

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, October 8, 1953.

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

ASSENT TO ACTS.

His Excellency the Governor intimated by message his assent to the following Acts:—Auctioneers Act Amendment, Vermin Act Amendment, Wild Dogs Act Amendment, and Dog Fence Act Amendment.

QUESTIONS.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Treasurer's attention been drawn to a statement, reported in this morning's *Advertiser*, by the president of the Taxpayers' Association of South Australia, suggesting the formation of a Public Accounts Committee to keep a watch on Government expenditure? Has he considered this matter and is it intended to take steps to appoint such a committee?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—My attention was not drawn to the matter, but I happened to notice it. It is not the Government's intention to give effect to the association's recommendation because it would be a complete waste of money. The Commonwealth Grants Commission, which is a most highly-qualified investigational committee with one of the best-qualified chartered accountants as its chairman, goes through every item of expenditure of the State's accounts every year and issues a full report showing all the variations that occur and the reasons, and bases the State grant upon the accounts submitted to it. The work of another investigational committee would only be a duplication of the work being done by this most highly-qualified authority. I doubt very much whether the Taxpayers' Association realizes the full scope of the Grants Commission's investigations into the State's accounts and the nature of its report. Evidence is called from the most competent authorities we have in Australia. This House is the committee appointed by the people to examine and approve of State expenditure, and any committee outside the scope of the House which would presume to control such expenditure would not be strictly in accordance with the functions of our democratic system, because it would be not an elected but an appointed committee. I have noticed the work being done by the Federal Public Accounts Committee, and I offer no comment on it except that it examines

expenditures which have occurred over previous years, and there is no Grants Commission supervising Commonwealth accounts.

HOSPITAL IN SOUTH-WESTERN SUBURBS.

Mr. PATTINSON—On October 19, 1949, in reply to a question by me as chairman of the South-Western Districts Hospital Committee, comprising the duly and democratically elected representatives of six municipalities and five House of Assembly districts, the Premier announced to the House that at the request of the committee the Government had purchased from the Housing Trust an area of land at Oaklands as the site for the proposed public hospital. He then said:—

It may be some time before it is possible for the Government to go ahead with the project, but it does mean that the Government is committed to the project.

On August 27 of this year the Premier retreated from this commitment of four years ago and blandly informed me that a survey of metropolitan district populations and hospital facilities would be necessary before the Government decided where it would erect another hospital. In the meantime the South Glen Hospital—a private general hospital at Glenelg—has closed, and the only other private general hospital there—Pier Street hospital—may close in the near future, providing further evidence of what I have been endeavouring to prove to the Government for years—

The SPEAKER—The honourable member may not argue his question.

Mr. PATTINSON—I have been endeavouring to show for years that the days of the small private hospitals are over. Can the Premier make some definite and positive statement now or in the near future on whether the Government's previous promise to erect a Government public hospital in the south-western district will come to fruition in the near future?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—When the proposition to purchase the land was first placed before the Government I gave it sympathetic consideration, but I stated then—and it was so reported—that that did not mean the Government would be in a position to go ahead with the hospital as the next project, but that the Government would be committed to building a hospital in the area when the occasion arose for it. The honourable member said my statement of August 27 last was a retraction, but there was no retraction in it, for I said:—

An up-to-date survey of the population of various districts and of the hospital facilities already available in those districts will be

necessary before a decision can be made as to where the next Government hospital is to be erected.

I believe every member realizes that in a question of this kind we have to deal with the worst conditions first, and the Hospitals Department is anxious to give assistance first where it is necessary. It was a question of where the next hospital should be built after the erection of the Western Districts Hospital not whether a hospital should be built in the area mentioned by the honourable member. The argument with which the honourable member concluded his question is not borne out by facts, because a recent survey showed that at present there are twice as many patients in the metropolitan area catered for by private hospitals as by Government institutions. Therefore, the day of the private hospital has not gone; indeed, in recent months a considerable number of community hospitals have been established. They are being maintained and are giving good service. I assure the honourable member that there is no retraction from my previous statement. When the Government bought the land from the Housing Trust it did so on the undertaking that it would, when practicable, erect a hospital there. That undertaking stands.

PRE-RACE BROADCASTING OF ODDS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I have received information that when Automatic Totalizators Limited operate at trotting meetings in the country announcements are broadcast about 10 minutes before the start of a race of the odds on certain horses. This often results in many people backing a particular horse. If that horse is successful the dividend is therefore considerably lower than what one would expect from the announced odds. Is it established practice to permit that type of broadcast at racing and trotting meetings? If so, can it be extended to every meeting? If it is not a normal practice or if it is a breach of the Act will instructions be given to discontinue that type of broadcast?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—This matter has not previously been brought under my notice. The totalizators are controlled by the racing clubs, so any action taken is largely a matter for their decision, providing they do not indulge in any illegal practice. Broadcasting upon a racecourse is also a matter under the control of racing clubs. I can quite understand that a person who backs a horse on an announced dividend of 20 to 1 becomes incensed if it wins and pays only 7 to 1. However, that is not

much different from the practice that I understand has been in operation on metropolitan courses for many years of having a totalizator automatically calculating and showing the current dividend. There, instead of the current odds being announced they are displayed. No doubt many people have backed horses upon the odds showing some time before the race but have received a smaller dividend, although in some cases, I should imagine, the dividend would be greater. Therefore, I do not see much difference between what is being done in the country and what is done in the city. I cannot see any suggestion of misrepresentation in what the honourable member has said, but I will examine the question to see whether there is.

IRRIGATION PROJECT.

Mr. MICHAEL—Has the Minister of Lands any further information to give in regard to previous questions I have asked about press reports of the activities of Messrs. J. H. and R. K. Lloyd, who propose to undertake large scale irrigation development on the Murray?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The area referred to is known as Lloyd's irrigation land, and I have a report from the Chief Horticulturist, which states:—

Mr. Kilpatrick has advised me that Mr. Lloyd was very appreciative of the assistance and information given to him and has been apparently convinced of the general unsuitability of the property near Mannum for the projects in mind. Unless further approached by Mr. Lloyd, no other action seems necessary or desirable at this stage.

Then follows a lengthy report which the honourable member may see if he so desires.

HOTEL AT CHALLA GARDENS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Following on a local option it was made known that it was intended to establish a hotel at Challa Gardens, and as a result, a petition was signed by a number of people opposing the granting of such licence. I am not concerned about whether the hotel should be built there or not, but it has been alleged that a man named Mealy, said to be the manager of the proposed hotel, and a man named Forde, the land agent who will handle the sale of the land on which the proposed hotel is to be built, have engaged agents who, having secured the names of the people who signed the original petition, have pestered them—particularly the female petitioners—until they have signed another petition signifying that the district needs the hotel. A number of these women have been subpoenaed

to give evidence today in the Licensing Court. On the advice of their solicitors the agents have offered the women concerned their taxi fares and an attractive meal as an enticement to appear today to commit perjury. Will the Premier take up this matter with the Police Department with a view to having investigations made and to seeing that no injustice has been committed?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If I understand the honourable member's intimation aright, it is that certain persons have incited people in a suburban electorate where a local option poll has been taken to commit perjury with the object of inducing the court to grant a hotel licence. I will most certainly take up this matter with the Criminal Investigation Department, because, if that is happening, it is a most serious matter which should be investigated, not only promptly, but carefully.

FRUIT FLY CAMPAIGN.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—Will the Minister of Agriculture make available an officer of his department to confer with representatives of the Burnside corporation, the Fruit Fly Eradication Committee of the Citrus Growers' Association, the members for the districts in which stripping is taking place, and any other interested parties on the implications of the fruit fly menace and the steps being taken for its eradication?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—I understand that the committees of those interested in the production and selling of fruit here have already approached the Burnside district council and have also written to the member for Burnside with a view to convening a meeting. If that meeting decides it is wise to invite the Chief Horticulturist, Mr. Strickland, to explain matters to it, I am sure that on receiving an invitation he will be glad to attend and give all the information at his disposal.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Will the Minister of Agriculture examine the possibility of a system of having the fruit left on the trees in the outer edge areas of the defined fruit fly zone and make it the subject of inspection to see whether it is infected? Will he also consider, in the stripping of the trees, a system under which the people could be served with a notice to strip the trees themselves, thus allowing them to take the requisite care of their own gardens which is not always possible when stripping gangs are employed?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—During an earlier outbreak certain householders agreed to strip their trees, but it was found that in

many cases the fruit was not properly stripped and that the only sound method was for the work to be done by officers of the department. A meeting to discuss the whole matter is to be held shortly, at which there will be representatives of growers interested and of the Burnside and Norwood councils, to see whether any system can be agreed upon which would not be less effective than the existing practice.

GRANTS COMMISSION REPORTS.

Mr. FLETCHER—Prior to the war members were always furnished with a copy of the Grants Commission's reports and appreciated the information contained therein. Will the Premier take up with the Grants Commission or the Federal authority responsible for the issue of those reports the question of those reports being again issued to members?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Some years ago these reports were made available to all honourable members, but the practice was discontinued at the direction of the Commonwealth Government. At present six or eight copies of each report are made available to the Parliament Library. At the time the practice was discontinued, some members raised the matter in this House and I forwarded their request to the Commonwealth authorities who, however, said that they were not prepared to make a general issue, but that libraries would be amply supplied with copies. I will again place the matter as a request before the Prime Minister to see if we can get a copy for each member. If honourable members have that and the Auditor-General's report before them they will have material which shows clearly the progress made, particularly in the administration and finances of the State. They are valuable documents and I favour every member having one. Further, I would favour a copy being sent to the Taxpayers' Association, which could then see some of the comments made on the financial accounting of this State—comments which, to say the least, are very eulogistic to officers of the Treasury Department.

FAIRVIEW ESTATE.

Mr. HAWKER—Can the Minister of Lands say whether anything has been done recently about the Fairview Estate and what are the Government's intentions in dealing with this estate?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—That is a rather large area purchased by the State under the Crown Lands Development Act with a view to development and it was later submitted to the

Commonwealth Government as a project for soldier settlement. That Government has asked for a soil survey through the Council of Scientific Industrial Research Organization. That has been made and forwarded to the Commonwealth Government, which at present is considering it, and no doubt in the near future we will receive a reply as to whether it is suitable under the soldier settlement scheme.

WALLAROO FIRST AID ROOM.

Mr. McALEES—Some months ago the Minister of Marine approved the establishment of a first aid post on the Wallaroo jetty, but no move has yet been made to establish it, although the matter is urgent. In the event of an accident on the jetty, where a number of men are working, there is no place in which injured men could be treated. Around the Harbours Board office there is a fair area of ground. I notice that the Harbours Board is beautifying the place by planting lawns, but a first aid room on the jetty is more urgently necessary than a beauty spot. Will the Minister of Works get a report on the matter?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The formal approval of many of these things requires the consent of the Minister, and so far as my consent is necessary I have given it. I will ask that the work be expedited.

UNLEY WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. DUNNAGE—About 18 months ago I approached the Minister of Works on behalf of people in the northern end of Unley who were experiencing considerable trouble in regard to water supplies. In a letter to me the Minister said that as soon as men and materials were available the water mains would be replaced. The trouble is due to the fact that the old water mains have been down for many years and need replacing. This week I received a complaint from the same area about the water supply. Are men and materials now available for the job?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—As the honourable member knows, two questions are involved. One is the amount of water available and the other is the capacity of the older mains to keep pace with the extensions therefrom. It is expected that the main from Hope Valley will afford relief some time during this coming summer. It will be as early as possible as far as we are concerned, depending on the delivery of steel for the purpose. In the meantime I have spoken to the Engineer-in-Chief and his Deputy and asked them to pick out the worst spots in Adelaide which will require atten-

tion, even after the boosting from the big main comes about. I will direct the question about North Unley to them for a specific report.

FIRLE FEEDER BUS SERVICE.

Mr. DUNSTAN—On August 18 I asked the Premier a question about the Firle feeder bus service and he said that the Tramways Trust was examining the request. I also received a letter from the trust saying that it was reviewing the position. Will the Premier now ascertain from the trust when a decision is likely following on the review, as it is now some considerable time since the request was first made?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes. I point out that it is competent for any honourable member in the metropolitan area who desires information on a subject like this to make a request himself to the chairman. Before it was raised here the honourable member by deputation had taken the matter to the trust, which had indicated to him that it would reply as soon as it was able to do so. I will be happy to get a reply for the honourable member, but it would shorten proceedings if some of these minor matters were taken up directly with the trust.

ROSEWORTHY COLLEGE GRADUATES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Can the Minister of Lands tell me how many graduates of the Roseworthy College have been placed on the land, giving the information for five-yearly periods?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—From 1924 to 1929 there were nine, from 1930 to 1935, four, and from 1936 to 1940 there were 17, making 30 in all.

SOUTH-EAST SHIPPING SERVICE.

Mr. CORCORAN—Recently I asked the Premier whether the Government would proceed with the establishment of a deep seat port at Cape Jaffa in view of the fact that the Public Works Committee had furnished an adverse report, and whether alternatively the Premier would consider the renewal of coastal shipping to South-Eastern ports. He said the Government would adhere to the recommendation of the committee, and then gave his personal opinion about the need for a port, but he did not answer the question about coastal shipping. I assumed he wanted time to think the matter over. Has he given it further consideration?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Since the honourable member asked the question I have discussed the matter of coastal shipping with one

of the steamship companies. I find from the information given to me that coastal shipping is having a particularly bad time. At least one valuable ship engaged has been making colossal losses, whilst providing a valuable service. I will take up the matter with the coastal shipping companies to see if they are prepared to reinstate a service to any of the South-Eastern calling places. I think that at present the only places capable of receiving ships are Kingston and perhaps Beachport; I do not think the Robe jetty is good enough. I will see if there is any inducement to a shipping company to call at either of those ports.

BURNING OF STUBBLE.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Minister of Agriculture any further information to give following on the question I asked on September 25 regarding soil conservation and particularly the renewal of the practice of burning stubble?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The Department of Agriculture and the Soil Conservation Branch are vitally concerned with the improvement of fertility in the cereal districts of South Australia. The treatment of cereal stubble has a direct bearing on this matter and officers of the above branches have been active, not merely in discouraging the practice of stubble burning but in trying to make farmers conscious of the value of stubble in protecting the soil surface from the impact of raindrops, and from wind erosion, and in returning organic matter to the soil. A great deal of progress has been made in this direction, but as is frequently seen in any extension work, some farmers are slow to change to the newer idea. It is relevant to state here that the department plans to increase substantially the amount of research work, having as its object the improvement of pastures in the cropping rotation. It can be expected that improvement in soil structure and stability and soil organic matter will result from this work, and the increase in soil nitrogen level will remove one of the disadvantages of incorporating the stubble in the surface soil. This is the temporary reduction in available nitrogen caused when nitrogen-poor residues are broken down by soil micro-organisms. The department will continue to advocate trash cover cultivation methods and other practices which improve or maintain soil fertility from both the chemical and physical standpoints.

HOUSING TRUST RENTALS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Has the Premier a reply to my recent question regarding the averaging of rent system adopted by the Housing Trust?

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

When the rents of the houses of the South Australian Housing Trust were recently altered for the purpose of making adjustments in the rents of its later and more expensive houses, the rents to be charged for imported timber houses were taken into account and have, as a consequence, been fixed at amounts lower than would otherwise be the case.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Has the Premier any further information regarding the question I asked recently about the approximate rents of of trust homes for aged people and pensioners?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have received a report from the Housing Trust dealing with the whole subject and I have already forwarded a copy of the proposed scheme to the Leader of the Opposition. The report states, amongst many other things, that the rents to be charged will, of course, depend on the cost of construction, but the trust expects to be able to let the houses at about £1 a week.

PHOTOGRAPHERS IN PRESS GALLERY.

Mr. McALEES—Mr. Speaker, can you say whether an application was made for press photographers to be in the gallery this afternoon to take a photograph of the Leader of the Opposition while speaking on the Budget, as was the case when the Treasurer delivered his Budget speech?

The SPEAKER—No application was made. Had one been made it would have been agreed to.

BOOKMAKERS' LICENCES.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Has the Premier a reply to my recent question regarding applications for bookmakers' licences from the general public?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The chairman of the Betting Control Board has supplied me with the following report:—

1. The assumption in the question is incorrect. It has been the settled policy of the board since 1945 that vacancies amongst licensed bookmakers not to be filled by promotion should be advertised. Many such advertisements have appeared. The board intends to continue the policy.

2. The policy is necessary and proper to give effect to preference to ex-servicemen.

3. On October 24, 1952, licensed bookmakers were reminded by circular that licences are annual; and were informed that applications

would be called for the following year and that the capacity of every applicant would be examined.

4. By advertisement dated April 22, 1953, applications for bookmakers' licences were invited to fill existing vacancies and any further vacancies which might be declared. Intending applicants were notified by the advertisement that the applications first to be considered would be those by persons holding licences as clerks or agents, and that preference would be given to ex-servicemen.

5. In accordance with the Lottery and Gaming Act each applicant was required to lodge £1 with his application. The fee was not refunded to unsuccessful applicants because to have done so would have been contrary to section 37a of the Act which provides that all fees received by the board shall be retained by the board and applied towards the cost of administration.

PLANT NUTRIENT MIXTURES.

Mr. QUIRKE—In reply to a question on September 15 regarding plant nutrient mixtures the Minister of Agriculture said that they could not to be regulated under the Fertilizers Act or other existing legislation, but that legislation was now in the drafting stage and, if passed, would give power to control these and other similar preparations. Has any progress been made in that regard, and will legislation be introduced?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—No Bill has been prepared, but the matter is being discussed by the Horticultural Branch of the Department of Agriculture and the Parliamentary Draftsman. As soon as the Bill is prepared it will be considered by Cabinet, and, if agreed to, will be introduced this session.

ROYAL VISIT.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The Registrar of the Justices' Association has pointed out to me that there are a large number of honorary justices in country districts who render a free service to the community and that many of them will be in Adelaide during the Royal Visit. He asked whether an area could be made available for them as for members of other organizations? Will this request be considered?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I presume every organization would like to have an area set aside for it to view the Royal progress. Special consideration has been given to some organizations where it was warranted. I point out that the plans for the Government reception have been materially altered from what was adopted for the proposed visit by Her Majesty when she was Princess Elizabeth. It was then proposed for the reception to be held

in the National Gallery, which would have limited the numbers to about 1,000, but the Government now plans to hold the reception upon the Wayville showgrounds oval, which will enable about 30,000 to attend. Invitations to that reception will be issued largely through local government authorities fairly and according to the population in each area. Councils will be requested to make those invitations available to suitable residents prepared to attend. It is hoped that a large number of people from all districts will be able to be there. I will examine the honourable member's proposal regarding the Justices' Association, because I greatly appreciate the value of the work done by justices. It is entirely an unpaid service and one which sometimes brings them criticism, but nevertheless it is necessary for law and order to be observed.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Recently I asked the Premier whether a method had been considered of issuing invitations to people residing outside local government areas. Has any scheme been devised?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—That question is being pursued with a view to enabling a fair distribution to be made to all areas throughout the State.

TRAMWAYS TRUST APPEAL BOARD.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Proposals have been mooted for several years for the establishment of an appeal board to which employees of the Municipal Tramways Trust could appeal against penalties inflicted. The South Australian Railways is a public transport undertaking similar to the trust, and its employees have a board to which they can appeal. Tramway employees believe they should be on the same footing as those in the railways. Has their request been considered, or is it proposed to introduce the necessary legislation this session?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have no recollection of this matter every coming before me, but it may have gone to the Minister of Works, who normally handles tramway matters. He will discuss the question with the trust to ascertain its views.

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Prices Act, 1948-1952. Read a first time.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (GOVERNOR'S ALLOWANCE).

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House the appropriation of such amounts of the general revenue of the State as were required for the purposes mentioned in the Constitution Act Amendment Bill' (No. 3).

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1934-1951.

Motion carried.

Resolution agreed to in Committee and adopted by the House. Bill introduced and read a first time.

PARLIAMENTARY SUPERANNUATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

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

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer) moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Parliamentary Superannuation Act, 1948-1949.

Motion carried.

Resolution agreed to in Committee and adopted by the House.

PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Public Service Act, 1936-1952. Read a first time.

OFFENDERS PROBATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

PRISONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Committee's report adopted.

BUDGET DEBATE.

In Committee of Supply.

(Continued from October 1. Page 871.)

Legislative Council, £8,747.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I preface my remarks on the Budget by referring to the fact that this is the 15th Budget presented by the Premier. This Budget was presented with some flourish of photography so that the Premier's photograph might appear in the organs of public opinion. I do not complain about the absence of cameras from the gallery today, for I realize that cameras are expensive things to replace and I cannot blame the photographers for refusing to risk their equipment on a subject such as I. While the Premier is to be congratulated on his achievement, which is an all-time record, it must be remembered that conditions for which the Liberal and Country League is responsible have made that achievement possible. If there had been anything like a democratic electoral system in this State, the Premier would have delivered his last Budget in 1943; for in 1944 there was a strong swing to Labor throughout Australia, resulting in the return of Labor Governments everywhere except in South Australia. At each election in this State since that time that trend has continued and it was particularly noticeable at the election of March this year.

As to the Budget itself, I want first of all to refer to statements made in the press, following its presentation last Thursday, namely the leading articles in the *Advertiser* of October 2 and the *Mail* of October 3. The *Advertiser* article contained this statement:—

The South Australian Treasurer and his officers do not rely on guesswork. Their estimates have a high degree of precision relatively to the total involved.

Any criticism I make this afternoon in regard to the peculiar article in the *Advertiser* is not directed against Treasury officials or any of the officers who assist in compiling the Budget, but against the practice which has grown in this State in recent years, which I do not think is as the *Advertiser* would have the public believe. I join with the Treasurer in his encomiums of Treasury officers for the way State accounts are kept, and I compliment them on the way they are presented to Parliament. It may be asserted that the Treasurers and officers of other States do not rely on guesswork either. The procedure followed in compiling the Estimates is much the same everywhere. Returns are forwarded

by each department and on these the probable total revenue and expenditure are "estimated." No doubt the Premier's financial policy makes the Treasury officials' task more difficult than it would otherwise be. The article continued:—

Expenditure for the current year, set down at £51,350,000, provides for a modest surplus of £10,000, and these figures, if recent experience is any guide, represent something more than an approximation. Last year, it is true, when expenditure amounted to £49,076,490, the estimated surplus was doubled, but even so fell short of £25,000. If all goes well this year, we may fairly expect that the error, if any, will again be on the right side.

I suggest this betrays not only an ignorance of the actual position but also a prejudiced disposition to approve of whatever the Government does. The estimated surplus for 1952-53 was £12,000, but the actual surplus was £1,200,000. Of the latter amount, £1,175,000 was hurriedly appropriated before the end of the financial year, contrary to the provision of section 30 of the Public Finance Act, which provides for the application of surpluses to the reduction of the public debt. I raised this question previously and whilst I do not disagree with the practice of failing to appropriate surpluses for reducing the public debt, in view of the implications of the Financial Agreement, and the provision made for the amortization of State debts over periods, if we continually ignore section 30 of the Public Finance Act we should consider repealing it, although it might be wiser to retain it to enable us to meet future adverse circumstances. I can remember the time when we ran into a period of bad seasons, and no doubt we will run into them again. We then had an accumulation of deficits and that will probably occur again. The article also said:—

If uniform taxation could be abolished and our financial independence restored, South Australia would proclaim its flourishing condition and its essential sanity and solvency by being a State less burdened with taxation than most of its neighbours.

This is an idea which the Premier has again emphasized in his Budget speech; but it would have been much more satisfactory to members if he had indicated how income tax rates would be lower under State taxation. In view of the fact that the Commonwealth and four States are in agreement as to the restoration of the States' taxing powers, it is rather remarkable that no progress has been made in this direction. Why are we told in each succeeding year of the wonderful benefits that would accrue to South Australia if it were done? I suggest

that the Premier speaks with his tongue in his cheek and relies on the *Advertiser* to broadcast to the people that they are statements of fact, whereas it is pure conjecture. No-one knows what would be a reasonable apportionment of the income tax field as between the Commonwealth and States. No-one can say what would be the position of the South Australian income taxpayer if our taxing powers were restored to us. No-one knows which taxing field the Commonwealth would desire to exploit and which field it would allow the States to handle. If uniform taxation is abolished we will be in a worse position than we are today, instead of being, as suggested in the *Advertiser* article, the envy of the people in other States. Uniform taxation has the advantage of providing for all Australians on the same income paying the same taxation irrespective of where they live in Australia. If there is any complaint against the system it is the method of distribution and not the method of collection. It is more a question of criticism of the Commonwealth than the State.

Before uniform taxation this State Government's socialistic policy had not been formulated. During the last ten years the scope of State enterprise has been enormously increased so that it is almost impossible to make any comparison as to the rates of tax levied before uniform taxation and those which would now have to be levied. We have had an anti-socialist Government, supported by a bunch of violent anti-socialists if one is to believe their remarks on the hustings and in this House, but year after year socialistic principles are applied to all kinds of activities in this State. I think they are being justifiably applied because it is becoming more and more realized that we are a community, and that to develop it, and maintain the highest possible standard of living, there must be something in the way of a full community effort rather than an individual or private effort.

The position has been further obscured by the fact that social services have in the meantime been handed over to the Commonwealth. I remind members that when we enjoyed the doubtful benefit of collecting our own income tax, and we earned the not very enviable distinction of being the highest taxed State, the Commonwealth Constitution had not been amended to place on the Commonwealth Government the full responsibility for providing social services. The many types of service which have been established since the amendment of the Constitution would have been met from State revenue in the normal course of events, and if

we had retained income taxing powers. These matters have been transferred by vote of the people to the Commonwealth and it is logical to assume that in determining the portion of the income tax field the Commonwealth will allow the State to exploit the Commonwealth will have a full realization of its responsibilities in regard to social services. It would appear that the Premier expects to receive disability grants from the Commonwealth even when taxing powers are restored, and, if so, the financial position of the State would not be materially different from what it is now. If we are the most prosperous State, as the Premier said, and the envy of the people in the other States, as mentioned in the *Advertiser* leading article, how can we justify the continuance of disability grants from the Commonwealth? The leading article in the *Mail* of October 3 stated:—

The Premier got right way from political expediency in his Budget this week. The expedient thing, especially with Federal elections in the offing, would have been to throw in accumulated Budget surpluses to create a superb low in State taxes and a great high in public spending. That is the convenient way for Governments to try to catch public support—temporarily. But Mr. Playford did not do that, confident in the public support his administration, based on his previous 14 Budgets had brought him, and in the way the State electoral system favours his Party.

I reiterate what I said in my opening remarks that the Treasurer would not have delivered his fifteenth Budget if the electoral system did not "favour his Party." The relatively slight

significance of State taxation in the Budget is demonstrated by an analysis of the total revenue which the Government expects to receive this year, namely:—

	£
State taxation	5,900,000
Fees for services	1,500,000
Revenue, public utilities	20,600,000
Sundry receipts	4,400,000
Commonwealth grants	19,000,000

Total £51,400,000

The two biggest items are revenue from public utilities and Commonwealth grants. State taxation represents only about 11½ per cent of the total. If there had been any scope for "political expediency," no doubt the Treasurer would have exploited it, but the figures show that no scope existed for the use of this very canny and perhaps popular method of finance. In its leader the *Mail* went on to say:—

He brought in a Budget of well-calculated conservatism which will provide a small surplus and leave the big sums accumulated from previous surpluses still in the Treasury.

This presumably is the *Mail's* way of saying that unexpended and unexpected surpluses are carried forward from year to year. Let us look at the figures for the last three financial years, because they emphasize the point I made earlier that the surpluses are not the carefully calculated and meticulously considered small amounts suggested in the *Advertiser* leading article. The following are the figures for the last three financial years to the nearest £1,000:—

		Actual Result.		
Year.	Budget Est. £	Declared Surplus. £	Supplementary Appropriation. £	Total Surplus. £
1950-51	10,000 (deficit)	230,000	287,000	517,000
1951-52	15,000 (surplus)	89,000	370,000	459,000
1952-53	12,000 (surplus)	25,000	1,176,000	1,201,000
Totals	£17,000 (surplus)	£344,000	£1,833,000	£2,177,000

These figures incidentally emphasize the inaccuracy of the Budget Estimates. I shall say a few words about the Supplementary Estimates which are voted at the very end of each financial year. Although the expenditure is shown in the accounts for that financial year the money cannot possibly be spent in that year. It is carried forward, but not as *The Mail* says as a nest egg against future bad times, but into the accounts for expenditure in the ensuing financial year. Instead of having these nest eggs in the Treasury to be available at a convenient occasion when they are required to ease our financial ills they are

expended year by year on works provided for in the Revenue Estimates. In its leader *The Mail* went on to say:—

Some people, certainly, would fairly urge a greater disbursement on extension of public services that are lagging behind South Australia's growth—such as hospitals, roads, water supply and sewerage.

I think it was very modest in that remark. There is hardly a place in the State where some urgent expenditure is not required on one or other of these matters. If we had given them fuller consideration when considering the Budget for the last financial year. a surplus of more than £1,200,000 would

not have resulted. I am wondering whether we are giving sufficiently full consideration to these matters in this Budget and making sufficient provision for extensions of hospital services both in the country and the metropolitan area. This afternoon the member for Glenelg asked a question regarding the dearth of hospital accommodation in the very important part of the metropolitan area he and other members represent. We have heard other requests from other parts of the metropolitan area for similar assistance. The question more particularly demanding attention is country hospital services. We have Government hospitals in certain towns and Government subsidized hospitals in others, and here and there a private hospital, very few of which remain. Then there are a number of community hospitals maintained entirely by the communities they serve. It is very hard to convince an isolated country community which for years has been bearing the full cost of hospital services either by fees, collections or charitable efforts that it should continue to do so when not very far away are other hospitals which either receive considerable Government subsidies or are maintained almost entirely by the Government. This question of hospital services will have to be considered and tidied up sooner or later on the basis that it is just as much the responsibility of the State to provide adequate hospital accommodation, or the opportunity to receive adequate hospital treatment, in the most isolated parts of the State as in the more populous parts at little or no additional cost. I believe that if we tackle this question with the right will we can provide better hospital services than are available today. By a proper spacing of these hospitals we could make available immeasurably better medical and surgical attention than now applies in many centres. In saying that I am not criticizing the medical profession, but the fact is that in many areas there is not sufficient practice to attract the requisite number of doctors, whereas if we had a proper system of hospital services on the lines I have suggested, with hospitals of sufficient size, specialists would be attracted, and then their skill would be available to country people, who now have to come to the metropolitan area. I realize that associated with this policy there must be some form of local treatment available for urgent cases, and above all there would have to be an adequate and readily-available ambulance service. During the ensuing 12 months before we are asked to consider another

Budget the Government might give very serious consideration to that question with a view to seeing whether it can completely re-organize our hospital system.

I will deal briefly with certain aspects of education which are covered in the Estimates, and particularly the fact that apparently we are placing an increasing burden on school committees. They are doing a marvellous job, but apparently the only recognition they receive from the Government is to have more work, expense, and responsibility thrust upon them. I have never complained about school committees being asked to supply amenities on a subsidy basis, but I object strongly when they are expected to provide half the cost of capital improvements. Many students ride bicycles to school. They are valuable, and quickly deteriorate, particularly the tyres and tubes, when left standing in the weather. Some school committees have taken steps to provide shelter sheds, but found they were expected to contribute half the cost.

Mr. John Clark—Often they have to pay the lot.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I am only mentioning the cases put to me. Apparently the people with whom I am concerned have been luckier than others, but that only makes my case stronger. About 90 children ride bicycles to the Peterborough high school. The school council is planning the erection of a shed on a subsidy principle to house the bicycles. I do not know what this will cost the council, but being big-hearted citizens they are prepared to accept this responsibility on top of others, such as the provision of a cinematograph, tape-recorders, and other items for the school. Compare their position with that of other committees of consolidated schools, where all the children are brought to school by bus. In these cases the parents do not have to bear the cost of providing their children with a bicycle nor half the cost of erecting a shed, and naturally, they are at an advantage. I know of some children that ride bicycles 12 miles in going to and returning from school to acquire a secondary education.

The points I have mentioned should be considered when framing next year's Budget so that we shall not have to consider how we have run up a big surplus at the end of the financial year and dispose of it by passing Supplementary Estimates in the last two or three days. The *Mail* continued:—

But while differing about the degree of spending, they will commend a policy of keeping a reserve against hard times, when the ability

to maintain public works and to take up slack in employment will be very valuable. Mr. Playford's warning against complacency about the run of good seasons and the high prices for primary produce, to which Australia owes so much of its prosperity, was itself a justification of his policy.

The surpluses have not been accumulated as a reserve against bad times, but have been taken into revenue account and spent as opportunity presented itself during the financial year. That shows that most of the press propaganda, which was necessary to make the Budget acceptable to the people, was based on entirely false premises. The Treasurer referred to the public debt, and said that the rate of interest had been pegged as a result of the firmness of the Loan Council. The public debt is an important feature of the Budget, for it is one of the financial factors building up our Budget year by year, until eventually we may reach a stage about which the Treasurer dropped a gentle warning. Not many years ago the total of the Budget was under £10,000,000, but it is now over £51,000,000. The public debt has soared correspondingly. By June it had reached £195,000,000, and about £27,000,000 will be added to it this year. They are big figures in anyone's language and warrant the serious consideration of this Committee to avoid a financial catastrophe such as descended upon us in the early 1930's. Interest and other charges in connection with loans have increased considerably. In 1947-48 they amounted to £5,194,000, and last year to £7,051,000, an increase of about £2,000,000 in five years. The taxpayers have to meet these huge commitments before meeting the cost of services provided by the State.

Of course, the recent increases in the interest rate will further increase the interest Bill. Mr. Chifley, when Federal Treasurer, visualized the possibility of stabilizing the interest rate on Government borrowings in Australia at 3½ per cent. He succeeded, for every public loan floated during his term of office was over-subscribed. Then a change of Government took place, and a change in policy followed. Investors were encouraged to refrain from subscribing to public loans because another loan would be floated soon after at a higher rate of interest. What happened? Between 1949 and 1953 the interest rate increased from 3½ per cent to 4½. Why didn't the Loan Council take a firm stand in 1949? The interest rate increases imposed a tremendous impact upon the Budget of every State, but the impact did not end there. As the public loan rate advanced so the private loan rate rose and every person

—and there are more than most people realize—that depended on borrowing money was severely penalized. Traders have to borrow money to pay for stock, particularly those in country districts. Many people have to borrow in order to purchase a home. All these people were adversely affected by the increase in interest rates. Further, many patriotic people subscribed to Government loans when Mr. Chifley was Federal Treasurer. They realized that money was needed for the defence of this country, but knew they would need their savings later. The increase in interest rates resulted in the value of their bonds being depreciated, in some instances by as much as 14 per cent. Those who had to sell their bonds were severely hit. The firm stand of the Loan Council was taken too late, after tremendous harm had been done to the economic structure of the country and many worthy citizens. About £20,000,000 was added to the public debt in the eight years from 1942-43 to 1949-50, the total then being £130,000,000. In the three years since then £65,000,000 has been added, thus increasing the total by 50 per cent. That increase was caused by the inflationary trend for which the present Federal Liberal and Country Party Government was largely responsible by the removal of controls imposed by the Chifley Government.

Mr. Brookman—Which controls?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Capital issue and price controls which would have been maintained had the advice of the Labor Party been heeded. Many of those controls, such as capital issue and import controls which were removed by the Menzies Government, had to be restored by it in a panic when it found the harm it had done to the country's economy. Formerly, it was the policy of the Liberal and Country Party to insist that money borrowed for public purposes should be spent only on works the revenue for which would cover interest and sinking fund, but apparently there has been some shift in the Party's policy in that regard, and today it seems to be no longer concerned with whether such works will be permanent or reproductive. In bygone years the Labor Party urged conservative Liberal Governments to adopt a proper attitude so that the State might be developed, but its urgings fell on deaf ears. Fortunately, things have changed on the financial side, but let us see what the result is. The bulk of public expenditure in country districts results in the enhancement in land values, and that land, especially that inside Goyder's line of rainfall where most of the money will be spent, is firmly held, so that the

result of this expenditure will be to add to the value of privately owned land. That increased value will subsequently show in the market price at which it is sold. A sounder policy would be, when spending money on public works such as railways and water supplies, to finance them from Loan moneys rather than make the Budget bear the whole of the responsibility. We could apply some portion of the charge to the land which is developed as the result of such works. Some day that policy will have to be adopted for it will be forced on us by sheer economic necessity.

The Estimates provide for £3,659,000 to be spent on the development of State resources. This expenditure on the Lands, Agriculture, Highways and Mines Departments is essentially socialistic, and most of it is for the benefit of individuals without a guarantee that they will render a proportionate service to the community. This is one-way Socialism. Members should consider the question of Public Service salaries and wages. In this and the last Budget certain public servants have been singled out for favours, a practice which is not necessarily in the best interests of the State. I am not complaining about the salary increases given to those public servants for I believe they are all rendering extremely efficient service to the State and are entitled to the higher emolument they are about to receive, but I object to the selectivity of the method used. Why should a few in the higher salary ranges be chosen for increases while the great majority who have been seeking a reclassification for over 12 months are fobbed off with the excuse that the Public Service Board must wait on some other tribunal before making a decision? The Treasurer might devote some attention to seeing that justice is immediately done to the many public servants in the lower salary ranges, who, because they are much closer to the breadline than those in the higher ranges, are entitled in that respect at least, to greater consideration than those in the higher ranges. Several highly paid public servants have more than one job. The Under-Treasurer is also chairman of the Electricity Trust, for which he receives an additional £750 per annum, and a member of the State Bank Board, for which he receives an additional £350 per annum. His salary as Under-Treasurer is £2,670, but the total he receives is £3,770.

Mr. Law—More than the Treasurer.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes.

Mr. Brookman—It is fully earned.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I believe it is and that the gentleman concerned is an excellent

officer, but we should look at these additional duties which are superimposed on excellent officers. I sometimes suspect that the purpose of this may be to avoid increasing the salaries attached to their main jobs. After all, £1,100 is a fairly large increase on a salary provided for such an important job as that of the Under Treasurer. Further, in the past, by imposing too great a strain on excellent public servants by giving them duties in addition to their departmental duties, we have killed good men. The Under Treasurer should receive a salary commensurate with his duties as Under Treasurer, but he should not be expected to be the chairman of this board and a member of that board merely to build up his salary, and the same applies to some other public servants. One remarkable illustration is that of the Local Court Judge, who is also Retiring Officer for the State, for which he receives £75 per annum. I wonder why he is bothered with that position at all.

Mr. Pattinson—We are the most parsimonious State in the Commonwealth without a doubt.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, in some respects. We are certainly the most parsimonious with regard to Parliamentary salaries. It is proposed in these Estimates to grant increases to certain senior public servants and, by legislation that has been foreshadowed, it is proposed to increase the salaries of certain public servants whose salaries must be determined by Parliament. I do not begrudge those officers their salary increases, for they are excellent public servants and are entitled to them, but I must say something on behalf of members of Parliament, for I believe it is time somebody spoke on their behalf, especially of those members who devote all their time to their Parliamentary duties—and many members do just that. Parliamentary salaries were last determined in August, 1951, by Mr. (now Sir) Edward Morgan who fixed a base rate of £1,150 a year, which was accepted by Parliament. Since then, because of the inflationary trend, all round increases have had to be and are being granted in this Budget to public servants generally, and such increases have been also granted to people employed in outside industry in accordance with the automatic adjustment of the living wage which operated until suspended recently by the Arbitration Court. If £1,150 was a fair salary in 1951, then at least £1,400 is a fair salary today. The increase in responsibilities of this Parliament due to the increase in socialistic

activities controlled by it has been recognized by the Government, which recently introduced legislation to create two additional portfolios. Those additional activities and the growing population of the State add to the work of the private member the same as they do to that of the Ministers, and most private members today work far more than 40 hours a week. They do not have week-ends off and very often their efforts must be supplemented by those of their wives who take phone calls at home, make appointments for them, and deal with matters which constituents bring to their homes while they are absent. I suggest that it is time the Government reviewed members' salaries.

I can see no good reason for continuing the practice of making bookkeeping transfers, as in the case of the railways. In recent years we have made transfers in revenue accounts of millions of pounds to the railways, and we are supposed to get it back in railway revenue. This tends to disguise the true position and adds to the confusion in the minds of the public in regard to State accounts.

Then there is the difficulty with the Tramways Trust. Last year we passed legislation creating a new trust, but after it was appointed we found that we had got back most of the old trust, only in a new form. We provided for annual grants totalling £1,180,000 in five years. Last year we advanced £700,000, and this year the amount is £600,000, making a total of £1,300,000 in two years. We are told that two experts from America are to investigate the possibilities of reorganizing the operations of the trust, and it will cost millions of pounds. I am not a traffic expert, but from what I saw in other countries I am convinced that except in special circumstances trams are on the way out. If we are to have an examination of our transport system that aspect of the matter should be considered. We need to place the trust under a Minister responsible to Parliament, and until that is done the interests of the taxpayers will not be safeguarded. There is a proposal—and when a proposal comes from the Government it becomes operative—to increase harbour charges. As these have not been increased appreciably since 1930, no objection can be taken to their being increased now, but they might have been increased sooner as losses have been incurred during the last two years. Members know that the prices of practically all export products, which form the principal source of revenue for the Harbours Board, have been at high levels for some time, and if we had increased harbour charges when the finances of the

board first went astray we would have avoided the magnitude of the proposed increases. It is estimated that the additional revenue from this source for 1953-54 will be £155,000, and for a full year £400,000. I find this difficult to understand. Are the new charges to operate for less than six months during 1953-54, or what other reason is there for the disproportionately small increase this year? If in a full year the additional charges will realize £400,000, in a half-year they should realize £200,000, and I would like to know why it is to be only £155,000.

In regard to motor taxation the increases, which have not yet been specified, will produce an additional £650,000 revenue for a part of this year, and £1,100,000 for a full year. In discussing this matter one is hampered by the fact that one does not know the type of motor vehicle which will carry the burden of the increased tax, or how the increases are to be spread over the different types of vehicles. The total revenue from motor taxation last year was £1,550,000, so that the proposed increase for a full year will be roughly 70 per cent. This is a steep increase and it is one that will take much justification, even although the Premier has assured us on more than one occasion that all the additional revenue will be spent on roads. It is time we had a careful look at this matter of motor taxation. I understand that the Commonwealth collects £25,600,000 from motor users in various forms of tax, and returns £15,100,000 to the States for road purposes, in accordance with a formula worked out so that there will be a somewhat higher return for the sparsely settled States like Queensland and Western Australia and a lower return for a thickly populated State like Victoria. South Australia's share is £1,675,000. I suggest that it is time for the State Treasurers to take a firm stand with the Commonwealth in this matter. The motor vehicle is no longer regarded as a luxury; it has become a necessity. I see no reason why it should be singled out for special taxation, except to provide better roads. An amount of £10,000,000 is taken from the motoring public by the Commonwealth and not used to provide roads.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—It is not only the motoring public, but aeroplanes, stationary engines, etc. Aeroplanes provide a lot.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, but there must be a considerable amount not used for road purposes.

Mr. Hawker—Are you referring to the petrol tax or do you include import duties?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—My figure includes the import duties on chassis, parts, etc. It covers the whole of the tax imposed on motor vehicles, petrol included. If what I suggest were done South Australia would get about £1,000,000 more, and we are entitled to it. Then there is the carry-over of money from year to year. There is a history attached to this matter. When Supplementary Estimates are passed in the dying hours of a financial year it results in the money being carried over into the next year. In the Supplementary Estimates passed on June 25 this year £500,000 was provided for the roads fund. Obviously it could not be spent because the year ended practically as the money was voted, so it went into the fund for this year. An amount of £1,675,000 is available from the petrol tax, and £2,200,000 from motor tax (with the increase added), so we have £4,375,000, including the carry-over of £500,000, available for road purposes. I do not think that is too much, and it may be found to be not enough. We should have a look at our highways policy generally. I am perhaps old-fashioned, but I prefer to stick to a method until it is proved to me that it is wrong. It is all right to have perfectly constructed highways and new bridges superseding old bridges. Whenever I go through Clare I see the new bridge erected at Penwortham, but the old bridge was a fairly substantial structure.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—It was not safe.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I think it could have been supported and made safe. The new bridge is a lovely structure, but although it is a beautiful piece of engineering, the £45,000 would have been better spent on our back roads.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—I do not disagree with the honourable member's broad statement, but the bridge he has mentioned was unsafe by engineering standards.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Surely that would depend on the weight of the load; however, this is not the time to discuss that matter. I have recently seen the reconstruction work carried out on the Spalding-Jamestown road, where there has been a good solid metal road for as long as I can remember; although it was rough one would not be bogged on it. The old three chain road was constructed on the highest part and fairly adjacent to the fence, leaving ample space for travelling stock, which was a useful provision because of the great deal of stock which travels along that

route. The old road, however, has been abandoned and a new road constructed in the centre. Although this may be good highway practice I think it would have been better to have sealed the old road with bitumen, when probably it would have lasted for another 50 years, by which time, perhaps, more money would be available.

Whilst in America I saw some magnificent highways which were being constructed out of Federal funds, some of which were to be toll roads, but I also saw a large number of roads, some of which had been in existence since the time of George III, and all that had been done to them was to tidy them up a little and bituminize their surfaces. These roads are doing an excellent job indeed for the type of traffic they are called on to handle. That is something we should consider, particularly when we have our new Minister of Roads, who will solve all these problems.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—He will if he gets the funds.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I am casting some doubts on whether, in the prevailing circumstances, the funds available are being spent in the best way, and I am not reflecting on the efficiency of the engineers. When I was on the land there were many times when I would have liked to buy, say, a couple of dozen new bolts for repairs, but was forced to acquire some old rubbish at auction sales and pick the bolts out of that; in other words, I had to improvise, and in a like manner I think that should be our policy of road expenditure.

While on this subject I would point out to the Minister that the question raised by the deputation which waited on him last year is becoming increasingly important, namely, attention to the Broken Hill highway. I take off my hat to the small maintenance gang, and the district councils *en route*, who are doing a very good job in keeping the floating surface in as good condition as possible, but the ratio of traffic has grown so enormously, and is continuing to grow, that immediate attention is imperative. Not only is the number of cars in Broken Hill increasing, but the population and road traffic in our own town of Radium Hill is growing very quickly. Therefore, we might make a start with the sealing of that road. I notice that Mr. Downer, in the Federal Parliament, had something to say about it and I commend his suggestion. Our Government might well take up the question with the Commonwealth Government to see whether it could

not be included in the programme of development of our uranium resources. If we cannot seal the whole of the road I appeal to the Minister to accede at least to the request of the people of Mannahill and other towns that the main streets should be sealed to minimize the dust nuisance, for that is a serious aspect of the problem. With the thousands of cars going through at holiday periods, and the almost continuous traffic at all times, and of course due to the naturally dry conditions, the dust nuisance on these lightly constructed roads is terrific.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—We hope to do that.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Now I want to say a few words on soil conservation, because I am not happy about our present methods. I note that the number of officers in the Soil Conservation branch is 10 and that provision is made in this year's Estimates for 13. That number is quite inadequate, for I do not think that 13 officers will be anywhere near sufficient to carry out this important work in a proper manner. As soil conservation districts are very important in the scheme of conservation let us see how many we have. Boards have been established in the Murray Mallee, Murray Plains, Upper Eyre Peninsula and Yorke Peninsula and one will shortly be set up in West Broughton. The Murray Plains board has set up three local committees, the Murray Valley board expects to set up five and the Yorke Peninsula at present is considering two, and these local committees are very important features of the scheme. Altogether soil conservation districts cover about 11,900 square miles. Of the vast area of South Australia—and nearly every acre of ground in this State is subject to erosion of some kind—only 11,900 square miles are under the control of boards, and 13 officers are expected to carry out the huge task of adequately protecting our soils.

Whilst in America I had an opportunity to examine this question, and here I want to say how much I appreciate the Government's courtesy in arranging an opportunity for me to visit America in order to examine this question. From what I had read I thought that conditions there were the nearest to our own that could be found, and my visit substantiated this view. Down through the years land holders in United States of America had been guilty of the same mistakes that ours committed, and for the inspections I made and the information I secured I want to thank the Federal Department of Agriculture and Dr. Gordon Kearns of the Maryland University, and the many field officers and foremen whom

I met in the course of my inspections. They were most co-operative and could not do enough in supplying me with information, or in affording me opportunities to see for myself what had been done in the way of soil conservation in the States of Maryland and Virginia. The very basis of their scheme is the district committee. The Federal Government assists very materially by providing finance and technical knowledge. This is passed down through the States, mainly through State universities and some of the county boards to the district committees. They do the work of organizing farmers and getting them to agree to what is called co-operative conservation farming methods, and the progress that has been made is amazing in view of the short time these organizations have been functioning. Although desultory attempts at soil conservation were made from about 1800, and considerable results accrued therefrom, the Civil War disrupted everything and nothing much more was done until the thirties of this century.

The first Federal attempt was the creation of a Soil Conservation Branch in the Department of Interior in 1933. Subsequently the question was handed over to the Department of Agriculture, funds were provided, and thus the organization was a last put on a very firm basis. Since then each State in the Union has adopted soil conservation measures and, speaking from memory, I think there are over 8,000 soil conservation districts in United States of America. They control 23 per cent of the total land area. The basis they started to work on was that they realized that the small farmer had to be saved. The total area of United States of America is 2,000,000,000 acres. About 500,000,000 acres are taken up by cities highways, railways and so forth and by the vast amount of peaks and ranges which are unsuitable for productive purposes. This leaves about 1,500,000,000 acres available for settlement in the shape of farms and ranches. On that there are 28,000,000 people deriving a living on 6,000,000 farms, of an average size of 250 acres. When the Federal Soil Conservation Organization first began its activities it was found that more than one-third of this land had been seriously affected by erosion in various forms.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Is it not mostly water erosion in United States of America?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—In the areas I visited, yes. Nothing can be done to counteract wind erosion except judicious stocking. Once such country is overstocked trouble must be

expected. The following is the finding of the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture:—

Erosion has severely damaged about 280,000,000 acres of the crop and grazing land in the United States; 280,000,000 acres is equal to the combined areas of Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Wyoming. And another 775,000,000 acres of our crop, grazing, and forest land has eroded to some extent. We now have left about 460,000,000 acres of good land that is suitable for crops. This includes, besides land now in crops, about 85,000,000 acres that need clearing, draining, irrigating, or other improvements to make them productive. That's all we have left; we can't discover or create any more. And all but about 95,000,000 of this 460,000,000 acres is subject to erosion if it is not protected.

I previously said that about one-third of the country had been seriously affected. The position is that two-thirds was affected to some extent, and only one-third is not affected. In America they have a vast organization—Federal, State, county and local. Apparently that country has become soil erosion conscious. The districts are working to a pattern.

Mr. Quirke—What is the authority?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The district committee. No difficulty has been experienced in implementing the decisions of district committees because they are representative of the farmers in the area, being presided over by a chairman elected by themselves, who is also the district supervisor and works in collaboration with the experts from the university or the Federal Department. We should aim at establishing the same system here. I pay tribute to our Soil Conservation officers. So far as I could find the methods they are adopting are exactly the same as those which have proved successful in America. All that is necessary is to provide the necessary staff to create enthusiasm and to carry out the educational work necessary to keep our people similarly conscious. I hope that the Minister of Agriculture will make a strong effort in the next 12 months to attract the right type of men to this department so that the personnel can be built up to carry out this most important work. Not only does our future sustenance depend upon it, but our capacity to carry a greater population, which is essential if we are to hold this land for the white races. Our capacity to carry the population is dependent entirely on the protection of the soil of this State from the ravages of soil erosion.

I shall now refer to the Peterborough and Terowie water supply. In July, 1947, the Public Works Committee published a report

on its investigations into the proposal to provide a water supply for Jamestown, Caltowie, Terowie, and Peterborough, and its findings included the following:—

1. That it is practicable to provide a water supply from the Morgan-Whyalla trunk main at a point near Spalding to the towns of Jamestown and Caltowie, and to intervening country lands.

2. That it is also practicable to make such a scheme of sufficient size to enable extensions to be laid to the towns of Yongala, Terowie, and Peterborough, should no other sources of good water be found adequate either to meet the requirements of those towns in full or to provide, in conjunction with existing supplies, a satisfactory potable water of not higher salinity than 60 grains per gallon.

3. That it is desirable that the abovementioned towns and country lands should have a permanent supply of water of good quality, on the following grounds:—

(a) Assurance of production at the highest possible level:

(b) Provision of amenities for country people as nearly as possible equal to those obtaining in the metropolitan area:

(c) Encouragement of decentralization, the establishment of industries being dependent on adequate supplies of good water:

(d) Retention in country towns of the local population after retirement from active participation in farming and other local pursuits.

4. That, if any of the towns concerned are to be sewered (and towns of the size of Peterborough and Jamestown qualify for such a service), they must have a permanent supply of reticulated water before that can be done.

5. That the evidence obtained by the committee in its latest tour of the districts indicates that the residents are preponderantly in favour of a reticulation scheme.

I urge that provision be made in the Loan Estimates next year for the continuation of the scheme from Jamestown to Peterborough and Terowie. I understand it will be about 12 months before the present work is completed and while the organization is in the district the extension should be made. If the committee could visit the district now and conduct another investigation it would be amazed at the change in circumstances which has taken place since its last visit. The following is also included in the committee's findings:—

The committee finds that the Railways Department is involved in considerable expense in hauling water and pumping and treating well water when its reservoirs fail, the average annual cost being in the vicinity of £2,600. A reasonable estimate of what the average annual expenditure may be in the future, with increasing coal and ore traffic, is £4,000. That, if River Murray water were available at points where the expense is now incurred, at one and a half times the standard price

for excess water, the Railways Department would be saved at least £2,000 a year. That, if provision were made, under scheme H, to supply the quantity of water required by the railways, the estimated annual loss would be increased by £821 to £20,046, but, as a result of the saving to the Railways Department, the actual loss to the State would be approximately £18,400.

For the 12 months ended June, 1952, the cost to the Railways Department of carting water from Burra to Terowie, including the cost of the water, was £22,331 and for the year ended June 30, 1953, it was £22,171. There was also considerable cost involved in carting water from Jamestown and Gladstone to Peterborough, but I have been unable to obtain this figure. In those two years more than £45,000 was spent in carting water to those two railway depots, and in addition there was inconvenience to the people at Peterborough and Terowie in having no proper water scheme. At Peterborough the water available contains about 110 grains to the gallon, which is 50

grains more than is considered by the experts as suitable for domestic services. If this question is examined from the standpoint of railway economics alone it will be found that the saving to the Railways Department from the supply of Murray water will counterbalance any losses on the scheme. That is the kind of thing we should consider when examining the projects on which Loan funds can be expended during the next financial year. I hope that the bad time the Treasurer forecast might come will not come too soon, and that in the meantime this Parliament will have adopted some of the suggestions I have made this afternoon so that the State may be better fitted to resist its onslaught.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.58 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, October 13, at 2 p.m.