

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, September 17, 1953.

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

QUESTIONS.**PRICE CONTROL.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Now that the Federal Arbitration Court has, in effect, frozen wages by abolishing the quarterly adjustments based on rises or falls in the cost of living, the question of an effective price control becomes even more important than before. Can the Premier say whether agreement was reached at the conference he attended in Melbourne yesterday on the future of price control, and particularly on the maintenance of control of those articles which substantially influence the basic wage?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The conference reached certain unanimous conclusions. The first was that in the Australian economy there were still a number of items which, in the interests of the community, should be controlled. Some of the States—not South Australia—were concerned about the expenditure involved in maintaining price control, one State saying that as far as its Budget was concerned it was necessary to reduce the amount spent by the Prices Branch. As honourable members know, South Australia has never gone in for a big Prices Branch and that has not been a material factor in our consideration of this problem. Yesterday the Prices Ministers approved a list of commodities which they considered should still be kept under control, but there are one or two marginal commodities, and for that reason the list was not released to the press. They also accepted, with very few reservations, a list of commodities I have submitted which, we believe, can now be decontrolled without any ill effect on the community. To give members some idea of the type of things involved I submit the following summary:—

Coconut; coffee, with or without chicory; coffee beans; coffee essence; cocoa; cocoa beans; cream, fresh or in tins; tomato juice; fibres, natural or synthetic; linen; flax; hemp and ramie sewing threads and twines; rope; cordage and twine, including binder twine, tyre cord and tyre fabric; bicycles; bicycle accessories and parts; roofing and sheathing paper; electric insulating paper and boards; sarking paper, including sisalkraft; moulding powders; oils; maize; seed; peanut; rape-seed; hempseed and cotton seed.

In addition the other States were notified, though I do not know how many propose to follow our lead, that this State proposes to decontrol the price of ale, beer, lager, stout, porter, and any mixtures thereof, or any mixture thereof with aerated waters. When an item is decontrolled in this State it does not mean that the Prices Branch becomes uninterested in it. A periodical examination of the prices of uncontrolled articles is made by that branch, just as a check is made of the prices of controlled articles, and if it is felt that the public is not getting proper consideration price control is again introduced. In some cases goods are not decontrolled until assurances are given by the industry concerned. For example, we have known for some time that it would be necessary to increase the price of bottled beer by 1s. a dozen wholesale and 1s. 6d. a dozen retail, and such an increase cannot be regarded as unjustified, but we have had an assurance from the industry that there will be no increase in the price of draught beer sold from the pump as a result of decontrol. The States unanimously drew up a list of articles which for one reason or another they considered should continue under control; also nearly every State accepted a list for decontrol submitted by South Australia. It was decided that, prior to the next meeting to be held in Adelaide, the whole scope of price control in each State should be examined, and each State will submit a firm list of the articles it believes still necessary to control and those it believes can be decontrolled.

SUPERPHOSPHATE PRICES.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—Can the Premier say whether consideration has been given to superphosphate prices for the ensuing season and, if so, whether any decision has been arrived at?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes. An order has been made fixing the prices for superphosphate this season and the superphosphate companies have been notified. They represent a reduction on last year's prices of from 13s. 6d., to 17s. 6d. a ton on Eyre Peninsula and from 9s. 6d. to 13s. 6d. a ton on the mainland. Last season a differential of 4s. a ton existed between Eyre Peninsula and mainland prices because of the higher manufacturing costs on the Peninsula. However, investigations have revealed that the differential is now not warranted and, in the circumstances, prices for 1953-54 will be the same in both areas.

The surcharge of 2s. a ton granted to superphosphate distributors last season has been investigated and has been withdrawn. The prices that will operate this season are:—for 45 per cent superphosphate supplied in new cornsacks, the maximum price *ex works* will be £13 5s. a ton, which is a reduction of 11s. 6d. a ton on the mainland and 15s. 6d. a ton on Eyre Peninsula; for that supplied in once-used cornsacks, £12 13s. a ton, which is a reduction of 11s. 6d. a ton on the mainland and 15s. 6d. on Eyre Peninsula; for that supplied in paper bags, £12 6s. 6d. a ton, a reduction of 15s. 6d. a ton on the mainland and 19s. 6d. on Eyre Peninsula, and for that supplied in farmers' own bags, £11 3s. 6d. a ton, which is a reduction of 11s. 6d. on the mainland and 15s. 6d. on Eyre Peninsula. All prices are subject to a 5s. a ton reduction for payment within 30 days.

Mr. PEARSON—I am pleased to hear that the differential in the price of superphosphate which has applied on Eyre Peninsula for a number of years has now been removed. Can the Premier say how much of the reduction in the price is due to the reduced price of cornsacks and how much to a reduction in the price of manufactured superphosphate? Are the prices of superphosphate mixtures containing ammonia, molybdenum, and, I think, DDT, and such other elements, controlled, and, if so, will the reductions which apply to superphosphate be applicable to these mixtures?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I think an application was made this year for a substantial increase in the price of superphosphate, and the reduction arises out of investigations made by the Prices Department as to what would be a fair and reasonable thing. I am not sure that the price reduction arises from any one factor in particular. I mentioned two factors that affected it to the extent of 6s. on Eyre Peninsula. The price of bags will be reduced substantially. The Wheat Board had a large stock of heavily-priced bags, and I think it will have to unload those and that their price will come down. Unfortunately, I cannot answer the second part of the honourable member's question. I know that the prices of all straight line manures such as sulphate of ammonia and nitrate of soda are controlled, but I do not know whether there is any control over the price of mixtures containing trace elements and superphosphate. I will check up and let the honourable member have a reply in due course.

“POT OF GOLD.”

Mr. HUTCHENS—The following article appeared in yesterday's *News* under the heading “Pot of Gold Opens in Adelaide”:

Adelaide Criminal Investigation Bureau telephones ran hot today with inquiries from members of the public about the Pot of Gold. The Pot of Gold organization, which has been running in eastern States in recent months, began business in Adelaide today. One woman who was telephoned, said a woman caller announced, “This is the Pot of Gold. I am happy to inform you that you have been one of the lucky women to strike it rich in our pot of gold.” She explained that her number had been selected from the telephone book. This gave her the opportunity of purchasing a set of 15 coupons for 30s., which enabled her to a free dinner at a city restaurant, a free portrait, chiropody treatment, hairdos, dry cleaning, and radio repairs. If the person telephoned is interested, a message boy is dispatched with the coupons. Some advertisers stipulate only one coupon a day may be handed in.

In today's *News*, under the heading “Police Caution Public on Pot of Gold,” the following appeared:—

Police headquarters said today their switchboard was inundated with phone calls from people inquiring about the *bona fides* of the “Pot of Gold” organizers.

I congratulate the *News* and appreciate the interest it has taken in what may be a danger to the public. I do not criticize the Government because I believe it has always endeavoured to protect the public in such matters. Can the Premier assure the public that their interests are being safeguarded and say whether this organization is out to fleece the gullible?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I am not connected personally with this organization so I would not be able, from first-hand knowledge, to state its intentions towards the public, but I will see that its intentions and behaviour are examined by the appropriate authorities, and that, if any further action appears to be necessary, it is promptly taken.

PRICE OF URANIUM.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Has the Premier seen a statement in the local press which suggests that Australia—and I assume South Australia in a major capacity—is selling uranium to Great Britain at about half the price being charged by Canada? South Australia, which has poured millions of pounds into the development of uranium, is a claimant State before the Commonwealth Grants Commission and has not so much revenue to spend on the development of uranium resources.

The authority quoted is the *Financial Times* of London, which is considered one of the most substantial and authoritative papers in the world. Can the Premier say whether the statement is true?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The prices obtained for uranium have always been regarded as confidential. There are two or three things that the security people have always placed considerable value on, not because of the direct information they would convey, but because of the consequences of the information being made public. They have always placed much importance upon maintaining a strict secrecy over the grade of ore worked, over the total reserves of ore in any country, and they have asked that the price of production should not be disclosed. That information in the hands of an enemy agent could allow him to work out quickly the atomic programme of any country, so the prices, grades and the tonnages have always been regarded as confidential information. I saw the report that the honourable member referred to. I have no knowledge of the Canadian price of uranium, for that is subject to security, but the writer of the article had not the slightest idea of the cost of Australian uranium. The only persons that would know the Canadian price would be those high up in the Atomic Energy Commission of Canada and they would be a very limited number. The press statement, as far as it related to South Australian or Australian uranium, was grossly inaccurate. It has not the semblance of sense, and I have no doubt that it does not convey a right picture.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—It was suggested that this question should not be asked for security reasons, but this matter of security can be easily overdone, because war and things connected with war are the greatest enemies of democracy. The Premier knows that an honourable member is entitled to ask any question he thinks fit and to expect a reply. My question arose out of a statement by Lord Bracken in the *Advertiser* on September 16. Anyone holding such a title would not be regarded as an enemy agent.

Mr. Lawn—Why?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Because he has been honoured by the Monarch and the title carries some responsibility.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member is rather arguing the question.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The press statement includes the following:—

Lord Bracken, writing in the *Financial Times*, reveals that Australian uranium is being sold to Britain and the United States at 16s. 3d. sterling per unit, contrasting with 31s. 3d. sterling per unit paid to Canadian producers. This is the first time any disclosure of this kind is known to have been made. Lord Bracken suggests Australia should get a better return for uranium instead of selling it at a "bargain basement price," especially as he infers that Australian ore is of better quality. Lord Bracken says that there is British sympathy for Australian complaints about the mounting cost of her share in atomic weapons. "Australia is a big, brave country, but surely her resources are already sufficiently heavily strained by the daring policy of immigration and development upon which she has embarked," he says.

I cannot see that revealing the price of uranium has anything to do with security. It is not telling the tonnages sold. I fail to see how it affects security whether we are paid 16s., 20s. or 30s. a unit—

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member must not argue the question.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—As a poor State South Australia has spent a tremendous amount on this undertaking, and we should get the same treatment in the sale of our uranium as do other parts of the Empire. Will the Premier consider that particular point?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have seen the press report and frankly admit that I do not know the price of Canadian uranium. That is held to be confidential information and is not disclosed to anyone. The price quoted by Lord Bracken for Australian uranium is not accurate and has no relation to the agreement which has been entered into. Just as I do not know what uranium costs in Canada, I should say that Lord Bracken does not know what uranium costs in South Australia, so in that respect we are on a par. The price referred to is per unit, but that is not a term in general use in dealing with uranium and it makes no sense: normally uranium is sold by the pound. The free world is confronted with the obligation of defence and it will therefore in some instances have good deposits of uranium to work upon which show profits at reasonable prices, and on the other hand may have other projects which are more difficult to work and where a higher price has to be paid if production is to be promoted. In regard to defence it is not always a question of economics. I visited the Canadian uranium mines and saw the type of ore they were working, the type of work they were doing

and also their cost factors, and I also saw some of the American mines and their cost factors. I believe that South Australia's mines are soundly founded, that they are internationally important and that the arrangements entered into concerning the development of our mines are also sound and reasonable. I should like to help the honourable member further, but I cannot.

Mr. Macgillivray—All I want is to be sure South Australia is not being exploited.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Lord Bracken's statement was made without any information whatever as to the price of South Australian uranium.

BLACKWOOD, BELAIR, AND EDEN BUS SERVICE.

Mr. DUNKS—In 1951, after some agitation by the Mitcham Council and many people around Blackwood, Belair and Eden, which I represent, I placed a Notice of Motion on the Notice Paper with reference to a bus service from that area to Adelaide. Unfortunately I was not able to be in the House when the matter came forward and it lapsed. At the time the Minister of Works took me into the area and we examined the position, but since then nothing has been done. The residents still desire that something should be done, particularly now that there will be a hospital between Blackwood and Belair not far off the main road. Is the Minister prepared to take up the matter with the Tramways Trust to see if the new board has any idea of providing a service?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will be glad to do it. As a matter of fact, following on the honourable member's representations a few days ago I have already started inquiries, but the position is not without difficulties, because if we give something to the trams we take it from the railways, and *vice versa*. I think it is a matter for collaboration between the two services. I will follow through the initial inquiries and at the earliest possible date let the honourable member know how far the negotiations have proceeded.

MOUNT GAMBIER HOUSING.

Mr. FLETCHER—I have received quite a few letters from pensioners and others residing in the Mount Gambier district in reference to the building of homes. Can the Premier say if the Housing Trust intends to extend its country building operations to Mount Gambier for these people?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will ask the Housing Trust to send an officer to Mount Gambier to investigate the position and when I have a report as to whether the trust can extend its operations to Mount Gambier I will advise the honourable member. In the meantime, if he will make available to me any names or give information about people whom the officer should consult I will be obliged.

IMPORTATION OF POULTRY.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—One of my constituents, a professional poultryman, has read something about certain poultry in Great Britain giving wonderful egg production and he is anxious to import settings of eggs of this breed. Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether there is any restriction on such importation? I take it that they would be brought out by air. If there were any restriction or embargo on the importation of fertile eggs, what would be the position as to importing a breeding pen? This man would rather import the eggs because it would be cheaper.

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—As far as I know, the only restriction would be in connection with quarantine regulations and just what they are I cannot say offhand. I will inquire from the department.

DOG FENCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 25. Page 485.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—The Bill amends an Act passed three years ago under which arrangements were to be made for a protective fence to prevent the invasion of wild dogs from the outside areas into the sheep settled areas. So far as I know the fence has been a considerable success, although difficulties have arisen through shortages of material and natural conditions at one or two points, where a number of dogs have managed to get through the protective barrier. However, the fence has, in the main, accomplished the purpose that was intended by the legislation. I have discussed the efficacy of the provisions of the original Act with interested persons in the north and north-eastern areas and with some whose properties abut the fence, and I find there is general satisfaction with its control with the exception of one of two complaints due to conditions over which there is no control. The cost of

maintenance per mile does not always work out equitably; one pastoralist might have a section of fence which, because of the presence of creeks or rough country, would be very costly to maintain compared with a fence on comparatively level country. The administrative difficulties and the cost of sectionalizing the fence might outweigh any possible advantage, although it is something which might be considered in the future. The Bill simply gives power to increase the levy from the present maximum of 1s. 3d. to 3s., and to increase the maintenance cost from £8 to £16 per mile. We all know that the cost of fencing has increased since the first Act was passed, so that this proposal is reasonable, and as we have to spend more in maintenance it is obvious that we have to collect additional revenue from some source to provide for that expenditure. In this case it is provided that the whole of the increased revenue shall be derived from those concerned; in other words, the Government subsidy will remain at the figure prescribed in the Act. The Stockowners' Association, which is competent to speak on behalf of the people who will have to pay the additional levy, has agreed to the proposals in the Bill and I see no reason why I should oppose it. The Act was amended to give the board power to borrow money in order to meet certain urgent commitments which could not be met out of revenue. I do not know whether any loans have been raised in accordance with those provisions, but if there have been I would like to know how much is outstanding. Although the board's finances may be sound at the moment, they can only be kept that way by passing this Bill, and in view of the great importance of the matter to the pastoral industry in this State, I think it wise that we should pass this Bill as expeditiously as possible.

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

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (MINISTERS).

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 16. Page 690.)

Mr. HAWKER (Burra)—I support this Bill. Although I do not agree that it is long overdue, it is opportune owing to the amount of extra business the Government has to carry out. It was mentioned by one or two Opposition members that Labor has long advocated

additional Ministers. On one occasion the Labor Party advocated the appointment of a Minister of Housing but it has, in effect, cantered the horses up to the hurdle, let them sniff, and turn away. Over the past few years there has been a notable change of attitude towards Ministerial control and it has coincided with the term of office of the present Government. Before the war it was the fashion to say, "We should put a man in charge of a department and let him work without political control." Under that scheme the Commissioner of Highways was authorized to spend money as he thought fit and without control. However, people are now seeking Ministerial control over the spending of public money. The fact that that attitude is spreading through the State indicates the favour in which the Government is held.

I do not think it matters in which House the new Ministers are situated. The most suitable man should be selected for the job, whether he is a member of this House or another. The Opposition has suggested, during this debate, that the Premier calls the tune and Government members respond. I emphatically deny that that has been my experience. When I have approached Ministers with deputations they have made the decisions unless the matters have involved the expenditure of additional money, in which case the Treasurer has been consulted, or high policy, which has had to be referred to Cabinet. In the same manner the Premier, when answering certain questions, has been unable to reply until after discussion with his Cabinet. We are pursuing the normal functions of Government under a Cabinet. The Premier is selected and he appoints his Cabinet realizing that he has sufficient votes behind him in the House to carry out his policy—a policy which has stood the test of time. Even though we may disagree in some respect with part of the Government policy, Government members have been elected to this House firstly to represent their constituents and secondly to support the Government. If we did not do those things there would not be stable government, which is vital to a country. There must be a Cabinet and a leader to dictate the policy and he must have sufficient voting strength to ensure the carrying out of his policy. We are not compelled to support the Government at any time: it is left to our conscience and good sense to do what we believe is right. One need only examine past records to realize that on many occasions Government members have opposed the Government. I remind members

that on one occasion the Leader of the Opposition accused me, in Committee, of trying to torpedo a Government measure. He probably did not like it because he supported the proposal. During discussion on the Margarine Bill many Government members voted against the Government.

Mr. O'Halloran—There was much shifting of ground then.

Mr. HAWKER—I did not shift my ground. The Government has frequently introduced measures which, because of opposition from its own members, have never reached Committee but have lapsed. On the other hand I clearly recall that on one occasion because a member of the Labor Party did not support an Opposition proposal, which members had been asked to treat as non-political, he was penalized.

Mr. O'Halloran—Was that back in the 1890's?

Mr. HAWKER—The Leader of the Opposition has no need to go that far back; he realizes what I am referring to. I fail to understand Mr. Macgillivray's attitude. Ever since I have been a member of this House he has railed against bureaucracy and heads of departments working without Ministerial control. Now, although there has been an expansion of Government work, he suggests that it be left in the hands of Government servants rather than under the control of members. The appointment of these additional Ministers is necessary because the work of the Government is expanding from year to year, therefore I support the Bill.

Mr. TEUSNER (Angas)—Clause 3 amends section 65 of the Constitution Act by increasing the number of Ministers from six to eight and clause 4 amends section 66 by providing that no person shall hold office as a Minister for more than three months unless he is a member of Parliament. When the original Act was passed in 1855-56 providing for four Ministers South Australia's population was 109,000, the number of Assembly members 36 and the number of Council members 18. By an amending Act of 1873 the number of Ministers was increased from four to six, the reasons given at that time by the Chief Secretary, the Hon. A. Blyth, being, firstly, that the work of Government offices had almost doubled, secondly, that much administrative work in connection with the Northern Territory had devolved upon Ministers, and, thirdly, that the Government intended to introduce in that year a Bill to amend the Education Act, as a result of which it was expected that tremendous additional work would be

thrown on to the shoulders of the Minister of Education. However, the Education Bill was not passed until 1875.

In 1901 the number of Ministers was reduced to four, of Assembly members from 54 to 42, and of Council members from 24 to 18. The reasons given for these reductions were the need for economy and the effect of Federation on the administration of this State. In introducing the Bill the Premier and Chief Secretary, the Hon. J. G. Jenkins, said it was fairly well recognized by members of Parliament and other thoughtful people that there was a big demand for economic Government therefore people in South Australia would have to be a great deal more careful in their private and public affairs than the people of any other State. Apparently some suggestion was made at that time that the Bill had been forced upon Parliament by the press, for the Premier went on to explain that members must recognize that, as soon as Federation had become an accomplished fact, much work had been taken from the State Government and accordingly general Parliamentary expenditure should be reduced. The next amendment to the Constitution Act, in 1908, increased the size of the Ministry to six, the reason given being that of increased Ministerial duties. Since 1908 six attempts have been made to increase the size of the Ministry from six to seven or eight, but all have been unsuccessful, mainly due to action in another place.

In his second reading speech Mr. Playford said he realized that, this was a very contentious subject, but I do not consider that it is, for, with the exception of only two, all speakers have wholeheartedly supported the measure. Furthermore, I believe the majority of the people in this State support it. In opening Parliament His Excellency the Governor reviewed some of the accomplishments of the past, accomplishments of which this State can be justly proud. Many of these have in no small measure been due to the action taken by the Government of the day, but we must not be content to rest on our laurels. Rather let us be stimulated and encouraged by past achievements and unflinchingly apply ourselves to the even greater tasks ahead. In the past many communities were lulled into a false sense of security by the thought that most of the things to be achieved had been accomplished, that nature had yielded all her secrets and that science had revealed all her truths. They looked backward upon their accomplishments with gratification instead of looking forward, intent to steel themselves for renewed

and greater efforts so that the future might not be eclipsed by the past. That such a feeling of complacency was characteristic of the times more than a century ago is made abundantly clear by one of Britain's greatest essayists, William Hazlitt, who wrote:—

We are so far advanced in the arts and sciences that we live in retrospect and dote on past achievements. The accumulation of knowledge has been so great that we are lost in wonder at the height it has reached instead of attempting to climb or add to it, while the variety of objects distracts and dazzles the looker on. What niche remains unoccupied? What path untrod? What is the use of doing anything unless we could do it better than all those who have gone before us? And what hope is there of this?

When those lines were written Napoleon was licking his wounds after his defeat at Waterloo in 1815 and electricity, telephones, wireless telegraphy, radar, X-ray, spectrum analysis, anaesthetics, the use of penicillin, radio, television, submarines, aeroplanes, and atomic power were unknown. There is hardly a condition today from which we derive some great benefit that was known to the people of the early nineteenth century, yet they considered that knowledge had nothing more to offer, that science and Nature had exposed all their treasures, and that no further advancement was possible, but what is the position today? We have just completed a wonderful age, unsurpassed in scientific and other achievements, and we are on the threshold of a new and marvellous age—the atomic age—one that will demand from all of us an application of unbounded energy and effort so that the fruits of modern scientific discoveries, whether in the atomic field or elsewhere, can be made available speedily for the benefit of the people generally.

It is because I believe that Parliament, and in particular the Government of the day, should give an important lead in these matters that I support a Bill which will increase the number of Ministers from six to eight. I realize that the work of the Ministers has increased rapidly in recent years, and that it will continue to do so. I consider that a Bill involving alteration of the Constitution should meet a particular situation for some time. There should be no frivolous tinkering with the Constitution. A Constitution is an instrument which by its very nature bears the impress of semi-permanency, therefore, the gravest consideration should be given to amendments to make certain that they will meet the position for some years.

When at some distant time in the future—perhaps at the turn of the century—a South Australian Utopia is established,

when all of us will have less to do and more time to do it in, and an amendment of the Constitution might be mooted to reduce the number of Ministers to four, legislators might then again examine the formula expounded in this Chamber at the turn of the last century by the Hon. A. Catt. When speaking on the second reading of the 1901 Constitution Act Amendment Bill, which reduced the number of Ministers to four, he stated he would arrange the offices on the following lines:—

The Attorney-General had not very much to do, and he might very well take from the Chief Secretary the Sheriff's work and the gaols and prisons, which at present were under the Chief Secretary. As military and quarantine matters had been taken off the Chief Secretary's hands he could take over the Education Department. The latter department had lost the post and telegraph work, and in consequence there was much less to do. The Treasurer had a hard and trying time for only one month in the year, and he could easily undertake the work of the Commissioner of Public Works. The customs used to give the Treasurer a great deal of work, but as these were no longer under his control his duties were considerably lightened. The Treasurer would find that when he had got through the Budget speech he would have a very easy time. The Commissioner of Crown Lands had the most important position in the Ministry, and the only additional work he would be required to do would be that of Minister of Agriculture, which was an office that would run well together with his other work. There they had the four Ministers, and he thought that was a fair division of labour. He would be perfectly content to undertake the work of any of the offices thus created, but he would leave them to somebody else at present. There were times when the work was exceptionally heavy and got in arrears, but it was only a question of working on Saturday afternoons to bring it up to date.

I heartily support the Bill.

The SPEAKER—The question is that this Bill be now read a second time. . . . There being a dissentient voice on a Constitution Bill, there must be a division.

The House divided on the second reading:—

Ayes (28).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, John Clark, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunks, Dunnage, Dunstan, Fletcher, Goldney, Hawker, Hincks, Hutchens, Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. Jenkins, Lawn, McAlees, McIntosh, Michael, O'Halloran, Pattinson, Pearson, Playford (teller), Shannon, Stephens, Teusner, Travers, Frank Walsh, and White.

Noes (2).—Messrs. Macgillivray (teller) and Quirke.

The SPEAKER—There are 28 Ayes and 2 Noes. Twenty-six being a Constitutional majority, the Bill passes the second reading.

Second reading thus carried.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—"Number of Ministers and salaries payable."

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—During the second reading debate I asked the Premier what would be the position in regard to the Transport Control Board when the new Ministers were appointed, assuming that one would be in charge of highways. I pointed out that we already had a Minister who could handle the portfolio. I said a Minister in charge of highways could be open to pressure, and it was suggested that if he had a property in a country district he could use his influence to have a road built to it, or be influenced by neighbours to spend in the district more than the fair share of the money available. I wonder whether if we have a Minister in charge of highways we will be able to use the better roads provided. The Transport Control Board has assumed unto itself dictatorial powers, although the Premier said he hoped no board in South Australia had done that. Whilst the Premier was in Melbourne yesterday Mr. Quirke referred to the Veterinary Surgeons Board having done a grave injustice to a highly qualified veterinarian. If there is to be a Minister solely in charge of highways, can the Premier assure us that the Transport Control Board will be under his control, and that Parliament will be able to question the Minister about the operations of the board?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—Prior to the last State elections I made a statement on this matter, and since then I have made two or three in this House. In moving the second reading I pointed out that if there were too few Ministers some public servants were given greater executive authority. We have seen in the Commonwealth sphere that public service control is not as good as Parliamentary control, even considering the weaknesses associated with the latter. Under the Bill two new Ministers will be appointed, one in the Assembly and one in the Council, and they will be available to answer questions put to them by members about matters under their charge. The Bill gives the Government an opportunity to completely reorganize the public services of the State. I cannot now announce what will be done. Inquiries are still being made in regard to several departments. Some may fit in with other departments, and others may be able to stand on their own. For instance, the Department of Agricul-

ture can easily be under one Minister. Some departments are on the borderline. For instance, the Treasury for some years has administered the Department of Industry; it is not a Treasury matter except that indirectly the wages are ultimately paid by it. At one time some people held the view that if a Minister of Roads administered the Highways Fund his district would have all the money spent in it, resulting in others being left without suitable roads. That was the common statement, but I do not believe that any Minister could be so corrupt and misguided in his duties. Under the new set up the Highways Department will suggest programmes and the Minister in charge will have the right to approve them. There we would have the advice of the experts and the supervision of the Minister over the experts. That is the logical development, and instead of having no Ministerial control as at present the Minister will be in a position to know the details of the programme and discuss them intelligently with members. That is the type of thing I visualize. The extent to which control of railways and harbours and the co-ordination of transport will be brought under the new department will have to be examined closely. The honourable member raised the question of the use of our roads. It would interest him to know that only today I received a deputation, headed by an influential member of the community, asking that the Transport Control Board should be given greater powers.

Mr. Macgillivray—Is he an interested party?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No. The deputation requested that roads at present not controlled should be brought under the board because of the chaotic position which has developed. Some of these roads are in my district. I visualize an administration being set up for the Roads Department whereby we shall have a definite programme of road construction drawn up. It may be advantageous to consult the councils before it is finally approved. Ultimately, it will have to be approved by the Minister, and he will then be able to inform the House what the policy is. At present I doubt whether we are even maintaining our existing roads. Although we went ahead in 1951, since then, owing to increased costs and other factors, our road programme has not been maintained. The purpose of having the additional Ministers is to bring the responsibility more into the Cabinet and consequently into this House.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The Premier has not answered my question. I wanted to know whether the Transport Control Board was to be

brought under the control of the Minister of Highways. This board is the biggest handicap confronting country people. If the Act was amended and the board controlled traffic in the metropolitan area the whole economy of the city would be brought to a standstill within 24 hours. It is only the country people who are affected at present. It is a most obnoxious board. The two departments which spend most of our revenue are Highways and Railways. The railways will bring South Australia down to its knees, financially, and I will be surprised if the Government has to subsidize this undertaking this year for anything less than £5,000,000 or £6,000,000. The people who are kept off the roads by the Transport Control Board receive no subsidy from the Government, and if they make a loss it comes from their own pocket. Private enterprise would be glad to provide services if the Government was prepared to pay the losses, as is done on Government undertakings. The present Minister of Railways is nominally also Minister of Local Government. I should not think much administration was entailed in his controlling the Harbors Board, although there would be somewhat more in controlling the Highways Department. As the railways are such a tremendous burden, will the Treasurer see if this department can be brought directly under the control of the Minister so that we can ask for information and ascertain how the money is being spent?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The clause gives the Government the right to appoint two additional Ministers, and the stated purpose is to enable administration to be more effectively watched by the Government. Most members agree that that is necessary. However, the honourable member, who is now so anxious that these departments should be brought under the control of a Minister, was not in favour of extra Ministers being appointed. Therefore, logically he cannot say that we should have a plan for the additional Ministers. If he were consistent in his ideas he would say, "We want more than two additional Ministers." I point out there are many boards which are not under Ministerial control, such as the Electricity Trust, which from the point of view of expenditure probably has a greater impact on the State than any other. The same can be said about the Housing Trust. The request for two additional Ministers is not excessive if one looks at the departments which are not directly under a board. The marketing boards of the State are not subject to the control of Ministers and some of these handle

crops worth tens of millions of pounds. The honourable member singles out one board, in which he is interested, and says that it should be placed under the control of a Minister. If the honourable member had his way we would not have any new Ministers although he wants this board placed under a Minister's control.

Mr. Macgillivray—I would make the present Ministers work.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Of course you would. Supplementary legislation will be introduced in several ways as a consequence of these additional Ministers being appointed—some will please the honourable member and some will not. It is not the Government's intention to alter the Railways Act. The Transport Control Board's position will be considered when the new Ministers are appointed but whether the Transport Control Board will be involved is something that will be determined later. I cannot take the matter further at the moment.

Mr. QUIRKE—I oppose this measure because there is a growing tendency, as the Premier admits, for boards to become autocratic. It is clear that although Ministers are in charge of these boards and exercise some authority over them they cannot alter the power boards have on individuals and groups. As at present Ministers cannot control these boards when application is made to them without effect by organizations such as the Stockowners' Association, how can the appointment of additional Ministers be more effective? I have to accept the Premier's assurance that these matters will be considered by the new Cabinet, but I will want very definite explanations from the members of that Cabinet on matters I mentioned in the second reading debate.

Mr. LAWN—The Premier is reported to have said, on page 486 of *Hansard*:—

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.

If the lower figure is divided by six and the higher by eight the same answer is obtained. From the present salary pool the Premier receives £3,000 and each of the remaining five Ministers £2,250. Dividing £19,000 by the increased number of Ministers, after allowing £3,000 for the Premier, there is a sum of £2,285 for each of the remaining Ministers, which is either an increase of £35 for each Minister or a total of £245 to be utilized in some other way.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It has been the custom in British Parliaments from time

immemorial to vote a certain amount for the Cabinet, and the method of distributing this has always been a matter for Cabinet itself. The increased amount is mathematically correct on what Parliament previously decided to provide for Cabinet.

Mr. Lawn—There will be an additional £245 for Cabinet to allocate.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—There are certain Cabinet expenses which come from the fund and the amount the honourable member quoted as the salary of Ministers is not quite correct. My colleagues have generously suggested I should have more than they, but it is a purely internal arrangement.

Mr. Lawn—The Premier is not suggesting that they want him to have the extra £250?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No, I do not suggest that. I have other ideas about that amount. The additional amount provided is calculated on the average salaries of Ministers.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Is any amount paid to the Government Whip from the sum allocated to Cabinet?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—That matter is decided by Cabinet, which does make certain contributions to the Government Whip. That has been the practice for about 40 years. The Ministers receive their salaries and contribute to the maintenance of the office of Whip, an office which is vital to the carrying out of the functions of government.

Mr. Jennings—Under that system the Opposition Whip is at a disadvantage.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Opposition has not the obligation of maintaining the House. Under our Parliamentary system the Government has certain obligations. It must ensure that sufficient members are present to perform the work of Parliament, but Opposition members come and go freely. The salaries of Ministers in other States have been considered and I can assure members that South Australian Ministers do not receive, on the average, the amounts paid in other States.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I have already indicated that I do not think the amount is sufficient, and I did suggest £23,000. If a Minister is entitled to a certain emolument he should not be required to pay towards the maintenance of another office. If payment of a salary to the Government Whip cannot be considered in this Bill I would favour the introduction of another Bill to provide for that office. The matter should be brought before

Parliament so that members can decide it. I have always been prepared to pay for service and do not favour the writing down of Ministers in this State by paying them a salary lower than that received by Ministers in other States. The Opposition Whip in the National Parliament receives a salary and is provided with a secretary, but the Opposition Whip here receives no recognition. I do not think there would be any objection to the payment of a salary to him. Can the Premier indicate how such provision might be made?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It is not the Government's intention to adopt the suggestion of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition at this stage, but I appreciate his gesture. I will examine the position and advise the Leader of the Opposition of my opinion in due course. Personally, I believe that many of our traditions have merit because they have stood the test of time and I am not disposed to alter them. The provision of a salary to the Government Whip would be irrelevant in this measure and would not be covered by the message forwarded by His Excellency.

Clause 3 passed.

Clause 4 and title passed.

Bill reported without amendment. Committee's report adopted.

FRUIT FLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH, for the Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS (Minister of Agriculture)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill has the same purpose as the previous Bills providing for compensation for loss incurred through the campaign for the destruction of fruit fly. In January of this year, because of infestation by fruit fly, the Government found it necessary to issue proclamations prohibiting the removal of fruit and vegetables from certain areas in the eastern suburbs of Adelaide, and to carry out stripping and spraying in those areas. In April a proclamation was issued prohibiting the growing of certain plants in those areas. Following the policy previously approved by Parliament the Government desires to provide for the payment of compensation to persons who suffered loss either through the stripping and spraying, or by reason of the prohibition of the removal of fruit or vegetables or the growing of plants, and the purpose of this Bill is to provide for the payment of this compensation.

The details of the Bill are as follow. Clause 3 makes a consequential amendment to section 3 of the principal Act. Clause 4 amends section 4 by striking out the provisions of that section dealing with compensation which are superseded by this Bill or have ceased to have effect. Clause 5 makes a consequential amendment to section 8. Clause 6 confers a right to compensation for loss arising out of the operation of the regulations made earlier in this year and which are set out in the schedule to the Bill. The clause gives a right to compensation to persons who suffer or who have suffered loss as the result of anything done or prohibited under those regulations; for example, where fruit or vegetables have been destroyed or where loss has been sustained

as a result of the prohibition contained in the regulations against the removal of fruit or vegetables from the land affected by the regulations. In accordance with the principle previously followed in the principal Act, the clause also provides for payment of compensation in respect of any loss which may be incurred by reason of the operation of any regulation which may be made between the passing of the Bill and January 1, 1954.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.17 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, September 22, at 2 p.m.