

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, October 15, 1953.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2).

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 all the purposes mentioned in the Appropriation Bill (No. 2).

QUESTIONS.

WATER TANKS FOR TRUST HOMES.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Will the Premier ascertain from the Housing Trust how soon it can satisfy the tenants who have been promised rain water tanks, some of the orders for which I believe, have been outstanding for several years, and whether it is the policy to supply tanks as was suggested originally?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes.

POLICE REPORTS OF ROAD ACCIDENTS.

Mr. TRAVERS—On Tuesday last the Commissioner of Police was called as a witness in the Local Court of Adelaide, and was asked to produce the police report of a road accident. He is reported to have refused to do so, and to have stated that he was instructed by the Chief Secretary to claim privilege. For as many years as I can remember police reports of road accidents have been compiled and, after the completion of any proceedings the police may take, made available, on the payment of the appropriate fee, to those having a legitimate interest in the matter; for example, to persons injured and wishing to make a civil claim, or to insurance companies wishing to defend a civil claim. Quite recently this practice has ceased, and this new claim of privilege has been advanced. It is universally acknowledged that these reports have been of inestimable value in advancing the interests of justice. I ask the Premier why the long-standing practice has been changed, and whether the Government will reconsider the matter with a view to reintroducing the former practice?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Cabinet has carefully considered this matter, which came before it as a result of recommendations by both the Crown Solicitor and the Commissioner of Police. They stated it was not desirable for the previous practice to be continued. In the first place, the police obtain from witnesses

many statements which they would not obtain if it were known by the witnesses that the statements would be made available to all and sundry. The police are interested in investigations to see whether an offence has been committed and, if so, they take action as prescribed by the Road Traffic Act. Quite apart from the question of whether we would get a full disclosure if it were known that the reports would be available to all and sundry, thus perhaps involving the persons concerned in much inconvenience by being subpoenaed and brought before a court, the second point is that we had the greatest difficulty in coping with the volume of work, for we have found from experience that all parties wanted a report on every two-penny-halfpenny accident that took place. The Commissioner of Police informed the Government that he did not have the space or the office staff to undertake the work, nor was this information being supplied in any other place. Great Britain, for instance, and Victoria, our nearest neighbour, do not supply these reports, but Cabinet is prepared to make available certain information to interested parties. This would be sufficient to enable anyone acting on behalf of interested parties to communicate with witnesses so as to obtain from them information that they require. The reports previously made available by the police involved a large volume of typewritten statements which had to be checked. If the honourable member will ask a question again next Tuesday, I shall let him and the House know what information the Government is prepared to have supplied to all interested parties. He will find that will be quite adequate to enable them to get in touch with the essential witnesses.

FRUIT FLY ERADICATION.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—This morning a meeting was held in the city at which a number of interested persons discussed the methods used for the eradication of fruit fly. As a result of that meeting Messrs. Dunstan, Travers and I, and the mayors of the municipalities of Burnside, Campbelltown, Norwood, Payneham and St. Peters, together with a representative of the Fruit Fly Eradication Committee, were asked to confer with the Minister and Mr. Strickland to discuss the methods used and some suggestions that had been made for technical consideration. Will the Minister of Agriculture meet that committee at an early date?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—Yes.

WALLAROO GRAIN DISTILLERY.

Mr. McALEES—A number of people have made inquiries through me about the use of the grain distillery at Wallaroo and I have referred them to the Premier. Has any progress been made in getting some industry started in that factory?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The company which established an industry in the grain distillery has ceased to operate and the Government, as first debenture holder, appointed the Official Receiver to protect its interests, and he is now in possession of the property. A considerable number of inquiries have been received from people in both this State and Victoria, and from the Wheat Board and the Barley Board; in all, about six or eight inquiries. These cannot be regarded as applications because the matter has not been thrown open for application, but they are being investigated. I also had a letter from the Mayor of Wallaroo asking that information be supplied as soon as possible and I had to point out to him that even when formal negotiations have been entered into with the Government, the company concerned, on some occasions, for some reason or other, has not desired to announce its intention until it has made other arrangements. I will advise the honourable member as soon as anything definite is known.

HORMONE WEEDICIDES.

Mr. GOLDNEY—Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether departmental officers have observed that the use of hormone sprays for the eradication of weeds in growing crops is causing abnormalities in cereal crops in the later stages of growth and in the ripening stage?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The honourable member recently sought information on this topic, and I have received the following report from the Director of Agriculture:—

Samples of abnormally formed grain heads of cereals have been received this year from a number of growers who used hormone-like weed killers on their crops. These abnormalities are undoubtedly due to the spraying. Phytotoxic effects induced in wheat, barley and oats by MCPA and 24-D type weed killers have been reported by numerous research workers. Wheat is regarded as fairly resistant to both MCPA and 24-D provided the dosage rate and stage of crop growth are correct. Oats is the most susceptible crop, both grain quality and yield being reduced. Barley seems to be more liable to develop abnormalities than either wheat or oats. More pronounced abnormalities are caused by 24-D, which is also regarded as being more toxic than MCPA. Different varieties are known to exhibit differential responses. An experiment is at present in progress at the

Turretfield Research Centre to determine varietal response of the leading wheat varieties to applications of hormone weed killers. The final results of this experiment will not be available until after harvest.

CEMENT AT SOUTH PARA RESERVOIR.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Has the Minister of Works a reply to my question of September 24 regarding the alleged deterioration of a large quantity of cement at the South Para reservoir?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—No, other than that I have had the general statement that it was hard to locate what grounds there were for the allegation. My officers could find no suspicion of large quantities of cement being there, but they are still making inquiries. I think it was rather like the early report of Mark Twain's death—grossly exaggerated.

OPERATING COSTS OF STATE'S RAILWAYS.

Mr. CHRISTIAN—The following is portion of a paragraph appearing in today's *Advertiser* regarding the Commonwealth grant to South Australia:—

The commission's report which was tabled in Parliament today, says that the Federal Treasury has drawn attention to the greatly increasing losses of State railways, and has suggested that a close examination of relative levels of operating costs might provide significant information bearing upon efforts to improve the railways' financial results. The Treasury further suggests that a comparison, on a train-mile basis, of operating costs and financial results in the claimant States with those in the non-claimant States, would disclose great differences.

Can the Premier say whether it is within his knowledge that the operating costs of our railways are higher than those of the non-claimant States; and, if that is so, whether it would be advisable to have a costing authority investigate the running and administrative costs?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Under the system on which the Grants Commission works evidence for a grant is submitted by the State and counter evidence is submitted by the Federal Treasury, and the commission ultimately makes its decision. I understand that the Federal Treasury has claimed that railway finances in the various States were deteriorating because of increased running costs. We in South Australia were in a position to provide the Commission immediately with full information on that topic, and a most conclusive memorandum was submitted by the Railways Commissioner. If the honourable member will read the whole

of the article he will see that South Australia was able to answer completely the suggestions of the Federal Treasurer on this matter. Australia will never develop without adequate rail transport and I cannot comprehend why on many occasions people seem to delight in trying to pull down the railways system in one way or another. That is entirely wrong, for the development of Australia can only take place if we have adequate railway systems. The Northern Territory is a good example of what happens when a country tries to develop without adequate transport services. Our grant was not reduced by one penny because of any of our railway activities; in fact, instead of losing more money as was suggested we have lost less. If the honourable member examines our Budgetary figures he will see for two successive years we have improved the position in the railways and with more modern equipment the position will improve still further. The South Australian grant was not reduced by any action of our railways in regard to either charges, efficiency or running costs. Actually, my estimate of what the Commission would provide this year was significantly correct, for we have now a close knowledge of the method upon which the Commission works and are able to judge very accurately what will affect our grant. On this occasion it was affected slightly because the State was in a rather better position than previously, and not because of railway extravagance or inefficiency.

HOTEL AT CHALLA GARDENS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Has the Premier a reply to my recent question concerning the actions of certain persons in connection with an application for a licence to erect a hotel at Challa Gardens?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have a report from a first grade detective constable in the Criminal Investigation Branch, which states:—

A memorial opposing the granting of a licence for an hotel at Challa Gardens was signed by a number of residents of that district and later, persons interested in the granting of the licence interviewed a number of the memorialists and persuaded them to signify their intention of removing their names from the memorial. A land agent, Roy Alexander Forde, of 2 Russell Terrace, Woodville, was interested in the sale of the land upon which the licensed premises would be built, should a licence be granted, and James Cornelius Mealy, of Woodville Road, Woodville, was the proposed manager of the hotel. It has been alleged by Mr. Hutchens, M.P., that agents interested in the granting of this

licence, have offered women concerned taxi fares and an attractive meal as an enticement to appear in court and commit perjury. The following are the names of the memorialists who signified their intention of removing their names from the memorial opposing the granting of the licence:—

Herbert Maurice Skipworth and Patricia Adelaide Skipworth of 7 Downer Street, Kilkenny.

Edna May Coppin, Eliza Ann Spratt, Edna Ethel Clayton and Alice Maud Brown, all of 369 Torrens Road, Kilkenny.

Edward Hugh Hollis of 11 Goodall Avenue, Challa Gardens.

Robert Andrew Henderson and Eileen Rose Henderson of 9 Downer Street, Kilkenny.

Sidonia Ann Williams of 367 Torrens Road, Kilkenny.

Emily Walter and Pauline Eugene Daniel both of 363 Torrens Road, Kilkenny.

Ivy Jean Elliott of 5 Downer Street, Kilkenny.

Amy Alice Osman and Colin Frederick Osman of 16 Downer Street, Kilkenny.

Edna Hodge of 81 Wilpena Terrace, Kilkenny; and

Edward John Roberts of 88 Wilpena Terrace, Kilkenny;

all of whom signed a document signifying their desire to remove their names from the memorial.

Edna Hodge has not yet been interviewed. but from inquiries made it has been found that none of the other people was aware that it would be necessary to appear in court to signify his/her intention, until subpoenas were served. Following the service of subpoenas, some of the intended witnesses inquired concerning their loss of time to attend the court proceedings and were informed that a witness fee would be paid them as is usual. None was offered a taxi fare, but two elderly women, Miss Williams and Mrs. Spratt (who is not allowed on the advice of her doctor to travel by tram), were offered transport in his private car, by Mealy, who intended to attend the court in any event. There was no offer to any of the intended witnesses concerning meals to be provided. Some of those subpoenaed stated, when interviewed, that their reason for signing the document notifying their intention to remove their names from the memorial was to get rid of those persons who were persuading them to do so, but each signified that this was done without any inducement or promise of any kind on the part of the persons soliciting for the removal of the names. At no time, according to these persons, was there any suggestion that false evidence should be given in any court to effect the granting of a licence for an hotel at Challa Gardens.

Forde and Mealy were interviewed in the presence of their solicitor, Mr. G. A. Pavy, and each denied knowledge of any incitement or inducement to the proposed witnesses to commit perjury, to be paid taxi fares, or to be provided with meals whilst attending court. Mealy (who is supported by those interviewed) quite properly told those of the proposed witnesses who inquired that they would be paid

witness fees. Mr. Pavy strongly refuted the allegation that "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." My inquiries have not been completed. Some persons who may be able to supply information are absent from their homes on holiday and cannot, because their whereabouts are unknown, be seen for at least a week, but from what I have learned I am satisfied that when these people are seen (as they will be), no information to support the allegations made by Mr. Hutchens, M.P., will be obtained. Should there be any further information, I will report immediately.

BASIC WAGE DECISION.

Mr. DUNKS—On September 15, as a result of the decision of the Federal Arbitration Court to discontinue quarterly adjustments to the basic wage, I asked the Premier what action would be taken in South Australia to establish the living wage through the Industrial Court as was the practice before we adopted the Federal system? Has the Premier any further reply?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—As I stated in the House yesterday, it seems to me that a very difficult position will arise if we have one set of employees working under a quarterly adjustment system and another set receiving wage adjustments under an entirely different system. It appears to me that whatever the systems they would not at all times coincide, and under these circumstances I feel that we would have an endless chain of industrial disputes. My Government did not ask for the suspension of the quarterly adjustments, but as they have been suspended by the court and cover a large number of industrial workers, it appears to me inevitable that the new system, whatever it is, should cover all industrial wage rates. I have not seen the reasons for the court's decision, and I do not know in which way the adjustments will be made. This is a material matter, if we propose to alter our State machinery. I am not in a position to give a definite reply to the question. It depends upon the action the Arbitration Court proposes to take in the future as to the action to be taken here.

HAWKER TO BRACHINA RAILWAY LINE.

Mr. RICHES—During the course of the inquiry which was held into the route of the north-south railway line, and subsequently, the people of Quorn asked that the existing line should be retained. It was given in evidence during the inquiry, and it has been announced since, that the Commonwealth intends to close the portion of the line between Hawker and

Brachina. The people are asking through their local governing bodies, and by resolutions passed at public meetings, that the line be kept open, believing that it will render a very valuable service. I understand representations have been made to the Premier and to the Prime Minister's Department. The case for Quorn pointed out that in his findings Mr. Justice Wolff said it was a moot point whether the Commonwealth had the power to pull up the line. In the Commonwealth reply appeared the following:—

In connection with the reference to the statement by the chairman of the Commission that the legality of closing the railway between Hawker and Brachina is open to doubt, action is in hand to obtain Parliamentary sanction to permit the closure at the appropriate time.

Can the Premier say whether any Parliamentary action in South Australia would be necessary to give consent to the closure of the line, whether he has been approached by the Commonwealth in the matter, and whether he has approached the Commonwealth on behalf of Quorn with a view to keeping the line open?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If my memory serves me correctly, last session the honourable member asked whether I would submit to the Commonwealth a request that coal coming to Adelaide would continue to come down on the present line through Quorn, Peterborough and Terowie. I submitted the request to the Prime Minister, but the reply was that the Commonwealth did not contemplate maintaining coal-handling equipment on two lines running parallel to each other and serving the same field, because it would be uneconomic to do so. As far as I know there has been no proposal to close any South Australian line. The present line serving Quorn from the south has not been considered for closing, nor has there been any communication or proposition addressed to me which leads me to believe that the Commonwealth line from Port Augusta to Quorn, and the Commonwealth line from Quorn to Hawker, will be closed, or a service not provided. I have heard that it was not the Commonwealth's intention to operate the small piece of line from Hawker to Brachina.

Mr. RICHES—That is the line I am talking about.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—We have had no communication from the Commonwealth asking for permission to take up the line. I do not know that it is necessary under present legislation for the Commonwealth to receive the sanction of the State, and I do not believe it is necessary for the Commonwealth to get

sanction to discontinue running specific trains on the line. I think they are matters within Commonwealth jurisdiction and I do not think further legislative action is necessary, but I will inquire into the matter.

CALLINGTON LEVEL CROSSING FATALITY.

Mr. WHITE—Has the Minister of Railways a reply to the question I asked last Tuesday regarding the accidents which have occurred at the level crossing near Callington?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I have a lengthy report which I will be glad to let the honourable member see. I will abbreviate it by saying that in the first place it could not be traced that there have been five accidents at the crossing. Records as far back as 1939 have been examined and it has been found that there were three accidents during the period. One fatal accident was unusual because a fitter on a motor quadricycle came into collision with a motor truck passing over the line. In this case it was the railway servant who lost his life. The second accident occurred in 1949. The report shows a buckboard struck a train, but the driver of the express was not aware of the accident. The marks on the train showed that the utility ran into the second coach from the engine, so the locomotive had actually passed and the person then ran into the train. The third accident was in 1952. This was a collision between a utility and a freight train. The vehicle was only slightly damaged and the driver was not injured, but he was subsequently prosecuted and fined for a breach of the Road Traffic Act. The report I have received shows that the crossing has a "Look out for Train" sign and visibility there is unrestricted for a considerable distance; in fact, the line can be seen from as far back as one mile. That being so, in the opinion of the Acting Railways Commissioner it is impossible to devise further ways and means of safeguarding the public. I do not say this unkindly, but obviously if a person cannot see a train coming when visibility extends back a mile it is unlikely he will see a flashing signal. This accident on Sunday was one of those unfortunate things for which the human element is responsible. I will be pleased to let the honourable member peruse the full report, but it indicates that visibility was good, there was a clear view of the crossing, the regulation engine whistle was sounded on approach, and a long blast was given when the motor vehicle was first seen. The report states that the driver of the motor car was observed to swerve

to the right and then straighten up, apparently in an attempt to pass over the crossing. It seems there was an error of judgment on the part of the driver of the car, and that is understandable. Accidents can occur under any conditions. On the last occasion of a tragic collision there was a line of traffic held up, and the person concerned passed all other vehicles and continued on despite the warning signal. Unfortunately, he met with a fatal accident. No matter what precautions are taken fatalities occur as a result of the human element.

PRICE CONTROL.

Mr. LAWN—I understand that the State Prices Ministers held this morning, in Adelaide, their first meeting since the Arbitration Court announced its intention to suspend quarterly adjustments to the basic wage. Has the Premier anything of public import to report as a result of that conference?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Prices Ministers met this morning in Adelaide, and are still in conference. The only point of disagreement was the fact that Queensland has decontrolled the price of potatoes, which have gone up to about £108 a ton there. Of course, that must have a detrimental effect upon the workers, for potatoes are an important item in the diet and were an important "C" series item when the "C" series index operated. On general matters this morning the Prices Ministers were able to reach agreement, and in due course the decisions and the altered prices will be announced.

Mr. Lawn—Were there any reductions in the price of consumer goods?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I am pleased to be able to inform the honourable member that in several instances we were able to agree on price reductions. When I left the Ministers had not been able to arrive at any decision to increase any price, so it seems that unless the conference has gone bad in my absence everything will be all right for the honourable member.

BEACONS IN PORT RIVER.

Mr. PEARSON—I have received complaints from the officers of ships trading between Eyre Peninsula ports and Port Adelaide about the inadequacy of the beacons in the Port Adelaide River. They say they have to navigate ships up the channel in almost any weather to keep to timetables. When I pointed out that the beacons had been there for many years and that few accidents had occurred they

said that was true, but by comparison with, say, the entrance to Port Melbourne, the beacons in the Port River were much behind the times. Will the Minister of Marine ask for a report on this matter and make it available to me?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Mr. Tapping took up a similar matter, and the reply was to the effect that any want of visibility or safety was being thoroughly investigated.

JAPANESE TRADE COMPETITION.

Mr. DUNNAGE—An article in today's *Advertiser* deals with the danger of Japanese trade to Australian manufacturers. It states:—

The Associated Chambers of Manufactures said that the investment of millions of dollars of U.S. capital on machinery for Japan had greatly increased Japanese manufacturing efficiency. Trade from Japan is not ordinary business competition, but an attack on foreign markets in accordance with a national creed of economic exploitation in which every instrument is co-ordinated to one end, the report says. Most people—including those in high places—were too complacent about the danger Japanese trade represented to local industries.

This Government has done much to bring into this State many industries, and I am a member of a committee that has helped considerably in this direction. On behalf of local industries I ask the Premier whether he has been approached by the Associated Chambers of Manufactures and, if so, have they put any of their problems to him? Does he think that cheap goods from Japan will have any effect on the big industries of South Australia?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have not had any request from the Associated Chamber of Manufactures on this matter; normally the chamber would make such a request to the Federal Government, which is the licensing authority for all goods coming into South Australia. Neither have I had any specific complaint from an industry in South Australia regarding competition; I do not mean that industries here have not been subjected to competition. I think it useful to add that trade between Australia and Japan is extremely unbalanced as we export to her about six times more than the value of the commodities she sends to us. Japan is a very valuable market for Australian wool and certain other commodities, but we cannot expect to enjoy that trade unless we enable her to pay for the goods she buys from us. If Japan cannot pay for the wool, barley, or wheat obtained from Australia she must cease to be a customer. You cannot have one-way traffic in trade.

BUDGET DEBATE.

In Committee of Supply.

(Continued from October 14. Page 1048.)

Legislative Council, £8,747.

Mr. DUNNAGE (Unley)—This is the fifteenth Budget the Treasurer has introduced and not only the members on this side but South Australians generally, should be extremely proud of his achievement. This seems to be the outstanding Budget of all that he has presented. He has given a great deal of thought to its preparation and the interesting points have been well handled by members generally, and although members opposite may hold different views, we on this side at least are quite happy with what the Premier has done.

Mr. Riches—What is outstanding about it?

Mr. DUNNAGE—All the beautiful things you are getting out of it. The Budget is millions of pounds up on any previous Budget.

Mr. Riches—I will tell you what we do not get.

Mr. DUNNAGE—I will tell you what you do get, especially in regard to hospitals. Read the Auditor-General's report and see how much more the Government is providing for hospitals today. I know something about those in my own locality. In 1948-49 the grant to the Home for Incurables was £5,000. In 1952-53 it was £43,000, an increase of £38,000 in a few years. Consider the District and Bush Nursing Society. We had two nurses in our district, but now we have four because the work became so heavy due to the overcrowding of the Adelaide Hospital.

Mr. Riches—In my district there is not one.

Mr. DUNNAGE—That is the fault of the local governing authority. In our district the municipal council has taken a great interest in the society and given it a great deal of assistance. This is one of the jobs that councils can do. Of course it depends on the honourable member, as mayor of his town, to do a little to help the town and district. Some members say that nothing is ever done by this Government, but it has increased its expenditure on hospitals from £1,700,000 in 1948-49 to over £4,000,000 in 1952-53.

Mr. Davis—Where?

Mr. DUNNAGE—Throughout the State, and I pay a tribute to the Chief Secretary, the Hon. Lyell McEwin, for his fine work in the administration of the Hospitals Department. I do not think even the Opposition can say anything against the work he has done. Mr. McEwin has done a wonderful job for the

hospitals, and knows more about them than anyone else I know. I am grateful for what he has done for the few hospitals in my district other than the hospitals run by private individuals, who do not run to the Government for assistance. Government expenditure on hospitals has increased from £1,700,000 to £4,000,000 in five years. I hope the Minister will continue in charge of this department for many a long day.

The question of motor registration fees has been mentioned in the House on numerous occasions, and a Bill will be introduced to increase these fees. I do not think anyone would argue against their being increased to some extent. The new Minister of Roads and Local Government must have money to cater for our road requirements. I can see by the look in his eye that the member for Stuart is just about to say, "But we have no roads in my district." I was at Port Augusta recently with the honourable member and we travelled almost 200 miles on a bituminous road. The State is spending millions of pounds on roads, and I hope will continue to do so. Do not let us hear all the moaning that "We never do anything." The road from Adelaide to Port Augusta, 200 miles, is almost all bituminous road, only 10 miles being in the metropolitan area, the rest being in the country, "Where they never get anything." In Unley, if we want a bituminous road we have to pay for it.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN—Order! Standing Orders provide that a member must be heard in silence. Therefore, interjections are definitely out of order. I allow one occasionally, but when there are five or six at the one time I must call the Committee to order.

Mr. DUNNAGE—With due deference, to you, Mr. Chairman, I do not mind how much the member for Pirie interjects. I am really trying to help him. In the metropolitan area most of the roads are provided by the local councils. They are mainly bituminous roads, particularly in your district, Mr. Chairman. A marvellous job has been done in that area with little Government assistance. If we in the metropolitan area want anything of this nature, we do it ourselves on most occasions. I believe the amount Unley council has received from the Government this year for expenditure on main roads is under £1,000, and this despite the fact that Unley is the largest city in the State apart from Adelaide. We are quite happy and not making any complaint. The Government is being continually criticized about the amount it spends on roads. It is

amazing that some honourable members either do not read the Auditor-General's report or take no interest in what is happening around them. I travel extensively throughout the State and see public works proceeding wherever I go. For the last four years I have been watching the construction of a bridge over the railway line at Clare which is being built for the convenience of the travelling public. The point I want to make is that the job is still being done, even though it may have taken some time. The Auditor-General's report discloses that in 1949 about £2,500,000 was spent on roads and that by 1953 the amount spent on that item had increased by over £2,000,000 in four years, yet we hear the cry from some members that the Government is doing nothing in this regard. The member for Flinders complained about the roads in his district.

Mr. Davis—He said the councils had to do the work there.

Mr. Riches—There are potholes in many country roads.

Mr. DUNNAGE—Many have been caused by Government trucks taking supplies to country depots. Recently a Government truck travelled from Adelaide to the Port Augusta powerhouse in 10 hours with a load of cement. That is typical of the way in which our roads are being used and why they are being torn up.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—If I did not allow such loads to go by road I would be accused of holding up production.

Mr. DUNNAGE—Members opposite might say that. We have been told that the railways are losing; that will continue so long as we send heavy loads by road into the country. The Government may take such loads or a private individual may cart his own goods from the city to the country, but a legitimate carrier is often prevented by transport regulations from doing so. We must decide whether we are to support our railways or not, and it must be remembered that the ordinary individual who can handle his goods quickly is more likely to use his own truck than the railways. We should not allow our roads to be broken up by these heavy vehicles taking loads to the country, while the railways sustain enormous losses. I heard a member on this side say, "If we are to continue sustaining annual losses of between £1,000,000 and £5,000,000 on our railways . . ." Surely, if we take the view that these losses are inevitable, we should get somebody to go into the matter and tell us why they are being sustained. When the American experts recently visited Adelaide to report on our tramways system I was interested to know

whether they could be used to report on the railways, but I was told that they had not been brought here for that purpose, but I consider that was a wonderful opportunity to use those men from a big city to advise us on our tramways system. I take it that considered opinion is that we are to go on losing money on our railways for a considerable time. I do not know whether the Minister agrees with that, but, after hearing the remarks of one member on this side, that is how it appears to me.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—You cannot do two things at the same time—make the railways pay and keep down freights to help primary producers.

Mr. DUNNAGE—That does not seem to have much to do with the question, for much of the freight is going by road. All high class freight goes by road.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Not one-tenth of it does.

Mr. DUNNAGE—Even if it doesn't, we are still losing a considerable amount annually. Most of our freight goes by road.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—About 99 per cent goes by rail.

Mr. DUNNAGE—I have travelled extensively by rail, but the railways are not all that they are alleged to be. A considerable amount is being spent annually on education—according to the Auditor-General's report, approximately £6,000,000 annually—and a number of reasons are given for the increased expenditure. I listened with great interest to the member for Gawler on education because he has had experience of the department and can speak with authority. Our Education Department employs officials and teachers second to none in Australia. The Government has been criticized because there are not sufficient teachers for the number of pupils.

Mr. Davis—And not sufficient accommodation.

Mr. DUNNAGE—That is true. Last year £55,000 more than the previous year was spent on maintenance of buildings. The reason for the increase was higher costs of maintenance, materials and labour and the increase in the number of school buildings.

Mr. Davis—Where are they? The schools in your district are overcrowded.

Mr. DUNNAGE—I will refer to that shortly. The total for teachers' salaries has increased by £522,000 and this has been brought about by an increase in rates and in the number of teachers employed. An increase in school committee subsidies for equipment was occasioned by greater expenditure by school committees subject to a pound for pound subsidy by the

department. However, I believe many of those matters should be the responsibility of the Government. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that one of the problems at our schools is the provision of bicycle sheds. There are 500 children at a school with which I am associated, and 275 bicycles are used. We provided bicycle racks because there was no room to erect a shed. I have repeatedly approached the Minister of Education concerning the lack of accommodation in my district and have endeavoured to have a new Unley Girls Technical School built in the area.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—There is a proposal at present to erect one of the largest schools in the State in your district.

Mr. DUNNAGE—That is the Unley school, but it is in the district of Mitcham; it has nothing to do with the Unley Girls Technical School. The present Unley Girls Technical School is better than the Unley High School, but it has not sufficient playing space. That school won the sporting championship for technical schools, but if the girls want to play or run around they have to go to the parklands. I have suggested that land could easily be purchased near the parklands and the parklands used as a playing area, but the only bodies interested in the proposal are private schools. The Methodist Ladies College and Pulteney Grammar School have overcome their problems of playing space by using the parklands. It would not be difficult to purchase old properties bordering the parklands and schools could be erected there. If an area of five to 10 acres is required for a new school it would be impossible to obtain such an area in Unley. Something should be done for the benefit of the inner metropolitan districts by building a new girls technical school. It would have to be built in the Clapham district because no land is available in Unley, unless a new Unley High School is built and then the land occupied by the present school could be used for a new girls technical school, although I do not think it would be large enough. When sufficient schools and teachers are available the school-leaving age will be raised to 15, as has already been decided, and later it will be raised to 16. A two or three storey school could be built on Park Terrace and some of the parklands used for playing space. As the parklands would be used only on week days the children from the school would not interfere with the people who use them on Saturdays. If something is not done in the near future the present girls technical school will be crowded out. According to the head mistress it is the only A class

girls school in the State. It is becoming very popular and more and more girls want to attend it. At present there are classrooms in nine different places in a number of streets and it takes the head mistress the best part of the morning to visit the classes. Most of the girls attending the school come from country areas and it is surprising how far some of them travel. Some come from Coromandel Valley, Noarlunga, Port Noarlunga, and Yankalilla and many of them do not get home until about 7 o'clock. They do not ask for a bus to take them to school. They arrange their own transport because they are keen to get the education provided.

We hear that the Government is doing nothing about decentralization. Earlier I said I visited Port Augusta with the member for the district to inspect an industry in the locality. During the visit I saw the new power station on which millions of pounds are being spent. It will be of great benefit to the people in that part of the State. If the Government did nothing else in the matter of decentralization that has been one outstanding act. Eventually it must cause the establishment of industries in the north. The Government has built a spur railway line to Radium Hill to assist the development of uranium deposits. It is establishing a large industry at Port Pirie, and the Leigh Creek coalfield is another example of what has been done. The Premier has introduced 15 Budgets and during that time the advantages accruing to the State have been due almost entirely to his efforts, yet we continually hear that no decentralization is taking place. The Industries Development Committee, of which I am chairman, meets almost weekly. At present it is reviewing a proposal to establish a big project in the country, and it will be of amazing value to primary producers and secondary industries. It will be most advantageous if ever Australia is engaged in another war. I am amazed at what is being done in the matter of decentralization. A press report dated October 2, from Canberra indicated that one Commonwealth Minister had said that the prospects for South Australia are exciting. He was talking about the development of industries. I agree with what he said because I know what is happening here. We are all part and parcel of the administration: as Mr. Dunks has often said, we are the board of directors; and it is pleasing to read such a remark by a Commonwealth Minister.

The metropolitan area is going ahead rapidly, yet little provision is being made for additional playing space. In the parklands it is almost

impossible for a new club to get playing space. It is all used at present. Some councils have done well in the matter of providing playing space. Mr. Frank Walsh said yesterday that land is being bought by the Housing Trust for building purposes at a cost of £1,000 an acre, which is an enormous price. It takes about 20 to 30 acres for an oval, which at £1,000 an acre would cost between £20,000 and £30,000. Land could have been bought years ago very cheaply, but the Government and some councils did not keep themselves *au fait* with the position. I suggest to the Minister of Lands that more playing space should be provided, and that land for an outer green belt, as suggested by Mr. J. McLeay, should be purchased, if possible although it would be very expensive. Land is being acquired for recreation purposes in other States, and any land so acquired here can be used for these purposes in perpetuity. Even if it cost millions of pounds to establish an outer belt of park lands around the metropolitan area it would be a cheap proposition. The cost could be written off over a long period.

Mr. Stephens—Mr. Frank Lundie saved the parklands for the people. They would have been sold had it not been for his efforts.

Mr. DUNNAGE—I do not believe that. The parklands would never have been sold. I remember Mr. Lundie, but there has always been agitation to preserve the parklands for the people.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—The Parklands Preservation League has done much in this direction.

Mr. DUNNAGE—It has done a great job. The establishment of an outer belt of parklands would mean that they would be available for future generations. I ask the Minister of Lands to give full consideration to this question. I congratulate the Treasurer on his wonderful Budget and hope he will be in charge of this State, this House, and the Liberal and Country Party for many years. He has the confidence of the people.

Mr. STEPHENS (Port Adelaide)—The member for Unley had much to say about the preservation of the parklands, but I remember that many years ago the Adelaide City Council considered leasing certain areas, or even selling them, for building purposes. Mr. Frank Lundie, who was a councillor, saw the possibility of the proposal being accepted, so he kept on talking until the council adjourned. Then he had many petitions signed protesting against the move, and a special meeting was

called in the Adelaide Town Hall. A resolution was carried opposing any proposal to sell or lease the parklands. Later, a committee was appointed for the purpose of preventing any sale of the parklands. Out of appreciation for what Mr. Lundie had done a reserve on the corner of Goodwood Road and South Terrace was named in his honour.

Mr. Dunnage—Where is it?

Mr. STEPHENS—Don't you know?

Mr. Dunnage—I have never heard of it.

Mr. STEPHENS—I have heard the honourable member say he has been all around the country. Why doesn't he look around the parklands? When the House adjourns I will be pleased to show him Lundie Reserve. If I do not take him I am afraid he may get lost in his own district.

Mr. Dunnage—You don't know where Lundie Reserve is yourself.

Mr. STEPHENS—It is on the corner of Goodwood Road and South Terrace.

Mr. Dunnage—That is not in Unley; it is in Adelaide.

Mr. STEPHENS—The member for Flinders has become complaints officer No. 1. He was full of complaints about everything, everybody, and every Government department. He reminded me of the old lady watching a regiment of soldiers marching along the road. She said everybody was out of step except her little boy. According to Mr. Pearson every member of this House, the Government, and every department, was wrong except him. He said taxation, charges for goods and services, and railway fares and freights were too high, but he can only blame his own Government and Party for that state of affairs. Then he said that expenditure on education was extravagant, but I will deal with that statement later. He complained that shipping costs were too high, but that is another matter under the control of his own Government. He blamed the waterside workers and the seamen for the high cost of transport. I wonder why he criticizes at every opportunity the wharf workers and seamen, men for whom I have the greatest respect and with whom I have worked. They fought to save the country he represents today, but he is not prepared to say to them what he says about them in this House. On another occasion he said that the waterside workers were controlled by Communists, but I give an emphatic denial to that. The president of the federation, Mr. John Beitz, is a member of the Labour Party branch of which I am secretary. I have often heard him ask at meetings whether any Communists

were present. If so, they had to walk out. Mr. Pearson also said that the waterside workers had no say in what is done by the federation, that they might be knocked about if they voiced their views at a meeting, and that they had no say in fixing union fees and contributions. The Waterside Workers' Federation is registered in the Industrial Court, and I have a copy of its rules. One rule states:—

The contributions payable by members of the Port Adelaide Branch of the Waterside Workers' Federation shall be determined by the members assembled at any special meeting convened for the purpose, but shall not be an amount per annum lower than that specified in the Federal rules.

Someone may say that the Federal rules can override the State, but another rule says:—

The amount payable by members as contributions in any one year shall not exceed the sum of £2 10s., sick fund payments excluded.

Despite that, Mr. Pearson had the audacity to say that waterside workers had no voice in fixing contributions.

Mr. Lawn—What is the charge to join the Liberal Party?

Mr. STEPHENS—I do not know, and I have never employed pimps to find out. When Mr. Pearson was asked where he got his information about the Labor Party he said he got people to attend some of its meetings to ascertain what was done. What sort of men are they? Would anyone take any notice of them? Rule 19 of the Port Adelaide branch of the Waterside Workers' Federation gives the executive power to deal with such people.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins—Are you reading from the Book of Revelations?

Mr. STEPHENS—These are the rules that control the union, and they have to be registered in the Arbitration Court. They must be observed, and they are, in their entirety. Some members opposite only refer to the Book of Revelations when it suits their purpose. I respect members opposite, and I expect respect from them. I resent what Mr. Pearson said about members on this side; Opposition members are not two-faced. On taxation Mr. Pearson said, "Labor members say, 'We will soak the rich'." Although I have not heard that expression before, I take it that he means we want to rob the rich by means of taxation. He also said that members on this side will not say these things here, but will say them in the Botanic Park or other places. This statement means that we are two-faced, and I resent it. I wonder if the honourable member heard that or whether he got it from some of the pimps he sent around to spy on the Labor movement.

I would rather cut my throat than stoop to such dirty actions. I will be speaking at the Botanic Park next Sunday; I invite the honourable member to come along, and he will find that I say there what I say here. I challenge him to go before the waterside workers at Port Adelaide and say to their faces what he has said here behind their backs. He wanted us to believe that the increased shipping charges were caused by the high rates of pay of the waterside workers and seamen, but when challenged he dropped all reference to waterside workers. He should know they receive the same rates for loading a coastal vessel as for overseas ships, so it cannot be said that they are the cause of coastal shipping rates being higher than overseas rates. I have taken the trouble to ascertain the rates of pay of seamen. An able-bodied seaman gets £A54 8s. a month, yet the honourable member talks about its being the cause of the higher shipping rates.

Mr. Lawn—It is only the basic wage.

Mr. STEPHENS—Of course it is, and that is what the honourable member wants.

Mr. Christian—What about their keep?

Mr. STEPHENS—That is in addition when they are at sea, but while in port they go home for their meals. The sum of £54 8s., plus keep, is scarcely more than is paid to coolies. Does the honourable member want to bring British seamen down to their level? Was it not the Australian ship owners who prevented coolies being employed in coastal shipping and who were successful in fighting overseas companies and preventing them from carrying cargo between Australian ports with cheap labour? I am prepared to go into the honourable member's district and defend anything that I have said, but I doubt whether he would be prepared to go before the Port Adelaide waterside workers and tell them what he has said here. He also complained of taxation being too high, but who is responsible for fixing taxation rates? Although he blames his own Party he is not prepared to tell his constituents that he belongs to the Party that fixes taxation rates. He prefers to blame others. He says that charges for goods and services are too high, but, again, they are controlled by his own Party. He regrets that railway fares and freights are so high. I have heard more complaints from members opposite about high railway freights than anything I have heard from this side. I have always stood behind the railways, for without them our country would never have been developed in the way it has been. It would be more to the credit of members opposite, if, instead of criticising the rail-

ways, they were a little more loyal to the department that has assisted in putting them on their feet. Without the railways some of them would not be enjoying the life of luxury they lead today. The member for Flinders was complaints officer No. 1. He went on to complain about education. In the earlier part of his speech he gave himself a pat on the back and tried to place members of his Party on a higher plane than those of our Party; he regards himself as one of the elite. He is trying to create class distinction when he says, "I often feel that, because of their training in business, finance, and the practical application of economic laws, the members of the Liberal Party have a much more realistic and practical approach to the problems of Government finance," as much as to say, "I am a superior being compared with you fellows opposite." Later he said, "The Government, with its education, is going to a degree of extravagance." The honourable member thinks that the amount of money spent on education represents extravagance, whereas the member for Unley says we ought to spend more. I do not think for one moment that Mr. Pearson was expressing the views of his Party in saying that he does not want to see the working class educated. He wants to reserve certain positions for his own superior class. Why doesn't he want to see us educated? I remember the famous words of John Darling: "If you educate your children too much who are we going to have to do the dirty work?" That is what he is afraid of. He criticized the members for Prospect and Norwood and said had not certain of their remarks been made in their maiden speeches they would not have got away with it. This was not the honourable member's maiden speech, and he will not get away with it. There will be another maiden speech from another member for Flinders after the next election, and there will be an uprising among the waterside workers in his district asking what he means by the things he has said about them. He said that shipping costs were too high. Recently on a Parliamentary visit to Kangaroo Island we saw a wonderful job being done by the soldier settlers. Some of the older residents said that the Government could develop this country as much as it liked, but unless it provided protection to the settlers from the shipping combine they would die of starvation, because transport costs were too high. I know something about what that combine can do. I have previously told the House how it controls Port Adelaide and the

Court of Marine Inquiry. Previously I referred to the famous Nelcebee and Gerard case, and the Government was so convinced that it brought down an amendment to the Act, the Court of Marine Inquiry was altered and the man concerned was paid damages for what was done to him by this combine. That same combine today is charging what it likes to those who use its vessels, and it is more responsible for high shipping costs than the waterside workers.

The member for Flinders complained about various Government departments and gave no Government official any credit for being able to make a success of anything. He never referred to the great success of the Government Insurance Department some years ago. When this work ceased a wonderful present was made to the insurance companies. The State would not have to borrow anywhere near as much as it is borrowing today had that department still been in existence. The Government would be receiving the profits instead of the private companies. When the Government raises a loan most of the money is subscribed by insurance companies. Members opposite say that it is a great Budget and that the State is going well, but every year we find we are getting further and further into debt. In 1952-53 interest on bonds and other interest amounted to £6,970,074, and this year it is expected to be £7,986,000, an increase of about £1,000,000. We have been told what our hospitals are costing us, but I remind members that our interest charges alone amount to more than £10 a head. If we could dispense with this payment we would be in a much better position. I hope that when the House deals with the individual lines members will not try to imply that they are of a higher standard than others. The member for Flinders should remember:—

All men are equally born
In this and every nation
The rich along with the poor would be
But for wealth and education
But when you're laid beneath the sod
With a hundred years to back it
No one can tell which were the bones
That wore the ragged jacket.

I claim that every honourable member on this side is just as good as the member for Flinders, who so scathingly referred to us.

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley)—I take this opportunity of once again congratulating the Treasurer on being in the position evidently of having the full support of the people in presenting his 15th consecutive Budget. Whether we agree with it or not, we must recognize it

is a wonderful effort and is a tribute to our leading citizen. It is a record of which he can be justly proud. I do not agree with all that the member for Unley said in extolling the Budget with all the superlatives of which he is capable. He said it was a wonderful and magnificent Budget. If the astronomical figures it records are wonderful, I agree, but if the astronomical debt it records is wonderful, then I disagree. The interest and sinking fund on our public debt amounts to £7,068,968. The taxation collected from succession duties, stamp duties, land tax, motor registrations and licences, the winnings bet tax and other odds and ends amounts to £4,491,636. In Australian currency, at the present rate of exchange, the public debt is £205,545,000 and it has increased by £91,000,000 in 11 years. In that period of the 15 years the Hon. T. Playford has been Treasurer he has had the unique distinction of seeing the public debt increased by that amount. Last year it increased by £21,500,000. Undoubtedly, there was a reason for that, and I shall try to illustrate it by referring to the country water districts deficits. The total deficit on these districts is £811,867 of which £398,149 is interest on loans and £152,000 sinking fund payments, which added gives £550,149, which is 67 per cent of the total deficit on country water schemes. When you look at it that way and leave out the interest and sinking fund charges the loss is £261,718. With this type of finance, and considering the public debt increase of more than £21,000,000 last year and with its continuing to increase every year, where is our ultimate destination? The State Parliament is only 100 years old and in that time we have built up a public debt of £205,000,000 and the Commonwealth is carrying a burden of more than £3,000,000,000. The interest debt charges under the Commonwealth debt alone amount to £90,000,000 a year, which has to be met by taxation. If we survive another 100 years what will the position be then, or do we intend to maintain the existing farce? Today we have heard about the explosion in our own State of the atom bomb, and a significant extract from a report in this afternoon's *News* states:—

The familiar mushroom column climbed unsteadily 15,000ft., leaned and dropped, and the world stumbled one more step towards the twilight.

That is strictly true and could be a prophecy of doom. There is no defence against the atom bomb. It is impossible to defend any of our cities against it. Because of the method used

in propelling it over vast distances it could obliterate civilization. It is a menace to our very existence, but, if we are permitted to exist under this menace what are we to do about the menace to our economic security, which is just as great as to that of the atom bomb? I do not wish to be a prophet who looks only on the gloomy side, but it is necessary to face the position as it is. All is not well with South Australia despite the expenditure in this Budget. All is not well with the amenities of civilized life throughout South Australia despite what the member for Unley said. All is not well in relation to the primary production of this State—in fact, much is far from well. One climatic catastrophe would show us that. Further, this year thousands of acres will return crops not worth planting. There are some very good crops, but there are also some very bad crops. Between Gawler and Auburn there are many barley crops, and the number of average ones can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The best thing which could be done with the rest would be to plough them in while the ground is capable of being ploughed. All is not well while we use the country for catch-cash crops, and that is what barley is being used for today, with disastrous effects on our primary economy.

What are we to do about this huge debt? Is there no means of getting over this problem? If there are brains—as undoubtedly there have been—which could fathom the mysteries of nuclear fission to bring into existence the menace of the atom bomb, is it impossible for us to overcome the undoubted faults and stupidities of our financial system? The Auditor-General's report discloses that since 1927 £21,094,000 has been paid off our debt, but in that time we have increased it by more than £100,000,000. Is that the solution to the problem? Of course not, for, as the figures clearly prove, it is only a farcical gesture that is no real basis for improving the position. What does the sinking fund charge achieve on our country water schemes and other public projects? Nothing! The scheme was designed as a remedy for what was at the time becoming an intolerable situation. We had to meet this menace of debt, so we arranged for this sinking fund, and the futile position remains the same as the debt increases. Is this not a challenge to our sanity and to us as administrators of the State? Is there no solution to the problem? Must the debt continue to pile up year after year throwing an incubus, which grows heavier and heavier, around the necks of the people? It needs only a national climatic

catastrophe to bring home to us the full force of the impact. I will not again give to members a solution that is apparent and one which can be used, but I will say that we are doing nothing about the problem. The solution is available, but the tremendous forces of those who control finance throughout the world are too great for us here in Australia while we adopt the attitude we are adopting today. The problem would not be too great for us if we tackled it, for it could be beaten in any self-contained country. A few hours of study will prove that to any member willing to make those hours available. Today finance is traded in as a commodity upon which a profit is made, and the extraction of that profit as a first charge on the real commodities of life presents us with the problem. We must tackle it, and I cannot congratulate anybody on a Budget that in its very essence perpetuates that system. I should like to hear honourable members address themselves on this subject. Have any a solution to this problem? Today hundreds of people are addressing themselves to problems in the railways, tramways, and other public bodies, and there is a tremendous amount of discussion as to how the financial difficulties of those bodies could be overcome. The administration of the railways and tramways has been criticized, but behind their problems is the same cause as that which leads to this astronomical increase in the State's debt, but while we apply ourselves to try to work out the difficulties of these instrumentalities, who is trying to solve the one major problem, the cure of which would bring about the cure of all the other financial ills of the State?

I wish to refer to housing in country areas. Costs have increased to such an extent that today it is no longer possible for a person on the basic wage or a little over it to buy or build a house in his own name, nor is it possible for him to rent one from the Housing Trust except at an extremely high rent. The trust must protect itself to see that the income of the tenant is sufficient to pay that high rental. I do not blame the trust for that, but behind that problem is exactly the same set of circumstances that has caused the building up of the national debt structure of this State—circumstances which need the same cure. There is no need for the tremendous charge for houses today. Can we reconcile the position in South Australia with that in Ireland, a country of about 3,000,000 people, where persons getting married and desiring to build a home receive a gift of £400 and are able to repay their loan over 30 years at 2 per cent interest?

Have we anything like that here? If it is possible to do it in Ireland why cannot something similar be done in Australia? Has anybody examined this matter to see if anything could be done? We cannot build houses for people on their present incomes. Many people requiring rental houses from the trust cannot pay the economic rent because their incomes are not high enough. According to the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, to pay a rent of £3 5s. a week they would have to earn at least £17, and many do not earn that much. How can we approach that problem? We are doing nothing about it and it is of pressing urgency. In the past we used to speak airily of the final obliteration of the slum areas of Adelaide. At our present rate of progress we will still never get rid of them, notwithstanding the wonderful programme of the Housing Trust. I do not criticize the trust, because it has performed a magnificent work, but it is caught up in the toils of the system and it has found it impossible to house those in dire need. The trust is not unsympathetic but it must ascertain whether a person can afford a rental of £3 5s. a week on his income and the trust cannot take the risk of letting people have houses unless their incomes are sufficient. The same conditions apply in the country and older townships like Clare, which has celebrated its centenary, have many houses that should be condemned as unfit for human habitation, but they cannot be demolished because they provide roofs over the heads of people. People who have passed through two wars and one depression and raised a family have never had an opportunity of purchasing homes because they are ordinary toilers on weekly wages.

I would like to correct a wrong impression which may have been conveyed by Mr. Dunnage who said that a road bridge in Clare took four years to build. That bridge cost about £43,000 but it only took six months to build. The mistaken statement of Mr. Dunnage does not give appropriate credit to the Highways Department for a magnificent piece of engineering. That bridge was not built to last only five years and it will probably be there as long as there is a highway. The road is curved over an elevated bridge and can be driven over with perfect safety at 60 miles an hour. Mr. Dunnage also referred to the beautiful country roads. Admittedly there are highways, but there are not many beautiful roads off the highways. As a matter of fact a great many of them are disgraceful but

not much can be done about them. Roads not far from the main highways have degenerated to such an extent that they are no longer worthy of being called roads. Even if councils collected the maximum rates allowable under statute they would not have sufficient to carry out all the work necessary for the regeneration of those roads.

I suggest that the position be investigated along the following lines. Grants are made to country councils and corporations for the purpose of restoring or maintaining roads, but that is a patchwork method of doing things. The financial significance of my suggestion would be considerable but I believe it is necessary to build roads which will have some permanency. I suggest that certain roads be selected as arterial roads in particular areas—feeder roads on to the main highways. They should pass through the district and serve the residents in the best possible manner. A road should not be selected because it now happens to be in good repair but roads should be established which will feed the area to the best advantage and remove the burden of maintaining that road from the council so that the money can be devoted to the smaller roads. The capillary roads feeding the highways should be solidly built permanent roads. Instead of the money granted to councils being devoted to repairs in various parts it should be used for establishing a net-work of roads feeding the main highways. If that were done we would achieve something. The feeder roads should be sealed so as to relieve maintenance costs.

Mr. Shannon—Do any of the councils in your area employ private contractors for road maintenance?

Mr. QUIRKE—No. A contractor would have to be employed in a big way and would require stone crushers, quarries and extensive plant. If he could obtain continuity of work it might be worth while and that might be achieved under my suggestions of building feeder roads. We must do something otherwise parts of the country will be isolated because of the deplorable condition of some of these roads in the winter. Some time ago I questioned the Premier about country sewerage. Clare has been listed as an area that will ultimately be provided with a sewerage system. At the present rate of progress that will not be possible in the foreseeable future and it is proposed in Clare to make the installation of septic systems compulsory. Such systems are costly to individuals and cost between £70 to £100 according to the

conditions of installation. Many people are unable to meet that immediate cost and it is hopeless for a council to compel a person to install a system when that person has not the necessary money. Pensioners would not have £100 and any edict that cannot be enforced only makes those attempting it look ridiculous. In order to get money to provide a fund so that people can install systems and pay the cost off at the present rate they are paying for sanitary services we would have to use our rate collecting capacity as a basis for borrowing money. If that is done that capacity is tied up for a long period. Is the Treasurer pre-

pared to examine the position with a view to making advances to councils outside the necessary conditions under the Local Government Act for that specific purpose? If that were done septic systems could be installed on properties in all country towns where there is a water supply and it would remove most of the obnoxious conditions of sanitation that exist at present.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.1 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, October 20, at 2 p.m.