

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.**

Thursday, July 30, 1953.

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

**QUESTIONS.****STATE BANK HOUSING POLICY.**

Mr. FRANK WALSH—In the past the State Bank has built group homes for ex-servicemen, but I understand that it is now building group homes for civilians. I understand further that it is working under the Advances for Homes Act and that the cost of these homes is lower than that of Housing Trust homes by £300 or £400. Can the Treasurer say whether the bank will be permitted to make advances on second mortgage on these civilian group homes, similar to advances made by the Housing Trust, or whether the Government intends to review the legislation to enable the bank to lend more than £1,750?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The State Bank has operated under the State Bank Act for many years, except that since the war it has, as a complete innovation, undertaken some group housing schemes for ex-servicemen. From a report I have seen, I understand it has now decided to discontinue its group building activities, but, under its normal activities, it will continue to advance money and assist in the erection of individual homes on owners' blocks. Under the Homes Act the Government gives a backing of £1,750 and under the State Bank Act the same backing. Any second mortgage that may be granted by the Housing Trust, or any authority, is at that authority's own discretion, has not the backing of the bank and is not at the taxpayers' risk. So far as I know, there is nothing to stop the bank from advancing money on second mortgages or making greater advances than the £1,750 provided by the Act. All that the State will guarantee in respect of any advance by the Housing Trust, or under the State Bank Act or the Advances for Homes Act is £1,750. If the authorities advance additional amounts, as the Housing Trust is doing, it is their concern and at their risk.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Premier say whether the State Bank is continuing with the group building of homes on its own properties and can he indicate whether the Government intends to review the matter of increasing the upper limit of the advance to more than £1,750?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The last information I had on the matter was that the bank still had six houses in its last group, which had not yet been purchased, and that it was not proposed to start another scheme. In regard to raising the advance, the answer is "No." The money available to the bank is being taken up completely and if we raised the amount of an advance to one person we would immediately curtail the amount of a loan to another person. The money available to the bank is all absorbed with advances of £1,750. If we increase the advance there will be some satisfied clients, with other people who desire to be clients unable to be accommodated. In these circumstances the Government would not be prepared to increase the upper limit of the advance at present. Another aspect is that when the amount was raised to £1,750 interest rates were very low, and it was pointed out to the House at the time that a loan of £1,750 at the then current rate of interest did not mean that the purchaser was undertaking an obligation difficult to fulfil. Now that interest rates are much higher any person getting a substantial advance for the purchase of a house is accepting a heavy obligation in the matter of repayments. It would be undesirable to raise the limit at present.

**PENALTY INFLICTED BY JUSTICES.**

Mr. TRAVERS—In a recent press report of a police conference a prominent official of the Police Association made a pointed attack on justices of the peace in general, based, as the report would suggest, upon the fact that certain country justices ordered a man to be imprisoned when they had no jurisdiction to impose any penalty beyond a fine. Will the Minister representing the Attorney-General obtain a report whether in that particular case the prosecution was not conducted by one of the members of the Police Association, and whether it is not a fact that such police officer (1) read to the justices that part of the section which created the offence but refrained from reading that part which set out that the only penalty was a fine, and (2) expressly asked the justices to imprison him? Further, is it not agreed by all parties concerned—the accused, the justices and the policeman—that that is what occurred?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—This is entirely a matter of fact and I will ask the Attorney-General to inquire into the matter and will bring down a report as soon as possible.

## KADINA MEAT WORKS.

Mr. McALEES—Residents in my district appreciate the proposal for a meat works at Kadina, but can the Treasurer indicate when the works will be in production? I believe a temporary start has been made but unless the work is proceeded with soon there will be a considerable delay before operations commence.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Minister of Agriculture has been negotiating with the company concerned about the precise terms of the legislation, which will have to be accepted by this Parliament. The legislation will be submitted as soon as members are in a position to consider it, and that will depend on when the Address in Reply debate concludes. I understand the company is prepared to go ahead straight away and that the terms of the Bill have been completely settled with the Minister.

## TANUNDA RAILWAY STATION.

Mr. TEUSNER—Has the Minister of Railways a reply to my question of July 23 concerning the construction of an overhead pedestrian bridge at the Tanunda railway station?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I have been informed by the Acting Railways Commissioner that £3,000 has been included in the 1953-54 Loan Estimates for this work. The execution of the work will depend on the total which can be allocated and in turn on what proportion thereof is available for the work, which is part and parcel of the Acting Railway Commissioner's programme. I think it will receive very high priority.

## ONE-BRAND PETROL STATIONS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I asked the Premier a question last Tuesday regarding one-brand petrol stations and the sale of petrol in emergencies. Has he anything further to add?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The court has not defined the precise meaning of "emergency" for the purpose of the Act, nor is it defined in the Act itself, but it did consider the four definitions set out in the *Imperial Dictionary*, *Webster's Dictionary*, *Worcester's Dictionary* and the *Oxford Dictionary*. As those definitions are almost the same, the court's decision was based largely upon them. For the purposes of administration of the Act the department concerned also takes into account, quite apart from the dictionary definition, the case of a *bona fide* traveller who may have come to or be passing through Adelaide from some distance and is on a long journey requiring petrol. Although that

would not be strictly within the dictionary definition of an "emergency," nevertheless the department accepts that as being a *bona fide* case. If the honourable member looks at the definition of "emergency" in *Webster's Dictionary* he will find what is substantially the decision of the court up to the present.

## PORT PIRIE SULPHUR PROJECT.

Mr. HAWKER—In an address to the Rotary Club the Director of Mines mentioned the production of sulphur from the smelting of lead concentrates at Port Pirie. Can the Premier say what progress has been made with this project?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will get the honourable member a full report on the matter.

## ROADS AND SEWERS IN HOUSING TRUST ESTATES.

Mr. JENNINGS—Yesterday the Premier, in reply to a question by Mr. Stott, said he thought I would agree that the Housing Trust was doing a particularly good job in the construction of roads in Housing Trust areas. Unfortunately, I cannot agree with that, although to be fair I must admit that the trust, through taking the responsibility for these roads, has helped local councils out of an almost impossible position. However, just how well the trust is doing the job is an entirely different matter. Only recently in my electorate a group of new Housing Trust tenants could not move into their new homes because of the bad state of the roads and footpaths, and another example is the Northfield primary school where the approaches and entrances are so bad that no vehicles can get into the grounds and even the children have to climb through the fences in order to avoid being bogged when going through the gates. This school is entirely surrounded by Housing Trust homes. Will the Premier ask the trust to explore the possibility of having sewers laid and roads made before building operations commence?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If that were done we would be immediately confronted with the criticism that there were large areas sewered upon which houses were not built. As I pointed out yesterday, in schemes of this description it is impossible for all of the activities to take place at precisely the same moment. I have checked up many statements by members and have had figures taken out showing that the South Australian Housing Trust completes houses and housing schemes much more quickly than any other housing authority in Australia.

Moreover, the work the trust has done in connection with building roads is, under Act of Parliament, an obligation of local governing authorities so that any assistance the trust has given has been completely extraneous in regard to its functions as prescribed by Parliament. Many areas require sewers and I cannot give an undertaking that the Government will consider laying sewers prior to the houses being built in areas where there are no houses.

#### HOUSES UNFIT FOR HABITATION.

Mr. LAWN—I understand that, in view of the housing shortage, the Local Board of Health of the city of Adelaide is not condemning houses as unfit for human habitation unless they are in an extremely bad condition, and that attitude is to be commended. Yesterday, however, I had a complaint from a constituent whose boarding house is surrounded by premises of the Franklin Transport Company. I understand that the company has a habit of burning rubbish at about the time she is cooking meals for her boarders, and on one occasion a fire occurred at about 5 p.m. or 6 p.m. Moreover, because the heavy transports come and go during the late hours of the night and early hours of the morning she is losing boarders. On complaining to the company she was told, "Why don't you sell out?" and in an interview with the inspector of the Board of Health he said, "What is wrong with the company? I have already condemned two houses for it this year." Today, another certificate of the Local Board of Health condemning a house owned by the Franklin Transport Company has been handed to me, and how many more have been condemned I do not know. Will the Minister ascertain how many houses in the city of Adelaide have been condemned as unfit for human habitation in the last 12 months and how many of them are owned by the Franklin Transport Company?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will endeavour to obtain this information.

#### QUEEN VICTORIA MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

Mr. FRED WALSH—In yesterday's *News* there is a statement by Mr. Lancelot Parsons, president of the Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital Committee, in reference to a question I asked in this place last Tuesday. Mr. Parsons denied what I said in respect to the seating accommodation at the hospital, which he claims is adequate, but on further information I have obtained I persist in saying that it is inadequate. He went on to say that

some patients have to wait for some hours, as they cannot all be attended to at once, and pointed out that an appointment system had been tried and abandoned because the patients had taken little notice of it. He also said that the average daily attendance was 86 patients, who were attended to over a period of five hours, and that provided they spread their visits over the five hours there would be no unnecessary waiting time, and no need for anyone to stand. I suggest that unless appointments are organized in a proper and practical way people will attend at any time and there must be some congestion. When representations are being made to the hospital committee on this matter could the question of an appointment system be reconsidered with a view to its adoption in a practical form acceptable to all concerned?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I am getting the honourable member a report on the matter and I will ask for the additional suggestion to be considered.

#### DEQUETTEVILLE TERRACE LIGHTING.

Mr. DUNSTAN—A number of motor omnibus drivers who are members of the Tramway Employees and Motor Omnibus Employees Union have complained to the union that the lighting of Dequetteville Terrace, Kent Town, constitutes a grave danger to bus passengers. In consequence, the union asked the Kensington and Norwood Council to have the lighting improved. However, after much delay, the council decided to take no action and the omnibus employees are still concerned at the danger to passengers and themselves. Will the Minister of Local Government take this matter up with the Kensington and Norwood Council to see whether something can be done?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Speaking generally, and in some degree on this matter in particular, representations have from time to time been made that the Government, through the highways fund, should contribute to the lighting of certain routes. It was held very strongly, I think, in this House that any assistance given to relieve councils should be confined to the Port Road, which carries a great deal of traffic other than what may be regarded as local traffic, and the Anzac Highway, which also carries such traffic, particularly during the summer months. In order that the highways fund should be safeguarded the amount was limited to £5,000 for each road. Speaking generally, they are the only two roads on which the Government has any power in this regard. It is a matter of policy

as to what extent the Government should dictate to councils on what they should do. It is rather a delicate question at present because there is some controversy about the relative position of each, but I will obtain a report from the Highways Commissioner.

#### LAND ACQUISITION.

Mr. STEPHENS—I understand that some Government departments, such as the Railways, Harbors Board and Education, have the right to acquire land they require, and if the owners do not agree to what is considered a reasonable price, the department has the right to take the matter to the court and it is decided by arbitration. I understand the Housing Trust in the last few years has purchased some land from a person who bought it not long ago at a reasonable figure but never used it and sold it to the trust at a big profit. Much money has been made out of such deals. Has the Housing Trust the same power as Government departments to acquire land? If not, will the Government bring down a Bill to give it that power, seeing that it is acquiring land to provide housing accommodation for people badly needing it?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Housing Trust has not the power of compulsory acquisition of land, nor does the Government intend to bring down legislation to give it that power. There is a great difference between the operations of the Housing Trust and those of public utilities. In the case of the railways, for instance, alternative land is often not suitable for the work under consideration: the Railways Department is obliged to secure a particular block if it is to have access for its lines, whereas the Housing Trust in building houses has plenty of alternative blocks on which to build and does not need the same power of compulsory acquisition as a public utility. This matter was raised some time ago at a Premiers' Conference by the Premier of Queensland, who advocated that the housing authorities should have *carte blanche* authority to acquire land willy-nilly from any owners for housing. Indeed some States today have legislation to that effect, but when the case was put up it was found that the South Australian housing authority, without any such legislation, was procuring its land at about 33 per cent of the price at which similar authorities in other States were getting land under compulsory acquisition. Therefore, the case fell to the ground on the grounds of both necessity and cheapness. The Housing Trust has plenty of

opportunity to purchase broad acres without having the specific power of compulsorily acquiring individual blocks, so the Government does not propose to act along those lines.

#### PRISONERS AWAITING TRIAL.

Mr. TRAVERS—Can the Minister representing the Chief Secretary say whether it is not a fact that all accused prisoners who are held in custody either awaiting trial or during trial are (1) grouped together with convicted criminals within the definition of "criminal prisoners" contained in the Prisons Act; (2) kept on half the food ration of one who has been convicted and is serving a term of imprisonment with hard labour; (3) in exactly the same way as convicted prisoners subjected to penalties for such things as merely speaking to another prisoner without permission; and (4) locked alone in a prison cell from a little after 4.30 p.m. until 8 next morning?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The honourable member made some remarks on this matter in the Address in Reply debate. I am getting a complete report on the topic and I will see that it covers the points referred to. I am not personally aware of the facts he mentions, so I am not in a position to answer his question.

#### JOINT HOUSE COMMITTEE.

Mr. QUIRKE—With great deference I direct this question to you, Mr. Speaker. Recently three members of this House, representative of both Parties and the Independent members, requested to be received as a deputation by the Joint House Committee. The matters involved have no significance in this question, but it is a matter of deep concern that the Joint House Committee refused to see the deputation and informed its personnel that their request would be conveyed to the committee through you, Sir. With your permission and the concurrence of the House I shall read the committee's letter, signed by the secretary of the committee:—

With reference to your letter of the 23rd instant I am directed by the chairman to inform you that a special meeting of the Joint House Committee will be called on Monday, the 27th inst., at 9.15 a.m. to discuss the matter mentioned in your letter. I am further directed to inform you that the chairman will receive the deputation named by you at 11 a.m. on Friday, the 24th inst., or if inconvenient, at some other suitable time to be arranged.

In other words the committee will not receive the deputation as a committee. I challenge the committee's right to refuse to receive a deputation composed of members who elected it. Can

you, Sir, give a reason for such refusal and say why this subordinate body should take upon itself the right of elevating itself to an oligarchy of seclusion?

The **SPEAKER**—Last Thursday I received notice of the letter which was written by the member for Semaphore and addressed to the secretary of the Joint House Committee. The request for a special meeting was signed by the Acting Leader of the Opposition and the member for Hindmarsh, so acting under the rules of the committee I sought to convene a special meeting at the first opportunity and called it for Monday, the first available day following the Thursday. The meeting was held and the matters referred to in the letter of the member for Semaphore, written by him as secretary of the Opposition Party, were fully considered by those members of the committee who were able at such short notice to be present. I think the consensus of opinion of the meeting, following on discussion, was that further information might be secured by the chairman of the committee and brought forward at the next meeting, and that in the meantime the chairman might seek to interview the three members mentioned in the letter, the members for Eyre, Port Pirie and Stanley. I was willing at any time—and I still am—to see those members if they would like to see me about any aspect of the matters, which will again be brought forward at the next meeting of the Joint House Committee. I am not able to state any reasons why the members of the committee were unable to see the deputation last Monday, nor that they have come to a definite decision on the matter, although the question of receiving the deputation was considered and discussed.

#### ELECTORAL MAPS.

Mr. **JENNINGS**—Is the Premier aware that at present it is impossible to purchase from the Electoral Department maps of individual State electorates, and will he arrange for the department to have available at least a certain number?

The Hon. T. **PLAYFORD**—I will ask the Chief Secretary to take up that matter with the Government Printer.

#### OIL-BURNING LOCOMOTIVES.

Mr. **STEPHENS**—I have asked several questions in this House, both this session and last session, regarding the use of oil-burning locomotives on the Port Adelaide line and have referred to complaints regarding the damage done to homes adjacent to the line by these

locomotives, including damage from the slime and smoke emitted by them. A number of people have been advised that they have grounds for legal action against the Railways Commissioner the same as landowners may claim for damages caused to their properties by fire from railway engines. Requests have been made but apparently the Railways Commissioner can make no alteration to the position. If legal action is taken the taxpayers may eventually have to meet any damages awarded by the court. Will the Minister ascertain the legal position of the railways, and whether the Commissioner would have any defence to any action?

The Hon. M. **McINTOSH**—In pursuance of his obligation to provide services, the Railways Commissioner has been forced to use oil although he would prefer to use good coal. When good coal was available he removed a number of oil-burning engines from operation but they had to be re-instated because there were not sufficient stocks of coal. The actual position is that if only coal is used there will be complaints because of the lack of service resulting. It becomes a question of the greatest good to the greatest number. The Commissioner desires to maintain services with a minimum of inconvenience to the public and to himself. I do not accept the statement that much damage has been caused because, peculiarly enough, it was found that damage did not arise as the result of anything which could be controlled in regard to running of oil-burning engines. For instance, there was friction between an enginedriver and a house owner and annoyance was caused on both sides. If the member will supply particulars of the complaints I will submit them to the Railways Commissioner and ascertain whether anything can be done to obviate any inconvenience. Speaking generally, the Railways Commissioner is authorized by law to run his services and so long as there is no negligence in their operation he is not legally liable. The Railways Commissioner, and the Government, are anxious to avoid inconvenience to anyone but there cannot be omelets without broken eggs nor can railway services be maintained without fuel and if there is not sufficient coal oil must be used.

#### OVERSEAS LOANS.

Mr. **DUNKS**—In the *Advertiser* of July 29 an article headed "London Loan Talks by Western Australian Premier" reads:—

Hopeful news on finance for the development of Australia was brought back by the Western Australian Premier (Mr. Hawke) when he

arrived at Fremantle in the *Strathnaver* today, after having attended the Coronation. With some other State Premiers, he said, he had discussed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Butler) the prevailing limitation of internal loan raising in Australia. Because of Australia's urgent need for development, they considered it hardly conceivable that any State or Commonwealth authority would raise any objection to the granting of financial assistance by the British Government for an approved loan undertaking.

That surprised me because I always understood that from the days of Mr. Chifley the Labor Party's policy was to borrow within Australia. Will the Treasurer indicate whether he took part in these discussions and whether, as our overseas trade balance is so buoyant, we should borrow from overseas?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I was present at the discussions mentioned. A conference was called by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to discuss with State Premiers the general policy of Empire Development and particularly development along the lines desired by England. It is well known that the British Commonwealth, constituting the sterling area, has experienced currency difficulties in the last few years and the Prime Ministers have inaugurated a policy to build up the economy of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The present position is that the British Government does not permit the floating of loans on the British market by Commonwealth countries unless such loans are in accordance with an approved developmental programme. I was surprised that the Premier of Western Australia considered it would be possible for his Government to float a loan in London because my recollection of the talks is that it would be impracticable unless for some specific proposition. I believe that propositions to develop food or steel production would be sympathetically considered. New Zealand has already been refused a loan in connection with a bridge proposition and I do not think there is the slightest likelihood of the Chancellor of the Exchequer agreeing to a loan for any of the amenities described in the article mentioned by the honourable member. The Chancellor may be prepared to provide finance for a project designed to meet deficiencies in our national economy but no such proposition was suggested at this conference, which was of an exploratory nature. I was assured by a leading financial house in London that South Australia's credit was good and that if the Chancellor approved a loan no difficulties would arise, but we have made no request nor do we intend to. Before any loan can be floated

overseas it must be approved by the Loan Council and as no such proposition has been before the Loan Council I am unable to say what its views would be in that connection.

#### BULK HANDLING OF WHEAT.

Mr. STOTT—Section 25 (3) of the Public Works Standing Committee Act states:—

Upon any public work being referred to the committee the committee shall with all convenient despatch deal with the matter and shall as soon as conveniently practicable, regard being had to the nature and importance of the proposed work, report to the Governor and to both Houses of Parliament the result of its inquiries.

The question of the bulk handling of wheat in South Australia was referred to the committee on May 22, 1947, six years ago. Does the Premier think that is a reasonable time to elapse before a report from the committee is presented to Parliament?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—In the first place the committee during the last six years has, I think, had a record number of projects placed before it, and the Government does not make any complaint that urgent works have been held up awaiting reports from the committee. It is true that some of the investigations have been prolonged. The proposal mentioned is one, for instance, on which a large amount of investigational work can take place and still, perhaps, the right answer not be furnished. It is a very big undertaking and would probably involve, on present-day costs, tens of millions of pounds. I understand the committee has this matter in hand but beyond that I have no information.

#### QUESTIONING OF ACCUSED PERSONS.

Mr. DUNSTAN—It is the practice for police officers in cases where an accused person has come before a court, been charged and remanded for trial, to go to the accused person and question him without the knowledge or consent of the solicitor concerned in the case. This works a very grievous hardship upon a person who has sought legal advice and is yet subjected to questioning which may reveal to the prosecution the nature of his defence. Will the Premier ask the Chief Secretary to direct that this most unethical practice cease?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It is very easy to make a statement that unethical practices are being carried out and ask the Chief Secretary to give directions that they cease, but to put the matter in its proper perspective,

if the honourable member will mention a case in which such questioning has taken place, which would obviously be a dereliction by the police officers, it will give the Government an opportunity to check up the grounds of complaint and see that the necessary action is taken to remedy it. If the honourable member will give a specific case or some information which will enable me to identify a case, I shall be pleased to go into it.

Mr. Dunstan—I can give you several.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

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

(Continued from July 29. Page 224.)

Mr. STOTT (Ridley)—Yesterday in my speech I mentioned the progress that South Australia and other States, together with other parts of the world, were making in road transport. I contend that the Australian Governments must be prepared to recognize the inevitable—that road transport is here to stay and they must be prepared to amend their policies accordingly. I also mentioned that private firms, because of the attitude of the Transport Control Board, were purchasing their own trucks and carting their own goods, thus losing revenue to the board. A certain type of scarifier has become very popular in the country and weighs 1 ton 6cwt., which is thus below the 2-ton minimum rate fixed by the Railways Department. The freight for forwarding this scarifier from Murray Bridge to Wunkar on a weight basis would be £6 2s. 2d., but because it is below the 2-ton minimum the charge is £9 8s. For a similar machine sent to Brinkworth the corresponding figures are £9 3s. 4d. and £14 2s., to Bala-klava, £7 12s. 1d. and £11 14s., and to Moonta, £10 0s. 2d. and £15 8s. Because of these excessive charges farmers are carting with their own trucks, although they would be prepared to pay the lower freight rates. The Government should look into this aspect to see whether it is possible to amend the 2-ton minimum freight rate on these classes of implements.

I refer now to the Education Department and area schools. The department is getting many more applications from country districts for subsidies for the transport of children to schools, and I have received from the Minister and the department many replies to my representations advising that the daily mileage allowance per child is becoming so heavy that

the department cannot go beyond certain limits. This puts many parents who live a little beyond the bus routes in a very awkward position. Several have asked for the routes to be altered to serve them but have received a negative reply on account of the extra cost involved. The departmental officers suggest that the parents themselves should pay something towards the cost, but that in turn becomes rather heavy on parents in outlying districts, and I would once again ask the department to look into this question with the idea of encouraging country people to send their children to area schools. Most settlers understand that they must accept inconvenience through not being close to schools, but when it comes to hiring labour the first thing the worker or the sharefarmer asks is the distance from a school. I think this is a matter that the department should look into.

I now want to refer briefly to my visit to the United States of America and to some of the things I saw which I think could be adopted in South Australia with advantage. A visit to Washington itself is a great experience and one learns that America has built its traditions around its great men. Australia, being such a young country, has none of the great traditions of England and the European countries whose beginnings are lost in antiquity. America on the other hand, being a comparatively young nation, has built its traditions around its great men—Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and many others—whose memorials are to be seen in the capital. Their architecture leaves one spellbound: there is nothing like it anywhere in Australia. We have some memorials to great men, but they do not tend to build a tradition around the great men of the past or stimulate the people. Memorials of that character should be awe-inspiring in order to create sound citizenship.

Mr. Fred Walsh—We could have one for Atomic Tom.

Mr. STOTT—The honourable member, who has travelled abroad, grasps my conception. While the member for Hindmarsh may not agree a great number of people in South Australia would, although we may be treading on somewhat delicate ground in discussing the thought while the Premier is alive and kicking—thank God! Memorials of this nature should be massive and the architecture inspiring in order to stimulate citizens to become better citizens. We are young enough to learn this lesson. Leaving Washington I

had the pleasure to go to Annapolis situated on Chesapeake Bay. Leaving this large town, which is the training centre for the U.S.A. Navy, one crosses Chesapeake Bay Bridge. This is 7½ miles long, with two spans to let shipping through. Prior to my trip overseas I looked upon Sydney Harbour Bridge as one of the greatest engineering marvels of the world, but in comparison with some of the bridges in the U.S.A. it is like our city bridge across the Torrens. On the other side of the bridge, in the State of Delaware, I was taken to see a piece of land which it was proposed to settle. The land was divided by a small river not quite as wide as the Torrens and we rowed across in a dinghy. They asked if I thought it was good land for agricultural purposes. Later I was told that the average rainfall was about 18½ in. I said I thought the land was so good that if a man stood there long enough he would take root and grow. They could not settle the land because there was no bridge across the river, but they intended to build one. I said we did not do it that way in Australia. I pointed out that we would hold an inquiry before anything was done. That was incredible to my American friends. They could not believe we would hold an inquiry into the need to put a bridge across a river. They asked how our people and their motor vehicles got across the river, and when I said we used punts, they said they thought punts had gone out with Noah's Ark. This shows how the Americans get things done. It is incredible that in Australia we hold up settlement because there is no bridge across a river.

Perhaps members, particularly country members, would like to know something about the operation of the commodity credit corporation in the United States of America. It is behind what they call "price support." In connection with wheat, from time to time they take a valuation of certain commodities, consider the export market, and then say what the corporation is prepared to pay. At present it is paying 2 dollars 21 cents for every bushel of wheat it buys from farmers. In Australian currency that is 19s. 9d. a bushel. In 1952 the corporation paid 2 dollars 20 cents, which was one cent lower than the present price, and that is important because it has some bearing on world prices. I shall not attempt to forecast the future of wheat prices. I am not an oracle, an Inigo Jones, or a Mandrake, with the ability to look into the future, so I will content myself with giving facts. The United States of

America, which is an exporting signatory to the International Wheat Agreement, has to make up the difference between the agreement price of 18s. 3½d. a bushel in Australian currency and the 19s. 9d. a bushel paid to her growers. Consequently the Treasury of the United States of America loses money on every bushel marketed. The surplus of wheat at present in the United States of America and Canada must have a depressing effect on prices. If it were not for the "price support" legislation the position in the United States of America would be difficult. The corporation puts wheat on to the market as orderly as possible in order to avoid depressing prices. It is estimated that today's wheat surplus in Australia, Canada and the United States of America is 1,264 million bushels. That is 95 per cent more than at this time last year. Twelve years ago the world demand for wheat was 550 million bushels; today it is 1,050 million bushels. This increase in the demand is an important factor in assessing world wheat prices.

The United Kingdom is not a signatory to the International Wheat Agreement. Every effort was made to get her to sign, and it is regretted that she did not agree. The United Kingdom looked at the matter as a business deal. She believes that if she stands outside the agreement she will be able to buy wheat more cheaply, but that is a matter of opinion. I do not think she will be able to, because the price would have to go below the agreement floor price of 13s. 10d. a bushel. It has a long way to drop from 18s. 3½d. to 13s. 10d. The agreement has three years to run, but let us suppose wheat dropped to 13s. 10d., the floor price. The United Kingdom, apparently, thinks it can get it below 13s. 10d., but if any of the exporting signatories sold it to her below that figure the International Wheat Agreement might as well be torn up. India, which buys a lot of Australian wheat, would complain and want to get wheat at the same figure as Britain. I do not think the United Kingdom will be able to purchase wheat below the floor price.

One would think that with huge surpluses of wheat and plenty of shipping available the price would tend to fall. At present Canada is shipping all the wheat she can while the lakes are not frozen, but, notwithstanding that, a fortnight ago the price at the Chicago auctions was 17s. 10d., and last week it increased to 19s. 3d., so the market is firming instead of falling. The world has the greatest surplus of wheat it has ever known, and if this

cannot force the price down I cannot see how there can be any great slide in wheat values in the near future. When the lakes in Canada are frozen in October the price may rise, and the price support legislation in the United States has a steadying influence. If there should be a drought in the United States or Canada we should have a great shortage of wheat. No one can foretell what the weather holds. Of course, another bumper season may result in a slight easing of prices, but Nature always takes a hand in these things. I remember speaking in this House some years ago about a proposal to restrict the Australian acreage under wheat because of the huge yields. I have never liked acreage restrictions and we had a dry year after that and heard no more about restrictions. The United States has a policy of acreage restrictions. It is on a voluntary basis, but if a farmer does not conform he finds he has no price support for his excess produce.

Another factor has operated recently to bring down the price of wheat. The United Kingdom is changing her system of purchasing from the operations of the British Ministry of Food, which bought all her wheat and fruit and other food requirements during the war, to private merchants and millers. Under the International Wheat Agreement England purchased 177,000,000 bushels of wheat, and the Ministry of Food has built up considerable stocks. That department has been unloading them to private traders. Naturally, this has had a tendency to retard buying, but when England's stocks have been depleted the merchants and millers will begin purchasing wheat from Australia and other countries. At Washington the Australian delegates agreed to an export quota for this country of 70,000,000 bushels on the assumption that the United Kingdom would remain a party to the agreement, but when she withdrew Australia made representations under clause 10 of the International Wheat Constitution to reduce her quota so as to be able to supply parties outside the agreement. The quota was reduced to 48,000,000 bushels. The United Kingdom will have to pay the market price of wheat, which is now 19s., compared with the ceiling of 18s. 3½d. under the agreement. Many people have condemned Australia for not meeting the United Kingdom's wishes in regard to the price of wheat, but they should acquaint themselves with the facts. Australia is not forcing the United Kingdom to pay a price higher than the

ceiling under the agreement: the United Kingdom has herself to blame. She had the opportunity of becoming a signatory to the agreement and paying no more than the maximum price of 18s. 3½d., but in a business deal she thought she would get a lower price outside the agreement. I do not blame but admire the United Kingdom for trying to get her price on a business basis as she was entitled to do, but if she is to be smart in business there is no reason why Australia should become easy. We must meet the United Kingdom and all other buyers on equal terms. The Australian Prime Minister asked the United Kingdom to lower her tariff of £2 sterling a gallon on Australian wines and the Australian wine trade sent a representative to London in an unsuccessful effort to have the tariff reduced. The United Kingdom is prepared to buy continental wines rather than Australian wines, and will not, because of a purely business outlook, reduce the tariff. Some years ago the signing of the Ottawa Agreement brought about British Empire preference, but what has become of that preference today?

Mr. Macgillivray—Because the United Kingdom had to take the major responsibility for financing the last war she is not in such a strong financial position today.

Mr. STOTT—No-one wants to assist the United Kingdom more than I do, but under the International Wheat Agreement the consent of other countries had to be obtained. Representing Australia at the international wheat talks I would have been prepared to agree to 200 cents, which was the maximum price to which the United Kingdom would agree, but the United States and Canada said "No, 205 cents (18s. 3d.) shall be the price." If we had said "Yes" to the United Kingdom, no agreement would have been made.

Mr. Macgillivray—Therefore the U.S.A. decides the agreement between the United Kingdom and other parts of the Empire. Are there no bonds of empire today?

Mr. STOTT—Had Canada agreed with Australia we could have forced the U.S.A. into line, but Australia could not have done that on her own so we had to agree to 205 cents, the price agreed to by 41 importing nations. At the port of Baltimore on the north of Chesapeake Bay on the Atlantic Coast I was amazed to see the way in which wheat, barley, oats and soya beans were handled in bulk. Barges from inland rivers pulled into silos and the grain was sucked from their holds in a short time. South Australia and Victoria,

our principal barley-producing States, seem to think that barley cannot be handled in bulk, but I have seen it handled in bulk not only in U.S.A. and Canada, but also in Sweden and Holland and I do not believe it cannot be handled in bulk here.

Mr. Shannon—Why did the Barley Board reject Ardrossan as a centre for the bulk handling of barley?

Mr. STOTT—No doubt they considered the costs were too high.

Mr. Shannon—How could the equipment be installed more cheaply?

Mr. STOTT—Today such equipment is not cheap, but I would have liked to see the Barley Board co-operate, and I believe it will once bulk handling is adopted.

The Hon. C. S. Hincks—Wouldn't one of the main difficulties be the grading of barley?

Mr. STOTT—That does not seem to be a difficulty in Fremantle, where barley is handled in bulk in huge sheds. I have seen a cargo of milling grade barley at one end of a shed, a cargo of malting barley in the centre, and a cargo of oats at the other end. Apparently provision has been made for the different grades.

The Hon. C. S. Hincks—Wouldn't there be the risk of green barley getting in?

Mr. STOTT—Yes, but surely the same problems arise in other countries. I have been told that producers in those countries prefer to handle barley in bulk, and I am suspicious of the attitude of maltsters in Victoria and South Australia who do not welcome the idea of bulk handling, for I believe that profits are made on the sale of sacks. On Yorke Peninsula the modern farmer has converted his plant to bulk handling equipment and installed a travelling bin on his harvester. About 90 per cent of the farmers on the Peninsula grow both wheat and barley, and if a farmer spends money on the modern equipment necessary to handle wheat in bulk he naturally wants that equipment to handle his barley crop as well, otherwise he has to take the bin off the harvester and revert to the bag method. Growers will have to put pressure on the Barley Board to get busy on the question of bulk handling. In Chicago I was shown over the facilities for the bulk handling of barley by the Vice-President of the United States Farm Bureau, the biggest farmers' organization in the U.S.A. with a membership of 1,125,000. The other principal farmers' organization has a membership of 900,000, so members will appreciate the terrific pressure these organizations can exert on the United States Senate. These

organizations played a terrific part in bringing about the International Wheat Agreement.

I believe South Australia will have bulk handling before long. I am terrifically disappointed—and I express not only my own view but that of hundreds of South Australian farmers—that the Public Works Committee has not yet reported on the bulk handling proposals. Admittedly the committee has encountered some difficulties, but I submit with great respect to the chairman and other members, for whom I have the highest regard, that they are looking at the question in too much detail, whereas they should report to Parliament only on whether it is necessary for and would be economical in South Australia. The questions of belts, trucks, silos and other equipment should be left to the bulk handling authority to consider after its establishment and the committee should not attempt to cross all the T's and dot all the I's in a bulk-handling scheme. The terrific capital cost of building the Ardrossan silo has been more than offset by the gains made by Yorke Peninsula farmers. Mr. Ossie Heinrich, one of the most respected farmers on Yorke Peninsula and well-known for his great ability, told me that by converting his equipment to bulk-handling he has saved more than 2s. a bushel on wheat. Other farmers, perhaps a little less efficient, may save less than that, but considerable sums have been saved by the use of the bulk-handling equipment. Bulk handling has become an urgent necessity all over the State. It is not only a question of the cost; we must also consider the necessity of keeping young men on our farms. Older members will remember the days when the farmer converted from horses to tractors. As a vigorous young fellow who had many a row with his father on this question, I was told that tractors were not so economical as horses for they did not foal. That was my father's philosophy. The tendency was to transfer to tractors because it took the hard labour from farming. If young people are to be encouraged to rural pursuits bulk handling must be introduced because it, too, will overcome much hard labour. I journeyed to Niagara Falls and was astonished at their great beauty. However, I do not want to delay the House with descriptions of the picturesque scenery but those falls are responsible for nine hydro-electric power stations which supply power to the northern States of the United States and to the southern States of Canada.

Mr. Quirke—The falls were there first.

Mr. STOTT—Yes, but the American people displayed sufficient initiative to utilize them. I have a great admiration of the Americans' ability to get things done.

Mr. Dunstan—Have we any falls which could be used for hydro-electric power?

Mr. STOTT—There is a hydro-electric power station on the Barron Falls in Queensland and another in Tasmania. The Queensland Government has not made sufficient use of the Barroq Falls nor has it seen the wonderful possibilities it provides for developing the Atherton Plateau. If roads were built in that area power could be provided from Barron Falls and the country could be planted with sorghum and wheat. The Premier has revealed foresight and energy in proceeding with plans to develop atomic power, but notwithstanding his vigour in developing the State, many projects which have been started are nowhere near completion. Whenever members approach the Minister of Works he is completely negative. When members ask for the provision of sewerage, roads, bridges and schools his reply is constantly "first things come first." The Cabinet must measure up to the foresight and vigour of the Premier and stop saying "you can't do that and you can't do this." The Government has a brilliant leader but the Ministers do not measure up to his capabilities and are too negative.

Mr. Davis—Don't you think he has some control of his Ministry?

Mr. STOTT—I do not know. If South Australia is to be developed and the Premier has the necessary foresight there should not be a negative approach to problems by his Ministers.

Mr. John Clark—Do you suggest it is a one-man show?

Mr. STOTT—I hope it isn't and I am doing my best to make it a five-man show. I have nothing personal against the Ministers and have the greatest admiration for the Minister of Lands who is not quite as negative as some: he does say "yes" on occasions, but I have never received a definite answer from the Minister of Works. This morning's *Advertiser* mentions proposed alterations to the Licensing Act to be introduced by a member in another place. American hotels are amazing and the service is wonderful.

Mr. Davis—At a price.

Mr. STOTT—All services must be paid for no matter what they are. In America one is charged 11s. 6d. for a haircut. With some friends I went into a restaurant in the large town of Richmond, about 140 miles from

Washington. Mr. Tadman, from London, ordered a steak and was charged the equivalent of 42s. Australian currency. It was a T-bone steak. The various States control their own hotel hours and it was rather amusing when travelling on the Santa Fe Express to notice the different hours. In some States there is a 24-hour service but immediately the train arrived in Kansas the bar was closed and liquor was not served. I also visited Beltsfield College which is similar to the Waite Research Institute but covers an area five times its size. Its laboratories undertake research into various means of farming. Experiments are being conducted with hormone sprays. If a wheat crop is sprayed with hormones, weeds are destroyed and there is a stimulating effect on the plants. Americans are hopeful of eradicating rust from the wheat with the same spray. When those experiments are concluded further details will be forwarded to me.

For some time there have been negotiations for the continuation of the wheat stabilization scheme. The Wheat Federation has asked the Commonwealth and State Governments to continue the scheme. On June 15 representations were made to the various Governments with a view to obtaining for wheat for flour and stock feed a local market price equivalent to the average between the export price and the cost of production. In the Agricultural Council there was no majority favouring that proposition and the matter was adjourned. At that meeting a majority favoured the fixing of the price of wheat for flour at the cost price, which today is 11s. 11d. bushel, and lifting the price of stock feed to the international price of 18s. 3½d. The Ministers of Agriculture of South Australia and New South Wales voted against that proposal, I think very wisely. At the adjourned meeting on July 27 those two Ministers were able to persuade the Western Australian Minister to come into the proposition of a flat rate of 15s. They deserve commendation for their stand, whereby they did a service to the wheat industry of Australia. The proposal is that the price of wheat will be 15s. bushel for flour and stock feed. If the export price falls below 15s. then the price will drop below 15s. by the amount of the fall, but the price will never be less than the determined cost of production price. If the cost of production price increased to more than 15s. then that price would apply, but if the export price fell to 14s. 6d. and the cost of production price was 14s., then the price to growers would be 14s. 6d.

In addition, the Commonwealth Government has agreed to provide a guarantee for 100,000,000 bushels. While the international agreement functions there is not much risk that the Commonwealth Treasury will have to make up the guaranteed price because the floor price under the agreement is 13s. 10d. In addition, growers will contribute 1s. 6d. a bushel toward the fund. An amount of £9,000,000 contributed by growers is already in credit against the No. 15 pool and under the No. 14 pool there is £11,000,000. The latter amount will be paid to growers as quickly as possible, probably this year, or as soon as the fate of the wheat stabilization plan is known. The £9,000,000 in No. 15 pool will remain in the fund and carry on into the new scheme. From their contribution of 1s. 6d. a bushel growers will be able to get a rebate of £4,000,000 in 1954. That will leave £5,000,000 of the £9,000,000 and in 1955 the balance will be paid to the growers. When the fund gets to £20,000,000 anything in excess will be paid to growers as quickly as possible. The guaranteed cost of production price is worked out by the Wheat Index Committee, of which I am a member. I am disappointed that the Commonwealth Government has not accepted its findings. This committee found the true cost of production price to be greater than the amount the Commonwealth Government has allowed, namely, 11s. 11d. The object of the committee was to ascertain the new cost of production price so as to bring it in as the base price for the operation of the new scheme. This price had to be approved by the Commonwealth and State Governments. The position is that the base price operated as from December 1, 1952, and when the committee makes its inquiries in October to ascertain how much the units of the cost of production have increased since December, 1952, any increase will be added to the 11s. 11d. and will become effective as from December 1, 1953. The committee took into consideration that the cost of bags and petrol had been reduced and that rail freights and the basic wage had been increased. My estimate is that by December 1, 1953, the cost of production will be between 12s. 6d. and 12s. 8d. a bushel.

Mr. Frank Walsh—What is the weekly wage paid to farm labourers in South Australia?

Mr. STOTT—The last check up I made showed that they were being paid above the basic wage. The committee took into account the basic wages being paid in the capital cities and also the C series index figures for each quarter, and then calculated the position.

Members of the Labor Party will be interested to know what is the effect on the basic wage of the increase in the price of wheat for flour from 12s. to 15s. and the advance in stock feed prices from 14s. 2d. to 15s. For every increase of 2s. 4d. a bushel for wheat for flour there is an increase in the price of bread of 1d. a loaf, so if the price is increased from 12s. to 15s. this means an increase in bread of 1½d. a loaf. To ascertain what the additional cost to a family would be one calculates how much bread the average family would consume, and then takes into account the C series index figures and the resultant effect on the price of poultry, bacon, pork, eggs, and butter. The effect on the basic wage because of increases on those lines is not as great as with bread. The increased cost to consumers because of advances in the price of bread and the other items would be approximately 1s. 5d. a week. For every increase of 1s. a bushel in the price of wheat for flour the wage is affected by .52d., and for pig meat an additional 2.8d. and for pork, bacon and eggs 2.6d.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Do you suggest that the basic wage will be increased by 1s. 5d. per week.

Mr. STOTT—Yes.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Evidently you can get certain figures which we cannot.

Mr. STOTT—You can calculate the figures. If the cost of bread is increased by 1½d. a loaf you then calculate the quantity used by the average family, and I contend that our calculation is fairly accurate.

Mr. Lawn—How many times would you multiply the 1½d.?

Mr. STOTT—For the average family we allowed a total of seven loaves a week.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Is that a Government committee you refer to or a committee of your own organization?

Mr. STOTT—It is a committee of our own organization which got figures from the Statistician's Department. We did not get them from the regimen figures. The committee believes that its figures are fairly accurate. The scheme will have some opposition from a number of farmers who will argue that they do not see why they should pay 1s. 6d. a bushel into a reserve fund in order to build up a guaranteed price for the future. Others will contend that the £9,000,000 in previous pools should be paid out now, and there may be something in their contention. I had the idea that

it would be best to have a plan with the £9,000,000 in the No. 15 pool carried forward and a 1s. a bushel contribution from the grower, but the committee of which I was a member calculated—of course without complete accuracy, but taking into consideration the average crop realization, the average quantity exported and the average quantity used on the local market, and allowing for one dry year in the five year spread—that it would need about 1s. 6d. a bushel, or up to even 2s. 6d. if the growers were paid out completely the £11,000,000 in the No. 14 pool and the £9,000,000 in the No. 15 pool now. I contended that it would be much better to leave the £9,000,000 in the fund and fix a smaller contribution of 1s. a bushel—which I thought high enough—and the Commonwealth Treasury was, I thought, too conservative in its estimate of 1s. 6d. a bushel. However, that was the best deal we could get through and if the wheatgrowers moan because they are not to get the £9,000,000 in the pool they must be prepared to make a bigger contribution of 2s. or more.

As I understand it, uniform legislation will be drafted in all States to authorize a ballot of growers. If the ballot is in the affirmative—and it must be carried in all States—the Parliaments concerned will bring down legislation to make the scheme effective. I am hopeful that we will get a majority in every State, although there is some doubt about Queensland. There was some doubt about Victoria, but I have none now because the Victorian Government has swung completely over. At the previous conference in June the Victorian Minister favoured the idea of wheat being sold at the cost price of flour. Now the position is reversed and he has undertaken to recommend to his Government the adoption of the majority decision of the Agricultural Council which provides for 15s. a bushel. If that is done I have not the slightest doubt about an affirmative vote in Victoria and I am also very confident of an affirmative vote in South Australia, Western Australia and New South Wales. The position in Queensland is a little difficult. The Minister of Agriculture said he could not give an undertaking from his Government, but would report all the facts to his Cabinet which would have to make the decision. We know that they are not too happy about the position, but there are some factors which I think will influence the Queensland Government to come in; I cannot see its being the odd one to stand out. If

I am wrong and the Queensland Government rejects the plan I believe we can carry on without it. Some difficulties would have to be overcome. The growers in Queensland are contributors to the £9,000,000 in the No. 15 pool and possibly they would have to be paid out their portion of it, but I say, with some reservation as a layman, that I believe the legal difficulties could be overcome.

In reply to a question recently the Premier said that the Government was considering amending the Public Works Standing Committee Act with a view to altering the £30,000 limitation now imposed. This limitation was fixed in 1928, which is a very long time ago and costs of material and labour have increased tremendously since then. I believe the figure should be brought up to £90,000, for it should not be necessary to refer every tiddly-winking little project such as school houses or police stations to the committee. I am looking forward to this session of Parliament with a great deal of optimism. We have several new members among us and I congratulate them on their election and hope that they will play an important part in our proceedings. The member for Torrens and the member for Murray respectively moved and seconded the motion with great distinction and I congratulate them. On the other side of the House there are young new members full of enthusiasm and vigorous anticipation which, of course, is a good thing; young blood in Parliament is welcome. I recall when I came here as a young man in 1933, full of hope and enthusiasm, and I welcome this enthusiasm in debates. If there is anything that I can do in my modest way to assist them I shall be only too happy to put my services at their disposal. More fire, more cut and thrust in debate is stimulating. I know that I get very vigorous in debate at times, but what I like about this Parliament is that though we may fight vigorously for our principles we can all remain firm friends. Let us look forward to great results from this Parliament and especially to next year when Her Majesty the Queen will visit us. Let us lift this Parliament to the dignity of the occasion and give Her Majesty a great royal welcome. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

Mr. LAWN secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.27 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, August 4, at 2 p.m.