australia—to take credit for everything that goes well, but to lay the blame on the trust for everything that goes wrong. Indeed, the same can be said about all Government boards and trusts in this State. Many of the functions of government have been handed over to outside organizations, but we find the peculiar arrangement that allows the Premier to make all favourable statements but obliges the trust or board concerned to make all unfavourable ones. It will be interesting to know how this arrangement operates. I sincerely trust it is not a condition of appointment to these boards that such a state of affairs must be accepted. Recently the Government showed it is determined to allow the Tramways Trust to carry the full responsibility for transport in the metropolitan area instead of accepting it itself,

so we can only hope that the newly constituted board will be much more successful than the former. It certainly has a tremendous job to do, and it may be well to withhold criticism of it at this early stage, but that does not mean the Government should not insist on the trust following a certain broad policy. It should insist on the trust taking over all private bus routes. Obviously, these services operate at a profit; if they did not their owners would not continue to run them. Some, notably the Adelaide-Kilburn service, appear to be lucrative. Surely it is gross stupidity that the trust, which provides transport on the unprofitable lines, should allow private operators to conduct services on the better-paying routes. If the trust took them over it would not be in such dire financial straits.

If the trust provided all transport services in the metropolitan area we would have co-ordinated services. At present we have a patch-work, hit-and-miss system, with private buses fitting into the over-all pattern of the Tramways Trust system. The Government should consider running inter-suburban transport services. In other capital cities it is possible to go almost anywhere by a direct route. In Adelaide, if one wants to travel from one suburb even to an adjoining suburb he has to traverse the city. Apart from the time taken, this inevitably takes business from suburban shopping centres and concentrates it in the over-crowded city. Surely, if it is not possible, because of the smaller size of Adelaide, to have a comprehensive cross-transport system, then it would well repay the trust to consider instead of running trams and buses out to a terminus and then straight back to the city, to do a round trip which would at least have the effect of providing some measure of cross-transport from one suburb to another, and opening up another source of revenue to the trust. I have one specific proposal I should like the Government to consider, namely, the Adelaide-Kilburn bus service which now terminates on King William Road outside this House. The return journey involves the turning of big buses against the traffic in one of our busiest thoroughfares. I propose that these buses should make their inward journey across Morphett Street Bridge from North Adelaide, proceeding along Hindley Street and then turning into King William Street to commence their outward journey. This would involve no right-hand turn against the traffic on any part

of the route, and certainly would not income-mode any of the people who patronize that service. Where there are any shortcomings, it is not the trust which is to blame but the Government. Intrastate transport is the State Government's responsibility, and just as it is wrong to pass the blame for housing shortcomings on to the Housing Trust it is also wrong to blame the Tramways Trust or any other authority for those things which are the responsibility of this sovereign Parliament.

I will deal only briefly with education because several of my colleagues intend to speak more fully on this subject. The most striking thing about education in South Australia is that free education exists only in the minds of the Government and its officials. Here, as distinct from what applies in the other States, the parents have to supply all books and other school requisites for the children, and even the children of destitute parents have to go through a humiliating and degrading means test before free books are supplied by the department.

Mr. Stephens—They have to parade their poverty.

Mr. JENNINGS—That is so. In these circumstances it is inevitable that much of the responsibility for education falls on school committees, parents and their friends. They have the job of transforming four walls supplied by the department into a school. They are doing a splendid job, despite the great difficulties facing them. My plea is for a greater understanding by the Education Department of the excellent work these committees are doing and a greater appreciation of their efforts. I have been in close contact with many of these committees in my electorate and they are disappointed with the way in which they have been treated by the department. Often they have been treated in an off-hand if not openly hostile fashion, and gain the impression from the department that they are a nuisance, instead of their being encouraged. I ask the Minister responsible to give instructions that these school committees should receive co-operation from the department, because after all they are doing much of the work which is really the responsibility of the department itself.

I acknowledge that the question of pre-school kindergartens is very debatable. Nevertheless, this Government by a grant to the Kindergarten Union has encouraged kindergartens to be accepted as a part of our

educational system. That being so, why does not the Education Department take full responsibility for kindergartens? Admittedly, the Kindergarten Union is doing a very good job, but its limitations are manifest. Various kindergarten committees throughout the State are struggling against tremendous disadvantages to have buildings erected and raise money so that a school can be established in the locality. Frequently, by the time something is achieved, the children for whom the kindergarten was originally intended have children of their own. I believe that as kindergartens are now accepted as part of our educational system the Education Department should take full responsibility for the building of schools, the provision of teachers and all the other things involved.

I shall now mention something which applies only to my electorate and make no apology for referring to it, because it is very important. I refer to the condition of Churchill Road, which needs reconstruction. The work has been promised year after year and the local residents and councils are despairing whether it will ever be undertaken. This road, particularly since the northern suburbs have developed so rapidly, has become one of the busiest in the metropolitan area, and also one of the most dangerous because of the drainage problems associated with the area through which it passes. I ask the Minister of Works to take this matter up with his department to ensure that this very urgent work is placed high on the priority list.

The motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply was moved by the member for Torrens and seconded by the member for Murray, both of whom are new members. I congratulate both on having successfully negotiated their maiden speeches. I am now almost in the same happy position and only my colleague, the member for Norwood, has the ordeal still ahead of him. We heard the motion moved by the member for Torrens in a very appealing after-dinner style of delivery, and the similarity to an after-dinner speech did not end with the manner of delivery. The subject matter was just as flimsy. I resent the fact that he criticized the actions of members on this side on opening day when they valiantly fought for their own electorates. The honourable member said that he could hear the parish pump squeaking, as though members are not here to fight for their own electorates. At least members on this side showed that they

have paid sufficient attention to their Parliamentary work to indicate that they are aware of the requirements of their electorate. It was rather amusing, after this criticism, to hear the honourable member devote practically the whole of his speech to the *very, very* narrow interests of his own profession. Then we heard the member for Murray second the motion. He spoke dispassionately and constructively, and I do not think any honourable member would disagree with much of what he said. However, I for one found it almost beyond my comprehension how this gentleman, speaking so sincerely on the subject of decentralization, should be in this House supporting a Government which has so successfully pursued the centralization policy we have in this State, where there is a greater proportion of the population in the metropolitan area than in any other State. Just how the honourable member, believing as he sincerely does in decentralization, should be supporting Australia's greatest centralization Government is something for which he will have to answer, if not on Judgment Day, at least at the next elections. I hope that after his defeat at those elections he will receive the Liberal pre-selection for one of the few remaining Liberal seats so that his constructive advice will still be available to the Government of the day.

I compliment the Acting Leader of the Opposition, the member for Goodwood, not only on the splendid address he gave yesterday, but on the work he has performed during the absence of the leader of our Party overseas. I am sure all members will agree that he rose to the occasion nobly, and has been conspicuously successful in drawing the attention of the people of the State to the Government's shortcomings.

I do not wish to say anything about the speech today of the member for Mitcham, except to comment that when I came into this House I was told that he was an extreme right-wing Tory who was so reactionary that his views would not usually be accepted even by the conservative Government in office today. His speech showed that there were good grounds for believing what I had been told. I do not wish to mention anything about his sickening eulogy of the Premier. Even his remark about "Atomic Tom" was not original. He got that out of the *Advertiser*.

I join with the mover and seconder of the motion in their expressions towards Sir Robert and Lady George. I also welcome them to South Australia and hope they will have a

happy time here and will become as popular as their predecessors. I cannot agree with Mr. Travers' concluding remark, that there is no need whatsoever for a change of Government in South Australia. With charming originality he said, "When you are on a good thing, stick to it." He is on a good thing undoubtedly, and will stick to it as long as he can, but the people of this State are not on a good thing. They showed recently by an overwhelming vote that they do not want this Government. They are not sticking to the Government, but the Government is sticking to office with the help

of the most scandalous and cowardly electoral arrangement which exists this side of the Iron Curtain.

Mr. DUNSTAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### SWEARING IN OF MEMBER.

The Oath of Allegiance, administered by the Speaker, was taken and subscribed to by Mr. O'Halloran, member for Frome.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.7 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, July 28, at 2 p.m.