

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.**

Tuesday, August 18, 1953.

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

**AUCTIONEERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House the appropriation of such amounts of the general revenue of the State as were required for the purposes mentioned in the Auctioneers Act Amendment Bill.

**WILD DOGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House the appropriation of such amounts of the general revenue of the State as were required for the purposes mentioned in the Wild Dogs Act Amendment Bill.

**QUESTIONS.****MANNUM-ADELAIDE PIPELINE.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The Premier was reported in this morning's press as saying in a speech last night that a threatened hold-up of the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline had been averted. Can he indicate the nature and cause of such threatened hold-up?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—When the Commonwealth Government imposed restrictions on imports by instituting a licensing system the contractors for the electric motors for this project immediately ceased operations upon those motors and said they would not be prepared to go ahead with their manufacture until an import permit had been obtained. On the other hand the Commonwealth Government at that time was issuing permits on a quarterly basis and as, of course, these motors were not to come forward for some quarters ahead we could not secure import licences for them. So, on the one hand we had the English firm not prepared to make the motors unless we could get an import licence and on the other we could not get one because it would not be in respect of the current quarter. That is the reason for the threatened hold-up. When I was in England I personally took up this matter with the managing director of the company, and after negotiation he agreed to step up the delivery of the motors and give them priority in his works. A schedule has now been provided which, I understand, is entirely satisfactory to the Engineering and Water Supply Department.

**GUMMOSIS IN APRICOTS.**

Mr. TEUSNER—Following upon a very impressive deputation which I introduced to the Minister of Agriculture last year urging the appointment of an officer to make research into gummosis in apricot orchards, Mr. Carter was appointed. Can the Minister indicate the nature of the research work done by this officer?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I have received from the Director of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute a very full report covering the work done from its inception in connection with gummosis, and also the work at present being done by the research officer appointed as a result of the deputation mentioned by the honourable member. It is a very lengthy report. I am having copies made and one will be available to the honourable member and also to the member for Stanley who accompanied him at the deputation, and if additional copies are required they will be provided.

**WATERSIDE WORK AT WALLAROO.**

Mr. McALEES—Waterside workers at Wallaroo, who have been unemployed for a number of days, receive attendance money but this is insufficient to keep them. They do not want these payments, but prefer work. There has been a tremendous outcry from other interests when there has been a shortage of labour on the waterfront, but when there is an over supply nothing is said by them. Can the Premier use his influence with the Wheat Board, the Barley Board, the shipowners, or in some other direction to have ships sent to Wallaroo and thus make work available for these men?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Wallaroo is one of the outports where there has been some difficulty in recent times. At some periods we have had ships laying off waiting for labour to load them, whereas at other periods we have had to either truck or rail wheat away from the district to other ports because of insufficient labour to man the ships and handle the wheat available. I will discuss the whole question with Senator McLeay, the Commonwealth Minister for Shipping, to see whether we can arrive at some basis upon which an equitable amount of labour will be available at the port to prevent the unnecessary expense of sending large quantities of wheat out of the district, at the same time giving a reasonable continuity of employment for wharf labourers.

### TREE PRESERVATION.

Mr. PATTINSON—Whilst strongly commending the Premier for his recently expressed enthusiasm for planting new trees in various parts of the State, I ask him whether he will use his powerful influence to prevent the repetition of the unnecessary destruction of well-established and beautiful trees, particularly by State instrumentalities, and more particularly by the Housing Trust, in those portions of the Glenelg electorate known as Warradale, Oaklands, Marion and Darlington, which were previously some of the most picturesque portions of the State?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes.

### HOUSING TRUST GROUP SHOPS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked recently relating to the Housing Trust building more shops?

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

In the past, when it has erected shops, the South Australian Housing Trust has concentrated on essential trades such as butcher, grocer, chemist, etc. With the growth of private shop building the trust is finding that in many localities it is becoming unnecessary for the trust to build shops. However, in any case where the trust does undertake the building of shops in the future the trust now feels that consideration should be given to providing shops for some of the less essential trades such as hardware shops, in addition to the essential trades.

### RECOVERY OF GOLD.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—My question arises out of reading an article in the *Mail* of August 15. It said that the Gregerson concentrate classifier can recover 100 per cent of gold dust out of placer gravel and sand deposits, whereas previously only 70 per cent could be recovered. Can the Premier, representing the Minister of Mines, tell me what percentage of gold is recovered from battery crushers operated by the Government? Will he make inquiries about the claims of the statement in the *Mail* and, if they are verified, will he take steps to import a machine if the increased percentage of gold recoverable warrants it?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I did not see the article, but I doubt very much whether any machine has yet been produced to secure 100 per cent recovery of ore. However, I will get a report from the Minister of Mines giving any information we may have on this machine and furnish the honourable member with the result we are obtaining in our State batteries.

### WESTERN DISTRICTS HOSPITAL.

Mr. TAPPING—Can the Premier, representing the Minister of Health, indicate when the Western Districts Hospital will be officially opened?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No, but I can get the honourable member the information. I know that steps have been taken to open the nurses' portion as an auxiliary hospital long before the main building will be in operation. I believe that portion will be available in a matter of months.

### BARLEY CROP COMPETITIONS.

Mr. WHITE—Has the Minister of Agriculture a reply to the question I asked about two weeks ago regarding a subsidy for barley crop competitions as for wheat crop competitions?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I discussed this question with the Director of Agriculture to ascertain whether officers would be available to carry out the necessary work if we were to subsidize barley crop competitions. He has furnished me with the following report:—

The assistance of the Department of Agriculture is being constantly sought for barley crop competitions. There have been several requests asking that barley competitions be subsidized by the Government. It would be quite impossible for the department with the present staff to encourage barley competitions, particularly as it is doubtful whether the increased efficiency of production likely to follow would be in keeping with the effort. One of the chief values of the wheat crop competitions is the recommendation by the judges of crops suitable for seed. At the present time the Department of Agriculture is building up pure strains of Prior barley for distribution to barley growers, but until there has been a sufficient accumulation in the State of pure strains of Prior barley, even this advantage could not be applied to barley crop competitions.

I have a much lengthier report on the question which I am prepared to make available to the honourable member.

### THEBARTON BOYS TECHNICAL SCHOOL.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked last Wednesday about the Thebarton boys technical school fences?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The suggestion was to remove that portion of the fencing the honourable member complained of and put it on the western side of the school and then erect a new fence on the exposed side. What has been done has been in conformity with that arrangement. Before the honourable member

asked his question recently tenders were called—on July 30—for the new fence and they are returnable on August 26. When received they will be given immediate attention.

#### IRRIGATION PROJECTS.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Has the Minister of Irrigation a reply to the question I asked on August 12 about a statement in the press that certain private persons proposed to buy land adjacent to the Murray and develop it?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have received the following report:—

The following report was submitted by the chairman of the Irrigation Development Committee on October 31, 1945:—“Oxford Landing Area, 2,000 acres.—The land comprised in sections 12, etc., hundred of Cadell, the development of which had been proposed by the local residents at Cadell, has been inspected by the committee, which is of the opinion that the area is not attractive and from a soils angle does not warrant further investigation at this stage.”

#### POTATO PRICES.

Mr. DUNKS—Can the Minister of Agriculture say how the Prices Branch has come into the question of fixing potato prices considering that section 20 of the Potato Marketing Act (1948) states that the Potato Board may make orders fixing the maximum and minimum prices at which potatoes may be sold?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—Since that Act was passed it has been amended, and the right to fix potato prices expressly taken out of the hands of the board and placed in the hands of the Prices Commissioner.

Mr. DUNKS—Section 25 of the Potato Marketing Act states:—

In the year 1951, and in any third year thereafter, not less than one hundred growers registered under this Act may present a petition to the Minister asking that a poll shall be taken to decide whether this Act shall continue in operation.

Is the Premier's statement, that not fewer than 100 growers may petition the Minister at any time, correct, or must they wait until 1954 before again petitioning?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The opportunity was available in 1951, when growers petitioned the Minister for a poll, but as the petition was out of order it could not be given effect to. In the meantime the growers did not proceed with it. Under the Act the growers cannot petition at any time they like.

Mr. SHANNON—A very appropriate sub-leader appears in this morning's *Advertiser* dealing with the potato question, and it

epitomises what every sensible citizen considers is the position regarding potato prices. Does the Premier, as Prices Minister, agree with the policy of fixing differential prices for imported and locally-grown potatoes, and, if so, does he think that a 25 per cent increase for inferior quality potatoes from Western Australia is a fair thing compared with the price for those in store here and available for consumption on the local market?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The higher price of Western Australian potatoes is caused by the cost of transport, wharfage and other charges.

Mr. Shannon—Are they branded when they arrive?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—They are inspected and branded on arrival. The policing of prices of potatoes presents some difficulties to the department. A full discussion on potato marketing and price control took place between growers' representatives, members of the board, and myself, last Friday and it was agreed that the board should submit proposals to the Government for a better system than the present one, which has not been satisfactory, and which was designed to do two things, but in my opinion it did neither. It was designed to provide a reasonable price to the grower and to ensure that adequate stocks at reasonable prices would be made available to the public. The marketing broke down completely because from time to time there have been glowing offers from Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales to purchase our supplies. Up to £90 a ton has been offered and that has attracted from our market potatoes grown for consumption here.

Mr. Shannon—Now we have to pay the same high price for those imported from Western Australia.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It is a two-fold problem. It is not possible to have a potato monopoly provided by a board on the one hand, and free marketing conditions on the other. The Government introduced potato marketing legislation as a result of a request from growers. They have had the opportunity to repudiate that legislation by petition. Last Friday I told the growers' representatives frankly that if they desired the abolition of potato marketing and price control I believed there would be solid support for free marketing conditions in this House. However, they assured me they did not desire that action to be taken, as they felt they had received much benefit from the legislation.

The Potato Marketing Board, in co-operation with the growers, will recommend to the Government alterations of the legislation or present procedure which they believe will ensure two things—that the growers get a fair return and that the consumers receive fair supplies at reasonable prices. Those recommendations will be considered by the Government in due course. The price of potatoes has a big bearing on the economy of this State, for it has a bigger influence on the “C” series index than has any other item, except meat and rents. When we are forced into competitive marketing the “C” series index becomes of great importance.

#### OFFENDERS PROBATION ACT.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Today's *Advertiser* contains the following report:—

Special Magistrate Criticises Legislation—Youth to Enter Mental Home.—“This is not the first occasion on which I have felt embarrassed by the severe limitation on the power of this court, as distinct from other courts, under the Offenders Probation Act, and I take this opportunity to draw attention to the matter,” said the S.M. yesterday morning. He was dealing with a youth who, under a bond, is to enter a mental home for treatment.

The report goes on to explain that a youth was before the court and charged with driving a motor vehicle whilst under the influence of liquor, and that the S.M. said:—

My only power is to release without proceeding to a conviction, which I am doing.

Medical evidence was tendered, with which the S.M. said he agreed and which showed that the youth should be detained because of his low mentality. It appears that the court has no power to detain a youth permanently or for a definite period, and can only require a bond. Will the Minister representing the Attorney-General have this matter investigated to see whether the law can be amended to protect not only the public but also such unfortunate people as the youth charged in this case?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Yes.

#### SATELLITE TOWN NEAR SALISBURY.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—In reply to my question of August 4 the Premier said that 4,140 acres had been purchased by the Housing Trust at an average of £61 8s. 3d. an acre for the proposed satellite town north of Salisbury and that at present all the land was occupied under either grazing or agricultural licence pending the commencement of building operations. Can he say what amount is being received per acre under these licences?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I presume the amount varies according to the terms and conditions of the permits, but I will endeavour to get the information required. I point out that the Housing Trust operates under its own statutory authority and I want to make it clear that the replies I receive are, of course, those forwarded to me by the Housing Trust.

#### RIVER MURRAY BRIDGES.

Mr. STOTT—In reply to a question. I asked some time ago regarding bridges across the River Murray the Premier said that he had inquired in Holland and other places regarding a lighter type of bridge and suggested that such bridges would be suitable to place across the river at Blanchetown and Kingston. Has the Premier any further report on that matter and is it likely that the construction of such a bridge can be expected at Blanchetown?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have some additional information on this topic. Fortunately, at Blanchetown very close soundings were made of the river and mooring tests had already been made in connection with the Blanchetown weir, so vital information on the river bed was available for analysis to see what type of structure would be necessary for any bridging operation. At that point the river is not excessively deep and would not in itself present a big problem for bridging, but unfortunately the information available about the rise of the river at flood time places an entirely different construction on the whole question. The very great rise means that any low level structure would be flooded. Not only would the bridge be then out of service, but probably it would dam back debris and this would ultimately lead to its own damage and destruction.

Mr. Stott—Do not reports disclose that it rises only as high as 10 feet?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No, it is much greater than that. I have seen the maps which have been prepared, and only as late as 6 p.m. yesterday I discussed with Mr. Richmond, the Highways Commissioner, the type of structure which would have to be visualized. We compared notes on information he had received from overseas on the matter. At present he is undertaking investigations as to the most suitable design for a bridge and the cost. Some costs taken out prior to the latest increases in costs indicated a total cost of about £350,000, and, after doubling that to take in the second bridge and adding the amounts involved in the increased costs, the

project appears to be a costly major work. I hesitate to say anything more than that the Highways Commissioner is putting expert staff on to the problem of seeing what can be done to design a bridge suitable for traffic and not prohibitive as to cost. As soon as those reports are available I shall be pleased to inform the honourable member.

#### BAIL FOR ACCUSED PERSONS.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked on August 6 regarding bail for accused persons?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I have received the following reply from the Attorney-General:—

The practice with regard to granting bail referred to by the police magistrate in the case mentioned by Mr. Dunstan, M.P., is a practice that has operated for many years at the Adelaide Police Court, and is in accordance with a memorandum prepared in 1939 by the former police magistrate, Mr. Muirhead. The practice is a very sensible and practical arrangement, and its observance ensures that bail is granted promptly in all proper cases. The practice relates to the Adelaide Police Court where several magistrates are regularly sitting and where justices of the peace also sit as required. If bail is not granted by the police pursuant to section 70 of the Police Act the practice is to communicate with the police magistrate, and either he personally will attend to hear the application for bail or arrange for some other person to hear the application. There is no rule or regulation prescribing such practice, and there is nothing to prevent any justice hearing the application for bail and no reflection was made or intended to be made upon the justice of the peace concerned in the particular case. However, the practice above mentioned is very desirable in the Adelaide Police Court and is not inconsistent with the rights of an accused person to apply for bail.

#### LAND FOR CIVILIAN SETTLEMENT.

Mr. RICHES—In introducing the Loan Estimates last Thursday the Premier said that the sum of £170,000 had been set aside for the Lands Department and that most of the amount would provide for the purchase and development of land for civilian and State soldier settlement. Can the Minister of Lands say if any land has been purchased in recent years for civilian settlement, can he indicate land likely to be purchased in the next 12 months for such settlement, and is any land now available? I know a number of men who are most anxious to get on the land but have been unable to obtain any financial assistance to do so.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—An amount of £170,000 does appear on the Estimates to buy

land for the purpose indicated by the Premier. We have a considerable area of land in the South-East which was bought some time ago in the hope of developing it for soldier settlement, but it has not been approved by the Commonwealth. The department is now investigating the land with a view to developing the area under the Crown Lands Development Act, which would then make it available not only for soldier settlement but for civilian settlement as well. At the moment I have no land in mind for the particular purpose. I will get a full report for the honourable member.

#### MYXOMATOSIS CAMPAIGN.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I noticed in the press recently some reports from various districts in the State indicating that the virus disease, myxomatosis, is not so effective in destroying rabbits as when first introduced. Has this matter been brought under the notice of the Minister of Agriculture and has any reliable information been given to him, particularly as to whether it has been found that some rabbits are developing an immunity to the disease?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I have a full report on this matter from the veterinary branch of the Department of Agriculture, which has quoted extensively on experiments carried out by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, and they show that there is no definite indication that rabbits have become immune to the disease, though they know that some rabbits have recovered from it. At present the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Lands are investigating the matter of disseminating the virus again this year and ascertaining the best methods of carrying it out.

#### LAND FOR PUBLIC AMENITIES.

Mr. PATTINSON—In the Glenelg electorate the Government, through the agency of the Housing Trust, has developed a large number of new housing areas which are virtually new suburbs. Some thousands of the new residents there have applied to me through the medium of their progress associations, ratepayers' associations, kindergartens and other societies, to assist them to secure land for recreation grounds, community centres, pre-school centres and other public amenities. The last two requests were received this month. Can the Premier say whether the Government has any fund from which monies can be applied to purchase land for these necessary or desirable purposes, and, if not, does it intend to set up such a fund?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Some years ago Parliament passed legislation which enabled the Government, on certain conditions and recommendations, to purchase land for recreation purposes, and it has been used on a number of occasions. It was used recently to purchase for recreation purposes a very fine block of natural gum trees in an area between Magill and Glynde. The purchase was made in conjunction with the local council, which meant that the latter agreed to undertake the supervision of the area. Personally I think the present legislation is not sufficiently embracing and I have already discussed with the Parliamentary Draftsman features of legislation which would give very much more power to the Government in the matter. It is not easy to say sometimes that land is to be purchased specifically for railways, school, or recreation purposes. It is sometimes well-known that an area is becoming densely populated and that additional land will be wanted for a number of purposes. Under these circumstances it is advisable to get in quickly and purchase land whilst it is available and before the price becomes unnecessarily high. Actually the proposal has not yet been submitted to Cabinet, but is only some idea I had as Tourist Minister. Subject to that limitation, I think it would be advantageous for the Government to have a more general power not embracing compulsory acquisition, but merely enabling it to purchase land for prospective public and recreation purposes and so on without saying specifically for what purpose the land will be used. We have frequently been in difficulty because of this. For instance, one of my colleagues wanted to buy a property in the South-East for the Children's Welfare Department. It contained a few acres not required by the department and this made it difficult to get legislative approval for the purchase. I believe that Parliament might well consider giving a general power for the purchase of land where it is likely to be required for public purposes, subject, of course, to the necessary safeguards as to prices to be approved by the Land Board and other necessary safeguards.

#### HOUSING TRUST POLICY.

Mr. DUNKS—Can the Premier say whether it is the Housing Trust's policy to build brick houses to let and to let or sell those houses now in the course of construction, particularly at Gilles Plains and Enfield Heights?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The trust's policy is to provide houses for both letting

and selling. If it confined its activities to letting it would mean that its normal programme would drop away forthwith by probably 50 per cent because of the falling off of finance. Where the trust sells a house it gets back immediately a very substantial amount of the cost, and it is therefore essential for it to sell a considerable number of houses each year. On the other hand it will continue to build to its limit houses it can finance for letting purposes. I understand that all prefabricated houses ordered from overseas have been delivered, and the trust does not intend to enter into further overseas contracts. It will build houses with all the materials available to it. The honourable member specified brick houses. Although there has been a big increase in brick supplies, if the trust had limited its programme entirely to brick houses it would have had to curtail its programme enormously. Its policy will practically remain unaltered and will provide houses for both letting and selling, including country homes and it will build as many houses as possible of solid construction. I cannot give an undertaking that it will build all houses of solid construction, because I believe that would result in a serious falling off in the number it could complete.

#### PETROL DELIVERIES AT NIGHT.

Mr. JENNINGS—Has the Premier an answer to my question of last week regarding the distribution of petrol at night?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have received the following report from the Chief Inspector of Factories:—

Caltex Oil Australia Proprietary Limited are using two semi-trailer tank waggons, one with a capacity of 2,451 gallons and the other of 2,130 gallons, for the delivery of petrol from their Birkenhead depot to service stations within the metropolitan area. The same tank waggons are used at night as well as by day and the night trips by tank waggons number 15 per week. The design and construction of the waggons is in accordance with the regulations under the Inflammable Oils Act. At each of the Caltex service stations a small box is provided in which the depot keeper places a written order for the gallons required. The tank wagon driver, on arrival at the station, unlocks the order box, then with a dip stick checks the quantity of petrol in the underground tank. A hose with a screw connection each end is then connected between the tank wagon and the fill pipe of the underground tank. The screw type valve is opened and the petrol then flows by gravity through a meter to the underground tank until the required quantity is delivered. The drivers are instructed to stop the engine which provides the motive power for the wagon before

discharging petrol. Each of the drivers is supplied with a sealed safety battery torch which is certified for use where there may be risk from petrol vapour. I do not consider that the fire hazard of night delivery is any greater than that during the day, and therefore I recommend that no action be taken in this matter.

#### WAIKERIE HIGH SCHOOL.

Mr. STOTT—In 1946 the Education Department, realizing the importance of erecting a high school at Waikerie, purchased a site for the building. However, with the demand for land in the locality, arrangements were made to give up that land for another piece, which was subsequently reported to be unsuitable for building. The local school committee is anxious for the additional accommodation to be provided. Will the Minister representing the Minister of Education expedite matters, for the increased accommodation is urgently needed?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Yes.

#### PRICES OF STATE BANK AND HOUSING TRUST HOMES.

Mr. LAWN—How do the prices of houses erected by the State Bank compare with those of comparable homes erected for sale by the Housing Trust?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will secure the information for the honourable member.

#### CADMIUM POISONING.

Mr. HUTCHENS—On July 28 I asked the Premier whether the Government intended to introduce legislation to protect people against cadmium poisoning. He forwarded me some information and a booklet entitled *Good Health*, which quoted the following Victorian regulations:—

- (a) No person shall use cadmium for plating the surface of any food appliance.
- (b) No person shall sell any food appliance of which any surface has been plated with cadmium.
- (c) No person shall keep or store any food for sale for human consumption in any container having a surface coated with cadmium.

Does the Government intend to gazette similar regulations?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have been advised by the Chief Secretary that it is proposed to introduce regulations to deal with this matter.

#### CONTROL OF THALLIUM SALES.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked on August 11 concerning the control of thallium?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have received through the Chief Secretary a report from the Director-General of Public Health as follows:—

The Poison Regulations of this State provide that thallium or any substance containing thallium may only be sold retail by chemists and persons holding a Medicine Sellers Permit. The signature of the purchaser is required. Any substance, however, which contains not more than 0.2 per cent of thallium for vermin destruction may also be sold by storekeepers and others holding an appropriate licence. Sales by these persons require to be entered in the Poisons Book, but signature of purchaser is not required. In the United Kingdom the provisions are similar to those in this State. In Queensland thallium may be sold by chemists and licensed dealers for pest destruction, but no entry is required in the Poisons Book. In Victoria only recently it could be sold by chemists and medicine sellers, without entry in the Poisons Book; this provision may recently have been amended to require entry in the Poisons Book and signature of purchaser. In New South Wales there are no restrictions.

Some little time ago the only preparation containing thallium for rat destruction on sale in this State was voluntarily withdrawn from sale by the wholesale firm distributing the poison. Previously the sales had been very small. Less dangerous and more effective substances for vermin destruction are readily available. Following on the number of incidents of thallium poisoning in New South Wales the Advisory Committee appointed under the Food and Drugs Act decided to recommend further restriction of the sale of this poison and prevent its sale for vermin destruction. There is still some small use of the poison for scientific purposes. It has been decided not to recommend prohibiting the sale of thallium entirely, but to allow its sale for scientific purposes under a permit system in the same manner as the sale of cyanides is controlled. Recommendations for the amendments of the Regulations to achieve these purposes were forwarded to you on June 1, 1953, in DPH 884/53.

The honourable member will therefore see that further measures are being taken.

#### TRANSPORT BOARD'S REGULATIONS.

Mr. QUIRKE—Today I had occasion to seek the regulations under the Places of Entertainment Act and the Road and Railway Transport Act and, whereas the regulations under the first mentioned Act were readily available and complete, I found that regulations issued by the Transport Control Board were out of print. As they affect so many people, will the Premier see if they can be reprinted as a complete set?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—All regulations must be gazetted and laid before the House for the prescribed period, so there can be no question about regulations made by the Transport Control Board not being available. The

honourable member's difficulty has probably been caused by two things; first, under the Road and Railway Transport Act the board has been given the powers of a Royal Commission to make orders and, of course, those orders are not regulations in the sense that they are gazetted as such, as they apply to particular persons and are, in many instances, equivalent to permits. They are not printed and the only source of information on them would be the board itself or the person to whom the instruction was issued. Secondly, I do not know whether the regulations under the Act have ever been consolidated but I will inquire into that to see whether that should be done for the convenience of members and the public.

#### EMERGENCY HOUSING.

Mr. STEPHENS—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked on August 13 with reference to the number of persons awaiting emergency homes from the Housing Trust?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes. It is estimated that there are about 3,000 effective applications for emergency homes outstanding. However, many of these applicants have also applied for other types of houses provided by the trust.

#### FIRLE FEEDER BUS SERVICE.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked on July 28 regarding the Firle feeder bus service?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I made inquiries and found that, two or three days prior to the honourable member's question, a deputation had waited upon the Tramways Trust requesting an extension of services, but the trust had not at that time had an opportunity to consider the request. As soon as a decision is made I will see that the information is passed on to the honourable member, as I have no doubt would have been done in the ordinary course of events.

#### FIRE BRIGADE BOARD GRANTS.

Mr. TAPPING—Can the Treasurer intimate whether a special grant will be considered this financial year to alleviate municipal councils' burden of fire brigade contributions?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Budget is in course of preparation and I can only say at this stage that I have considered the proposition. I have examined what happened on previous occasions when the Government increased its grant and find that it has not necessarily gone to the municipal authority

but *pro rata* to both the insurance companies and the municipal authorities; in other words, the Government's grant has been used as a general rather than a specific fund. That, of course, is a matter for the Fire Brigades Board to determine, but I can say now that a somewhat larger grant will be made available to the board this year.

#### HOUSING TRUST SECOND MORTGAGES.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Premier give me a reply to the question I asked on July 28 regarding Housing Trust second mortgages?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The chairman of the trust advises as follows:—

When the South Australian Housing Trust agrees to sell a house to a purchaser, the trust allows the purchaser to take possession of the house immediately after payment of his deposit. In practice, it is found that most purchasers are not in a position to settle for some time after taking possession. They must arrange for mortgage finance under a first mortgage and so on and it is found that, on average, the purchaser is not able to settle until up to eight weeks after taking possession. As the trust must meet the interest charges on the amount outstanding until settlement is made, the trust therefore agrees with the purchaser that his occupancy in the meantime is to be regarded as a tenancy, and rent is charged. The maximum amount so charged is £2 5s. per week. The amount is a few pence below what the trust has to pay in interest on the amount outstanding and no allowance is made for administration, so that the trust incurs a small loss during the period of tenancy. If the purchaser has paid a larger deposit than is usual, the rent is fixed at an amount less than £2 5s. and is based on the interest charges payable by the trust on the outstanding balance. The rent charged by the trust does not in any case include any amount for repayment of principal, so that it is obvious that a purchaser cannot expect any reduction of purchase price by reason of any rental payments made by him during the period between taking possession and the date of settlement.

#### PARAFIELD RESEARCH CENTRE.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—On August 13 I asked the Minister of Agriculture a question regarding the *Advertiser's* report of that date that the Department of Agriculture intended to establish a new research centre at Parafield, and in reply the Minister said that the report was exaggerated and that the department, having lost its experimental orchard at Fullarton to the Education Department, was transferring its experimental work to Parafield and that he would disabuse my mind of the idea that it was a new research station. Following that, however, the *Advertiser* the following day, under



the heading "New Research Station," published a sub-leader as follows:—

There appear to be three reasons for the Department of Agriculture's decision to establish a new research centre at Parafield. One is the need for an alternative to the Fullarton centre so that the Urrbrae High School may have more ground. The second is that the new site, being twice as large as the old one, will be much more useful for experimental purposes; and the third, that officers of the department will be able to keep in close touch with a wider field of applied research. The department maintains a number of these centres in various parts of the State. They form, as it were, links in the chain between the C.S.I.R.O., the Waite Institute, and the University of Adelaide, where basic research is carried on, and the man on the land. There is no need to emphasize the importance of this work and one can easily foresee that the Parafield station will prove a valuable addition to what is already being done. It must be a cause of some self-congratulation to the department that it has been able to put the station so near the city.

I cannot see any virtue in the department's having a research station near the city when practical work is being carried out 150 miles from the city. If the statement in the *Advertiser* has been exaggerated, and if this is not a new research station, what steps has the Minister taken to give the correct information to those interested in horticulture?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I am delighted to know that the *Advertiser*, at least, is appreciative of the good work done by the Department of Agriculture and, in this case, particularly by the horticultural research centre. The establishment of the research station at Parafield resulted in the transference of work previously done at the Fullarton orchard. Recently I indicated that that orchard had been lost to the Education Department and that the work previously done there had to be transferred to another site fairly near the city. As the Parafield site was available and was the property of the Government it was made available to the department for that purpose. Research work being done there would still have been carried on at Fullarton had the Fullarton orchard been left with the department.

#### BRAKES ON TRAILERS.

Mr. STEPHENS—Has the Minister of Lands a reply to my recent question regarding brakes on trailers?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The report from the Registrar of Motor Vehicles states:—

Under the provisions of section 42a of the Road Traffic Act a trailer need not be equipped with brakes if the motor vehicle by

which it is drawn has brakes capable of stopping the vehicle with the trailer attached from a speed of 20 miles an hour on a hard, dry, level road within 30ft. The Australian Uniform Vehicle Standards Committee recommended to all State Governments that all trailers and semi-trailers exceeding 10cwt. in weight should be fitted with a brake. The State Traffic Committee recently considered the recommendation and decided not to recommend its adoption to the State Government. It was considered that if the present provision requiring a motor vehicle drawing a trailer to be equipped with brakes of a prescribed standard, were enforced, the present legislation would be found adequate.

#### TRAMWAYS TRUST: STREET REPAIR.

Mr. DUNKS (on notice)—

1. Is it the intention of the Tramways Trust to repair the centre strip of streets on a tram route when it is altered from a tram to a bus route?

2. Will the trust have any responsibility to pay a portion of the repairs to streets traversed by buses when the alterations take place?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The General Manager of the Municipal Tramways Trust reports:—

1. It is a statutory obligation on the part of the trust, *vide* section 49 of the Municipal Tramways Trust Act, 1935-1952, to maintain the roadways—

(a) between tram rails,

(b) between tram tracks where the distance is not more than 4ft.,

(c) 18in. each side of a track.

This obligation continues until the track is removed and the roadway reinstated, or (with the consent of the council concerned) is covered over by the trust.

2. Under section 7 of the Highways Act Amendment Act, 1944, the trust pays to the Highways Commissioner, by way of contribution towards the maintenance or lighting of roads, the sum of .17d. for every mile travelled upon any road by trust omnibuses and trolley-buses.

#### BOOKMAKERS' LICENCES.

Mr. FRED WALSH (on notice)—

1. How many persons, licensed as bookmakers last year, had applications for renewal of these licences rejected on the grounds of age?

2. What were the ages of those so effected?

3. What is the age of the chairman and respective members of the Betting Control Board?

4. What is the remuneration paid to the Chairman, secretary, and respective members of the board?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The chairman of the Betting Control Board reports:—

1 and 2. General. The Lottery and Gaming Act, section 38(1) provides that the board

shall have an unfettered discretion to grant or refuse any application without assigning any reason, thereby indicating that it is or may be contrary to the public interest to disclose reasons.

3. Chairman, 59; Hon. James Jelley, 79; Mr. Lee, 62. Note.—The Hon. James Jelley was re-appointed on December 19, 1950, but intended to retire during the following year. On Col. Hanson's death in March, 1951, it was arranged for Mr. Jelley to continue so as to obviate the appointment of two new members to a board of three.

4. £500, £1,461, £300 and £300 respectively. The secretary's salary includes £277 for cost of living increases. The salaries of the chairman and members of the board are unaltered by any rise or fall of the cost of living.

#### FAR WEST COAST WATER SUPPLIES.

Mr. CHRISTIAN (on notice)—

1. What progress has been made with the survey of the water requirements of districts on the far West Coast?

2. Has any programme along the same lines as that for County Buxton been worked out for the augmentation of existing water supplies in the above areas?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The replies are—

1. The district superintendent at Ceduna has, for some time, been collecting data in regard to public and private supplies, number of stock, etc., for the survey of the water requirements of the far West Coast. It will be a few months before this survey can be completed.

2. The district engineer will, on completion, prepare a comprehensive report (as was done for County Buxton) for consideration by the Water Conservation Committee and ultimate decision of Cabinet.

#### JOINT COMMITTEE ON CONSOLIDATION BILLS.

The Legislative Council intimated its concurrence in the appointment of a Joint Committee on Consolidation Bills.

#### LOAN ESTIMATES.

Grand total, £27,618,000.

In Committee.

(Continued from August 13. Page 356.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—The importance of the discussion on the Loan Estimates submitted by the Treasurer last Thursday is brought forcibly home to members when they look at the total, which is a large sum in anybody's currency. Last year the Government spent about £25,000,000, although authority was provided on the Loan Estimates for an expenditure of £29,000,000.

Probably the difference was partly due to anticipated expenditure on uranium. One point, with which members should be concerned, is the rapid increase, by about £88,000,000, in the public debt over the past 10 years. We should be particularly concerned with the real value being obtained from the expenditure, the development being promoted by it and the extent to which the earning capacity of the State will be increased as a result of that development.

Unfortunately, although the Treasurer listed a number of amounts which had been spent on the various public works which had been authorized previously and for which additional sums are provided in this year's Loan Estimates, he gave little information as to what had been achieved as a result of that expenditure. For instance, substantial amounts are provided in the Estimates for such large works as the South Para Reservoir, the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline and the Yorke Peninsula water scheme. Many large projects have been in progress for a number of years and since some of them were approved by the Public Works Standing Committee the costs have increased out of all reason. This House is entitled to an accounting of how this expenditure, which continues from year to year, is producing results in the overall scheme.

In the course of his remarks the Premier said, "The rapid increase in population has made it necessary to increase our food production," but to what extent has food production been increased by the expenditure of £88,000,000 which has been added to the public debt in the last 10 years and by what percentage is it expected that food production will be increased as a result of these Estimates? It is a well known and well established fact that most lines of food production are diminishing rather than increasing despite this colossal expenditure. The Premier continued:—

It is also the desire of the Government to extend many of these utilities to the country in order to give the country people similar facilities to those enjoyed by the people in the city.

He was referring to electricity, water and similar amenities which are provided for in these Estimates. His words rang a bell in my memory and I looked up the last policy speech I delivered on behalf of the Labor Party and I discovered that I had used that very excellent sentence. I hasten to agree with the sentiments expressed by the Premier but I query to what extent the desires expressed are going to be given effect to as a result of this

expenditure. Who are the country people who will benefit in the main from it? They are the owners of freehold land inside Goyder's line of rainfall. In recent years when land has come on the market they have been able to acquire it and add it to their holdings and today there are many holdings of more than a living area, with the result that food production is diminishing. Despite that, electricity and water is being taken to those areas and adding to the value of the land. When the time comes—as it inevitably will—for the land to be acquired by the State for closer settlement it will cost more as a result of providing these amenities. In effect what happened in the early days of land settlement in South Australia will be repeated. Honourable members then gave their Parliamentary services free gratis and for nothing but divided the land of the State among themselves and then built railway lines and other public works which improved it. In the early part of this century when the land was acquired by the State for closer settlement it was purchased not at the nominal price at which it was originally sold but at a high figure which was due to the provision of developmental public works. We should continue to spend money on developmental work but we should ensure firstly that real development takes place as a result of any expenditure, and secondly that some of the cost of that work is borne by holders of the land it develops.

We should never lose sight of the fact that despite the huge expenditure in recent years there are fewer landholders now than there were 20 years ago. Conversely, the prices of agricultural and pastoral land have reached astronomical heights—prices which would never be economic even if good seasons continued indefinitely and the prices of wool and wheat remained at their present high level. I shrewdly suspect that people with already large incomes can afford to pay high prices for properties adjoining their land because for several years they are able to obtain high taxation concessions for improvements thereon. This will not continue indefinitely although it might carry them through the Faddenitis period of Federal taxation.

Mr. Heaslip—Do you agree that that policy has developed what was once useless land?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I agree that where that tax concession has operated for real improvement of formerly undeveloped or underdeveloped land it has been worthwhile, but it should not be granted to the person who

purchases land on which improvements have been established for many years and on which he has undertaken no development. It encourages inflated land value which is already over-encouraged by good times experienced during the past seven or eight years. I cannot remember, and neither can old inhabitants whom I have questioned, a similar period when people in the dry pastoral areas of this State have enjoyed such a run of good seasons and high prices. Two or three weeks ago a pastoral property in the north-east was sold for 10s. an acre. It is comparatively light carrying country and its capacity would be between 25 and 30 sheep to the square mile. One can realize what a tremendous price per sheep the purchaser of that property paid when it is reduced to an annual value in proportion to the number of sheep that can be carried. I hope that in this and similar cases where high prices have been paid for this type of country the Pastoral Board will exercise its undoubted powers and ensure that the maintenance of soil fertility is not unduly impaired in endeavours to recover high purchase prices.

The Premier also said "We need more large towns; we want more towns with a population of over 10,000; and we need many more with a population of 5,000 to 10,000 people." I agree entirely with those sentiments but the provision of amenities will not increase the population of country towns to the extent the Premier envisages unless something is done to decentralize industry and create employment for people in those towns. There is little in the Loan Estimates on these lines and I have seen little evidence in recent years that Government supporters are anxious to do something in this direction. Last year when I moved a motion for an inquiry into the question of the decentralization of population and industry I did not set out any cut and dried scheme but merely asked that a competent authority be created to investigate the matter to see what could be done and where. When the Premier said "No" the Government supporters, in a solid phalanx, said "No." At the back of their minds they had visions of a tremendous social, economic and political upset in their little pocket boroughs which might even tuate as a result of the accession of some thousands of horrid working people in their districts who might have the temerity to support Labor at the elections and endanger the future security of the Liberal and Country League representatives.

I refer now to the Premier's statement that South Australia could not do what the Commonwealth Government has been doing during recent years—financing capital works out of revenue. Nobody has suggested that we should commence the practice of financing public works out of revenue, so I do not know why the Premier made the statement. He referred to the fact that over the last two years the public was not inclined to lend money to Governments to carry out public works, and there is a good reason for that—the complete financial ineptitude of the present Federal Liberal Government, which has been continually supported by the Premier and all members of the Liberal and Country League in this State. The Commonwealth Government's financial policy is against the wishes of thousands of worthy citizens in the community. I will refer to the bungling of interest rates since the present Federal Government has occupied the Treasury benches. It is a well-known and well-established fact that the Labor Government which preceded it desired to stabilize interest rates at what was considered to be a fair return to the investor. It was claimed that that would result in a reduction of the crushing burden placed on developmental works and enterprise. To show that it was considered to be a fair return to investors I need only point out that during the years of the Labor Government every loan was filled and some over-subscribed, and that would have continued to be the position but for the meddling with the interest rates that was characteristic of the Menzies-Fadden Government. The result was that people saw their assets, in bonds and inscribed stock, diminishing before their eyes, with very serious consequences to a number of most worthy people.

I know people who desired to purchase or build a home, but because of circumstances born of the war they were unable to do so. They put their savings into Commonwealth loans, thinking that when the time came and it was possible to build or buy they would be able to sell their bonds or inscribed stock at par, but what is the position? Some were asked to take a discount of 12 per cent, although I think that on past occasions the discount has been between six and seven per cent. It will be seen what substantial inroads have been made into the savings of people as a result of this fiddling with interest rates. Is it any wonder that during recent years it has been impossible to borrow from the public the amount required to carry out public works

in the various States? The plain fact is that the public has lost confidence in Government investments. Another section knew that they had only to wait long enough and the return on investments in Government bonds would be increased. Now we find that interest rates have been forced up by between  $1\frac{1}{2}$  and  $1\frac{3}{4}$  per cent and that there is a more ready response to calls of this nature.

The Premier went on to state that the Government had been able to carry out its 1952-53 capital works programme without dismissing employees or having to seek a wholesale cancellation of contracts, although some other State Governments had had to do both. A little more information on this matter would have been helpful to the Committee. Some State Governments had to cancel contracts made overseas for the same reason as was given by the Treasurer this afternoon in explaining the difficulty we had had with our contract to secure motors for pumping plants on the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline. That is another legacy from the ineptitude of the Federal Government which is so strongly supported by members behind our Government.

Another moot point is the question of Government expenditure. Some of us hold the old-fashioned theory that when times are prosperous and private enterprise is expanding and employment plentiful, Governments should soft pedal, as far as possible, with their expenditure in order to build up reserves which could be used in times of recession or depression and thus overcome unemployment which, unfortunately, was so prevalent in this country in the 1930's. The present Government, however, seems to have the idea that its public works policy should be chiefly to maintain employment, although it appeared from the earlier part of the Premier's remarks that it was mainly for the purpose of development. I think I have shown conclusively that development is not taking place to any extent and that, so far as employment is concerned, it might be more necessary to spend some of this money next year than this.

The Loan Estimates reveal that the total loan funds available to the State for 1953-54 are £4,500,000 greater than they would have been, but for the amount to be received for housing under the agreement between the Commonwealth and the State. We learn now that, for the first time, South Australia has agreed to come in as a partner with the Commonwealth under the Housing Agreement which was made some time ago and which I will

describe at greater length later. I am concerned—and I think the Committee is entitled to full information on the question—about how much of this agreement is to be implemented by South Australia. The Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement of 1945 was signed by the Premier, on behalf of South Australia, on November 19, 1945, ratified by Parliament in December, and assented to by the Governor on January 3, 1946. The main principle of the agreement was the adoption of a rental scheme, promulgated by the Chifley Labor Government, to assist people on low incomes with the payment of their rent, because, at that time, rents were showing a tendency to rise, and most people foresaw what has happened since. The State and the Commonwealth agreed that housing authorities in the States should build houses and that an economic rent should be determined for each group as erected. The economic rent could not, in any case, be less than 8s. a week, but if it exceeded one-fifth of the basic wage or of the family income, as the case might be, provision was made, within certain limits, for granting a rebate in the rent commitment, which could be increased or reduced, after investigation, in accordance with the rise or fall in the family income. It was really establishing the old principle, which obtained for many years, and was considered to be a fair thing for the worker—one day's work a week for the landlord. The cost of the rebate was to be borne in the proportion of three-fifths by the Commonwealth and two-fifths by the State. This was not one of those things which are wished on people by the Commonwealth Government without its accepting its responsibility: the Commonwealth was prepared to bear a major share of the financial responsibility in implementing what was undoubtedly a good scheme. Eight years have passed since the agreement was signed and until now South Australia has taken no part in the scheme. It is obvious that, as a result of the failure of our Government to accept the principles of the scheme, many tenants in South Australia have been disadvantageously affected.

During the time I was absent from South Australia substantial increases were imposed by the Housing Trust in the rents of its rental homes. That, of course, is only one of a number of increases made in recent years; so much so that I understand houses let for 14s. 6d. a week eight to 10 years ago are now being let for 27s. 6d. per week. The trust found it necessary to do this because of the high cost of erecting new homes. The trust

is not expected to make losses, so it must average the rents of the houses constructed more cheaply in days gone by. If the Commonwealth/State agreement had been in operation the rebate system could have been used and we could probably have averted some of the rent increases, with their consequent effect on the basic wage and cost of living. We could also have avoided some of the hardships imposed on trust tenants of new homes. There is a provision in the agreement for the Commonwealth to share in some of the costs of providing services to group housing schemes. At present the full cost is being borne by the State, and they will be losing propositions for many years to come. According to the agreement the losses were to be borne three-fifths by the Commonwealth and two-fifths by the State.

Mr. Shannon—In a complete housing estate water and sewerage services are all right.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Where all the blocks are occupied the losses are not great. I think the Public Works Committee reported that there will be losses in connection with building at Gilles Plains, which will be a completely built-up area. If we had accepted three or four years ago the principle of meeting the losses, we could have applied it to building at Gilles Plains. I take it that our participation in the agreement will be confined to houses built as the result of the expenditure of the £4,500,000. Another point worthy of consideration is the Premier's pat on the back for the Chief Secretary, who is an estimable gentleman, and I would be the last to attempt to write him down or suggest that he is not entitled to praise bestowed on him by the Premier. It was said that owing to his fine work when he represented the Premier at the Loan Council meeting South Australia received 13½ per cent of the total loan funds instead of the 8.6 per cent it should have received on a population basis. The difference is substantial and I wonder what the representatives of the other States were doing to let South Australia get away with it. I have a shrewd feeling that there is another explanation. I know the boys from the other States very well and I cannot imagine them letting South Australia get away with something to which she was not entitled. We usually have to fight pretty hard for what we get. I think the reason is that the other States were under the Commonwealth-State Agreement for some years and that our going into the scheme this year meant a difference in the computation. However, it remains to be

seen. Semi-government bodies like the Electricity Trust and Housing Trust have been given permission to raise money by way of loan. Formerly the State used to borrow all the money required, but in recent years the practice has been established of semi-government bodies raising their own loans. It is a practice which has been carried out in the other States for some time. As all loans have to be approved by the Loan Council the spirit of the Financial Agreement will not be abrogated, and there is nothing wrong with the practice except that it provides competition for the money available on the lending market.

The Premier said that the Electricity Trust had opened a loan of £1,000,000 at an interest rate of £4 12s. 6d. per cent, the highest interest rate ever offered to the public by the trust, but we should not be proud of it. We have been patting ourselves on the back because the loan was over-subscribed in eight hours of banking time, and we have been saying that it shows the stability of the State and the confidence in the Government. I think it was the high rate of interest which attracted the lending public, and I suggest that the raising of the interest rate has a detrimental effect on investors in previous trust issues. As late as June, 1952, the trust issued a loan at a rate of £4 2s. 6d. per cent. According to the press of yesterday 1952 Electricity Trust £100 debentures could be purchased for £96. This shows that it was not so much a desire to invest with the trust as a desire to get a high rate of interest. If the Loan Council, the Government and semi-government instrumentalities are to be continually increasing the rate of interest it will lead us to the worst possible type of inflation which future generations of South Australians will rue, and they will be skimping themselves to the bone to meet their obligations. The Commonwealth Government has sufficient control over the financial policy of Australia to stop this racket if it wants to do so. It has the Commonwealth Bank, but it suits the book of the Commonwealth to allow those people who give it the greatest support at election time to take more than their fair share of the rake-off. Speaking on behalf of the workers and producers, I say it is time that a definite stand was taken on this matter. It is expected that during this year over 3,500 trust homes for rental and sale will be completed. Apparently they will be financed by the £1,000,000 provided in the Estimates, but of this sum £780,000 is to be used to finance second mortgages. The Premier should have given us

some information about the terms associated with these mortgages. It is obvious that it will be a responsible part of the trust's activities in the next 12 months and I do not object to it, but I want to know how the thing is to work. Parliament will have to provide the money, and it will have to accept the responsibility if anything goes wrong with the finances of the trust, and we ought to know more about these things than we do at present. The Commonwealth-State Agreement amount of £4,500,000 is already taken care of. I am not a legal man, but it appears to me that the plan should be fully implemented if it is to be availed of at all. The Premier could have given a little more information on the point.

Afforestation and timber-milling activities again loom largely in the Premier's statement, but it is a pity that more information was not given regarding achievements in other directions. As to the Government's timber-milling activities I have no complaint to make of his explanation or of the very satisfactory operations of this most important branch of socialistic activity, except that perhaps this enterprise has long passed the developmental stage and we might revert to a better business practice of accounting instead of having all expenditure, whether capital or revenue, taken out of the Loan Fund and all revenue, whether it represents a return on capital or earnings of the undertaking from the milling and selling of timber, returned to the Loan Fund. It would be better accounting practice if we had a business account to take care of the business activities of the department and a capital account to take care of the Loan expenditure on the forestry undertaking.

The Treasurer also referred to the efficiency of our railways and made a moving reference to the unfortunate and untimely death of the Railways Commissioner, Mr. R. H. Chapman. I associate myself with those remarks about Mr. Chapman, who was a man of charming personality and great ability, and a good administrator. Probably had he come to the management of the railways sooner and lived a little longer we would have had more benefit from the application of his policy. I deeply regret his passing. There are points associated with the South Australian railways that are not due to any present administration. They are things which have grown up through the years and were begun by the rehabilitation programme of the late Mr. W. A. Webb when he was Railways Commissioner, a

programme which has in some respects yielded good results, but which seems to have created the tendency for going in for bigger and bigger trains all the time. I know nothing about the running of railways except that I have ridden in different types of trains for many thousands of miles, but it seems to me that in a sparsely populated State like South Australia it is not particularly economic to have huge freight trains that take half an hour to shunt one truck off at a country siding going away into various parts of the State. This also applies to stock trains. I have received complaints from stockowners about the delay which occurs in bringing consignments to Adelaide. They are brought down part of the way on the narrow gauge and then have to wait at places like Port Pirie and Terowie while a larger train is made up for the broad gauge, and sometimes a considerable wait is entailed. That is not good policy from the standpoint of the stockowner, specially when some of the stock coming via Port Pirie has already travelled from Alice Springs. We might consider whether it would not be more economic to run smaller trains and run them more frequently than for the department to wait until it has a fully loaded train available to be sent on its way with an engine of huge haulage capacity.

Another proposal mentioned by the Treasurer is one that we know off by heart. He referred to the £20,000 which is to be spent on fishing havens. This item has been on the Loan Estimates for a long time, and it would be interesting to know how many havens have actually been provided.

Mr. Hutchens—They have scales on them like fish.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, like the famous Barnacle Bill of fishing mythology. Another matter which has become a rather hardy annual is country sewerage schemes. Legislation has been on the books for at least eight years to provide for this amenity. When it was passed we had a great sounding of brass, the tinkling of cymbals, and the bashing of the big drum to impress councils that sewerage schemes would be established in their districts. Some councils went so far as to cancel their sanitary contracts, or curtail the term, in the hope that the benefits of sewerage would be available in the very near future. Up to the present, however, not one mile of sewerage main has been laid in any country town except the two Government towns at Leigh Creek and Radium Hill, and judging by the amount provided on this year's Loan

Estimates not very much will be done this year. The member for Port Pirie is hopeful that a scheme for his city will receive early consideration.

Mr. Davis—We do not expect it this century.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The honourable member is like those who enter Dante's Inferno—he has no hope. I could also mention Gawler for the benefit of the honourable member representing that part of the State. We shall have to wait and see what comes of the expenditure of the very small amount provided this year. If a start is made somewhere we will be more hopeful about the possibilities of the future. The member for Semaphore extracted from the Treasurer in answer to a question this afternoon that the first unit of the Western Districts Hospital will be opened in the not distant future, and I am sure we were all pleased to hear that because we know how necessary increased hospital accommodation is to that very important portion of the metropolitan area, and what a boon it will be to the local population. It had become almost a hardy annual on the Estimates, but it is heartening to know that the first unit is approaching completion.

Reference was also made in the Loan Estimates to additions to primary schools in the metropolitan area, quite a number being listed. I suggest it is about time we considered the size of these schools. There are 17 of them with an enrolment of 1,000 or more. Such an enrolment is too large and something will have to be done to provide more schools so as to split the school-going population up into manageable units. We should be considering that rather than placing money on the Loan Estimates to enlarge schools that are already too large. Whereas the headmaster of a school should give a lead to see that the best education possible is imparted to the students by the staff available, he is prevented from doing so because of the size of the school, and future generations of South Australia and the whole economy of the State will suffer as a consequence. Consider, for instance, the Adelaide Boys High School. I admit that like Tennyson's brook it went on almost for ever before it was completed, but the number of students available exceeded the accommodation provided even before the school was opened. Surely we can improve on that kind of planning and look two or three years ahead in designing a school system so that instead of having a big school overcrowded before it is opened we shall have two to serve the

needs of the people. For some years we have heard the Treasurer periodically refer at some stage of the Parliamentary session, particularly just before an election, to the establishment of a southern port, but such a port has faded from the picture.

Mr. Quirke—It blew away in dust.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I do not know whether it blew away or was washed away, but it is not within the ken of men at the moment. We are told that the new Port Augusta power station is to be placed in commission next year. This project has been looming on the horizon for a considerable time. I think the Electricity Trust and those responsible for its direction have done very well, but I am wondering whether we will find a similar statement in next year's Loan Estimates to what was contained in this year's to the effect that "the Port Augusta power station will be commissioned next year." If we are to wait for the Commonwealth railways to bring coal to Port Augusta from Leigh Creek via its new line then the station will not be commissioned next year and possibly not the following year, considering the present rate of progress.

Mr. Shannon—But they will not need the new line to start the station.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—If they do not, why the need for the new line at all?

Mr. Shannon—They do not propose to start off at full bore.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I have some grave doubts about that. In this and in other respects we have a tendency in Australia to think that we must do everything in a big way with big machinery and equipment. Recently I spent the best part of three weeks in the United States of America, the home of mass production and big equipment, and I was amazed at the small plants used on certain jobs—the kind of plant we in South Australia would probably despise. When I asked the reason they gave the simple explanation, "It is doing the job, isn't it?" When they have a really big job to do they do use big equipment, but they don't use a sledge hammer to crush mosquitoes. The Loan Estimates explanation contained a reference to costly work by the Electricity Trust on transmission lines. I have suggested frequently in this Chamber that the high cost of transmission lines is largely due to the high price of copper and that we should investigate our undoubted copper resources to see whether they could be developed in order that we may be independent of imports of this commodity. We may be able to develop our copper mining

industry and at the same time lower costs for the trust, to the ultimate benefit of the consumers of electric energy.

I thought that when we legislated for the Leigh Creek coalfield to be under the control of the Electricity Trust we would be finished with financial responsibility for it. We have provided a large sum for the trust and I thought that some of the money would be used for the further development of the coalfield, but we have a special item "Leigh Creek coalfield, £700,000." The explanation was that this amount will be mainly spent on extensions to the power station, roads and railway sidings, housing for employees, temporary water supply, Aroona dam construction, water reticulation, sewerage reticulation, powerhouse plant, electricity mains and connections, excavators and other plant, coal handling and treatment plant, and transport vehicles. Why should we have a second vote on the Estimates when some few years ago we handed over the development and management of the coalfield to the Electricity Trust?

The sum of £200,000 is provided for the Produce Department. The expenditure last year was £100,000, and the amount provided this year will be expended on extensions to slaughtering, refrigerating and treatment plant at Port Lincoln and a new boiler and building at these works. I am concerned with the expenditure on extensions of the freezing works. When I moved a certain motion last year I instanced the necessity of establishing such works in country districts, but the Premier, in criticizing my motion and appealing to Parliament to reject it, instanced the Port Lincoln freezing works in support of his argument. He said it was a losing proposition, yet we are asked to vote a further large sum for extensions. I do not criticize the expenditure for I believe it is necessary, and I have always thought freezing works at Port Lincoln were a necessity, as they are in other parts of the State. However, I do not criticize certain undertakings when it suits me and then later ask for substantial sums for their extension, as the Treasurer does.

Uranium production looms large in the public eye, and so it should, for it is costing us plenty. Last year we provided £3,883,000 for it on the Loan Estimates, and this year we are providing £3,096,000. Earlier expenditure amounted to at least £750,000, and it was financed from revenue. I realize there is some agreement with overseas friends, that they are making certain moneys available to South Australia by loan to help in developing uranium



production, but we do not know the conditions of the loan. It has been suggested it is for a term of seven years. No one knows the rate of interest, the conditions of repayment, or whether the overseas market for uranium will collapse. If what we all fervently pray for happened—a change of heart on the part of Communist-dominated countries that have caused so much trouble in the world in recent years—the demand for uranium would greatly ease. There could be a change in the ideology of those countries, though I am sure we would not mind if much of the money expended on uranium production were lost as a result, for we could then enjoy an era of peace. We have been told it does not matter much what our defence needs are because there is a great potential for the use of uranium for the production of industrial power. Perhaps there is, but in the meantime how will South Australia finance the development of a plant for that purpose unless we can get some long-term assistance? It is time we knew how much has been spent on uranium mining in South Australia, under what terms and conditions the overseas loan has been made available, and the term of that loan. No vital information could be conveyed to an enemy by the publication of that information.

On the day after the Treasurer brought down the Loan Estimates we read in the press that the Port Pirie treatment plant, which will be one of the units associated with the development of uranium production, will cost an extra £500,000. We should have been given that information by the Treasurer. We do not know whether the extra expenditure has been caused by an increase in the capacity of the plant or by faulty planning in the first place.

Mr. Teusner—I think the press suggested it was on account of increased capacity.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—That was not expressly stated, though the honourable member may have seen a different press statement. There seems to be some competition in the local press, and one must read both the daily newspapers to get the full story. A railway line is being constructed from Cutana to serve Radium Hill. Certainly that route will be shorter than from Olary or MacDonald Hill and thereby effect some saving in cost of construction, but about 12 additional running miles will be involved. What is saved in capital cost may be quickly lost in working expenses, particularly when one realizes it costs about £2 a train mile to run in that country. Furthermore, Cutana is in a water course. There have been many serious floodings in that area, but the other route

would be across comparatively safe country. I cannot understand why it has been decided to lay a water main to Radium Hill from a dry reservoir in another State which is controlled by a water board on which we have no say.

Mr. Shannon—You know how much it would cost to take other water to Radium Hill?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—But we could save our railways much money that they now spend in carting water along the Cockburn line. There is no water in the Uمبرumberka reservoir today.

Mr. Shannon—That will not supply Radium Hill.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—At present it is the only source of supply. There is no provision for pumping from the River Darling to Uمبرumberka, and as far as I know no steps are being taken to do so. I know these Broken Hill boys—I do not say this disparagingly—and if there is a shortage of water at Broken Hill, as there has been at close intervals as long as I can remember, I would much prefer to have control of the water ourselves. I doubt very much whether the little pipeline from the Darling will completely solve the problem and then there will be no water at Radium Hill.

Mr. Hawker—I have seen the Darling dry several times.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I have not seen that but I have heard of it from others well versed in the back country. Some steps are being taken to provide a weir at Menindie to overcome that difficulty provided a drought does not last too long. I am not condemning the public Works Standing Committee or the Government as I do not know enough about it; I have not had time to examine the committee's report since my return, but it does seem to be just a wee bit screwy.

Mr. Shannon—I admit that the doubts that the honourable member is now expressing were also in the minds of members of the committee at one stage.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I have spoken at greater length than I intended and there are many other points of detail on which I intend to reserve my remarks for debate on the respective lines of the Estimates. I conclude by expressing the hope that in the future we will be given a little more information on some of the points I have mentioned, and not so many figures about the astronomical sums we have spent and are proposing to spend. These things terrify me when I think of how difficult it becomes in lean years to meet the interest on the public debt—as met it must be.

I recall a certain Premier of New South Wales who on one occasion thought he could evade this obligation, but all the Constitutional powers of the Commonwealth were used to bring him to his knees. We have to face up to this fact, particularly in relation to expenditure on works of a developmental nature. I do not object to them—on the contrary, I applaud them—but we should see that the development they are intended to promote does result instead of spending money on enhancing the value of privately owned land which may be eventually sold back to us.

Mr. HAWKER (Burra)—I congratulate the Honourable A. L. McEwin, who acted as Premier while Mr. Playford was abroad, on the amount he secured for South Australia at the Loan Council meeting. I think it is as much as we can easily digest, because most of our public and semi-public departments have some difficulty in getting sufficient skilled staff to carry out their works. I listened with great interest to the Leader of the Opposition, who made one statement which was not the sort he usually makes, namely, that “in the days when members served their country” free, gratis and for nothing “they portioned out the land and then supplied railways and roads to those lands for their own benefit.

Mr. O'Halloran—You know they did.

Mr. HAWKER—That is entirely wrong.

Mr. O'Halloran—I qualified that. I said that it did not apply to all; but it did to many.

Mr. HAWKER—I know of no-one to whom it did apply and I do not know to whom the honourable member is referring, but it is an aspersion on the earlier legislators and pioneers of South Australia. As far as I know only one land grant was made in South Australia.

Mr. McAlees—They were all “squatters” weren't they?

Mr. HAWKER—All other land was taken up under the laws of South Australia.

Mr. O'Halloran—Has the honourable member heard of Catt's Act?

Mr. HAWKER—Yes, and incidentally it was passed at a time when there was payment of members, so it does not come into this argument. They encouraged people to come out from England and take up land to keep South Australia going. After their taking up the land the Government did what was known in those days as “killing the

squatter”; it resumed areas of land which men had taken up legally and put it up for public auction or sold it privately. In reply to Mr. McAlees, the bulk of the land was sold at £1 an acre or more and those “squatters” had to buy the land or have a piece taken right of the middle of their properties. The Treasurer said that money was being spent to increase production, but some have contended that production has not increased, so I should like to compare the figures for 1938-39 and 1951-52. We have increased pasture under superphosphate by one million acres; our sheep by more than 1,500,000. We grew 20,500,000 more lb. of wool; we have produced 15,500,000 more gallons of milk; we have 110,000 more dairy cattle and 107,000 more beef cattle. We have sown 4,800 acres of linseed, a thing we did not produce previously. Most people seem to think of wheat as the main item of production, but I think that one of the best things that has happened to South Australia is the large amount of land that has gone out of wheat production; this has been our saviour.

The Leader of the Opposition also said that there are today fewer farms. Of course there are! We do not farm nowadays, as he apparently wants us to do, in the way of the peasant farmer. Tractors can do more work and consequently handle bigger areas, and if the farmer is to have a grazing rotation interspersed with cereal growing he must have a bigger area. When the South-eastern Drainage Bill was before the House in 1948 I strongly opposed it on the grounds that the country would be over-drained, and in support of my argument I instanced Booborowie where one could not put down a post hole without striking water, but where the water table is now at about 20ft., and I said the same thing would happen in the South-East. Some time after the Act was passed an officer of the Waite Research Institute gave me some preliminary figures on the amount of water used by natural scrub and pasture. I again got in touch with the institute recently and I have the latest figures which are very interesting indeed. I will quote from a letter received from the Institute:—

One ton of dry lucerne needs 500 tons of water. This works out almost exactly at 5in. of rain or soil moisture. By actual measurement at Werribee, Victoria, five tons of lucerne hay were produced on 28in. of rain and irrigation. This corresponds to 5.6in. of water per ton . . . . . We estimate that lucerne on Booborowie could make use of the equivalent of 34in. of rain distributed throughout the year. The actual rainfall at Hallett and Jamestown respectively is 16.3in. and 17.7in.

The next paragraph particularly applies to what I claimed when speaking on the South Eastern Drainage Bill:—

At Naracoorte perennial improved pastures using water throughout would need 49in., whereas measurements in scrub country show the use of only 18in. in the same period. The actual rainfall at Naracoorte is 22.6in. For the month of October, which may be taken as the best month pastures could make use of 4.3in. at this centre whereas scrub will use only 1.6in. The actual rainfall for this month is 2in. At the Waite Institute actual measurements of the use of water by a wheat crop in October is 5.2in. This was the heaviest month as the plant is fully grown and there is usually available water in the soil. Of this 5.2in. on the average rain will supply 1.8in., the rest comes from water stored in the soil.

According to this latest information, improved pasture will use a rainfall of 22.6in. and get the remainder of its 49in. from the moisture stored in the soil over the years when the scrub land has been using only 78 per cent of the water and has been flooded.

Mr. Brookman—Is that country heavily timbered?

Mr. HAWKER—It may be, but I would not think so. These figures refer to improved land, which can use more than 2½ times the annual rainfall if it can get that amount. No evidence was given before the Land Settlement Committee as to the amount of water taken by pastures compared with that taken by natural scrub, and the officer who originally gave me the information was not called to give evidence. Water to the extent of 270 per cent of the annual rainfall is taken for perennial grasses and will dry the country out, producing the result seen at Booborowie. Information, scientifically ascertained by the Waite Research Institute, explains why the Morambro plain near Naracoorte is drying up and why, after two wet years, people are digging deeper wells on the Morambro plain. For these reasons I object to the expenditure of so much money on throwing into the sea one of Australia's most valuable and scarce assets—fresh water.

This session the Supplementary Estimates contained an item of £200,000 for the Municipal Tramways Trust and now members are asked to approve of a further £600,000 for the trust, to be spent on metropolitan transport services which previously paid for themselves. The committee which, two years ago, inquired into the affairs of the trust found that no single line operated by the trust paid for itself, but that all the private bus services paid—some of them handsomely—although they had not the pick of the routes as had the

trust. This is yet another example of a service rendered by private enterprise at no expense to the taxpayer. Although I realize that the use of buses necessitates a dependence on overseas sources for fuel and tyres, which could be a serious problem in the event of another war, buses or trolley buses should replace trams in the city and suburbs, for buses can pull into the kerb, thus eliminating the danger of motorists passing stationary trams when passengers are boarding or alighting. I trust the present Tramways Board will continue to farm out to private enterprise as much of its work as possible.

Members are asked to approve grants to the Electricity Trust and for uranium production. Such projects will require the transport of heavy materials from the city. Recently I asked the Minister of Works whether it would not be possible for some materials to be taken by rail and I did not get a satisfactory reply. Since then I have made tentative inquiries and ask the Minister of Railways whether these semi-Governmental instrumentalities did not try to reach an agreement with the Railways Department with regard to the carriage of certain materials for at least some distance into the country, but, owing to the inelasticity of the present schedule of rail freight charges, such departments as the Mines Department and the Electricity Trust finally decided to carry their materials on their own lorries to the detriment of the roads which must be used by men on the land. I trust that the Minister will go into that matter a little more carefully.

The sum of £100,000 appears under the heading of Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board. Producers generally have not been satisfied with the way their lambs have been handled at the Metropolitan Abattoirs lately. Although it is a big concern using modern methods, it is a monopoly, and, in the event of industrial trouble, no alternative is available for the slaughtering of lambs. Until recently Australia has had an agreement with the United Kingdom for the supply of meat, and not much stress has been placed on quality, but reports from people returning from England show that more meat is becoming available in the United Kingdom and that consequently British consumers are getting more selective. If Australia is to hold its share of the United Kingdom market, our lambs must be killed when they are the right weight, and that will necessitate facilities for handling a large number of lambs over a short period. I commend the Government for

its assistance in establishing a killing works at Kadina, but I know of two other private companies within a short distance of Adelaide, which are prepared to spend money on killing for export, but which have not been given a licence to do so. Although much money is tied up in the Metropolitan Abattoirs, it would not matter if private killing works took away the whole of its slaughtering, for private enterprise supplies its own capital.

Mr. Stephens—Metropolitan consumers found the capital.

Mr. HAWKER—So did the producers, but, if we cannot get our lambs killed and exported, the Metropolitan Abattoirs is falling down on its job. It does not matter whether lambs are killed at works financed by producers or consumers, so long as they are killed when they are wanted. I have heard at least one member opposite say that, because a Government instrumentality is doing a certain job, private enterprise should not be allowed to compete with it, but, if private concerns were allowed the right to kill stock for export and even for consumption in the metropolitan area and the producer knew that his stock could be slaughtered at the right time, he would increase his production of stock. Before combining with the Metropolitan Abattoirs the export killing works slaughtered about 200,000 lambs a year, but in the short time since the amalgamation of the two works the total has increased to over 400,000, and I could envisage a further increase, if the producer knew he could get his lambs killed at the right time. Every year the producer is asked to produce more and he does so, but he cannot get his lambs into the abattoirs. The dry season arrives and with it the grass seeds, and his lambs are spoiled for export.

There has been much talk from the Opposition about housing. A large amount is provided in these Estimates for the Housing Trust. The member for Prospect blamed the Government for not building more houses, but under the circumstances the Government has done an extraordinarily good job. The first desire of the people the member for Prospect represents is for leisure, but houses cannot be built with leisure. They cannot be built unless someone makes the material and someone erects them. The persons who build homes expect to be paid and the only source of money is from revenue or loan. Loan money is subscribed by private enterprise, but Opposition members always oppose private enterprise, no matter how efficient it is.

Socialism, as we have it, is riding on the back of private enterprise and can only continue so long as private enterprise makes profits to provide money. I support the Loan Estimates.

Mr. TAPPING (Semaphore)—I only desire to refer to two items in the Estimates—firstly, the provision of £600,000 for the Municipal Tramways Trust, and secondly, the provision of £4,200,000 for the Electricity Trust. I am concerned at the amount of money being devoted to the M.T.T. administration. In 1952 Parliament approved a grant of £500,000 to the trust and earlier this year a further £200,000, which, with this amount of £600,000, amounts to £1,300,000. Like other members, I believed when we approved of the appointment of a new board that some of our troubles, financial and otherwise, would be resolved, but the position has not improved one iota; in my opinion it has deteriorated. It is a matter of grave concern because providing public money for the trust deprives other essential works of money they sadly need, and I refer particularly to housing, hospitals and education. We should ensure that this money is not spent unwisely. Some time ago I was amazed to read that the M.T.T. intended bringing Colonel Bingham, the chairman of the New York Transportation Board, to South Australia to advise on its administration and to assist in putting the trust on an even keel. It is interesting to examine the performance of the transportation set-up in New York: it loses more money annually per capita than our trust does. I do not suggest that Colonel Bingham has failed in his administrative duties, but he has been asked to help the M.T.T. when his own organization is losing heavily. In reply to a question I asked on July 28 the Premier said that Colonel Bingham was coming to South Australia for the express purpose of assisting the future planning of the M.T.T. and that it would cost £5,000 for his services and those of another adviser. That amount includes hotel expenses and other incidentals. I believed that the new board would do much to overcome the trust's problems but by deciding to bring Colonel Bingham to South Australia I feel the board has admitted defeat.

Some of the remarks of the member for Burra should be refuted. He suggested that the M.T.T. some years ago made a profit. That may have been so, but it is many years since the trust showed a profit. Any organization of the size of the trust must purchase new rolling stock and meet heavy overhead

costs, but I do not agree that because a profit was made 20 years ago it should be supported at a loss today. He also said that private bus owners made profits although they did not have the choice of bus routes. With the latter statement I entirely disagree. The Kilburn bus service is one of the most prosperous routes in South Australia and pays handsomely. The Port Adelaide to Glenelg service is also profitable and there are many others. I have always contended that the M.T.T. should be a Government enterprise. There should be no half measures and if the matter is to be considered economically the trust must acquire all bus transport in the State. I can remember some years ago when private bus operators conducted the services. Although they made profits the buses were not in as good a condition as the trust buses now are and proper timetables were not maintained. The trust buses are in excellent and safe condition and run to a set time table, which is appreciated by the public. The private bus operators, in my opinion, enjoy some of the cream of the routes and it behoves the M.T.T. to acquire those services. The M.T.T. should control all transport or none. If all transport were controlled by the trust, sponsored by Parliament, it could do a good job. The member for Burra also suggested that we should do away with the M.T.T. and allow private buses to maintain the services. Private operators cannot do the job because their buses are not sufficiently safe and they do not run to decent timetables.

I said earlier that the financial position of New York's transport was worse than that of the M.T.T. In a recent copy of *South Australian Road Transport* the road transport industry's journal these words appear:—

According to the latest figures obtainable, the municipal passenger transport system in New York is losing 32,000,000 dollars a year. With the approximate population of greater New York at 8,000,000, this loss works out at about £1 13s. 2d. a head of the civic population. Latest figures obtainable from the M.T.T. show a loss of £528,804, which, on an estimated population basis of 459,000, works out at £1 2s. 3d. a head of the civic population.

That article convinces me that there is no need to bring Colonel Bingham to South Australia because the new board of experts should be able to do the job.

Mr. Christian—I thought greater New York's population was 10,000,000, not 8,000,000.

Mr. TAPPING—I do not disagree but I should think this journal would be accurate and I accept the figures provided. It may be

worth while to check the figures. In the *Mail* of July 25, in an article headed, "Tram Expenses Heaviest in this State," the working expenses per passenger for the year ended June 30, 1951, were tabulated. They revealed that in South Australia the figure was 6.59d., the highest in Australia, and Queensland at 3.36d. was one of the lowest. The Queensland system is conducted by the Brisbane City Council and if we desire any enlightenment on how to conduct our services economically it might be wise to approach someone in Queensland rather than spend £5,000 on an overseas adviser. In future I shall be wary in casting my vote for further expenditure to the trust. In the last 12 months £1,300,000 has been voted to that organization and it is the duty of every member of Parliament to closely examine the position to see that it does not deteriorate.

Mr. Frank Walsh—You do not think that the Tramways Trust is a satisfactory set-up at present?

Mr. TAPPING—I believe that all members will watch with considerable interest the progress or otherwise made by the new administration. Some months ago I said it was unfair to criticize the new trust because it should have a chance to prove itself. People in my district are vitally concerned about the deterioration in administration and I hope the position will improve as the months go by. They also say that the acquisition of the Adelaide Electric Supply Co. was equal to setting up a State instrumentality, but facts prove that is only partially so. I have heard it said that Mr. Playford is a socialistic Premier and that he did a good job, particularly for country people, when he acquired the company. At the time of the acquisition there were about 1,000 debenture holders in Australia and a number in England. The legislation of 1946 empowered the Government to redeem debentures, but since then the total redemption has been only £1,054,000. According to authentic information up to June 30, 1953, debenture holders received £4,445,000 in dividends, yet today we are asked to approve a loan to the trust of £4,200,000, almost the same amount as that paid in dividends. If we are to continue paying money annually to debenture holders the trust will be at a sad disadvantage. I read in the press last week that the trust made a profit in the last 12 months. That is commendable, but if the £4,445,000 paid out since 1946 had been retained there would have been a much greater profit and country people would have got power more quickly. By next year perhaps another £1,000,000 will have been paid out in dividends.

Mr. Heaslip—The trust does not pay dividends.

Mr. TAPPING—It was a payment to debenture holders.

Mr. Heaslip—A payment of interest, not a dividend.

Mr. TAPPING—The honourable member is splitting straws. The money was paid from the revenue of the State, whether it was interest or dividends, and could have been used for better purposes. If money is to be spent unwisely in this way we will have less for hospitals and schools, and our housing programme will be stifled. The Premier told Mr. Stephens this afternoon that about 3,000 people were awaiting temporary homes. The money paid out by the trust could have been used to build more houses. Is it right that overseas people should receive money annually in this way? We should redeem the debentures under the power provided in the legislation. I support the motion and trust that my remarks will be considered.

Mr. MICHAEL (Light)—I congratulate the Government on having obtained from the Loan Council a sum of money with which it claims it can carry on this year. I commend the Hon. A. L. McEwin for the work he did whilst Acting Premier, which disproves the statement that South Australia is run by one man. He did an excellent job and at the Loan Council meeting did not hesitate to speak his mind. This afternoon I listened with interest to Mr. O'Halloran, who always speaks with much judgment and commonsense. I thought that in his criticism of the present Commonwealth Government he showed he was a little fearful of the popularity that it is gaining by rectifying the position resulting from the actions of the previous Labor Government. Many of our sufferings during the last few years were caused by the actions of the last Commonwealth Government. Twelve to 18 months ago people were critical of the present Commonwealth Government but they now realize it has done what was necessary, and I am sure that when the next Commonwealth elections are held it will be returned with an increased majority.

I disagree with the remarks made by Mr. Hawker about the South-Eastern drainage scheme which he has consistently criticized. There is no comparison between the South-East and the Booborowie district. I have the honour to be the chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Land Settlement which considered the South-Eastern drainage scheme and recommended its adoption. Last year I attended at

Furner the opening of the first large section of the scheme. Before making the visit I had been warned that I would meet with opposition because of the Committee's recommendations, but I did not hear one word of unfavourable criticism. A number of people said that it had proved to be a wonderful scheme for the South-East so far, and that it would be most successful when completed. I think the drainage of the South-East has only just begun. The system has been devised so that if at any time there is an indication that no further drainage is needed because of pasture development the drains can be closed. After my visit to the area I am more than ever convinced that before much of the land can be settled it must be drained. If there should be a wet season, or a run of two or three wet seasons, some drainage will be necessary. Mr. O'Halloran referred to the type of development in South Australia. In the South-East there has been much development in recent years and the area has a great future. In another debate Mr. Corcoran referred to the possibilities of its development and indicated that he wanted to say something constructive about it. In my experience members opposite have criticized but have seldom brought forward anything constructive. Mr. Corcoran spoke of the requirements of the middle and lower South-East, and although I do not entirely agree with all his suggestions he endeavoured to set out methods by which the development of the area could be advanced. There is a great future for development in the South-East, but that will not eventuate until the Government spends much more on drainage. The Land Settlement Committee recommended that an area south of drains L and K should first be drained and data collected concerning the area north of those drains with a view to its development. There is a vast potential in this area which, before many years, must be developed.

I also believe we must push on with the development of the Murray areas. I am very concerned because South Australia is not using the quantity of water from the Murray to which it is entitled. Under the Murray Waters Agreement, South Australia is allowed 1,254,000 acre feet annually, based upon 603,000 acre feet for diversion for irrigation, stock and domestic supplies and 651,000 acre feet for evaporation, seepage and lockage losses. Although South Australia has done more in the conservation of water than any other State, still more than half the quantity available to South Australia from the Murray is lost in evaporation, seepage and lockage losses. At present South Australia

is using only 180,000 acre feet for irrigation, plus 20,000 acre feet to supply the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline, and only an additional 20,000 acre feet will be needed when the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline operates. That means that we will be using only 220,000 acre feet of the total available to us. I have been informed on the most reliable authority that South Australia could easily double its present irrigation demand without exceeding its quota under the agreement or being short during dry periods. I urge the Government to assist private irrigation projects. With its numerous rivers Victoria is more irrigation-minded than any other State, and if New South Wales becomes equally irrigation-minded and we do not use more of the Murray waters I am sure that in the not distant future they will make an attempt to vary the agreement whereby South Australia will not be entitled to the same quantity.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins—There will be much more water coming down the Murray as a result of the Snowy River project.

Mr. MICHAEL—It has been said that South Australia will not be entitled to any of this water. I cannot see why, but if the question is taken to the court and it is shown that we are not making use of the water already available to us, we will not have much chance of getting additional water from the Snowy scheme.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins—The Snowy scheme will satisfy the needs of Victoria and New South Wales to a greater extent and thereby leave available to us a greater quantity of the Murray waters.

Mr. MICHAEL—Although Government irrigation schemes have resulted in the settling of thousands of men, particularly ex-servicemen, I urge the Government to sponsor more expansion in this direction. However, as in other directions, overhead costs are growing so high that it is doubtful whether it is economical to continue with these schemes. In the lower reaches of the Murray particularly there are private areas which could be developed with some Government assistance. The Murray goes through part of my electorate and in the hundred of Cadell, particularly on the south side of the river, there has been great development of small-scale irrigation schemes in recent years. A number of the settlers, because of good seasons and the high price of wool, are in a better financial position than ever before, and they, realizing that droughts will be experienced, have used the surplus money on

small scale irrigation projects, growing mainly citrus trees. I have been amazed to see the development that has taken place there in the last two or three years, and similar development is feasible in a number of areas. Such development has taken place from Morgan down to the mouth of the river and at other places further up river, and this kind of project should be encouraged. It is something the Government should look into. In certain areas it will be found that the lift from the Murray is not too high and it is here that the Government could pursue development. Because of the loss of river trade Morgan has had a tough spin in recent years, but if Government assistance could be given for the development of this land where the lift is not too high it would result in a big boost to the district. Around the lakes area where the lift is not very high since the barrages were completed there are possibilities of irrigation development. This land is capable of greatly increased production. Ultimately I believe something must be done, and this will be of great assistance to the South Australian economic position.

I am pleased that a large sum is to be made available for extensions by the Electricity Trust. If power is to be provided to people in country areas it can be only through some Government assistance. In my district, and no doubt in other districts, there are reasonably closely settled areas where the cost of providing electricity would be too high without some form of Government assistance, perhaps in the form of a subsidy. One officer of the trust suggested to me that if the Government were prepared to assist these people perhaps the trust would be prepared to make a gift of the transformers. At some places where there are 40 to 50 consumers quite a number of transformers would be necessary, and therefore the cost of supply would be much greater than providing a service to the same number of consumers in the metropolitan area.

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

Mr. MICHAEL (Light)—Many people in the more closely settled country areas have not been supplied with electricity because their homes are too far apart. They are in some of our most productive districts, but it is too costly for them to be given a supply. Perhaps the Government could give them financial assistance in this direction. The cost would not be great. Further, many people have not

a water supply from the reservoir mains. In my electorate there are many small pockets with perhaps a dozen farms that have no water reticulation. Most of the people are already connected, but because of the high cost or perhaps because the main could not serve any more people they cannot get a supply. If they were given electricity and water production would be considerably increased. Since the Government is taking water to people in outback areas on Yorke and Eyre Peninsulas some money should be made available for a supply for those in areas where most people already have supplies. This would result in more traffic for the railways and greater production.

The Leader of the Opposition said that many farms had been aggregated and I hold much the same view, for it is a good thing for a country to have as many small farmers as possible, provided their areas are sufficiently large to return them a good standard of living. If electricity and water were taken to the areas I have mentioned with some assistance from the Government not so many small farmers would be selling out to larger landholders. Many have sold out because they have struggled for years without modern amenities, to which every individual is entitled. I am pleased the Government will be able to carry on its works programme with the Loan money available. This is a result of good management. When I hear the statements of Premiers of other States I wonder whether they are more concerned about developing their own States or about belittling the Federal Government. The Leader of the Opposition doubted whether the Acting Premier, Mr. McEwin, was able to get a larger share of the Loan money just because he was at the Loan Council meeting. He thought it was because South Australia had not previously obtained money under the housing agreement. That may be, but the fact remains that the South Australian Government has announced it will carry on its works programme without wholesale dismissals. Other State Premiers said they would not be able to carry on, but that only impressed on me that the Government of this State is a better manager than those in others.

Mr. STEPHENS (Port Adelaide)—I suppose it is the duty of every member to support the Loan Estimates, but if the Government had done the right thing we would have our own banking system and not need to obtain big loans from overseas. We should borrow

money from our people, as the Electricity Trust did recently. The item, "Expenses and Discounts of Floating Conversion Loans, £100,000," for raising loans will not pay the interest bill. It is proposed to vote £950,000 for the Harbors Board, but I regret we have not provided more modern facilities on the Port Adelaide wharves. Most of our industries have the latest machinery and we expect the employees to do their work efficiently. However, there are no travelling cranes at the Port Adelaide wharves, but other States and New Zealand have them. Heavy cargo has to be lifted by the men at Port Adelaide, so it takes them a long time to do their work, but it is not their fault that we do not have modern cranes. Members opposite are always prepared to blame the waterside workers for the slow turn-round of ships, but the real reason is the poor facilities we have on our wharves.

Mr. McAlees—They are out of date.

Mr. STEPHENS—Yes, and this Government is out of date, and has only been elected by an out-of-date and undemocratic system. The wharf sheds require modernizing. The Government should take evidence from the people concerned, not only the waterside workers, but agents and carriers, and visit the wharves to appreciate the lack of modern facilities. I asked the Government and members of this House to visit Port Adelaide, but they were not prepared to do so. Our wharf sheds were badly constructed.

Mr. Fletcher—Are the later ones satisfactory?

Mr. STEPHENS—Even some of the new ones are badly constructed. Many of the people concerned cannot understand why the sheds have not been fitted with rolling doors instead of sliding doors, which block off one part of the shed. This means that cargo often cannot be removed, whereas with rolling doors it is always accessible. Cargo sheds could be cleared in half the time and berths made available much more frequently. I do not expect the Government to take my word for this, for I am on the wrong side of the House, but it should appoint a commission or committee of inquiry; not a civil servant who already has too much to do, but, say, a judge of the Supreme Court, to find out how these sheds could be emptied more quickly. I have seen half a dozen trolleys and half a dozen gangs of men from different firms waiting their turn for a door so that they could unload their goods; the same thing applies on the



other side of the shed in the discharging of cargoes from the ships. I do not want to have to bring this up year after year as I did the Nelcebee case, which I fought for seven or eight years before getting justice for the man concerned. Another important matter that affects the progress of this State is the operations of the Housing Trust. An amount of £25,000 is set down in these Estimates for emergency housing. Only a few days ago the Treasurer said that the Government did not intend to build any more emergency homes and the trust said the same thing in its report, so why are we asked to provide £25,000 for this purpose? Are we to assume that the money has already been spent? Only a few days ago I asked a question regarding emergency housing and was informed that there are 3,000 applicants seeking temporary accommodation, and yet the Government tells us that it does not intend to provide any more. However, other homes are to be built by the trust for which the rent will be £3 5s. a week and more. They will be let, however, only to people who have no young children. The Liberal Party and the Liberal Government do not want as tenants women who are going to bring children into the world, but prefer those who have no children under 16 years of age—and even they must be able to pay £3 5s. a week.

I was a member of this House when the Housing Trust was formed and I remember that we were told that the houses were to be let at 12s. 6d. a week, but ever since the rent has been gradually increasing. The Government is not assisting the Housing Trust as much as it could. We have a grave shortage of cement, one of the most important items in home building. During the whole of the 20 years I have been a member there has been a shortage of cement. When Mr. (now Sir Richard) Butler was Premier I asked why cement was so much dearer in South Australia than in Victoria and he replied that there was no justification whatever for it. There is a Federal award governing employees in the industry and men making cement in the other States are paid the same wages as those in South Australia. When the member for Unley, on one occasion, was speaking of making roads with cement I asked why cement was so dear and he said, "There are only two cement companies in South Australia and they can charge what they like" and so we have been controlled by this cement monopoly for many years. Why doesn't the Government manufacture its own cement for

use in its harbours, railways, highways, hospitals and other Government buildings, for we have all the necessary raw materials in South Australia. I was told that if I examined the list of shareholders I would get my answer as to why the Government would not take action, and I suggest today that members should look up that list if they want to know the reason.

On page 14 there is an item under the heading "Industries Development Act"—to provide loans for assistance for production of building materials. I do not know whether any part of that could be used to start a cement factory. We sent our lads overseas to fight against the Japanese, but as soon as the war was finished we again became good customers of the Japanese and we are getting a lot of cement from them, and they are taking scrap iron and pig iron in place of it; some of our lads may bring some of that back after it has been shot into them. I am totally opposed to the importation of cement into South Australia when we have a plentiful supply of the raw materials which we could use to manufacture it. When I brought this matter up on another occasion one member opposite, looking for excuses, said, "We have not the machinery." When I said that we could make it he said we could not, which was belittling to the engineers of this State. I went to the Hon. F. T. Perry, who said I could use his name, and he said, "They would not say that in the Council because I would soon tell them that we could manufacture the machinery and that they could be making cement in a very short time." If we could build aeroplanes, munitions of war and machinery of all kinds for war purposes we could manufacture the machines needed to make cement, and we could do it now. The only reason why we do not is the fear of offending some of our friends who control private enterprise for their own profit. I was disappointed to hear some of the statements by the member opposite with reference to the slow turn-round of ships. He said that the waterside workers were Communist-controlled, which is absolutely untrue. Today I read a report that the President of the Waterside Workers' Federation was conferring with officers from other States.

The CHAIRMAN—Order! Is the honourable member referring to a statement made in this debate on the Loan Estimates?

Mr. STEPHENS—No, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN—Then the honourable member is not in order in replying to statements made in other debates.

Mr. STEPHENS—But the statement was made in this House.

The CHAIRMAN—Members are in Committee now and the honourable member may only refer to subjects referred to in Committee.

Mr. STEPHENS—A statement was made regarding the slow turn-round of shipping, but that slow turn-round was due not to any fault of the waterside workers, but occurred because they were not supplied with adequate facilities to do the work. Although I may get another opportunity to deal with this matter, I refute here and now the statement that these men are Communists; nor are they Pearson's pimps who crawl into meetings to get information. That statement was slung up at me in Port Lincoln. I was pleased when the Electricity Trust of South Australia Bill was passed. The trust has done more than private enterprise could or would do to supply electricity to consumers. Prior to the passing of that legislation, if a light were required in a street a form had to be filled in giving details regarding the people who required it and later a light might be supplied, but the trust does not wait until it is sure of getting income from its services before giving them to the people. Indeed, today electricity is being sent all over South Australia. The trust is doing good work and I will do everything possible to support it. When the original Bill came before this House several members spoke against it, but when the division bells rang one member who had done so walked out of the Chamber and another remained to vote for the measure. That Bill was defeated in another place and a fresh one introduced and passed with the support of Labor members.

The member for Burra criticized the activities of the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board, saying that he would like to see the abattoirs taken over by private enterprise because it was not giving adequate service. Many lambs may await slaughtering in the flush season, but I believe the Minister of Agriculture's statement that producers expect to have their lambs slaughtered immediately when they send them all down at once. The export freezing works at Port Adelaide was always a losing proposition, for lambs were slaughtered there at less than cost price, but, on the other hand, the Metropolitan Abattoirs paid because city people found the money to

make it pay. The amalgamation of the two works meant that city people must pay for the losses made on the slaughtering of export lambs. The honourable members spoke of the wonderful job being done by South Australian graziers in producing more lambs and other stock, yet Government spokesmen have asked primary producers to increase production so as to reduce costs. In spite of these pleas we find that costs have risen. In fact, the slogan, "The more you produce the cheaper it will be" should be "The more you produce the dearer it will be."

I never agreed with the original constitution of the Tramways Trust. A man could make himself popular by being a good sport or spending money within his district, be elected to the council, and later be appointed to the Tramways Trust and expected to know how to control the tramways. Such men were paid for their services on the trust, but I know of a case in which no sooner was a man elected than he went on a trip round the world, at the same time drawing his money although not attending a meeting. No wonder the trust could not be made to pay. Although another board has been constituted, a man is to be imported from the United States of America to tell the new board how to run the tramways, although I believe he made a failure of his job in New York. The Government should decide whether the new board or the man from overseas is to control our tramways.

I support the Railways Department at every opportunity, for it has done a good job in opening up country which otherwise would have produced little. Unlike private enterprise, the Government did not wait, before constructing railway lines, until it could see a profit, but pushed ahead to open up country even though little business was offering. In opening up country the Railways Department increased the value of the land adjacent to its lines and those land-owners have had to pay an increased land tax. After collection, at least part of that tax should have been earmarked for the Railways Department. Many South Australians, both in the city and in the country, complain that the Railways Department does not pay, and, although most are pleased that the railways have opened up their land, if they get the chance many cart their goods by road. It is a pity such people are not more loyal to the Railways Department which has opened up their land.

Mr. Macgillivray—The city people have let the railways down.

Mr. STEPHENS—Our roads have become worn-out because of their use by heavy vehicles. For many years metropolitan members have complained about poor water supplies. We were told that when Mount Bold Reservoir was completed our water supplies would be secure for many years but that has not been so. When I advocated bringing River Murray water to Adelaide I was sneered at by Government supporters as they sneered at John Fitzgerald when he first spoke about Leigh Creek coal, but the Premier wisely adopted those suggestions. Many Opposition suggestions were laughed at until they were introduced by the Government. I said that if our metropolitan reservoirs were filled once a year there would be sufficient water for a year but I was told that they would never be full. When I suggested bringing Murray water to the city I was asked how I could get the water over the hills. I said it was not necessary to go over the hills, but around or through them. A tunnel three miles long was dug for the Happy Valley Reservoir and if it could be done then it could be done now. I hope the Premier will do something about sliding doors on wharves because that would assist the turn-round of ships and provide satisfaction not only to the shipping companies but to agents, carriers and merchants. I will have an opportunity of dealing with many other matters when the items are discussed seriatim.

The CHAIRMAN—Before members continue I would like to know whether members would prefer to deal with these items seriatim or *en bloc*.

Mr. STEPHENS—I believe that every year we have spoken in general on the first line, and then with the other lines seriatim.

The CHAIRMAN—That is not correct, and I would like to know the desire of the House. Would members prefer to deal with them seriatim?

Several Members—Yes.

The CHAIRMAN—Very well.

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley)—I suppose we should congratulate ourselves on the amount that we have received from the Commonwealth—a total of £27,000,000 for expenditure this year. Whilst members have been congratulating the Premier and the Acting Premier and possibly deeming unworthy the attempts of other States to obtain sums that were not granted, they have tended to overlook that there was a substantial reason for a State asking for an amount in excess of what the

Loan Council granted. All State works have to be placed before the authorities and the expenditure must be outlined. If we say that other States have asked for too much is it because we think that they should not go on with works that they consider imperative? The congratulations that we have given ourselves, probably at the expense of the other States, are somewhat unworthy of us. I do not suggest that the amounts requested by the other States would not have been spent in a manner beneficial to their citizens.

In relation to our expenditure I suggest it is time we examined where we are going. Year by year the State debt has increased in astronomical proportions and the burden of debt per capita is reaching a stage that merits serious consideration. In 1947 the total public debt in South Australia was £114,130,000 or £176 13s. per capita. In 1952 it had increased to £173,436,000 or £234 per capita. In other words, it has increased in that time by £58 for every man, woman, and child in this State. The total increase in those years has been £59,306,000. Today we are paying on that debt £4,526,000 per annum in interest which is only £264,000 less than the total amount collected in taxation in this State.

Mr. O'Halloran—How much per head does that represent?

Mr. QUIRKE—I have not that figure, but the total taxation in South Australia per annum is £4,792,000 and it is used to pay interest on our debt, which is not being reduced by one penny. The debt is being increased annually but how long can it continue? Now that the spur of war which keeps our financial system working has temporarily ceased we can expect a reduction in prices for commodities exported overseas. What will we do then in relation to our debt and our housing problems?

Today asbestos-framed wooden houses are rented at from £3 5s. to £3 10s. a week. I do not criticize the Housing Trust for asking that rental, nor do I question the necessity for it. Evidently that amount is required so that the trust can meet its expenses. Under the agreement proposed between the Commonwealth and States it was assumed that one-fifth of a man's income would go in rent. A man must have an income of between £16 and £17 a week to pay, as one-fifth of his income, a rental of £3 5s. or £3 10s. The basic wage is under £12 a week and with a loading of about £2 a week the average income is about £14. Under these conditions the person who most needs

housing cannot possibly get it. The Premier said he was not in favour of subsidizing housing, but how are these people to be housed?

Mr. O'Halloran—He has accepted the principle now.

Mr. QUIRKE—Yes, under the Commonwealth agreement. The point is that if we obtain lower prices for overseas exports the position will not be bright nearer home. The men in the lower income group cannot be considered as applicants for a rental home. These are the people who most require houses. The Premier is human, but one criticism I have is that possibly he is not aware of the Frankenstein monster being built up.

Mr. Macgillivray—He is aware of it, but cannot do anything about it.

Mr. QUIRKE—I will accept that, but I would like him to voice his opposition more often to the pernicious system so that we will know he does not support it. At present Australia has a public debt of £3,300,000,000, or £300 per capita. It is becoming an intolerable burden and the interest payments amount to about £90,000,000 per annum, yet we still congratulate ourselves on raising loans, thereby increasing the incubus. Today we have public bodies like the Electricity Trust and the Housing Trust raising their own funds, all interest-bearing.

Earlier this session I asked the Premier whether he would have the question of rental homes at Clare investigated, and soon a trust officer came to make an inquiry. I approached him in regard to an applicant and found that the rental of a house comparable to one in the city would be £3 5s. a week. That rules out the possibility of having many rental homes at Clare. Some of the people who want them served in World War I., started to establish themselves thereafter, met the depression in 1930, got out of it and went through another war, yet they cannot get houses. They are a most desirable type, but nothing is done for them. I do not criticize Electricity Trust expenditure, because the trust is performing magnificent work. We are spending money in many directions, but our greatest assets are not our uranium and its by-products, but our men and women. We must develop our uranium deposits, but if we can do that we can also build cheap homes.

Members in a position to know have criticized country schools. I know that some are unfit for school purposes, but the position cannot be alleviated. Today when a small school is closed the pupils go to another school at

which we add a small wooden room to provide for them. The Clare high school is a magnificent stone building and was erected when the Architect-in-Chief's Department and others appreciated the architectural beauty of a substantial structure. Today there are weather-board buildings beside it to provide for the overflow. We cannot visualize any extension of schools of a substantial nature. It has been said with some truth that the present schools are better because they are more adaptable, but I want the adaptation to be on the up-grade rather than on the down-grade.

The sum of £170,000 is to be spent on the purchase of land for developmental purposes. Mr. Hawker extolled the virtue of large holdings and said a large holding was more economical to run because one man with a tractor could work it. That can be done, but only at the sacrifice of production and I defy anyone to refute it. Many years ago a philosopher said that the best fertilizer for a farm is the footstep of the farmer. We have farms so large that if a man walked over his holding during the whole of his life he would not place his footstep on all of it. It is not possible to get full production from a paddock of about 200 acres by farming in all seasons, because various parts of the paddock need entirely different treatment and cropping on a wider rotation. One of the mistakes of present farming methods is that if a paddock has a fence around it the farmer applies the same treatment to all of it. To get the best production from the land he cannot work that way; we must have diversification in the types of crop grown and run stock. Diversification means a close consideration of every soil type on a farm, and it cannot be done with the larger areas. I do not advocate that we should dispossess all large holders of land, but, the methods of production and the education relating to them should become so intense that the failure of the big holding will become most apparent, with the small holding coming into its own.

Mr. O'Halloran—If we do not accept that principle somebody will dispossess us of the land.

Mr. QUIRKE—That is highly probable, and if we do not accept it we will soon become importers of foodstuffs. Mr. Hawker criticized the drainage of the South-East. I think he was on entirely wrong grounds because he tried to draw a parallel between the underground water of the Booborowie district and

that of the South-East. He said that in the South-East we are allowing precious rainwater to run into the sea. That is so because of the want of something better to do with it. The honourable member does not understand the principle of underground drainage. Unless surface water is taken off vast areas of land in the South-East they cannot be developed. With the development of the pasture there will be a greater take up of the water and the land will become drier. The scheme in the South-East is designed to provide for that contingency and when it is not necessary to drain the land it will not be drained. The surplus winter water can always be taken off to allow the development of pasture, but when there is no surplus winter water and the pasture takes up more water no rainwater will flow into the sea. In the Booborowie country the underground water comes from a limited area, but geologists have told us that in the South-East it comes probably from the drainage of the Grampians, and that the Blue Lake, the Leg of Mutton Lake and Bubbling Springs are on the same water level and derive their water from the same source. There is a constant seepage of the water at the back of Bakers Range. It comes from an easterly direction and keeps the water table up. The surplus water there is not entirely due to rainfall, but rainfall on the top of an already raised water table. That has never applied in the Booborowie district. Because of my experience and knowledge of the South-East I uphold the drainage works 100 per cent. They will enable thousands of acres now waterlogged for the greater part of the year and impossible of development to become heavy capacity areas. If any public money has been well spent in the interests of production it has been in the South-East. I rose primarily to utter a protest and warning at this piling of Pelion on Ossa in the form of debt, whereby we are increasing the incubus yearly. We are certainly getting something for it in the way of public works, but I want to see much more money spent on the little people—those who are now rapidly getting outside the reach of the real amenities of life. When we look after these people, who are the principal assets of this country, we will have no quibble as to what is raised in the monetary sphere. I think the time is coming when this policy, which has been advocated by myself and the member for Chaffey year in and year out in this House, is getting closer and if I do not die too soon perhaps I will live to realize the ambitions I have in the interests

of Australia when we can run this country without being subordinated to the utterly fictitious and artificial principle that money, which is the easiest thing to manufacture and the hardest thing for the individual to get, will no longer dictate how we shall live in this country, but will become the servant of the people as it was always intended before the barons of finance so ordered it that the nations of the world have become the slaves of finance—the slaves of an artificial Moloch that has no reality if we have the sense to realize how it is manufactured and distributed. If the people realize that, half our troubles will go and the bogeys of inflation disappear. That cannot be disproved if money is used to bring down prices instead of assisting through debt an upward spiral of prices. Money should be used to bring down prices and correct that spiral, or even lower the whole debt structure and make money worth more. Then we would have no inflation. Every penny of borrowed money used in our Budget will not decrease prices one half-penny.

I shall conclude by referring to the humble potato in relation to production. We cannot order primary production in relation to supply and demand and prices, and that has been proved beyond the shadow of doubt in regard to perishable articles like potatoes. Inevitably during times of shortage they are dear and in times of surplus they are cheap. If the grower organized his own interests co-operatively throughout the State without the interference of the Government or boards and ran his own business his own way, as do other great organizations, and regulated his product to the people and gave them a good article at a reasonable price, he would know that when there was a glut he would have to take a low price and when supplies were short consumers would expect to pay more. That is the only way to control a perishable article like potatoes. If we continue to mess around and interfere with these things we will always have chaos. We have organized the humble spud out of existence, as the Apple and Pear Board did with the products it controlled some years ago. I saw an interesting reference the other day to the number of boards in Australia, and it would appear that for every 10 people in Australia about seven must be on some Government or other board. We are over-governed in that respect. I object to these things when they become tyrannies as one board, which at another time I shall name, has become in South Australia.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—The Woods and Forests Department is a revenue-producing organization and there is a big demand for its products, but supplies are not sufficient to meet that demand. I have favourably commended this department's efforts on every possible occasion. I favour the provision of loan moneys for the establishment of new forests and the acquisition of land for afforestation. On page 5 of the Loan Estimates appears a list of forestry officers whose salaries are paid from loans. On June 25 the House was called together to pass appropriation for £1,175,500, and during the Address in Reply debate I mentioned the Public Finance Act. However, in his reply the Treasurer made no mention of these things. Is it the Government's policy to refuse to attempt to reduce the public debt? As these matters were raised by the Opposition in the course of another debate it would have been proper for the Treasurer to acknowledge this reference as being worthy of consideration.

I notice that £280,000 is provided for reticulation sewers, miscellaneous extensions, and minor works and £90,500 for house connections. No mention is made of the sewer main at the Brownhill Creek Reserve. I am not reflecting on the organization which was successful in having this main laid. I have been informed sometimes that there were not sufficient houses in particular streets for the provision of sewers, yet Brownhill Creek has been serviced, although that locality is only used by people living for short periods there in tents or caravans. I have been informed that there are not sufficient houses in Park Holme to justify a sewerage scheme there. In Mirreen, which is between Sweetman's Road and South Road, there are a number of new houses. Many of the residents are New Australians; and they are not prepared to pay for sewer services. I believe they came from countries where they had other means of disposing of sewage. I should appreciate information on how soon we can expect sewer connections to areas where there are many houses.

Mr. John Clark—What about the country sewerage schemes?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I am not speaking about the country now: I am thinking of the residents of Goodwood, and they are growing in number. The people in the district are building a good type of home. I hope they will soon be given sewerage services. The Treasurer has on previous occasions suggested that the Opposition was continually criticizing the activities of the Housing Trust. Once he

accused me of attempting to take the business of the House out of the Government's hands, but I make no apology for my criticism on that occasion. My approach was in the interests of the community. It seems that about £750,000 will be voted to the Housing Trust to finance second mortgages, but they have always been risky, as was evidenced in the 1930's. The State Bank will be granted an amount similar to that granted last year. I recently stated that the State Bank had not used that amount but had been called upon to purchase some of the Housing Trust's homes. In my criticism—if it be such—I have had only one purpose in mind. We have been told that in 1942 we agreed to the averaging of rents and that because the trust was in no way connected with the Commonwealth housing scheme it would have to pay sales tax upon all materials it used. This, we were told, would increase rents by a little over 1s. a week and therefore the averaging system was introduced. The Act was amended to permit the spending of more than £500 on one unit. In those days the rent was 12s. 6d. a week, but a similar type of home today, under the averaging system has gone up to 27s. 6d. a week. On reliable information I believe that five-roomed Housing Trust homes are being sold at over £3,000 but that the State Bank under its group system—for which, I am informed, there is no further demand—can build units for sale at £2,700. Am I not therefore entitled to ask for certain information and because I do so am I to be accused of having an axe to grind? I merely want the best for the community, and the community needs better homes. Have we not grounds then for pressing for an inquiry? I know there is more equity in a State Bank home than a trust home, and I am prepared to say that outside of Parliament. Is there a reason for this? Some senior officers and others in the Public Service tell me that because the trust is building a larger number of homes it has a bigger overhead charge and consequently the costs per unit must rise. That argument will not hold water.

I asked on another occasion why the trust was permitted to pay exorbitant prices for broad acres—up to almost £1,000 an acre, and I still cannot see why the trust should be able to get away with it without some investigation. The Treasurer on another occasion said that members ought to take notice of some of the letters he had received from satisfied tenants of the trust. On the other hand I have cases on record of people who are

still waiting for homes—people with large families. The reply I get from the trust is that though it desires to house them it is building so few units that will accommodate families of six to eight children that they must wait. Whilst I was Acting Leader of the Opposition a case was brought under my notice from Salisbury. This family has been registered for over eight years and has been living in most undesirable conditions. I am not accusing the trust of being unfair in its methods, but the important thing is that the Treasurer has never answered my queries. When we asked what are the trust's conditions of contract we are told, in effect, to mind our own business. I have examined the books of a very prominent contractor for the State Bank; if there is an increase in the basic wage he has to tally up the number of manhours for each trade that it will take to complete a house. I do not know whether the Housing Trust uses the same method, but it has too much merit to be ignored. I would be pleased to know what the Treasurer has to say about this because it is of vital importance.

In introducing the Loan Estimates he said that £4,500,000 was to be provided by the Commonwealth Government under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, and this has close relationship to the matter I am discussing. The Treasurer also said that an amount of £220,000 has been provided to enable the trust to complete 150 single-unit houses for rental purposes.

What part of the £4,500,000 will be used to erect timber-framed homes? Will the Housing Trust continue to average rentals? The

Housing Trust Act should be consolidated so as to enable members to refer to it quickly. Was the Government or the Housing Trust responsible for the importation of prefabricated homes? I can only assume it was the Government, for I understand it tried to dispose of 500 to the New Zealand Government. If it was the Government, why did it shelter behind the trust? These matters should be investigated. Can our aged be expected to pay £3 10s. a week for flats at Plympton? As the older trust homes become vacant, surely they can be renovated and made available for aged couples, say, at their present rentals of 27s. a week. More than 70 tenants of the trust attended an informal meeting at which I was asked to speak to the Government on their behalf, but I have received no reply from the Government on those matters. Will the £4,500,000 be used to erect single-unit all-timber homes, or will tenants of homes still to be erected benefit from some sort of subsidy by way of lower rents? Will the capital cost of pre-fabricated and all-timber homes be reduced by providing semi-detached units? I hope that, later in this debate, the Treasurer will have some comprehensive answer to the matters raised by all members, particularly that of housing, which I believe is most important.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 9.32 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, August 19, at 2 p.m.