

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, August 25, 1953.

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

QUESTIONS.**HOMES FOR PENSIONERS OR AGED PEOPLE.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I was pleased to read in the press recently a statement by the Premier that the Housing Trust intends to build 100 homes for pensioners or aged people, and the Opposition, seeing that it has pressed for a considerable period for something on these lines to be done, supports the broad principles of the scheme. Can the Premier say whether any of the first 100 houses will be built in country towns and, if so, which towns?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—This matter arises out of a number of suggestions made in this House and by the association of pensioners, and follows on some correspondence I had personally with the Commonwealth Government. The latter made it clear that it was a matter for State activity, although aged pensioners, under the Constitution, come under its care, and that in its opinion it should be dealt with as an ordinary housing matter. Therefore, the Housing Trust has drawn up a proposal for the erection of a group of these houses. It is not contemplated that the first group will be erected in the country, but in accordance with its normal policy, the trust erects houses where they are most required, and if any proposal should come from a country area showing that there is a definite need for houses, it would receive the same consideration from the trust as any proposal from the metropolitan area. The houses are being built to provide for a disclosed need in the metropolitan area, but the Government is prepared to consider country areas in due course.

Mr. HUTCHENS—In view of the provisions of Part IV. of the Housing Improvement Act, 1940, giving the Housing Trust power, where in any area there are houses unfit for human habitation to declare it a clearance area, order the demolition of any houses in the area, acquire the land, rebuild, and provide housing for persons of limited means, the following statement in *The Mail* of August 22, is interesting:

About 100 homes are to be built soon by the S.A. Housing Trust for old age pensioners. "The trust has in mind building at the outset about 100 of these pensioners' homes in suitable localities, reasonably convenient to transport and shopping facilities," said Mr. Playford.

Will the Treasurer take up the matter of having cleared some of the area of sub-standard houses in the Hindmarsh electorate with a view to building pensioner homes near established shopping and transport facilities, and permitting old people to live in areas to which they have been long accustomed, at the same time ridding the area of houses unfit for human habitation?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The honourable member quotes one clause of the legislation, but there is more recent legislation on this matter which provides that no-one shall have the right to pull down any house which has been occupied unless he has the permission of the Director of Building Materials. We still have an overall shortage of houses and it is not feasible to pull down a house which is not condemned and is habitable and thus turn people out into the streets. Even for emergency homes there are at present about 3,000 applications, so at the moment we are not in a position to pull down houses. Not until we have caught up with the deficiency can we undertake work of the kind mentioned under the powers which my Government introduced and which it believes to be necessary.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Will the pensioners who have already applied to the trust for rental homes have to lodge another application to be considered for one of the 100 homes to be built in the metropolitan area? Who should make the representations for groups of houses to be built in country towns? Would the local government authorities be the appropriate bodies?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It may not be absolutely necessary for pensioners to renew their applications, but I think it would be advisable. A large number of applications are before the trust, but so far none has been specifically for a pensioner home, so they may be overlooked if they are not renewed for this purpose. I believe the trust will be quite happy to consider any representations by councils for groups of houses. It costs the trust money to send officers to examine the position in various districts, and probably a council would be the proper body to make representations.

FORESHORE DAMAGE.

Mr. PATTINSON—At the beginning of June Cabinet approved of a grant of £200,000 towards the cost of restoration of our foreshores damaged by storm, and appointed a committee of four public servants and three town clerks to make recommendations to the Minister

for his approval for such works to be undertaken. Later in June Parliament authorized the expenditure of this money, after several members, particularly Messrs. Macgillivray and Quirke, delivered very interesting and informative speeches concerning the type and location of improvements which should be constructed in future. Since then I have seen in the newspapers the reproduction of a proposed plan of restoration by one council, and pictures of a bulldozer and a mechanical shovel working in the areas of other councils, and reports of some grants having been made by the Minister of Works. I have the highest regard for the Minister and his committee. However, as a layman, having made several recent inspections of our metropolitan beaches, I am far from satisfied, either from a utilitarian or an aesthetic viewpoint, concerning some of the work actually in progress. Will the Minister, in view of the fact that Parliament is providing the whole of the funds, submit to the House in due course a concise but comprehensive report of the committee's recommendations for information purposes, if not for discussion?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—On the committee there are four civil servants because the Government provided the funds, and the town clerks of Glenelg, Brighton, and Henley and Grange, the chairman being the Under-Treasurer, Mr. Drew. Up to the present I have heard of no suggestion that the committee is at variance on any point whatsoever. All I have done up to the present is to approve, as I think it is my duty and responsibility to Parliament to do, the unanimous report of the committee. I have heard of no report that either the town clerks have been over-ridden by the public servants or *vice versa*. In many cases the application for a grant comes to me so urgently that unless something is done worse may happen. He gives twice who gives quickly, and unless we give quickly, work that may at the time restore the damage may be utterly inadequate later. There is no reason why I should not submit a report, as requested by the honourable member, and I shall be glad to do so, but I am surprised to hear that there may be an issue amongst the members of the committee. All I can say is that if there is any matter at issue I shall be glad to take it up with the committee.

ELECTRICITY TRUST AND CARPENTERS AT PORT AUGUSTA.

Mr. LAWN—Has the Premier a reply to my question of August 13 regarding the

employment of carpenters at Port Augusta by the Electricity Trust?

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

The trust has been seeking additional carpenters for some considerable time to ensure the commissioning of the Port Augusta power station by the winter of 1954. Extensive advertising and requests to both the Carpenters' and Joiners' Union and the Commonwealth Employment Service were unsuccessful. At no time were we advised by the union of their unwillingness to refer tradesmen to us for employment at Port Augusta. As this class of labour could not be engaged locally, advertisements were placed for carpenters to work at Port Augusta in the *Advertiser, News* and *Mail* on June 20, 1953, but without success. The immediate need for these men was for urgent work which would require approximately three months to complete. The trust had insufficient permanent labor of this type employed in the metropolitan area, and could not arrange the transfer of men for the short duration without seriously interfering with projects on which these men were already engaged.

In view of the unsuccessful attempts to engage carpenters, it was decided to advertise in the metropolitan press inviting contractors to supply labour on an hourly rate basis for a period of approximately three months, and accordingly advertisements were placed in the *S.A. Builder* and *Contractor* on June 26 and in the *Advertiser* on June 27, 1953. In view of the short-term nature of this contract, this arrangement had the desirable effect of ensuring continued employment for carpenters already employed at Port Augusta, as the contractors' labour would be dispensed with when this urgent work is completed. Tenders were accepted from the following:—Wilckens and Burnside, six carpenters; A. Pfeiffer, self and four carpenters; and I. Janssen, self and four carpenters. The average hourly rate for the carpenters under the respective contracts is 16s. 3d. per hour. The rates are inclusive of overtime (14 hours at double time and 12 hours at time plus one-half per fortnight), and also include leading hand supervision for each gang, accommodation charges, fares to and from Adelaide, workmen's compensation insurance, public risk insurance and payroll tax.

PRICE CONTROL.

Mr. DUNKS—The following appeared in the *Advertiser* on Saturday:—

Brisbane, August 21.—From tomorrow beer, tobacco and cigarettes and more than 75 other goods and services will be freed from price control.

There were also communications from Sydney and Melbourne to the effect that the Governments there were also considering the same thing. Will the Government consider decontrolling immediately all goods that are in adequate supply and then at the interstate conference to be held shortly advocate the abolition of price control altogether?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have received telegrams from Ministers in States other than Queensland expressing very grave concern at the action taken by Queensland, requesting my attendance at a conference at which they desire to consider the whole matter, and advising that they have invited a Queensland representative to be present. The matter arises out of the fact that the Commonwealth Government had been paying the cost from its Budget of the State Prices Branches and the Queensland Government, in retaliation, has started to decontrol a number of commodities. We have always looked upon price control as something completely outside the political arena. Whether the Commonwealth or the States paid for price control, we regarded the issue as one which should be based upon the necessities of the people and not upon who may at the moment be footing the bill. That is still the attitude of my Government which has no interest in price control except as it affects the general welfare of the community and the economic stability of the State. I assure the honourable member that that policy has been carried out fairly and squarely. Where goods are in plentiful supply and the Government knows there is competitive selling—I emphasise the second point as well as the first because both are relevant to whether prices are fair and reasonable—it will immediately decontrol the prices of those commodities. However, where goods are plentiful and we have evidence that there is no competitive selling—as we have in a number of instances where associations even go to the extent of imposing penalties on their members if they sell below a certain price—we believe there is justification for price control continuing. That is the basis upon which we have considered price control in this State. We do not look upon it as a political issue: as a political issue it has its advantages and its disadvantages, but if the price structure of this State rises above those of other States we have widespread unemployment and half our industries are immediately in difficulty, for 80 per cent of the commodities manufactured here are now exported to the eastern States. There are various ways of maintaining the price level. I will not argue that point today, but this House must continually bear in mind the price levels in this State compared to those in other States. For instance, flour mills are closing in South Australia because we cannot get sufficient orders for their products. Another closed yesterday, and this is a matter of great concern.

ELECTRICITY CHARGES IN COUNTRY AREAS.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Part of a letter in today's *Advertiser* states:—

This profit (the trust's profit of £300,000 made during the past financial year) could be better used by the trust in abolishing or drastically reducing the heavy surcharge which it imposes on new extensions in country areas leaving the present tariff charges as they are. The surcharge on a recent extension is 66 per cent and in some cases higher. This move would stimulate and encourage extensions in outlying areas so that these residents can enjoy the amenities which is the privilege of the town and city dweller.

Electric light and power was extended to a part of my district, but the growers there have to pay a much higher surcharge than those on the other side of the river in Waikerie. The Premier just spoke of the price level, and he will realize it is largely controlled by the cost level, so the country growers who have to pay a high surcharge are in an unfortunate position when they enter into competitive selling with others who get power at a much lower cost. Will the Premier consider having one charge throughout the State, wherever the trust is supplying light and power? As the trust is a concern for which the general taxpayer throughout the State is responsible, every electricity consumer should be able to get supplies at a flat rate. Secondly, will the Premier see that any profits made by the trust are put into a suspense account to reduce the cost of installing mains, transformers, and other things in country areas?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The basis upon which the honourable member has put his questions is not entirely accurate because the trust has never been a charge, even to the extent of one penny, upon the taxpayers of this State.

Mr. Macgillivray—It might be. It is guaranteed by the State.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The honourable member based his questions on the premise that the trust is a charge upon the taxpayer of this State, but it has always realized it has to carry out its functions economically and in a businesslike way, and that it must, over a period, provide for all of its expenditure out of its own revenues. The first point is that it is a business undertaking and there is no charge made, for example, to the residents of the district of Victoria, where there is no service being provided, to maintain services somewhere else, because they are not being provided as a charge upon the taxpayer. Secondly, the idea of a flat tariff has been examined in a number of countries and I

think that, with one exception perhaps, it has in every instance been found impracticable. It certainly is not feasible at present in South Australia. The question of providing electricity on a flat rate, again coming back to the question asked by the member for Mitcham, would immediately mean that all our industries which at present are competing on an interstate basis would find their costs so unfavourable that they would be put out of business. I assure the honourable member that the tariffs to the country user already carry some concession, for he is not being required to cover the whole of the cost of reticulation. Some of that cost is being carried by the organization as a whole. If the country user had to carry the whole of the costs many extensions would be impossible. Thirdly, legislation already provides for an appropriation of £1,000,000, which was in the nature of a direct subsidy, to enable electricity to be taken into areas which otherwise would not get it because of the cost factor.

Mr. Macgillivray—It is hard to get hold of.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—When we are spending taxpayers' money we must be sure it is justifiable, and the honourable member would be one of the first to criticize expenditure if were not. Though the fund is being husbanded carefully, it is being used. Only this week three projects to come under that fund were discussed by me with the chairman of the trust.

MURRAY BRIDGE RESERVE.

Mr. WHITE—Considerable sums have been spent on the Sturt Reserve, which is contiguous to the river at Murray Bridge and which is a watering place for the townspeople and also a tourist attraction. In 1951 and 1952 it was under water for some months with the result that fences were damaged, lawns completely obliterated, and shelter sheds almost wrecked. It is estimated that to repair this damage and to make the area more immune to future floodings will cost at least £1,000. In view of the importance of this reserve as a tourist resort and a watering place for the people of Murray Bridge and of the farming areas for many miles around and as far afield as Pinnaroo, can the Premier say whether the Government will render financial assistance to the Murray Bridge Corporation to enable it to repair the damage to the reserve?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will make inquiries and, if the member will ask this question again next week, I will advise him regarding it.

WAR SERVICE SETTLEMENT ROADS.

Mr. CORCORAN—The Supplementary Estimates contained an item of £120,000 to provide roads of access to war service land settlement areas. When those Estimates were being considered I asked the Minister of Lands whether any of that sum would be allocated for work in the South-East, and, although he assured me that part of it would be, he could not give me details of that allocation or tell me what amount would be spent there. Can the Minister now give more details of that allocation?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—When the honourable member raised this question on June 25, I assured him that I would get the information. Of the total of £120,000 allocated for roads in soldier settlement areas, £75,000 will be spent in the South-East. If the honourable member will let me know of any road in which he is particularly interested I will let him know whether money will be spent on it.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT TREE PLANTING PROJECTS.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—Some years ago the Minister of Agriculture introduced legislation, which was subsequently approved by Parliament, providing for assistance to councils for the establishment of timber reserves and plantations of trees in their areas. At a recent conference the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association expressed its appreciation of the provisions of this legislation, but asked that they be extended to street planting and the like. Could the Minister furnish a report indicating the extent to which councils have availed themselves of this assistance and whether the extension recently asked for could be granted?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—Following on a letter received from the Eyre Peninsula Association I asked the Conservator of Forests for a report indicating to what extent the legislation mentioned by the honourable member had been availed of, and he has furnished me with a report indicating that five councils have had areas proclaimed under this Act, some of which have had assistance from the Government by way of advances and some of which have proceeded without any such advance. The areas proclaimed are 96 acres in the Beachport district council area, seven acres in the Onkaparinga district council area, 17 acres in the Clare district council area (hundred of Milne), 410 acres in the Barmera district area (hundred of Moorook), and an unspecified area in the Encounter Bay district

for the purpose of re-afforestation of native hardwood forest. At present consideration is being given by the Government to two projects totalling about 150 acres in the Naracoorte district and to a project of about 15 acres in the Barossa district. With regard to the question of whether such assistance should be given for street planting schemes, the Conservator states:—

The Act itself makes provision for the creation and management of forest areas in perpetuity, and envisages ultimate recoup of advances made available by the Government. Nowhere in the Act is there any intention that special funds be made available for street planting or beautification schemes. It is understood that local councils have power to plant roads and reserves from their own funds, and it is considered that the placing of its obligation upon the Government as expressed in the resolution carried by the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association, is not warranted, particularly as most, if not all, of the finance made available would have to be regarded in the nature of a grant, rather than as an advance. Secondly, it is pointed out that the planting and maintenance of roadside avenues could be a very costly business, relatively much more so than the establishment of plantation areas. It is quite probable that the resultant flow of applications by local councils under such a scheme could seriously jeopardize the very excellent intentions provided in the present Local Government (Forestry Reserves) Act. I expect that in the next few years, much more interest will be taken, especially by country councils, in the present Act, and consider it desirable that this should be encouraged to the utmost extent.

FLOUR MILLING INDUSTRY.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Today's *Advertiser* contains the report of a statement made by the Hon. F. J. Condon, M.L.C., as Federal President of the Federated Millers and Mill Employees' Association, referring to the alarming position which is developing in the South Australian flour milling industry. Mr. Condon said:—

As well as the three South Australian mills now idle, others were on reduced time. The serious decline in the flour milling industry in South Australia would eventually mean a shortage of bran and pollard to the detriment of the pig, poultry and other allied primary industries.

I understand that two years ago practically all South Australian mills were working three shifts, which is equivalent to full time, and there must be some reason for the grave deterioration in the position. Has Mr. Condon's statement been brought to the notice of the Minister of Agriculture and, if so, will he have inquiries made to see if it would be possible to do something, through the good offices of the Australian Wheat Board, to secure contracts

for flour to be milled in South Australia in order to keep the mills working and provide for a continuous supply of mill offal for the industries mentioned by Mr. Condon?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I recently received a report from the Wheat Board regarding this matter. It indicated that formerly there were considerable orders from abroad for flour, and that when orders came in for wheat some flour was provided, but now in some instances it is insisted that all grain be supplied. Consequently that has made the position difficult. At present I understand the flour business is on a trader to trader basis. However, I will bring the honourable member's question under the notice of the Wheat Board and bring down a report.

PAINTING CONTRACTS FOR TRUST HOUSES.

Mr. FRED WALSH—On July 23 I brought before the notice of the Premier the matter of subletting painting contracts in connection with Housing Trust homes at Gilles Plains, and on July 28 the Premier read a report from the chairman of the Housing Trust, which admitted that certain painting contracts were let by the principal contractor, Martin Housing Ltd. to King & Co., which it approved because it was the policy in respect of sub-contracting for the painting of houses. The report added:—

The trust, however, does not permit a sub-contractor to sublet the work to others although, on occasions, it is difficult to discover when this is being done as the parties concerned usually do not volunteer information. As regards the jobs in question, the inspecting officers of the trust were some weeks ago concerned with the quality of the painting being done and the principal contractor was informed that it was suspected that the sub-contractor was subletting the work. The principal contractor denied that this was the case.

I am informed reliably that this work is still going on under a system of subletting contract, and that two men were engaged to give effect to a contract lodged on July 18 this year. This practice is being indulged in for the purpose, we claim, of evading the provisions of the Painters and Decorators Wages Board determination in respect of annual leave, sick leave, travelling time and workmen's compensation. Will the Premier take up the matter with the trust and see that effect is given to its declared policy?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If I remember it correctly, I think my reply said that the work had been condemned because it was unsatisfactory. However, I will bring the matter again under the notice of the trust and see if any further action can be taken.

GUMMOSIS IN APRICOTS.

Mr. QUIRKE—I acknowledge the courtesy of the Minister of Agriculture in supplying me with the latest report on the investigations into gummosis as affecting apricot trees, and I pay a tribute to the people responsible for the report, particularly Mr. M. V. Carter, plant pathologist at the Waite Research Institute. It is a comprehensive report, and I think this is only the beginning of what must necessarily be a long investigation. In one paragraph on page 2 there is the statement, "There is some evidence that heavy manuring is associated with severe gummosis." Would the Minister kindly communicate with the author of the report and seek from him the type of manuring that has been in their opinion associated with gummosis?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—Yes. The honourable member will realize that the report summarises the position following on the investigations up to the present, as well as mentioning certain definite things shown up in the course of the investigation. I shall refer the matter to the Director of the Waite Research Institute and ask whether they can supply the information sought.

TRAMWAYS SERVICE REHABILITATION.

Mr. PATTINSON—During the last financial year Parliament voted nearly three-quarters of a million pounds to the Municipal Tramways Trust towards the rehabilitation of its transport service. Next month Colonel Bingham, the general manager of New York City Board of Transportation, will visit Adelaide to advise the trust on its plan of rehabilitation. In addition to being an international transport authority, Colonel Bingham is also a traffic expert. In South Australia the Government and Parliament rely for advice on traffic matters on the State Traffic Committee, which comprises the Commissioner of Police, Registrar of Motor Vehicles, president of National Safety Council, secretary of Automobile Association, president of Road Transport Association, chairman of Insurance Underwriters Association, secretary of Transport Workers Union, and the town clerks of Adelaide and Glenelg, with the Parliamentary Draftsman as deputy chairman and myself as chairman. As the Government is either directly or indirectly financing this visit from overseas, will the Premier arrange for members of the State Traffic Committee to have a consultation with and receive advice from Colonel Bingham

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on traffic problems which will come before Parliament for consideration during the present session?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I would very much like to be able to reply to the honourable member in the affirmative but I have learned in the last few hours that Col. Bingham, owing to other urgent work in America, is prevented from leaving America and has had to cancel his South Australian commitment. In those circumstances I regret that it is not within my power to arrange the meeting suggested, which I am sure would have been advantageous to both the State and the Traffic Committee, because undoubtedly he is a world expert on both transportation and traffic.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF QUORN DISTRICT.

Mr. RICHES—Has the Premier a reply to my question of August 13 regarding a geological survey of the Quorn district?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have received the following report from the Director of Mines:—

At the express wish and direction of the Minister of Mines a hydrological survey of the Willochra underground water basin has been commenced and emphasis will be given to the study of possibilities of exploiting the underground water for irrigation. The collection of data and the mapping work will occupy six to eight weeks, but every effort will be made to submit a report and a finite recommendation before the end of the year.

MURRAY RIVER FLOOD RUMOUR.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—There have been consistent rumours along the River Murray valley of the possibility of another flood in the very near future. Does the Minister of Works know whether there is any truth in it, and what steps the department is taking to meet the position?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—My latest information is that sufficient water is coming down to maintain pool level with an open river, and therefore the removal of stop logs has commenced. Sufficient logs will be left to prevent a fall below normal pool level. The steps being taken are not in anticipation of a flood, but to provide sufficient water to prevent any undue accumulation of salinity.

TRAMWAY STRIKE.

Mr. DUNKS—When a tramway strike occurred some time ago the people most concerned were ratepayers in the metropolitan area, but today I feel that a big section of the community paying taxes are concerned because

the Government is making up tramway deficiencies from time to time. Can the Treasurer say what progress has been made between the Tramways Trust and the Tramway Employees Union towards a solution of the present tramway strike?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The union is registered in the Commonwealth Arbitration Court and is therefore under Commonwealth jurisdiction. I understand a meeting took place between representatives of the union and the trust and the Commonwealth Conciliation Commissioner, but it was of short duration and the Commissioner expressed strong views in connection with the case presented, but no solution was reached. Though it is true that the State is providing some financial assistance towards the maintenance of the tramways, I point out that at the moment there are large corresponding savings because the trust for the moment is not involved in any commitment for wages, materials and fuel, so the strike, from a book-keeping point of view, is not entirely one-sided. I have the feeling that the men themselves have realized that this case is not one which should be the subject of a strike. I hope that wiser counsels will prevail and that this utility will soon be able to resume its service to the public. As the Commissioner has already expressed his judgment there is no action the State Government can take.

Mr. LAWN—In proceedings before the Arbitration Court last Friday I understand that Conciliation Commissioner Blackburn asked a few questions of the representative of the Tramways Trust and one question of the Federal secretary of the Tramway Employees Union, demanded from the latter a reply "Yes" or "No," and then read a decision which was prepared before he entered the court. Does the Premier know of any other court in the British Commonwealth of Nations where a decision is prepared before the court has assembled and before either party has been given an opportunity to be heard, and is he aware that the dispute could possibly have been settled had the commissioner shown a desire for conciliation instead of adopting the attitude he did?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I understood that some 15 or 16 conciliation commissioners were appointed by the Commonwealth Government and their purpose was to do what they could to prevent industrial disputes which would necessitate court action. I have never realized that the commissioners were constituted as a court in the legal sense of the word, but considered their job was rather to hear such

evidence as they believed was necessary to enable them to make suggestions or give assistance in connection with a dispute, and that in fact they had certain powers to make awards. In this instance I understand that the conciliation commissioner asked a number of questions of one side and one question of the other and, upon receiving answers, then proceeded to give his views on the matter before adjourning the court. I presume he acted in a proper manner, for I cannot imagine that such an eminent authority would not have done so. My job, unfortunately, is not to study courts, but to study members of Parliament. If the honourable member had asked whether I had seen any other members of Parliament equal to those in this Parliament, I could truthfully have said, "No."

Mr. DUNKS (on notice)—

1. Is the Treasurer aware of how the tramway strike retarded business in the city by causing losses to the business community and the Tramways Trust?

2. Is it the intention of the Government to issue a permit to allow private bus owners to handle the passenger traffic in this or any subsequent tram strike?

3. Is it the intention of the Government to introduce legislation to repeal the Municipal Tramways Trust Act to allow private bus owners to handle all traffic at present handled by the trust?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The replies are:

1 and 2. The Government is aware that all people in the metropolitan area are affected by the tramways strike. The Tramways Trust Act authorizes the trust to license private bus owners to operate buses on specified routes.

3. No.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES IN SOUTH-EAST.

Mr. CORCORAN—Will there in the near future be extensions of electricity to South-Eastern towns and districts?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Electricity Trust has already made an extensive investigation of the position in the South-East, but the main problem is getting fuel supplies at a reasonable rate, enhanced by the fact that a port in the South-East has not been recommended. The Mount Gambier Corporation has installed internal combustion engines to generate electricity for the township, but oil fuel is costly if it has to be transported long distances overland. The Government has closely examined the possibility of using offcuts from Government sawmills for fuel, but that only

offers a limited solution of the problem. The amount of off-cuts available is limited and, unfortunately, they are not all available at the one centre, but from widely scattered places. The Government has also considered, though only to a minor degree, the possibility of establishing a small atomic station in the South-East. America has made big strides in this direction following on the building of a submarine powered by atomic energy, but that development has not progressed far enough for me to take the honourable member's question any further. The Government and the Electricity Trust are just as anxious as he to consider a proposal from the South-East, but I want to make sure that any undertaking would give the cheapest and best service to the area concerned.

SOOT NUISANCE AT OSBORNE.

Mr. TAPPING—An extract from a letter from one of my constituents at Osborne states:—

I don't know whether conditions down here at Osborne have been brought to your notice, but in case they have not I think you should know about them. The trouble is all this soot falling about the place. There must be tons and tons of it. The source of the trouble is the Osborne power house. The smoke that pours out of those stacks is incredible and an injustice to all the people of S.A. who use electricity, because smoke is unburnt matter, and therefore it is not being burnt economically, but as far as the people down here are concerned it is costing us pounds a year to arrest the damage it is doing to our houses. They have to be painted every year to keep them presentable. Paint, as you know, is most expensive. The soot gets into carpets, drapes, and has a most abrasive action on furniture. I estimate it is costing me at least £40 a year solely rectifying the damage done.

Will the Premier obtain a report to see whether this trouble can be eliminated?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Electricity Trust has instruments which are continually recording the combustion of the various boilers with the object of getting the most efficient combustion possible. Of course, the efficiency of the whole unit at Osborne depends upon the efficiency of the combustion taking place in the boilers, but I am certain that everything possible has been done by the trust to get efficient combustion. I point out in fairness to the trust that when the undertaking was established at Osborne there were no houses within miles. The plant was installed on LeFevre Peninsula far from housing areas so that no nuisance would be created, but the moment the power station was erected people began to build houses around it.

Mr. Tapping—And so has the Housing Trust.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes, but many other people built houses there, and that was not the trust's fault. I will bring the honourable member's remarks before the chairman of the trust to see whether anything useful can be done. In the same neighbourhood are the gas works, the Imperial Chemical Industries plant, and a large cement works, all major industrial activities, and all emitting a certain amount of fumes into the air.

OVERSEAS VISITS BY TRAMWAY OFFICERS.

Mr. LAWN—Is it a fact that two officers of the Tramways Trust were sent abroad in recent months to investigate basic tramway problems? If so, what did it cost, and have any of their recommendations been put into operation?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not know whether it is a fact, but I will obtain the information for the honourable member.

OIL IN SOUTH-EAST.

Mr. FLETCHER—The Premier said this afternoon that fuel was the bugbear with regard to the supply of electricity in the South-East. I have been given to understand that recent geological surveys have indicated the strong possibility of oil deposits existing in the South-East. Will the Premier consider further drilling in that locality?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I would like the honourable member to ask his question again in a few days. In the meantime I will get a report from the Director of Mines.

IMPORTED POTATOES.

Mr. SHANNON (on notice)—

1. What method is adopted to ascertain the quality of potatoes to be imported into this State?

2. By what method do officers of the Prices Branch determine whether potatoes offered for sale to consumers are imported or of local origin?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The replies are:—

1. All potatoes entering this State must pass under the review of inspectors of the Potato Board. Not only must such produce conform to the quarantine requirements in regard to pest and disease, but also must conform to the grade standards demanded by the Fruit and Vegetable Grading Act. The requirement is exactly the same as that demanded in our produce, and any consignment not attaining this quality standard will automatically be condemned for resorting.

2. The Prices Commissioner reports that identification of imported potatoes presents little difficulty to his officers, who are conversant with the varieties of potatoes received from interstate and inspect samples of each shipment. The Commissioner also advises that the bags in which the potatoes are supplied to retailers are branded with full details of grower's name and State of origin. Officers engaged in checking prices inspect these bags and also suppliers' invoices. Prices officers are maintaining a constant check on potato prices.

RAILWAY FOOTWAYS AND ROADWAYS.

Mr. HUTCHENS (on notice)—

1. How many persons are engaged on the guarding of railway footways and roadways throughout the State on Good Friday?

2. What is the total cost of providing such guards, including salaries, wages and cost of transporting guards to sites?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Acting Railways Commissioner reports:—

1. 328 men.
2. £894.

ELECTRICITY TRUST LOAN.

Mr. FRED WALSH (on notice)—What number of subscribers to the recent Electricity Trust loan contributed—(a) under £200; (b) between £200 and £500; (c) between £500 and £1,000; (d) over £1,000?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The information is not yet available. It is being taken out and should be completed within the next two weeks.

MAIN NORTH ROAD.

Mr. HEASLIP (on notice)—

1. What was the cost of the widening and reconditioning of the Main North Road between Georgetown and Bungaree Station?

2. What is the distance involved?

3. What was the time taken to complete this section?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The replies are:—

1. £442,006.
2. 27½ miles.
3. The work was commenced in April, 1948.

FIRE BRIGADE BOARD GRANT.

Mr. TAPPING (on notice)—

1. Is it the intention of the Treasurer to consider a special grant for the Fire Brigades Board?

2. If so, will consideration be given to making such grant specifically for alleviation of municipal council contributors disregarding fire underwriters?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The replies are:

1. A special grant has been made by the State to the Fire Brigade for the last four years in excess of that required by legislation:—1949-1950, £10,000; 1950-1951, £12,000; 1951-1952, £30,000; 1952-1953, £33,120.

2. The amount to be granted to the board for 1953-1954 is receiving consideration with the preparation of the Budget.

DOG FENCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS, having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Dog Fence Act, 1946-1949. Read a first time.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Minister of Lands)—I move:—

That this Bill be now read a second time. The Dog Fence Act, 1946-1949, provides that, for the purpose of providing protection against the ingress of wild dogs, a dog-proof fence is to be established and maintained in the northern areas of the State and for this purpose the Act constitutes a board called the Dog Fence Board and gives to the board powers to establish and maintain the dog fence, to rate land in the pastoral areas in order to raise the funds necessary for the purposes of the board, and to carry out various ancillary duties. Whilst the Act empowers the board to erect stretches of new fence to make good deficiencies in existing fences, the general plan of the Act is that fences already existing across the northern part of the State should be constituted the dog fence and, where necessary, be altered so as to be made dog-proof. These existing fences are, of course, privately owned by the lessees of the land concerned. The Act provides that the board may impose an annual rate upon ratable land, that is, in general, the land comprised in the pastoral areas. Section 26 provides for a general rate on all ratable land and the rate is not to exceed 1s. 3d. per square mile of ratable land. Section 27 provides that an additional rate may be imposed on ratable land adjoining the dog fence and situated within 10 miles of the fence. This rate also is not to exceed 1s. 3d. per square mile of ratable land and the section provides that, if an additional rate is declared under section 27 for any financial year, it is to be the same as the rate declared for that year under section 26.

Section 31 provides for a Government subsidy to be paid to the board, the subsidy being one pound for every pound of rates declared by the board. The revenue of the board is, in general, to be applied by the board in the inspection and maintenance of the dog fence. Section 24 provides that, in every financial year, the board is to pay to the owners of any fences which comprise part of the dog fence a uniform amount not exceeding £8 per mile of fence. These payments are to be applied by the owners towards the maintenance and inspection of the dog fence and the destruction of wild dogs in the vicinity of the fence and the Act imposes on those owners a duty to carry out these tasks. Representations have been made that this amount of £8 per mile, which was fixed under the Act in 1946, is now insufficient to meet the present day costs involved in carrying out the duties imposed on owners of the fence and it has been suggested that the maximum annual amount payable under section 24 should be increased to £16 per mile of fence. Such an increase would, of necessity, involve an increase in the rating powers of the board. The board has therefore recommended that the Act be amended accordingly and this is done by the Bill. The suggestions for alteration of the law have been considered by the 'Stockowners' Association of South Australia and the association has expressed approval of the proposals. Clause 2 accordingly increases from £8 to £16 the maximum amount per mile of the dog fence which may be paid to an owner for expenditure on the maintenance and inspection of the fence and for the other purposes mentioned in section 24.

Clause 3 increases from 1s. 3d. to 3s. per square mile of ratable land the maximum rate which may be imposed on ratable land under section 26. Clause 4 deals with the additional rate which may, under section 27, be imposed on ratable land within 10 miles of the dog fence. No alteration to the maximum rate, namely, 1s. 3d. per square mile of ratable land, is proposed, but the clause provides that, where the rate under section 26 for any financial year is less than 1s. 3d. per square mile, any additional rate under section 27 for that year is to be of the same amount. If the rate under section 26 is 1s. 3d. or more, then the additional rate under section 27 is to be 1s. 3d. As before mentioned, section 31 of the Act provides for a Government subsidy on rates declared by the board. It is not proposed to increase the amount which may be paid by

way of subsidy by the Government and clause 5 therefore provides that the pound for pound subsidy on rates declared by the board provided for by section 31 is not to apply to rates declared at an amount greater than 1s. 3d. per square mile. The effect is that the maximum Government subsidy for any financial year will not exceed the amount which is now payable under section 31 under the present provisions of the Act.

Mr. O'HALLORAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

PASTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

Second reading.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is one of the most important Bills to be introduced this session because it provides for a wide alteration in administration. It is not the first time that the matter has been brought before Parliament and considering what happened previously when a similar kind of alteration to the Constitution was proposed I realize that it is a very contentious subject. In 1855-56 the first Constitution Act based on responsible government was passed providing for the appointment of five Ministers, with salaries totalling £4,400 per annum. In 1873 legislation was passed empowering the Government to appoint an additional Minister and increasing the total salaries to £6,000. In 1901 the Constitution was amended, and the number of Ministers reduced to four and the total salaries to £4,000. In 1908 the number of Ministers was increased to six and the total salaries to £5,000. In 1921 the total salaries were increased to £7,750, in 1947 to £10,750, and in 1951 to £14,250. In 1918 the Peake Government prepared a Bill to increase the number of Ministers to seven, one to be honorary, but the Bill was not proceeded with. In 1919 the Peake Government introduced a Bill providing for seven Ministers and increasing the total salaries to £7,000. The second reading was carried in the Assembly, but the third reading was negatived. In 1924, following on a change of Government, the Gunn Government introduced a measure providing for eight Ministers, two of whom should be honorary. No proposal was made for an increase in the total salaries. The Bill was passed in the Assembly, but rejected by the

Council. In 1926 a Bill was introduced by the Hill Government providing for an increase to seven Ministers and salaries to £9,000. The Bill was passed by the Assembly, but the second reading was negatived in the Council. In 1928, again following on a change of Government, the Butler Government prepared a Bill to increase the number to seven and the total salaries to £7,750, but before the legislation was introduced there was another change of Government. In 1930 the Hill Government introduced a Bill for seven Ministers, one to be honorary. It was passed by the Assembly, but the second reading was negatived by the Council. I believe that at the time Mr. Harvey was appointed honorary Minister, and acted for some time on the assumption that the Bill would be passed. South Australia is the only State in the Commonwealth where there is no separate portfolio of Premier. Here the department dealing with the Premier's affairs has always been attached to the Chief Secretary's Department. In 1916 Mr. Crawford Vaughan, then Premier, announced that owing to the increase in duties performed by the Premier the Government had decided to create a Premier's Department. Appointments were made and an amount was placed on the Estimates. In Parliament Mr. Vaughan said:—

His office had become congested with work and important matters were held up. As an outcome of the war and the increasing operations between the various States there was a very great amount of work which meant that the Premier was compelled to give more time to the details of the Premier's office than was formerly necessary. It was also impossible for the Premier to bear the joint portfolios of Premier, Treasurer and Minister of Education, but equally impossible for him to saddle any one of those important portfolios on any of the overworked members of the Ministry. They were all fully engaged devoting day and night to public services and the time would come when they would have to appoint an additional Minister to look after the great and growing question of education.

However, the Premier's Department, as a separate department in the Public Service, was disbanded after about a year's existence. Though proclaimed a department under the Public Service Act it soon lost its separate existence. The main object of this Bill is to increase the number of Ministers from six to eight, as announced before the last elections in the Government's policy speech. In that speech the reasons for the proposal were stated as follows:—

¹ For many years the Cabinet of South Australia has been much smaller than that of any other State, and very much smaller than most

of them. Whilst there are substantial advantages in having a small Cabinet, the number of Minister must be adequate for the business to be done, and the growth of industry in this State and the large programme of development now make it desirable that two additional Ministers should be appointed. An amendment of the Constitution for this purpose will be submitted to Parliament.

The Government is still of the same opinion and has accordingly introduced this Bill. The details of the clauses are as follows. By paragraph (a) of clause 3 the maximum number of Minister is raised to eight. By paragraph (b) it is provided that not more than five of the Ministers can be in the House of Assembly, thus ensuring that if two new Ministers are appointed at least one of them will be in the Legislative Council.

Mr. Macgillivray—According to that, both could be in the Legislative Council.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—There is no intention to do that. The policy of the Government is to have five in the Assembly and three in the Council. I take it that the Parliamentary Draftsman, in preparing the explanation of the Bill, has followed the original drafting in the Constitution, and that is why it has been expressed in that way. Let me make it perfectly clear that the purpose is to increase the number of Ministers from six to eight and to include one additional Minister in this House and one in the Legislative Council. If the Bill does not in every way ensure that we shall have to examine it further in due course. By clause 3(c) the maximum total remuneration of the Ministers is raised from £14,250 to £19,000—an increase exactly in proportion to the increase in the number of Ministers. Money for Ministers' salaries is appropriated by paragraph (d). I invite the attention of the member for Chaffey to the next provision because it may explain the particular form of drafting on which he commented. Clause 4 deals with a matter incidental to the increase of the size of the Ministry. By section 66 of the Constitution Act it is provided that four Ministers must be members of Parliament—namely, the Ministers holding the portfolios of Chief Secretary, Treasurer, Minister of Lands, and Minister of Works. As a matter of law the other Ministers need not be members of Parliament. The Constitution Act also provides that five Ministers, shall, *ex officio*, be members of the Executive Council. The sixth Minister is not required to be a member of the Executive Council. These provisions of section 66, which were originally enacted to meet circumstances

existing about 100 years ago, are out of harmony with the present practices under which all Ministers are members of Parliament (except for the period between expiration of the House of Assembly and the elections) and all are members of the Executive Council. It is therefore proposed by clause 4 to declare that every Minister must be a member of Parliament, except for the three months' period mentioned previously, and that every Minister will, by virtue of his office as Minister, be a member of the Executive Council. By these provisions the law will be brought into line with the practice which has been followed for many years. It may be mentioned that the Commonwealth Constitution, which is, of course, the most recent constitutional instrument in Australia, contains, in section 64, provisions to the same effect as those now proposed.

It is not possible, nor desirable, to put the clock back to the good old days when it was regarded as the function of Parliament to make laws, the duty of the Government merely to administer them and of the judiciary to interpret them. Whether we like it or not there has grown up in the community a demand—which, in any democratic society must be met—that the Government shall do more than those things, and therefore we are faced with the alternative of establishing various semi-governmental activities under their own self-constituted boards not answerable directly to Parliament, or creating a larger Ministry to ensure adequate supervision and direct responsibility to Parliament.

Mr. O'Halloran—Something that is very desirable.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—There are two very sincere points of view on that matter, but I confess that I believe that the bulk of such activities should be under the control of a Minister of the Crown and that the Minister should be in his place in Parliament to answer questions and be accountable for the conduct of his departments. The alternative to a growing bureaucracy is a democracy, with someone responsible to Parliament in control of the undertakings sanctioned by Parliament. I invite consideration of some of the things we did not have in the days when there were four Ministers, or even when there were six. We had no Highways Department, Irrigation Department or Housing or Electricity Trusts; no Leigh Creek coalfield or Radium Hill demanding supervision. We had few of the present social services. Our hospital system was the barest skeleton.

Mr. O'Halloran—And not much forestry.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Practically none. The Forestry Department has entered upon a long-range planting programme. We had scarcely anything which could be regarded as a Harbors Board; no Repatriation Department and no prices or rent control. Indeed, when I think of the activities of the Ministers of nearly 100 years ago I begin to believe that they did not have such a bad time after all.

Mr. Macgillivray—But they did not have telephones or motor cars.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Lack of telephones meant that they were able to go to sleep at a reasonable hour and remain asleep, unlike present Ministers who are liable to be disturbed at any time of the night. They did not have motor cars, but on the other hand how rare was it for a Minister of the Crown to visit any part of the State? They could not do it and did not attempt it. Nowadays a Minister of the Crown with important work in any part of the State under his jurisdiction is not expected to rely upon what his officers tell him of a project; it is considered essential that he should make himself personally conversant with what is going on. How many requests does a Minister get from members to visit their districts in order to examine matters which they regard as important?—and I do not deprecate the reasons for it.

Mr. Lawn—I never ask for anything.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The honourable member has everything. His district already has all conveniences and amenities laid on.

Mr. Macgillivray—And it is only one square mile.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes, it is only a pocket handkerchief. I do not know whether members have ever taken the trouble to study the second page of the cover of the weekly numbers of *Hansard* where the details of the Ministry are set out. There they will see the problem presented with its fullest implications. At present the Premier is also Treasurer, Minister of Immigration and Minister of Industry and Employment. No mention, of course, is made of such topics as prices and housing.

Mr. Lawn—And electricity.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Electricity normally comes under the Minister of Works, although the Treasury has the problem, and sometimes it is not an easy one, of the overall financing of this activity. The Chief Secretary is also Minister of Health and Minister of Mines and here again no mention is made of the fact that he has under his control the Police and Hospitals Departments. The

Attorney-General is also Minister of Education, and the Minister of Lands is also Minister of Repatriation and Minister of Irrigation. The Minister of Works has the additional portfolios of Minister of Railways, Minister of Marine and Minister of Local Government, and in addition is expected to keep an eye on the activities of the Tramways Trust and the Electricity Trust—that is in his spare moments. The Minister of Agriculture is also Minister of Forests. When eight Ministers are appointed it is obvious duplication of some of the portfolios will not disappear.

Mr. Macgillivray—What portfolios do you intend to allot to the two new Ministers?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I realize the problem of members in considering this matter. We must pay particular attention to two matters. I believe that our road system needs very much more attention than is being given to it now.

Mr. Macgillivray—And more money.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes, and I will deal with that on another occasion. I thank the honourable member for his support. The Highways Department is largely outside Ministerial control and its policy to a large extent is determined by the Highways Commissioner. I am not criticizing either the present Highways Commissioner or his predecessor, both of whom are admirable and sincere men who met many difficulties in carrying out their duties. At present the department is trying to build 1953 roads with 1939 money.

Mr. Macgillivray—I have been telling you that for a long time.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—And I have listened to the honourable member very carefully. We are in accord on this subject. I am not comparing our roads with those in the other States. In some instances the comparisons would be very favourable, but some of our back roads are in a deplorable condition. In some instances our road construction programme has not been advanced and some roads already constructed have not even been properly maintained. I believe that members generally will agree that if this State is to develop it is necessary that we should not rely on any one form of transport, but must rely on the three forms, each of which I think is eminently suitable for its own class of work. That means we must see that our road system is capable of meeting all requirements. One of the chief duties of one of the new Ministers will undoubtedly be to look after roads. Perhaps the Leader of

the Opposition will suggest that we should out of hand place all forms of transport under the rigid control of one Minister. That would not be entirely in the best interests of the State, and would mean he would primarily be Minister of Railways and secondly Minister of Roads. Local government and roads constitute a big portion of the government of this State. One Minister will have to give particular attention to the problems of road construction, improvement of our road system, to seeing that councils are all tied to the general scheme, and also to improving our highways generally.

Mr. Macgillivray—Is it the Government's intention to break down the dictatorial power of the Transport Control Board?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—That question is not involved in this Bill. The Government's policy on these matters will be influenced by what is the most economic in the interests of the community. I am not suggesting that our system is by any means perfect or that the administration is perfect, but we have not set out with the stated intention of restricting road transport to the extent done in another State where they have a prohibitive road tax of 3d. a ton mile. This charge is levied upon goods even when they are carted by the owner of the goods in his own vehicle. The principal function of one of the Ministers to be appointed will be to supervise local government and road matters, particularly the latter. If a driver gets off some of the main highways in this State, particularly in the South-East, he is in difficulties. I believe we should appoint a Minister whose sole responsibility, if possible, would be education.

Mr. O'Halloran—Will he be a member of this House?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I would be quite happy for him to be. It is my firm belief that as a matter of policy he would be best placed here. Almost £6,500,000 is spent annually on education, which has an important bearing on the future of our community.

Mr. Shannon—That is more than the whole Ministry had to operate on not many years ago.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—That is so. I can remember when the Legislative Council objected to the education vote because it was £1,000,000 and a commission was appointed to investigate the matter.

Mr. Macgillivray—A larger vote does not imply that the Minister has more work.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—There is more work in educating 100,000 children than in

educating 5,000, in controlling 3,000 teachers than 200, and in providing accommodation for an additional 7,000 enrolments annually than for 300.

Mr. Macgillivray—I did not make that point.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The honourable member may not have realized he was making it. At one time a set-number of subjects were taught at primary schools but nowadays the Education Department endeavours to provide a variety of education to serve children in almost all circumstances. It endeavours to provide for children entering professional occupations, for those who intend to pursue agricultural occupations and for those who suffer from some natural limitation. The member for Gawler, who has been associated with the Education Department, will realize that education is no longer something which applies to a child starting school at six years of age and leaving at 12 or 13. Technical education is now provided for persons beyond the school-leaving age. The value of money has altered and the functions of the Education Department have altered in that it is now endeavouring to provide a much greater variety of opportunities to children than was contemplated a few years ago. It is only within the last 12 years, when Sir Shirley Jeffries was Minister of Education, that the first area school was erected. That created much hostility from the parents of children in that particular area who thought that something was being taken from them and that small schools would be closed. Since then a bus system has been inaugurated to take children to the schools. It was not long ago when only one school provided agricultural lessons. The scope of education has broadened in every way and that alone reveals the necessity for the appointment of an additional Minister.

Six years ago the Government had no interest in electricity but today, through the interest it has taken, a network of electricity extends over a large area of the State. In that time the amount of electricity provided to the people has doubled. Six years ago approximately 260,000,000 units of electricity were provided but by 1952 that had increased to 526,000,000 units. During the last 10 years the aspect of the State's fuel position has completely changed. The Leigh Creek coalfield has come into operation. At present it is disappointing, not because it is not paying or not providing a service but because a greater service could be provided if the rail link could enable additional supplies of coal

to be transported to the city. Today 56 per cent of the electricity in this State is generated from Leigh Creek coal and if the rail link were more effective the figure could be higher. By this time next year it will be higher because the new power station at Port Augusta will be functioning and operating on Leigh Creek coal.

Mr. O'Halloran—Will the railway link be functioning effectively then?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The matter has been the subject of discussion by the Prime Minister, the Federal Minister for Transport, and the Commonwealth Railways Commissioner. Much work has been done on the line but I doubt whether it will be functioning by the time the power station at Port Augusta is ready.

Mr. O'Halloran—The same limitation will apply as applies now?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The limitation will apply until the line is functioning. It is within the Parliamentary experience of almost every member that the Government has set out on a policy of trying to find satisfactory deposits of uranium in this State in the belief that uranium will ultimately become a source of power which may overcome what is the inherent weakness in our economy today. South Australia has large and important industries, but we are dependent upon other people for fuel. That is an inherent weakness that must be overcome and if Parliament does nothing else we shall do something valuable for South Australia today and for its future. Only a few years ago we were hopefully scratching around in this State for worthwhile deposits of uranium, but now we have not only found significant deposits, but an important industry is opening up.

Mr. Dunks—Will there be a Minister in charge of atomic developments?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Not necessarily, but we must provide for proper control over the mining and treatment of the important deposits that we have discovered. That is not an easy task. The Chief Secretary, who is also Minister of Health and administers our hospitals and law and order, is directing this rapidly-growing enterprise. This year about £3,000,000 of overseas money will be spent on it. South Australia had six Ministers in 1901, but consider the variety and scope of work that now falls to the lot of Ministers compared with what there was at that time. The State can develop properly only by active planning. In

1916 Mr. Crawford Vaughan talked about burning the midnight oil and said:—

Owing to the increasing duties performed by the Premier of the Government the Government decided to create a Premier's Department and appointments were made and money was placed on the Estimates. My office is fast becoming congested with work and important matters are being held up.

Those remarks did not imply any active planning for the future. He did not mention large industries in the State, or getting new ones established. He merely said he could not keep up with the problems of the day. Besides maintaining the administration of the State we must plan to meet future requirements. Members will see that the appointment of two additional Ministers is entirely justified. In some other States the Cabinets are so big that they almost constitute a Chinese Parliament, but that is not desirable. The necessities of the moment, the enormous sums involved in administering public services today, the development of the State, its future progress, and the large volume of work performed by the present Ministers justify an enlarged Cabinet. If members believe in democracy they will agree that there must be sufficient Ministers to control the functions of government in this State, otherwise we shall have authorities that are completely autonomous and autocratic, and Parliament will lose control over them.

Mr. Macgillivray—Will you abolish such authorities?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The appointment of two more Ministers will enable a general re-organization of the public services. Their prime responsibilities will be education and roads.

Mr. Macgillivray—And you will still have dictatorial organizations.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I hope that no organization in South Australia will ever be dictatorial.

Mr. Macgillivray—The Transport Control Board is one.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The best forms of government arise out of compromise. However, I do not suggest that I will necessarily compromise on everything the Leader of the Opposition puts up.

Mr. O'Halloran—You oppose me one year and do the very thing I suggest the next.

Mr. Riches—Is it incumbent to have one additional Minister in the Assembly and the other in another place?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Cabinet directed the Parliamentary Draftsman to draft a Bill to that effect, and that is the Government's intention.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Then there will be five Ministers in the Assembly and three in the Legislative Council?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes.

Mr. Riches—What is the advantage over having the two extra Ministers here?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government has been in extreme difficulty in the Council when one of the Ministers there had been absent through indisposition or other reasons. An intolerable strain is placed on the remaining Minister for he has to handle all the business coming from this Chamber.

Mr. Riches—The Leader of the Opposition has to do that.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—But he has three assistants and he can farm the work out to them, but the remaining Minister has to be in his place all the time. Sometimes one of the Ministers there has to attend a Commonwealth conference, which immediately places the remaining Minister in a difficult position.

Mr. O'HALLORAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS, having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Weights and Measures Act, 1934-1944. Read a first time.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Minister of Lands)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to make some administrative amendments to the Weights and Measures Act. Section 57 of the Act provides for the licensing of petrol pumps. The administration of the scheme for the licensing of petrol pumps is, under sections 57 and 57a, given to the Warden of Standards. Petrol pumps must be licensed annually and must be tested and certified as correct by a Government inspector. The Warden of Standards has reported that electric pumps are now being used for the sale of kerosene, diesel fuel, and lubricating oil. It is desirable that pumps used for the sale of these commodities should be subject to the same control as petrol pumps and clauses 2 and 3 of the Bill therefore provide that the existing provisions of sections 57 and 57a of the Act relating to petrol pumps will also apply to

pumps used for the purpose of measuring kerosene, diesel oil, or lubricating oil on the sale of these commodities. Section 57, among other things, provides that the Governor may make regulations fixing the fee to be paid on the licensing of a petrol pump but it is provided that the fee so fixed is not to exceed 10s. 6d. This provision was enacted in 1939 and it is obvious that what was a proper amount for a fee at that time is not now adequate to provide for the costs involved in the testing and licensing of these pumps. It is therefore proposed by clause 2 that the limitation now imposed on the power to make regulations should be deleted and that the Governor should have the power to make regulations fixing the fees for the licensing of the pumps to which section 57 applies. It is pointed out that section 56 provides for the licensing of weighbridges by the Warden of Standards and, in this case, the power to prescribe a licence fee by regulation was not made subject to a limitation. Clause 4 extends the general regulation making powers contained in section 68 of the Act and empowers the Governor to make regulations providing that where goods in packages are sold the net weight of the goods in the packages shall, in the circumstances prescribed in the regulations, be one or other of the weights prescribed by the regulations. The purpose of this provision is to enable action to be taken by the various States to secure uniformity in the packaging of certain goods so far as the net weight of the goods is concerned. Such action, it is considered, will provide protection to purchasers and will enable manufacturers carrying on interstate business to pack goods in a form acceptable to the various States.

Mr. TAPPING secured the adjournment of the debate.

AUCTIONEERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 12. Page 339.)

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—I support the Bill, the purpose of which is to enable companies carrying on auctioneering businesses to hold licences for that purpose. There are two classes of auctioneers—town and country. Town auctioneers must pay a £25 fee, their clerks £10; and country auctioneers £10. In the event of an auctioneer dying or terminating his activities as an auctioneer, the present Act contains no provision for a refund of his fee or portion thereof, and clause 7 of the Bill

enables the refund of a part of any fee paid. South Australia has been fortunate in the high calibre of its auctioneers. The original Act was introduced in 1862, has been amended only once—in 1920—and was consolidated in 1934. All possible precautions are taken to protect the public and applicants before being issued with a licence must satisfy Treasury officials of their worthiness to act as auctioneers by the presentation of a certificate from the local court.

Clause 3 provides that a person shall not act as an auctioneer unless he is licensed as an auctioneer or registered as an auctioneer's clerk. Section 10 of the original Act stated:—

If any person shall act as an auctioneer without a valid and subsisting licence authorizing him in that behalf, every such person shall be liable for every such offence to forfeit and pay any sum not exceeding one hundred pounds, and to be imprisoned with or without hard labor for any period not exceeding three calendar months.

Section 11 of the principal Act provides for similar penalties, but clause 8 repeals that section and clause 9 gives the Governor power to make regulations and, by any such regulation, prescribe fines not exceeding £25 for breach of any such regulation. I have no doubt that the Minister has considered this matter, but I feel the House is entitled to a more adequate explanation than that contained in the Minister's second reading speech as to the reason for the deletion of the provision for a term of imprisonment.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 7 passed.

Clause 8—"Penalties."

Mr. HUTCHENS—In view of the deletion of the penalty of imprisonment contained in the original Act, can the Minister say why the imprisonment penalty has been deleted?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—As in many other Acts passed years ago, the penalties contained in the original Auctioneers Act would today be regarded as vicious. The provisions of the Act have not been abused, and, in considering applications, the court looks to a man's capabilities and general character. A term of imprisonment for an unlicensed person acting as an auctioneer is not in keeping with modern views on punishment for this type of offence.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (9 and 10) and title passed; committee's report adopted.

WILD DOGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 12. Page 339.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This is one of those small Bills which are introduced for the purpose of dealing with changed circumstances due to the reduction in the value of money since the original legislation was passed. As usual, when the Bill was introduced, and I do not complain about the Minister of Lands particularly, the information given was very meagre. For instance, we did not learn from the second reading explanation the revenue derived under the present legislation. We were not told what amount was paid by way of Government subsidy. It was not made clear whether the subsidy is on a pound for pound basis or some other basis. We were not advised of the amount of revenue collected and spent under the legislation during the last two years, for instance. Can the Minister say that as the result of the activities encouraged by the legislation, the destruction of wild dogs, particularly in areas outside the buffer fence, has resulted in a decrease in the wild dog population, or, as has been suggested to me by interested parties, an increase? If there is an increase, despite the activities, it is obvious that something should be done to improve the position. Another important point is whether the increase of the destructive type of dog in this area is due to an increase in the number of dingoes or in the number of other dogs gone wild. Such information would be helpful to members. I am in accord with the general principles of the Bill and offer no objection to it.

Mr. MICHAEL (Light)—Because of several trips I have had into the outback country I have seen the damage done by wild dogs and the attempts made to keep down their number. As the Leader of the Opposition said, we were not given much information when the Bill was introduced. I made some inquiries and learned that it was not on account of the altered value of money that the Bill was introduced, but because more dogs are being killed and there are more demands on the fund. The price per head remains at £1, but over the years there has not been enough money in the fund. The object in increasing the rate is to provide more revenue because more dogs are being killed. At present there is a general demand by pastoralists for greater steps to be taken to rid their country of wild dogs, and aerial baiting takes place. In a trip up the Birdsville track to the western border of

Queensland and the fringe of the sheep country there are bushmen who are silent when they meet strangers, but it is always possible to get them to talk about wild dogs, because to them the matter is important. Their livelihood depends on keeping down the number of dingoes. From the information given to me there is more co-operation between the Pastoral Board and the pastoralists in South Australia in regard to aerial baiting, but I do not remember one occasion when I made the trip that the local bushmen were not critical of aerial baiting. Some of the criticism may have been justified, but the point is that we must not rely too much on aerial baiting because there is a danger of baits being laid in places where there are no dingoes and where it results in unnecessary killing of birds and animals.

I have a report of a conference of officers of the Lands Departments of New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia on wild dog destruction. There was general agreements that it was not in the best interests of wild dog destruction and the pastoral industry generally to raise the price. It was suggested that if the price were raised to £5 per head more dogs would be caught, but it was generally agreed that the price should not be increased. The chief objection to a raise was that it would probably have an effect on pastoral employees, particularly half-castes, because they would give up their present work and not be available when required by the pastoralists.

Mr. Hawker—It might lead to wild dogs being bred.

Mr. MICHAEL—Yes. More wild dogs are being caught and more money is being paid from the fund, which is probably due to land rovers and jeeps being able to cover greater distances and get into country where it was not possible to get previously. When people talk about the danger from wild dogs they are often laughed at, but it is an important matter to the pastoralists, particularly in the areas between the sheep and cattle country. I support the Bill because it provides more money for wild dog destruction.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Minister of Lands)—Later I will give figures to substantiate the statement that in recent years more wild dogs have been killed. I think some of it is due to aerial baiting, judging by the scalps and tails returned to us for counting. Some pastoralists are critical of aerial baiting and the possible destruction of birds. I became very interested in the aerial baiting and wished

to see at firsthand what was being done, but when I made inquiries from Captain Buckley, the pilot whose task it was to distribute the baits, and he informed me that he flew only 10ft. to 20ft. above the fences I thought perhaps after all it was a pilot's and not a Minister's job. The pilot flies very low along the fences and drops the bait just outside, and Captain Buckley told me that he has on occasions, soon after the baits have been dropped, seen dogs that have been poisoned. It is true that there was a suggestion that the bonus should be £5 a head, and I had a communication from the Stockowners Association of South Australia suggesting that it should be £3, but Cabinet felt that £1 was a reasonable thing. I agree with an interjection that if the bonus were £5 the trappers might watch very closely the breeding habits of the dogs, for I am mindful of the case of a farmer who engaged a rabbit trapper to clean out his property. After the trapper had said he had completed the job and left the farm the farmer found numerous young rabbits. He immediately got in touch with the trapper and complained, but the trapper said "You can't blame me. You always retain enough seed to plant your next year's crop." The Leader of the Opposition, quite rightly, required more information in regard to the financial position of the fund. I think the Stockowners Association is to be commended for its willingness to meet the additional cost. The number of tails and scalps presented to June 30, 1952, was 13,384 as compared with 6,667 during the preceding 12 months. Between September 1, 1951, and March 15, 1952, 5,190 tails and scalps were recovered, and between September 1 and September 30, 1952, 780. Therefore, on the basis of last year's figures, 4,400 will have been received between October 1, 1952, and March 1953. The position therefore is as follows:—

	£	£
Amount available in Wild Dog Fund at 30/9/52		2,256
Tails and scalps presented to 30/9/52, but not paid for	769	
Estimated cost of management, freight, etc., to be charged to 31/12/53	350	
	—	1,119
Balance available to meet bonus payments between 1/10/52 and 15/3/53		1,137

The number of tails and scalps to be presented between those dates, based on last year's figures, would be 4,410, which leaves a deficiency in the amount available of £3,273. Of course, we will not levy the additional

amount unless it is necessary. It may not be necessary to increase the rate by more than 3d, as each 3d. is the equivalent of about £2,000. It is thought that by increasing the Government's advance to £4,000 it will be sufficient for some time.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment; Committee's report adopted.

VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 12. Page 340.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—It appears that only one Vermin Board is affected by the provisions of this Bill, but the Act provides that other councils may take similar action to that taken by the particular district where a Vermin Board has been constituted. I see no objection to the provision increasing the representative nature of the board and consequently do not oppose the second reading.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment; Committee's report adopted.

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION FUND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 12. Page 340.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This is another of those Bills which members would have extreme difficulty in opposing. It deals with the administration of the old Public Service Fund which was inaugurated, I think, in 1902. Strange to say, on looking through the files of our Acts in order to get some lead on the provisions of the Act, I found it was not classified as a public Act, but eventually I found it amongst those which are in the somewhat indeterminate class. It provided for a superannuation fund to be established for the then Public Service, mainly on a voluntary basis. Since then, of course, the main provisions of the Public Service superannuation fund have been provided in the much more comprehensive legislation passed in 1926. Thus it follows that the number of pensioners in the old scheme is rapidly diminishing and has now reached the stage when there are not sufficient eligible pensioners to provide the necessary pensioner representation on the board, so this Bill provides that the membership of the board may be reduced to not fewer than three. The only

other point of interest is, when eventually all the pensioners cease to be pensioners as a result of that fate to which we are all destined in shuffling off this mortal coil, what is going to happen to the surplus in the fund. I assume that the management of the fund will see, as far as is humanly possible, that the pensions are payable during the time to which pensioners are entitled to them, and it follows that it would be impossible to have the last pound in the fund synchronize with

the death of the last pensioner, so the disposal of the residuum will be a problem for some future Parliament. I see no objection to the Bill.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment; Committee's report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.32 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, August 26, at 2 p.m.