

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, June 8, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.**GRADING OF MEAT.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I noticed in the press, I think last week, that the Government was considering introducing the principle of grading the meat for sale in the metropolitan area. It was stated that it was possible that if the grading system were introduced butchers would be permitted to charge higher prices for first quality meat, but there was no suggestion of a lower price for inferior meat. I have some sympathy with the proposal for grading meat into proper categories of quality and the fixing of appropriate prices. Can the Premier say if final consideration has been given to the matter and, if so, will the price for inferior meat be lowered if the price for better quality meat is increased as the result of the introduction of the system?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—For some time representations have been made to the Prices Branch for higher prices for meat. The position is that at the Abattoirs the theoretical ceiling prices fixed by the department as the basis for the fixing of retail prices have been greatly exceeded on many occasions, particularly with high quality meat, the price for which is always brought up in discussions with the Prices Branch as the reason for a general lifting of meat prices. I believe that at present a higher price for good quality meat is warranted. As members are aware, a large amount of the meat sold today in the metropolitan area is second grade, yet it brings the same price in retail shops as top quality. I am in accord with a price differential for quality meat provided steps are taken to see that the quality of the meat sold to consumers is as provided by regulations. I have told persons who have approached me on behalf of the meat industry that if strip branding were introduced for mutton or beef the Government would be prepared to fix a differential price for hogget and other high grade meats which come at present under the general classification of mutton. The Leader of the Opposition who has had some experience of the meat industry knows that hogget is likely to be a much more satisfying joint.

Mr. O'Halloran—It covers a multitude of omissions at the moment.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It may at the moment. That is why I have said that if grading is provided and there is strip branding the Government will be prepared to fix differential prices.

Mr. SHANNON—Has the Premier inquired about the result of this system in Queensland? Is it not a fact, for instance, that retail butchers find that strip-branded beef—and beef is the meat in shortest supply—remains on their benches because housewives prefer to buy inferior quality meat? We might take some cognizance of what is happening in Queensland, which is the home of beef production in the eastern States. Will the Premier consider relieving not only the housewife and the butcher, but everybody else concerned, from control and letting the proper law of supply and demand take effect so that the housewife can elect to buy meat irrespective of brands, especially as I understand that at the last Abattoirs market beef made about £9 per cental as against £4 15s. per cental? I cannot understand how any retailer could operate under such conditions.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—From inquiries I made as regards Queensland I believe the operations there have not been detrimental. All meat is branded according to its quality, and it might well be that sometimes housewives prefer buying second quality meat at the lower price to paying an excessively high price for better quality meat. That does not alter the fact that meat is being effectively sold according to grade, and the price paid for it at the Abattoirs is reflected ultimately in the retail price paid by consumers. At this stage to decontrol meat altogether would, in my opinion, be a retrograde step. We are receiving continuous complaints of overcharging, and when these are examined they are shown to be correct. In some instances offences are repeated by the same person, even though a recent charge has been laid against him. In two States where meat was decontrolled the price sky-rocketed and it had to be brought under control again rapidly. When there is no ceiling price to start off with it is difficult to get any margin set up, and when there is an open market for stock it is difficult to control grades and margins. Although at the moment I feel there are grave weaknesses in the control of meat, I feel, to some extent at least, that the overall cost of retailing meat is being controlled to the benefit of the general community.

MOB VIOLENCE AT FOOTBALL MATCHES.

Mr. TRAVERS—Can the Premier say whether the Government will consider legislation to prevent a recurrence of the recent alarming display of mob violence towards an umpire at a soccer match, and also at football matches, and whether it does not consider the penalty for an assault committed in such circumstances should be gaol without the option?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—At present the law provides, as the honourable member must know, for appropriate action to be taken in cases of assault.

Mr. Travers—Mainly by a fine.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—In my opinion one assault is little different from another and all unjustifiable assaults should be subject to the same penalty. We should not have one penalty for assaults on a football field and another for assaults in some other place.

Mr. Travers—Mob violence is more serious than mere assault.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The consequences to the victims can be equal, but I will have the honourable member's question examined by the law authorities, get a report and advise the honourable member whether it is necessary to tighten up the general law to deal with cases of assault. I think the honourable member will, on reflection, agree that a general tightening up would be better than a tightening up for one type of offence.

BUDD CARS ON PORT PIRIE LINE.

Mr. DAVIS—Last session the then Minister of Railways told me that there were 14 Budd type rail cars under construction and that when they were completed—this year, it was expected—a certain number would be placed on country lines. How many of these cars will be placed on the Port Pirie to Adelaide line?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will take up that matter with the Minister of Railways and bring down a reply before the House adjourns, or forward him a reply. Some of the cars are now being completed and it is expected that the first of them will be running next month. Where they will be located, of course, depends on where traffic demands the most attention.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS' SERVICES.

Mr. FLETCHER—I draw the attention of the Treasurer, representing the Minister of

Health, to the following report in today's *Advertiser*:—

Doctor before Tribunal over Woman's Death.—Sydney, June 7.—A doctor told the Medical Disciplinary Tribunal today that he had thought it unnecessary to attend a call to a woman who later died.

Then follows a long report which I will not read. Recently in Mount Gambier a friend of mine had cause to call a local doctor to visit his dying brother. On meeting with a refusal he telephoned other medicos, with a similar result. The patient died and no local doctor could give a death certificate because none had attended him. The result was that the police took charge of the body and placed it in the morgue at the Mount Gambier hospital, where a post mortem was held and consent given for its burial. All the worry, expense and inconvenience entailed had to be borne by the deceased's only brother—a World War I. soldier on a "totally and permanently incapacitated" pension. Can the Premier say whether there is any provision in the Medical Practitioners' Act to compel a doctor, when called upon to do so, to attend a sick person, and, if not, will he introduce legislation this session to meet such cases as I have mentioned?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not know of any legislation compelling a doctor to attend any patient, but certain ethics have been established by the medical profession, and I think that, if the honourable member's question is placed before them, a ruling may be obtained. I will have an investigation made and advise the honourable member later whether any action should be taken.

UNLEY PARK CROSSING.

Mr. DUNKS—On two occasions last session I asked the Minister of Works, then Minister of Railways, whether it would be possible to erect a set of automatic gates at the Unley Park crossing on Cross Roads, and I think he said that the matter would be examined. The area around the crossing is thickly populated and the blowing of whistles by trains approaching the crossing causes much noise. Further the road is used extensively by traffic. Can the Minister of Works say whether this question is still on the files of the new Minister of Railways, and, if not, will he take up the matter with his colleague?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—When I was Minister of Railways about 20 sets of automatic gates were ordered and were to be installed at crossings where the Railways Commissioner, knowing the volume of traffic,

thought most desirable. From memory, I think the crossing mentioned by the honourable member was well up in the order of priority. I will ascertain from my colleague whether that order has been altered in any way, and bring down a reply.

HANSARD VOLUMES.

Mr. HUTCHENS—In past years members have been supplied with bound volumes of the previous year's *Hansard* before the commencement of the session, and this has been of great assistance to them, but this year, for reasons that I do not know, the 1953 volume is not yet to hand. As honourable members are experiencing some difficulty without the volume, can the Premier, representing the Chief Secretary, say when the bound volumes will be available?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have not had this matter before me, but I have no doubt it is purely a matter of Government Printing Office arrangements. For a considerable time the Government Printer has been extremely short of staff, a considerable number having left for other work. At the moment he is carrying on under great difficulty. This problem is not peculiar to South Australia: in some other States the printing of official documents is two years in arrears. I will see whether it is possible to expedite the binding of the *Hansard* volumes. I point out that honourable members have already been supplied with the weekly copies, and I believe they are still available to them.

COUNTRY ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

Mr. GOLDNEY—I believe that some years ago the Electricity Trust was able to supply electricity in country areas where, although the supply would not pay, according to trust officials, the persons to whom the electricity was to be supplied made some sort of guarantee, but that system seems to have been abandoned, principally, I believe, because many more requests were received for extensions than the trust was able to meet. Today many isolated country residents in a financially sound position would like to contribute towards the cost of an extension—either by contribution to the capital cost or by guarantee—if electricity could be supplied to their homes. Can the Premier say whether anything of that sort can be done?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No privilege previously in operation has been withdrawn: in

fact, the privileges have rather been increased—and at present the Government is subsidizing extensions to rural areas where the cost would otherwise be prohibitive, but where the trust believes that, with a reasonable subsidy, the Government can make electricity available. The Government is also making a grant of 50 per cent of the capital cost of installations that are completely outside the scope of the trust's operations. For example, only yesterday Cabinet approved of extensions in various parts which will provide electricity supplies to 628 additional subscribers, the annual cost to the Government being just over £2,000 a year. I assure the honourable member that electricity extensions have not been curtailed; instead, they have been substantially expanded.

STEEL WORKS FOR WHYALLA.

Mr. RICHES—A paragraph in the Governor's Speech stated that discussions are taking place with the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Limited regarding the establishment of steel works at Whyalla. Is the Premier in a position to amplify that statement, having regard to the resolution carried by this House last year?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Discussions have taken the form of an interchange of several letters, and two conferences have been held between representatives of the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Limited and the Minister of Mines and myself. Discussions are continuing, but the position is largely as I reported it to the House last year. At present the Broken Hill Proprietary Company is building an enormous strip mill at Port Kembla, which is taking all its available resources, and is very firm in its statement that it is not in a position to make further extensions in the Whyalla area, though it concedes that this proposal should be granted a high priority. Until finality has been reached I prefer not to take the question any further.

NORTH OF THE RIVER ROAD.

Mr. MICHAEL—I express the appreciation felt by people interested in the progress that has been made on the north of the river road. I ask the Minister representing the Minister of Roads whether he can get from his colleague a statement on the progress made and plans for the future?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will get that information.

ACCOMMODATION FOR MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Mr. DUNSTAN—*Truth* of March 20 alleged that in creating a suite for the Minister of Local Government in the Education Building the Vocational Guidance and Psychology Branch of the Education Department had been removed from that building and sent to inconvenient quarters further down the street; furthermore, that a terrazzo-lined bathroom had been built for the Minister. Is this report correct? If it is, why was it necessary to disrupt the Education Department to accommodate the Minister of Local Government, was the work paid for and done by the Architect-in-Chief's Department, and is it the policy of the Government to provide powder rooms for all Ministers?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have not read the article the honourable member referred to. When I have time I prefer to read more enlightened literature. The Government has a very limited amount of accommodation available to it. Examination was made of alternative accommodation for the Minister of Local Government, but it was found that there was nothing suitable available. The part of the Education building occupied by the Minister was normally ministerial offices. It became available to the Education Department only when the former Minister of Agriculture and his staff were moved to what I consider an unsuitable building in Gawler Place. With the Director of Education I inspected the part of the Education Building concerned and found that the space was used to a very limited extent by the Education Department, and the Director agreed with the proposals that were adopted. I understand that there is no bath in the offices, but that a shower has been erected in one of the retiring rooms and that it is available for any use that the Minister may have for it. The installations were undertaken by the Architect-in-Chief and paid for by him in the normal way.

KIMBA TO BUCKLEBOO RAILWAY.

Mr. STOTT—Can the Premier say what proposal is being considered for closing of the railway from Kimba to Buckleboo, and whether the people are to be offered alternative transport by the Government?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Under the legislation which established the Transport Control Board it is the duty of the board from time to time to make inquiries concerning the operations of various railways, and where annual heavy losses are occurring to consider

whether it is advisable to close the lines and allow ordinary road transport to undertake those services. I have no inside information on the present inquiry, but I did hear, as the honourable member did, that the board is reviewing the operations of this particular section of the line to see whether some more effective means of transport could be provided. I have no doubt the Minister of Railways has taken no action in this matter, but that the inquiry is being taken under the legislation passed by Parliament.

MOUNT GAMBIER TO MILLICENT RAILWAY.

Mr. CORCORAN—When the broadening of the railway from Naracoorte to Mount Gambier was completed the work of broadening the line onwards to Millicent was commenced, about 12 months ago, and then it was generally expected that it would be completed in from 12 to 18 months. As far as I can ascertain only about seven or eight miles have been constructed, and at that rate of progress it will take about four years to complete the work, which is of vital importance to the people in this area. Can the Minister representing the Minister of Railways say whether there are any prospects of this work being expedited?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will get a specific reply and let the honourable member know as early as possible. It was the Government's intention to proceed with this work as soon as circumstances permitted. I would not judge the time of completion by the time taken to do the work already done, because often organization is far ahead of the actual work in the field. Material and plant must be organized, and when this is arranged the work proceeds at an accelerated rate. I am sure there has been no slowing up by the Railways Department.

HOUSING POSITION.

Mr. JENNINGS—I was interested last week to hear questions asked by the members for Port Adelaide and Unley regarding our housing position. The member for Unley went so far as to say that the position now is worse than it ever was, and in his reply the Premier reiterated that South Australia is building more houses than ever before and consequently the position must be improving. I am prepared to agree with that, but at the moment there does not seem to be any provision for emergency cases. The rental programme is years behind, and there is already a big waiting list for imported homes. The emergency scheme has

been completed and all these homes occupied, but an increasing number of people are being evicted and often it is almost impossible to get emergency accommodation through the Housing Trust. I believe that is why all metropolitan members are receiving more requests now for assistance for emergency accommodation from the trust. Will the Premier take up this matter with the trust and see if provision can be made for really urgent cases?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The emergency housing scheme was put into operation to deal with such cases as those mentioned by the honourable member. From time to time considerable numbers of people in emergency homes are offered permanent homes under various housing allocations. In saying that I am going on the number of persons who I know are still being taken into emergency homes from time to time. The trust is not building additional emergency homes. From time to time I find that persons in emergency circumstances are being supplied with emergency homes and that can only mean that from time to time some are being transferred. It is inevitable that there will be eviction cases following on the relaxation of the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act, which gives the owner the opportunity to get possession of his house for his own use. The Government will do its best to prevent evictions for reasons other than the tenants being undesirable and not carrying out their obligations under the tenancies. It will see if it can give assistance.

Mr. LAWN—Does the Premier mean by "for his own use" that the owner can get the house to live in or to demolish? I know that since last session tenants of houses, one where from 19 to 21 people were concerned, have received demands from the owners, but those demands do not mention requiring the houses for use as residences but to be demolished and turned into warehouses. Will the Premier make the position clear and take steps to amend the law to make sure that an owner can obtain possession of his house only for use as a residence?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I am well aware of the provisions of the Act in connection with this matter, but after saying "for his own use," I did not say "as a dwelling," for under the Act a person who has owned a house for a certain period may serve notice on a tenant and secure the house for whatever use he wishes to put it to. Personally, I think it would be unwise to retract on the

legislation we have passed; in fact, all war-time controls should be eased as quickly as economic circumstances allow, provided such easing does not lead to great hardship in particular cases, and I am trying to avoid that hardship resulting from any steps being taken by my Government. The migration of people to the new housing areas from the city of Adelaide and the electoral districts of Torrens and Norwood proves that South Australians are not so densely packed into houses as they were before the war. In reply to the honourable member's question, I was aware of the implications of the Act, and the legislation will be extended. It was not mentioned in His Excellency's Speech because last year a direct statement of Government policy was made on this matter.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I understood the Premier to say that the emergency housing scheme was established to meet the needs of people in emergency circumstances and to provide housing for those who had been served with eviction orders, but I learned from many of my constituents who are applicants for emergency houses that the Housing Trust has to allocate homes to some employees of the Engineering and Water Supply Department. Some of these employees have had applications with the trust for very short periods, whereas people in far greater need have had applications with the trust for a long time. Has the policy for the allocation of these houses been changed, are they now being used to house departmental employees, and how many homes have been allocated to Water Supply Department employees? Will the trust cease allocating emergency houses to departmental employees in order that the people for whom they were intended may receive allocations?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The original emergency housing scheme was established, as I told the member for Adelaide, for the benefit of people living in dire circumstances. The Government caused a survey to be made and found that many people were living in the sandhills along the beaches, in creeks, and even in cellars. The emergency scheme was introduced, not as a Housing Trust scheme, but at the cost of the Government. It was purely for humanitarian purposes to provide a roof over the heads of families living under great difficulties. As the scheme progressed one or two Government departments asked for an extension of it to provide accommodation for their employees. Some departments found they could not get labour unless they provided

housing. These employees were directly engaged on installing services for houses, so the Government considered a good case had been made out and that the ultimate housing programme would be better advanced by extending the emergency scheme to accommodate certain employees. At that time we had hundreds of houses completed but not connected with the water, sewerage or electricity mains, so they were left untenanted. By allocating emergency houses to obtain more employees the departments were able to install the services and the houses were then let.

Mr. Dunstan—When was that?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I should think this scheme started about two years ago, or perhaps a little more. It has been used by departments off and on as emergencies arose, but the original allocation of houses under the emergency scheme was not in any way altered. To accommodate employees additional houses were built at the request of the departments, in some instances with Loan money deducted from the departments' expenditure.

Mr. JENNINGS—Has the Treasurer further considered some financial arrangement to enable the Housing Trust to reduce the rent of imported prefabricated homes? From complaints made to me I know that many people who were glad to get one of these houses in the first place because of the conditions under which they were living are now finding grave difficulty in paying the exorbitant rent of £3 5s. a week.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No financial arrangement can be made to reduce the rent on these houses unless we ask other people to subsidize the rent through taxation or we average the whole of the Housing Trust rents to enable some adjustment to be made. The Housing Trust is Government-owned and is a non-profit-making institution. It cannot reduce its rents unless the cost is passed on to someone else. Today there is no justification for passing on to other house owners the cost of any system of subsidy for the Housing Trust houses. The honourable member often reads articles from the newspapers on topics convenient to him, but in the *Advertiser* this morning an erstwhile Labor Premier praised the Housing Trust's operations. The Hon. Lionel Hill is not a person biased in favour of my Government, but he said the Housing Trust was doing a good job. I ask the honourable member to read what he said.

Mr. JENNINGS—In answer to a previous question the Premier was good enough to recite certain ways in which he felt the rent

of prefabricated homes could be reduced. I take it that none of the alternatives he gave was acceptable to the Government. Can he say over what period it is proposed to recover the cost of these houses out of the rents fixed, and would it be possible to reduce the rents by increasing the period?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will obtain the information and advise the honourable member. The question of amortization creates difficulty because the period fixed for a brick structure has proved to be far too short as the houses will last much longer than the period provided. We have had little experience with timber framed structures in this State, but I will get a report and see whether by internal bookkeeping arrangements any adjustment can be made. I have always felt that we are doing a real service to the community if we can keep house rents low, because it reflects upon the cost of living and influences the possibility of our maintaining our industries. It is the largest individual cost in the housekeeping budget.

Mr. Lawn—The honourable member has done the Government a service by making this suggestion.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I am not quite sure about that until I see where it leads us.

TREATMENT OF GARBAGE.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Last session Mr. Dunnage, Mr. Quirke, myself, and perhaps some other members, on various occasions drew the attention of the Premier to the advisability of turning refuse in the City of Adelaide into compost. The Premier said that an expert was coming to South Australia from the United States of America but unfortunately, so far as I know, nothing has been done in the matter. I believe that one of the reasons why our agricultural experts who give lip service to the matter of composting do little about it is that they have been trained in a school of thought that the soil can be renewed by the use of materials sold in bags, such as superphosphate and sulphate of ammonia. I was interested in a statement in the press last week that garbage is being turned into profit in Sydney. I think Mr. Dunnage mentioned the matter. The article said:—

Australia's first plant for turning garbage into commercial, saleable compost was opened at Kingsgrove, Sydney by the Premier (Mr. Cahill) today.

Will the Minister of Works prosecute the matter because South Australia is busy developing secondary industries and searching for

uranium? The Premier himself is seized with the necessity for keeping soils up to full production, and market gardeners in particular would appreciate a supply of compost like the one available in the City of Sydney.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The honourable member may have noticed from the press recently that Mr. Hodgson, Engineer for Water and Sewage Treatment, and a world recognized authority on the subject, has been given leave by the department to go abroad, and the Government is sponsoring his overseas visit. One of the items on which he will report is the disposal of city refuse and composting with or without sewage sludge. Until that report has been received I think it would be premature for the Government to indicate what is likely to eventuate. This matter is not being overlooked.

RECRUITMENT OF SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—In the Premier's New Year message published in January he said it was desired that the present ratio of students to teachers should not be increased, which is a laudable aim. He mentioned the possibility of recruiting teachers from the United Kingdom. Later, as reported in the *Advertiser* of January 2, the Minister of Education enlarged on the matter and gave details of the scheme. He said that graduates from the United Kingdom universities and graduates from the Adelaide University would be sought. The latter were to be given training in South Australia. I understand from the Minister's statement that the teachers were particularly required for secondary schools, senior classes in area schools, and senior classes in higher primary schools. I understand that the teachers from the United Kingdom universities were to be recruited through the Agent-General for South Australia. Can the Minister of Education say what success there has been up to the present and the number of applications received from South Australia and from the United Kingdom?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The honourable member's understanding is correct but I have not got the exact figures before me. I confess that the result of the scheme has been disappointing to me. I think it was far too late when it was commenced, which was a week after I was appointed Minister. It was too late in the year to hope for success, and by the time details of the scheme reached the Agent-General. There have been few responses from United Kingdom universities and very few from the Adelaide University. Mr. Nietz

of the Education Department is at present on leave in the United Kingdom and he is following up the matter. The publicity to which the honourable member referred, firstly by the Premier, secondly by myself, and thirdly by extensive advertisements in the local press and in the United Kingdom has brought a response from an unexpected source. Graduates who are skilled and trained teachers are now offering to come back to teaching. We have made a gain that way. I shall endeavour to obtain the exact figures for the honourable member.

RADIUM HILL WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Can the Premier say whether the water supply from Umerumberka reservoir to Radium Hill has been completed, whether an adequate supply of water from that source is now available, and under what conditions it will be supplied to residents?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The scheme is complete and water is now being supplied satisfactorily. A scheme to supply water to residents of the town has been worked out, and this will give a considerable amount of water at a greatly reduced price. I will get the terms of the arrangement and let the Leader of the Opposition have them tomorrow.

WALKERVILLE SCHOOL.

Mr. TRAVERS—Has the attention of the Minister of Education been directed to the condition of the Walkerville Primary School, as described in this morning's *Advertiser*, and will steps be taken to improve what appears, from that description, to be the only sub-standard building in the district?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I do not admit that the building is substandard. It is an old school, but it was remodelled in 1937, and I am advised that it is architecturally sound and that during the last five years £7,138 has been spent on it. Following on the report in this morning's *Advertiser* I have had investigations made and find that during the last two years almost 20 requests have been made for further improvements and amenities at this school, all of which have been acceded to by the department. It is not an ideal school by any means, but there are more than 700 other schools throughout the State, many of which, particularly in the country, are not in an ideal condition. During the war there was a complete cessation of school building and remodelling, and we have not yet caught up with the programme. I noticed from the press report that I shall be requested to receive a deputation from either

the Walkerville Council, the Walkerville School Committee, or both these bodies. I shall be delighted to receive such a deputation; my door is always open to any council, school committee or member of Parliament on matters of education. However, I have not yet received such a request from either the council or the school committee, although I received one concerning the school lavatory from the honourable member, which I immediately referred to the Architect-in-Chief.

HARBORS BOARD ACCOMMODATION, PORT PIRIE.

Mr. DAVIS—I have been informed that certain alterations are to be made to the Port Pirie wharves, that an additional number of men will be required for the work, and that the Harbors Board has promised to arrange for their accommodation. Can the Minister of Marine say whether such arrangements have been made and how many additional men will be required for the work?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I cannot say, offhand, the number of men to be employed, but arrangements have been made for the temporary accommodation of the board's workmen in hostels owned by the Broken Hill Associated Smelters, and the Mines Department and the board planned to provide their own accommodation in stages as circumstances required. As the Mines Department had need, for its own employees, of some of the accommodation it had made available, it became necessary for the board to proceed with the first stage consisting of one hut of 14 cubicles, with ablution and lavatory accommodation. This will be ready for occupation in one month. The work on the wharves has been approved and is part of a long-range wharf rehabilitation plan.

LOXTON WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. STOTT—After bringing the piles onto the site, the gang of workmen engaged on work in connection with a domestic water supply for the Loxton soldier settlement area have gone away, and the work is held up. Will the Minister of Lands take steps to expedite this work?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I was not aware that the gang erecting the tank on the site had dispersed, but I will get a report on the matter. The department has at all times pushed vigorously to implement a domestic water supply.

KADINA SEWERAGE.

Mr. McALEES—A proposal to sewer Kadina has been talked about ever since I have been a member of Parliament. I have heard many promises, but nothing has been done. There is no cleaner town in South Australia, and the people there are doing their utmost to keep it clean and free from epidemics, though one broke out some time ago. Can the Minister of Works say whether any steps have been taken to sewer this town?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Kadina is one of the many towns where the Government would like to proceed with deep drainage, but so far the amount of men, money and materials has been limited and the highest priority has been given to the installation of water supplies. Water, of course, is the first essential. Some towns had no water supplies and the Government necessarily concentrated on them first and then on other towns, even with a sewerage system, that had water supplies but needed better supplies. Kadina has had the advantage for a long time of a splendid water supply and an improved supply in recent years, so it has not been completely neglected. However, the whole question of what can be done towards the implementation of Government plans for the sewerage of country towns is having the fullest attention of Cabinet. I expect that at a later date the Premier will be able to say what the Government's plans and priorities are.

EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE TO STATE BANK HOMES.

Mr. LAWN—One day I hope to be the owner of a State Bank home, and others in a similar category have been wondering what the State Bank's intention is in regard to any future earthquake damage. I have a different conception from that which was stated by the Treasurer last week. Will he obtain an authoritative statement from the State Bank Board, if possible this week, on its intentions in regard to insurance cover so that purchasers may know the true position?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I said last Thursday:—

In future the board will issue an insurance policy to each of the home owners so that they will know what they are insured against and what cover they are receiving for the premiums paid. All claims received by the bank are being sympathetically considered and no person's claim will be refused without a proper inspection being made.

In the future, instead of insurance being covered by the general agreement for sale and purchase, there will be a separate policy

issued and the honourable member, or any purchaser of a State Bank home, will be able to see precisely what the policy covers.

Mr. LAWN—Will it cover earthquake damage?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—At the appropriate charge, yes.

SCHOOL EQUIPMENT.

Mr. HUTCHENS—On November 25 last I addressed a question to the Minister representing the then Minister of Education and referred to a resolution carried by the South Australian Public School Committees' Association, which resulted in a letter being sent to the Minister requesting that yard seating be standard equipment provided by the department in all schools. I said that school committees were helping buy film projectors, amplifying systems, library books, sports equipment, rest rooms, partitions, bicycle sheds, shelter sheds, floor coverings and curtains, and bearing all costs of maintaining established ovals. Will the Minister reconsider the reply given to the association and see if the committees could be relieved of the responsibility of maintaining the equipment supplied by them?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—This matter has not been referred to me since I became Minister. As I understand the position, seating in shelters is provided and maintained by the department, but yard seating is considered more in the nature of an amenity than an ordinary school building and that has been provided and maintained on a subsidy basis. I understand that has been the policy for many years and if the honourable member's request is to be complied with it will mean a change of policy. I will consult my colleagues and bring down a reply in due course.

ADDITIONAL LAND FOR SCHOOLS.

Mr. SHANNON—In considering his departmental budget for the coming year will the Minister of Education provide a sum which would be adequate to meet the cost of purchasing additional land for schools, which, because of the increasing number of scholars, have insufficient room to meet requirements? In some instances opportunities to purchase this land are quickly being dissipated because of building operations and unless definite steps are taken to rectify the position the time will possibly come when some schools will have to be removed to other parts at greatly increased cost to the Government.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I have considered the provision of a sum for the purchase of additional land but "adequate" is a relative term, and what I might think adequate

might not coincide with the honourable member's views. Nearly every week Cabinet has before it one or more applications for the purchase of additional land for school purposes, there having been three or four before it yesterday. I realize the importance of the problem and agree that unless we move quickly, spread our net widely and get adjacent land it will be necessary to move schools. I am pleased that the honourable member has brought the matter before me again because it might strengthen my hand when I make further application for the acquisition of land for school purposes.

PAYMENT OF EMPLOYEES ON NATIONAL SERVICE TRAINING.

Mr. LAWN—Can the Minister of Works representing the Minister of Railways say whether the Railways Department makes up lost time to employees while they are engaged on national service training, and what is the general policy of Government departments in this regard?

The Hon. M. MCINTOSH—The Railways Department does make up any difference in pay and I take it that also applies to other Government departments. The Railways Commissioner requires a certificate from the service authorities advising the pay received while a man is in camp, and after the allowances are added for rations, quarters, clothing, marriage and separation, the difference, if any, between the service and railway pay is paid by the department. In view of the age of national service trainees and the allowances which are added to the service pay received for seven days a week it is not very often that any difference in pay is due.

HOSPITAL AUTOCLAVE EQUIPMENT.

Mr. SHANNON—I should like the Premier to have examined what is being done by the hospital authorities for the efficient operation of equipment in regard to asepsis. I have in mind particularly autoclaves which are almost standard equipment in any hospital but which, I am informed, may be used inefficiently, thus leading to trouble for patients. It has been brought to my notice that trouble has been traced to inefficient use. I believe there is a method whereby autoclaves can be tested for efficiency, but that no attempt has been made by the Department of Health to check on their efficient operation, not even in subsidized or Government hospitals. I understand one Adelaide authority has suggested that all aseptic treatments for hospital operations in the metropolitan area should be carried

out centrally by one authority, the dressings and equipment to be passed out to hospitals as required. Will the Premier have this possible need in our hospital services investigated to see if something can be done to tie up as far as practicable the efficient operation of autoclaves in all our hospitals?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I know of no difficulty having arisen in this matter, but will refer the question to the Central Board of Health to see if any action is necessary and advise the honourable member in due course.

PHOTOGRAMMETRIC MAPS.

Mr. HUTCHENS (on notice)—

1. Has the Lands Department produced a map by photogrammetry as yet?

2. Has the Lands Department yet procured the printing machinery necessary to reproduce such photogrammetric maps?

3. How many of the approximately 600 maps of hundreds and 40 maps of counties necessary to cover the already surveyed areas of the State are now available?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The replies are:—

1. Many maps have been produced by photogrammetry for official use by the Mines, Engineering and Water Supply and Highways Departments and the Harbors Board and the Electricity Trust of South Australia. The compilation of one standard military map has been completed, another two have been commenced.

2. The matter of purchasing the necessary additional equipment to reproduce maps will be referred to the Public Works Standing Committee this week.

3. 518 and 29 respectively.

SETTLEMENT OF EX-SERVICEMEN.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (on notice)—

1. How many ex-servicemen have been approved for land settlement in South Australia in—(a) irrigation areas; (b) other areas?

2. How many settlers have been placed on the land up to May 31 last in—(a) irrigation areas; (b) other areas?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The replies are:—

1. (a) Irrigation areas — 680

Less—

Withdrawn 238 —

Allotted or allocated holdings 294 —

Leaving awaiting settlement — 148

Land being investigated, will, if accepted by the Commonwealth, enable all to be settled.

(b) Other areas — 2,122

Less—

Withdrawn 882 —

Allotted or selected 576 —

Men advised that because of shortage of land holdings cannot be guaranteed 450 —

Leaving a balance of — 214
settlement of whom must await development of further land.

2. (a) Irrigation areas 276

In addition to which 18 men have been allocated holdings and will take up occupation when the required stage of development is reached.

(b) In other areas 484

In addition to which 92 applicants have been selected for allotment and will be placed on their holdings as the blocks are developed to the required stage.

Also 915 ex-servicemen who are not applicants under the scheme have obtained agricultural loans or secured Crown lands.

LOAN EXPENDITURE.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (on notice)—

1. What amount was provided by the Commonwealth Government out of revenue to meet loan expenditure in South Australia—(a) for the year 1952-1953; (b) for the year 1953-1954?

2. What rate of interest is charged to the State for these amounts?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The replies are:—

1. The amount provided by the Commonwealth Government from all sources for the whole of Australia was—(a) 1952-1953, £122,825,000; (b) 1953-1954, £77,000,000. The amount provided for South Australia is not available as the sources of supply are unknown to the State authorities.

2. The following interest rates are being paid:—Long term loans (currency 9-13 years), £4 10s. per centum per annum; short term loans (currency 3 years), £3 per centum per annum.

CHANNEL OVERFLOW, LOXTON AREA.

Mr. Macgillivray for Mr. STOTT (on notice)—

1. What was the cost of the additional work to Channel "C" to prevent water overflowing into the blocks in the Loxton Soldier Settlement Area?

2. What was the cost of —(a) the tank; (b) the engine and pump (c) the pipeline to connect up with Channel "D" to take the overflow of water?

3. What is the average hours worked per day by the engine and pump?

4. What is the cost per hour of using this plant?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The answer to these questions will be obtained as early as possible.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD moved—

That during the present session, unless otherwise ordered, the House meet on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in each week, at two o'clock.

Motion carried.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD moved—

That during the present session, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and after the six o'clock adjournment on Wednesdays, Government business take precedence over other business, except questions.

Motion carried.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.

In Committee of Supply.

(Continued from June 3. Page 16.)

Chief Secretary and Minister of Health, Miscellaneous, £229,900.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—In discussing these Supplementary Estimates at probably greater length than has been the case in recent years, because more time is permitted to members for the purpose, I am again reminded that frequently during recent sessions I and other members on this side have suggested to the Government that, to provide for the more efficient working of Parliament and afford members an opportunity to give the fullest consideration to important subjects, particularly those relating to finance, there should be two sessions a year. The Government has not given way entirely on this matter, but, as in many other respects I could mention, and one or two I shall probably mention today because they are germane to the subject, it is gradually coming around to the Labor Party's way of thinking and adopting a policy which has been consistently advocated by the Opposition over the years.

Mr. Lawn—Without acknowledgment.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—It is unfortunate that we did not take out a copyright or patent, or whatever was necessary to protect our policy when it was first devised and published, but

I am a modest person after all, and I do not seek honour and glory from the establishment of great reforms. I am happy to know that someone else has adopted the reforms as the result of their continued advocacy by this side of the House, and to know there has been an educational impact on occupants of the Treasury benches. In connection with the Supplementary Estimates there is one point of great importance. It has become a habit in recent years to have a special sitting of Parliament just prior to the end of the financial year for the purpose of tidying up the Budget, for that is what it really amounts to. Parliament having met and tidied up the Budget, and made provision for an expenditure of some magnitude, fairly early in July the financial position of the State is published and much praise is heaped on the head of the Treasurer for his wonderfully accurate Budget forecast. As a matter of fact, I have the figures for the past four years and they show bad rather than good budgeting, and inaccurate rather than accurate forecasting.

For the year 1950-51, the estimated revenue was £32,798,000, and the estimated expenditure £32,808,000, with an estimated deficit of £10,000. Towards the close of the financial year Supplementary Estimates covering an expenditure of £287,446 were approved. Later it was found that for that year the actual revenue was £33,672,222 and the actual expenditure £33,442,693. It will be seen that these two items were considerably in excess of the estimate, and the actual result for the year, after providing the £287,446, was not a deficit of £10,000, but a surplus of £229,529. For 1951-52 the estimated revenue was £42,078,000 and the estimated expenditure £42,293,000, with an estimated deficit of £215,000. Supplementary Estimates accounting for an expenditure of £370,000 were approved and the final result for the year was an actual revenue of £42,638,205, an actual expenditure of £42,548,823, with a surplus of £89,382. For 1952-53 the estimated revenue was £49,089,000, the estimated expenditure £49,077,000, with an estimated surplus of £12,000, but towards the end of the year Supplementary Estimates amounting to £1,175,000 were passed. The final picture showed an actual revenue of £49,101,439, an actual expenditure of £49,076,490, and a surplus of £24,949. Although we have not the final figures for this year, the estimated revenue as submitted in the Budget last year was £51,355,000, and the estimated expenditure was £51,345,000, showing a surplus of £10,000. We are now asked to

appropriate a further sum of £561,530, and are told that despite this it is expected confidently that the State will finish the year with a small surplus. I suggest that we might look at these figures and give some consideration to one or two points.

When there is this underestimating of revenue and expenditure, particularly when items of expenditure are being brought into account towards the end of the financial year in Supplementary Estimates, I wonder whether one of two things, or both, are not happening; firstly, whether we are not collecting more from the people than we should, and secondly, whether we can be assured that the expenditure is being as advantageously directed as it should be. I mention this because of the wild scramble a few months ago when the Treasurer, not the newly appointed Minister of Roads who was going to solve the road problem by satisfying the growing demand for better highways, announced that £400,000 would be made available to councils provided they could spend it before June 30 this year. Reports in the press made it appear that this sum had been conjured up by the Treasurer for the benefit of road users and that it was being distributed as a form of largesse to the councils so that they might co-operate in this effort to improve roads. The plain fact of the case, however, is that there was no doubt about this sum at all, and everyone knew where most of it, if not all, came from—the increased motor registration fees imposed by Parliament last year. From the day of the passage of that Bill it was known that this additional amount would be available during the latter half of the financial year, and I suggest that instead of waiting until the period had become considerably advanced plans should have been made then and councils asked to submit estimates of the works they could be reasonably expected to fulfil during the balance of the financial year.

The second point to which I draw attention is that last year in the Legislative Council Mr. Condon moved on behalf of the Labor Opposition for the creation of a Public Accounts Committee in this State, but the motion was defeated on a purely Party vote, every solid Government supporter, and those who at various times are not quite so solid, joining in the vote which defeated this important and worthy suggestion. A spokesman of the Government said that there was no need for such a committee because our budgeting over a long period had been so nearly cor-

rect that it established that our accounting systems were all that could be desired, and that furthermore we had been commended by no less person than Mr. Fitzgerald, the chairman of the Grants Commission, for the manner in which we keep our accounts. I noticed in a press report last week that Mr. Fitzgerald while in Adelaide had some rather caustic criticism to make of public accounting systems in Australia generally and he mentioned that certain subsidies were kept hidden in Budgets. However, he did say that the position in South Australia is somewhat better than in any other State.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—He went further and said that it is by far the best.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I will accept that correction. He went on to say that there were certain things that should be done here. The fact that we are so consistently widely at sea in our Budget estimating, and that we meet at the end of the year in order to pass Supplementary Estimates for the previous year, this year of £561,000, indicates that there is scope for the activities of a Public Accounts Committee in South Australia, and Parliament should seriously consider this matter at the earliest possible opportunity. I have nothing but commendation for the expenditure proposed in the Supplementary Estimates. The first item is the provision of £229,000 as a subsidy to assist various charitable and religious bodies to provide additional accommodation for aged people. In 1952 I moved:—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the Government should take steps to provide suitable homes both in the country and the metropolitan area for aged and infirm persons who are pensioners.

In the course of my remarks I praised the good work that had been done by religious and charitable organizations, although this had not been recognized in the past when they had appealed in vain to various Governments for financial assistance. I pointed out that my motion was intended to have the widest possible significance, and it was to cover not only the aspects that I have mentioned but the various aspects of this problem that should be covered and that ultimately must be covered, but which are not covered at the present time. I quoted extensively from the investigations and recommendations of the Nuffield Committee which had inquired into the problem in England, and then, after a good deal of consideration, the Premier replied. First he took me to task because he said my motion was too restricted in that it

applied only to aged persons who were pensioners. I would have been quite happy if he had moved to strike out "pensioners," because the motion then would have applied to all aged and invalid persons. He attempted to ridicule the whole proposal, and said that it was not necessary because the Government was already doing all that should be done in this regard. There was a good deal of debate on this matter, appearing on pages 465, 564, 825 and 944 of 1952 *Hansard*. One of the points raised by the Premier was that the Housing Trust was then constructing flats for aged people with no families, and that trust homes were available to applicants in all walks of life. However, in making that statement the Premier was dragging the old red herring across the trail because, although they were available to applicants from all walks of life, what was the use of a pensioner applying for a trust home for which the rental was £3 5s. a week? I understand that the cheapest rental for a flat was over £3 a week, and the dearer types nearly £4, so that the suggestion of the Premier did not in any respect meet the requirements of my case. This became evident after the Premier had spoken, because Mr. Shannon was put up to move an amendment which I think could be classed as an attempt to salvage the position for the Government. This is the motion that finally emerged:—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should be commended for the broad policy which it has pursued in providing housing for all sections of the community according to their respective needs.

Until that time the Government had done nothing for the people whose needs were greatest.

Mr. Hutchens—They had not even thought of them.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Not until then, but apparently the Opposition stirred the Government out of its lethargy. The amendment was merely a subterfuge to save Government supporters from the necessity of voting against the motion, although, in effect, all Liberal members did vote against it in supporting the amendment. Only two Government members spoke on the motion; ten others, including two Independents, spoke in favour of it. At that time the Government was not willing to consider the question on its broad merits; it wished merely to pass a pious amendment, which, it hoped, would save its face and prevent the Opposition from succeeding in what I believe was the most commendable move I have made since becoming Leader of

the Opposition. I sought to place on a non-Party basis this question of housing those who, because of their financial position, found it hard to provide housing for themselves; I sought to have devised a policy that would take into consideration the various types of persons entitled to consideration and provide for them according to their necessity.

The Government scheme, as set out in the Estimates, seems to have been precipitately decided upon. It was announced recently—not long before an election—and a hole-stopping scheme has been adopted rather smartly without, apparently, being duly considered. The scheme embodies only a part of the greater scheme proposed by the Opposition two years ago, and in that respect it does not go far enough. The list of the various bodies that are to receive assistance under the scheme discloses that, of the 15 mentioned, 11 are in the metropolitan area and four in the country. I know that this is necessarily so at present, because many of these organizations have been built up over the years from small beginnings, and, while continually giving splendid service in providing homes for a particular class of aged person—particularly those unable fully to look after themselves—they have gradually extended their activities, and there has not been the same opportunity to build up such organizations in the country. I do not complain about the allocations of moneys to the homes mentioned, for every organization named is a worthy one, but there is still a great demand for this type of accommodation in country areas, and it will not be fulfilled as a result of the voting of this money. Further, it is a reflection on the Government that the aged and infirm people requiring this form of assistance have had to wait until a surplus was disclosed at the end of the financial year before having their case answered in this incomplete manner.

Should not Parliament try to make grants of this nature a permanent feature by passing legislation establishing the conditions under which charitable organizations may apply for grants? They would then know that they would receive those grants when such accommodation was required. At the moment it seems that we must depend on the dictum of the Treasurer as to whether sums will be granted for this type of work, which bodies they should be voted to, and whether the policy will be continued in the following and subsequent years. One condition to be insisted on is that the institution receiving the assistance will continue to be a home for old

persons. Most of the institutions mentioned in the Estimates have existed long enough to prove their *bona fides*, but, if through some unforeseen difficulty one of them ceased to be a home for aged persons, what could we do to ensure that it would continue as such?

An important aspect of the matter is being overlooked: as the accommodation in these homes is increased as the result of this expenditure, their maintenance and operating costs will be increased, thus making it more difficult for these institutions to make ends meet out of their ordinary revenues. Therefore, we shall soon have to consider not only assisting them with their capital expenditure, but also a subsidy on their operating costs. We were told two years ago that definite provision had been made to house our aged people. Last year a proposal was announced under which the Housing Trust would build 108 small homes for pensioner couples, but the demand must run into many thousands! Peterborough, a large town in my electorate, requires homes of this type, and I applied to the Housing Trust for some to be built there; but I was told that, for the present at any rate, the trust's programme would have to be restricted to the metropolitan area. The provision of these small homes is distinct from the type of accommodation envisaged in the Supplementary Estimates, and that matter should receive more attention from the Government than it has. However, it is heartening to know that the activities of the Opposition two years ago have at least spurred the Government to do something towards housing our aged, and members on this side hope that, in the immediate future, the activities of the Government will be extended along the lines of Labor policy.

The sum of £20,000 is provided to meet the loss to the State Bank Insurance Fund occasioned through meeting claims on earthquake damage to State Bank homes. This discloses a weakness in the insurance system on those homes, namely, that the purchaser of a home was not in possession of the policy and, consequently, had no means of knowing to what extent his risk was carried. Further, I understand that in most cases the insurance cover only related to the balance outstanding on the mortgage on the house, so that, as that balance was reduced, the amount of cover was also reduced, and it could happen that a man, thinking he was covered for the full value of his home, would lose his home by fire and then find out that he was entitled not to its

real value but only to the balance on mortgage. However, that is to be remedied in future, and I commend the policy to be adopted, namely that insurance policies will be issued to purchasers of homes, who will then know to what extent they are covered and have the opportunity, if necessary, to provide for further cover. I have heard the opinion expressed that the Government should not have accepted the responsibility for this loss, but that criticism is not justified in view of the history of this insurance fund. As a matter of fact, the history of this fund indicates what a lucrative business this type of insurance must be because over the years a profit of £260,000 has been paid to the Treasury and a surplus of £63,000 exists in the fund today. After we have voted this amount of £20,000 to meet the claims which will result from earthquake damage the Treasury will still be £240,000 to the good.

In discussing the amount of £100,000 to assist the finances of the Tramways Trust I am impelled to ask whether the Government has not made another blunder in setting up the present board of control. When we were asked to pass legislation to abolish the old trust and to establish this new board we were told by the Premier (page 690 of 1952 *Hansard*) that he had been advised that the following amounts would be required:—For 1952-53, £450,000; 1953-54, £350,000; 1954-55, £250,000; 1955-56, £100,000, and 1956-57, £30,000, a grand total of £1,180,000. The actual amounts provided were £500,000 in 1952-53, plus and additional £200,000 in the Supplementary Estimates, a total of £700,000, and £600,000 in 1953-54, which, with this vote of £100,000, makes a total of £700,000 or for two years only, a grand total of £1,400,000. Is an annual amount of £700,000 to become a permanent feature of our State expenditure? That amount was provided last year and we are asked to provide it this year.

Mr. Lawn—There is still a deficit of £400,000.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I am not familiar with that figure but if that is so and we fail to vote this amount it is obvious that the deficit will become £500,000. If the board has been active during the year examining all avenues for economies and has made such tremendous losses, one wonders what the position would be if it had deliberately set out to incur losses. If the old trust had remained would it have made these tremendous losses or would the position be better today? We have had

advice from overseas experts and from local sources and fares have been increased through the expedient of shortening sections. The result has been that more and more people are not using the system but are reverting to alternative forms of transport, particularly to doubling up in private motor cars. We are told that if the tramways' employees are granted something to which they have been entitled for years, there will have to be a further increase in fares. Not long ago there was a very strong rumour that monthly concession passes, including school passes, were to be withdrawn. There was an outcry and eventually the proposal, if it ever was such, was withdrawn. If this is the best that the new board can do it is about time we re-examined the position.

I notice that the idea of central depots is to be abandoned and a number of depots at terminis are to be established. It is claimed that this will result in a saving of bus mileage. It may, but it seems to me that at each of these depots there will have to be a manager, deputy manager, foreman and other administrative staff and I wonder whether the increase in management expenses will not more than counteract the possible saving in bus mileage. Apparently, the question of the employees' convenience is not receiving any consideration because at present when they return their vehicles to the central depots they all have somewhat the same type of journey to undertake to their homes, but with the establishment of local depots a man living at Woodville or Port Adelaide may complete his journey at Tusmore and have to provide means of transport from there to his home. I wonder, too, whether the complete economies of the proposal to convert gradually from trams to buses has been analysed. I realize that if the present costs of running buses and trams are compared the comparison favours buses because the tram has to provide its own highway whilst the bus runs over a highway provided by the community.

Mr. Hawker—New tram lines are being laid in Bourke Street, Melbourne.

Mr. Lawn—That route has been operating for the last three or four years.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—When I was overseas last year I found that the general tendency in most big cities was to abandon trams in favour of buses. I was unable to get any reliable information as to how that tendency came about but apparently the municipally-owned trams were gradually discarded as they wore out in favour of municipally-controlled

buses. As many of the municipalities were greater municipalities like Brisbane it didn't make much difference because in any event the municipality was responsible for running the trams and maintaining the tram track under the old system and under the new system it was responsible for running the buses and maintaining the roads. I venture to suggest that we are going to experience considerable difficulty. We have already encountered it in one of the southern suburbs where the council has delayed the introduction of a bus service because of the problem of damage which is likely to occur to a lightly constructed road. When trams are eliminated and there are hundreds more buses on the roads I wonder what some of the suburban councils will say about the damage to, nay, the positive destruction of their roads as the result of the increased traffic.

Another point to be considered in the near future is the congregation of bus traffic in Rundle and Hindley Streets. A suggestion has already been made that these streets should become one-way traffic routes. There is probably much merit in that suggestion but if we concentrate bus traffic through those streets we will obviously be forced to make them one-way traffic routes long before we would normally do so. While one-way traffic routes are desirable in cities which have been planned to accommodate them on the alternate ebb and flow principle, as in New York, it is not so easy to arrange them in Adelaide which has not been planned to enable traffic to operate in that manner.

I do not know why it should ever become necessary to abandon the Glenelg tram which, after all, is in the nature of an electric railway and which generally runs over a track which does not interfere with any other form of traffic. We approved of an amount of £1,180,000 for the rehabilitation of the tramways system and we amended the Act to provide for changing the method of control but now that we are being asked to vote greatly increased sums for this purpose it is incumbent upon us to have much more information on the question of whether it is more economic to run buses than trams and also on other questions associated with the control of this undertaking. I hope that before the session ends the Premier will be able to supply more information on these lines. On the broad question of the appropriateness of the various amounts provided in the Estimates for the Tourist Bureau and the Education Department

I think the expenditure is merited and provided it is wisely administered will be in the interests of the majority of the people in the community. I support the first line.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—I issued a challenge in the House about two years ago when I said that the Government and the Liberal Party in general had always opposed progress, and it was taken up by the Minister of Works. I now notice in the first line of the Supplementary Estimates that provision has been made for something which the Opposition has been advocating for years—assistance for providing homes for the aged. Again I am supported in my contention that the Liberal Party and the Government oppose progress until it is forced upon them. Two years ago the Opposition moved a motion, not of condemnation of the Government, but recommending that the Government make some provision for homes for the aged. The House turned the motion into one of commendation of the then Government's housing programme. The Supplementary Estimates nullify the motion carried by the House. The Government, in effect, now tells the House it was wrong in commending the Government for its housing policy because the Government has now found it necessary to provide special accommodation for the aged.

I do not oppose the expenditure proposed on a pound for pound basis with that incurred by religious bodies, but they do not provide the type of home that I prefer. Of course, we have not sufficient Government institutions to accommodate the aged properly, but I cannot praise highly enough those that we have, particularly the wards at Magill under the control of the Children's Welfare Department. I have a great admiration for the staff employed in those wards. Homes under the control of outside bodies, religious or otherwise, may not be so well run. I am not condemning any religious society, but the Government should make greater provision for homes of its own for the aged and erect dwellings for people still able to live in them. Dwellings are preferable to any type of institution. However, I am pleased that the Government has accepted, in part, a suggestion that has been put forward by the Opposition for years on behalf of a deserving section of the community.

From time to time Parliament has granted large sums to the Tramways Trust, but who owns the trust's assets? I believe they are still the property of the municipal councils,

but if Parliament is to continue to make grants the assets should become the property of the State. I do not think the administration of the trust is in the best interests of the tramways system. It brought out some overseas experts who made a quick survey of our tramway system and, I understand, attempted to stand over some trust officials in an attempt to get them to agree with their report. I understand that the report of these experts would not meet the position and, despite lengthy arguments on the merits of their proposals, I believe they stood fast and would not listen to reliable reports on the actual position. Our trust officials increased fares some years ago, then shortened sections, and later increased fares again. Now, services have been curtailed. I am not convinced that the trust is acting in the best interests of the tramway system or of the people in the metropolitan area. The Leader of the Opposition said that the shortening of sections and increases in fares had probably had the effect of driving people off trams and buses, and I agree with him. The curtailment of services is having the same effect.

Everyone knows that passenger traffic increases during school vacations, but the trust refused to increase services last month on any route. Many mothers wanted to take their children out during the holidays, but hundreds were left standing on the roadside because tram and bus services could not cope with the traffic. Several times a day tramway employees reported the position to the trust and requested additional trams and buses, but the trust refused to provide them. The trust could have obtained much more revenue, but apparently it did not want to. During the school holidays I travelled several times on a private bus on the Marion Road to the Glenelg tramline or to Anzac Highway where I can catch a tram or bus that brings me to Victoria Square or the Adelaide railway station. Every day I saw scores of people left on the roadside. On one occasion the conductor and I counted over 50 people between the other side of South Road and Adelaide who could not be carried. The bus stopped picking up passengers east of the South Road, so members can imagine how many people from the other side of the South Road through Richmond and Keswick to the city were left, and this was on a rainy day. I rang the Premier's Office, but he was engaged, so I asked his secretary whether the Premier could influence the trust to run additional services, at least for the

remainder of the school holidays, though I do not know whether anything came of it. Tramway employees have told me that every day they reported on how many passengers were left on the footpath, but the trust refuses to provide additional services. It doesn't seem that the trust wants more revenue.

Instead of bringing experts from overseas and increasing fares and curtailing services the trust should be bold enough to go out after the traffic and cope with the passengers available. This would encourage more people to patronize the trams and buses. I am not sure that the policy of substituting trams by buses is the best. Certainly I do not think this should be done immediately. Trams give much smoother riding than buses, partly because of the bad state of many of our roads. Further, we have been told that the power stations being built at Port Augusta will provide the State with cheap electricity by using Leigh Creek coal. This seems to me to be the most economical fuel we can use to supply power for our trams, but the trust is using many diesel buses. Diesel oil must be obtained from overseas, but if war broke out it might be difficult to get it. We hear continually from the Government as to how long it will be before atomic power is available and I emphasize the point, therefore, that we should be concentrating on electric power instead of on diesel oil, for whether electric power comes from Leigh Creek coal or from the atom it will still be electric power, and it should be the long range policy of the trust to electrify all its services. The tearing up of tramlines and the removal of overhead wires should be the last thing the trust undertakes in its rehabilitation scheme. The work will cost a colossal sum and it may be found ultimately that this policy was the result of panic and that the trust would have been well advised to leave it until last in its programme.

Many private bus services are operating and it is claimed that they are very profitable because they are privately owned. I know some of them and they are profitable, but I know also that they frequently leave people on the roadside. Moreover, comparatively few people get a seat on buses, for the seating accommodation is limited. If the trust adopted a bold policy of going out after traffic and took over some of these private services and put on additional buses I believe it would attract much revenue that it is losing today.

Mr. Macgillivray—The trust is a monopoly, speaking by and large.

Mr. LAWN—Yes.

Mr. Macgillivray—And those who stand pay the same fares as those who sit.

Mr. LAWN—Exactly. I have already attempted to show that the trust first increased fares, then shortened sections and then again increased fares, pulled up tramlines and tore down overhead wires, all of which I believe was poor policy, so I feel sure that I will yet gain the honourable member's support.

Mr. Macgillivray—I do not believe in Socialism in any form.

Mr. LAWN—I thought the honourable member wanted electricity for his district and water for irrigation purposes and bridges over the Murray. Upon reflection I think he will agree that there are some things he wants which only Socialism would give him.

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—As Mr. Lawn concluded his remarks I heard some reference to Mr. Macgillivray's unwillingness to subscribe to Socialism. If the Tramways Trust is by any stretch of imagination related to Socialism I could not support Socialism, but I do. No body in the history of the world has proved its incompetency in such a short time and Parliament should carefully examine its actions before granting it further sums. We thought that when the new board was appointed we would see something really worth while done, but I fail to see that it has ever lent an ear to the public—indeed it has turned a deaf ear. Whether it has lent an ear to the Government is a question which must be examined by the public.

Mr. Riches—It should be answerable to Parliament.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I agree, but it is answerable to no-one and is a little dictatorship with little concern for the welfare of the public it is supposed to serve. It is an utter disgrace that this Parliament should bow and scrape to such a band of dictators as we have on the board. We are voting it further money on the grounds that it cannot make things pay, but every recent action of the board has been an attempt not to make it pay in order to get grants to do something for the future. The Port Road service was acknowledged by the old board as one of the best paying in the metropolitan area. Even prior to the recent reduction in the number of buses all the vehicles were overcrowded and many people were left standing on the roadside. Recently a new timetable was issued, with a view to economy, and the number of buses has been reduced by five each hour. After hearing

many complaints from my constituents I recently travelled to the city on one of these buses in order to ascertain for myself the conditions that prevailed. Many of my constituents have had to wait for long periods and finally turn to some other form of transport in order to get to work. Many have been late for work and have had to resort to leaving home half an hour earlier. On the morning on which I travelled on the bus, which was due at Morphett Street corner at 8.58 a.m., there were 35 standing and 10 on the back platform, something no private operator would allow as it is frightfully dangerous. They paid up to 1s. for the privilege of standing, and this state of affairs is a disgrace to any civilized country. Recently a bus which arrived in Adelaide at 10.15 a.m. left, on a count by a passenger, 90 people by the roadside between Queen Street, Croydon and King William Street. That is the type of service that this wonderful board is providing, but what is it doing to economize? Immediately it took over the administration it commenced to increase the inspectorial staff until now there are about 90 inspectors, and the number is increasing almost daily. Their wages vary from £819 to £930 a year. These inspectors are costing £73,000 a year, even allowing for the lower rate of pay. Other members on the traffic staff are bus operators 310, motormen 308, tram conductors 339 and bus conductors 206. In the traffic staff there is about one inspector to every 12 members. The inspectors are engaged in checking conductors in the interests of the public. We have reached the stage under the policy of the present board of there being one inspector to every six conductors.

Mr. Jennings—Who watches the inspectors?

Mr. HUTCHENS—It is time the general public started to watch them. There are good reasons for a reduction in the number of inspectors. Recently the board installed radio cars so that the inspectors could communicate with each other and send on advice where needed. It is now the common practice for people who have used the tramway service for years to complain of overcrowded vehicles and an inefficient service. I was pleased to see in the *Advertiser* last Saturday a cartoon dealing with this overcrowding. It speaks with greater effectiveness than any words of mine. It showed John Citizen hanging on to a bus and asking for half fare because he was only half on. People pay a shilling to stand and hang on to straps. In the event of an accident those standing would be subject to undesirable risk. There is a whispering

campaign at the moment that the tramway service to the western districts has been cut down, due to the plea of the Government to the board to justify the installation of diesel-electric engines on the Port Adelaide and Henley Beach railway lines to flout a recommendation of the Public Works Committee. I ask people not to believe in this whispering campaign, because I do not believe that any Government member could be so deficient in reasoning to make such a recommendation. I blame the board. I believe that it has proved to be incompetent and it should be subject to examination. Immediate steps should be taken to put it under the direct control of a Minister so that representation can be heard against the abominable conditions operating today.

A line appears on the Estimates to provide grants to religious organizations for accommodation for aged persons. The member for Adelaide has already dealt with this matter and I do not propose to repeat what has been said. Members would be failing in their duty if they did not congratulate the Leader of the Opposition for having got the Government to move at last and show some interest in these people. For too long have those institutions eligible for the grant been carrying the burden of providing for the aged. We were told by the Government in 1952 that all was well and there was no need for the motion then moved by the Leader of the Opposition. The Premier said that he opposed the motion because the Government had not been unmindful of the problem and was making the utmost provision possible for the care of these people and that the Federal Government had power under section 51 of the Constitution to provide for pensioners. Apparently the voice of the Opposition was heard and the public views were quickened in the demand for something decent to be done at last for those who had suffered and been neglected for so long. There was a great flare of trumpets by the Premier from a certain broadcasting station. He said that something wonderful was to be done for the aged people by the building of homes by the Housing Trust, and that the greatest pressure would be exercised to achieve this end. Not one of those homes has yet been made available, although the Premier's statement was made 12 months ago. Now it is proposed to make grants available to religious institutions. They are being driven into the business, a purpose for which churches were not established. Although these grants are a good thing, they are not enough. These religious organizations have to guarantee that

they will continue in the service with this meagre grant, irrespective of what the future may bring. Using the churches in this way is not playing the game. Nothing substantial has been done to retain the home life which means so much for these aged people. We talk about the greatness of home life for those who spent their lives rearing families, but now they are homeless and many of them are sent to institutions where they have no home life. That is not gratitude for their services to the nation. It is time that we protested against these organizations being used in this way and the aged being treated as if they had not been worthy citizens and being forced into institutions to get protection from the winds and rains. Although I support the grants proposed, they are insufficient. Before Parliament makes further grants to the Tramways Trust there should be an inquiry to see whether it is making an honest endeavour to provide proper services. I hope all people will rally for the purpose of providing better conditions for our aged people.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE (Burnside)—The Leader of the Opposition said that the purpose of Supplementary Estimates is to tidy up accounts for the year. That is perhaps a layman's way of putting it. As everyone knows, the Government must appropriate money for every item of expenditure, and it must be properly provided by Parliament. From time to time members of the public have suggested that the Government should publish a statement of its accounts setting out the difference between money spent from revenue and from loan. It may come as a great surprise to the public to know that this is done very accurately in the preparation of the public accounts of South Australia. The Leader of the Opposition referred to a statement by Mr. A. A. Fitzgerald, a very eminent public accountant and the chairman of the Commonwealth Grants Commission. I have heard Mr. Fitzgerald pay an unqualified tribute to South Australia's public accounts. Mr. O'Halloran said that we are often widely at sea in our estimates but that statement is altogether too extravagant. When all is said and done, the estimates for the current year are only out by one per cent. I believe State expenditure amounted to about £50,000,000, and the revenue to be appropriated now is only about £500,000. In other words, where the State expected to receive £100 it received £101, or, to simplify it further, where the State expected to get 16s. 8d. it got 16s. 10d. If

all businesses, large or small, could prepare a budget so close the proprietors would be happy indeed.

I commend the Government, as the other honourable members have done more or less generously, for its decision to make grants to religious and charitable bodies for homes for our aged people. Mr. Lawn urged that there was a great need for more institutions, but Mr. Hutchens complained that people are being forced into homes run by religious and charitable bodies, where they are treated in an institutional fashion. From my experience I can say that the care the aged people get in such homes is different from that indicated by Mr. Hutchens. Aged people fortunate enough to have the care of religious bodies in their declining years do not think they are treated in an institutional fashion. Nothing could be more desirable than the way religious and charitable organizations conduct their homes. I have had the privilege of visiting some of them and they are most worthy and desirable institutions. Although Mr. Lawn gives very faint praise to such institutions for the work they are doing, I suggest that he visit some of them and see the grand work done which demands our unstinted praise. I share with some members grave concern as to the future of our Tramways Trust. The problem facing the tramway authorities is largely the inevitable consequence of the unbounded prosperity that the State is now enjoying. This unbounded prosperity has given to the State the greatest number of motor vehicles per head of any country in the world except the United States of America. People now do not want to travel in publicly-owned vehicles.

Mr. John Clark—Is that why the trams are always overcrowded?

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—It may be that a tram service is curtailed and more people want to travel on a tram than it can carry, but in the main people do not want to travel by public conveyance. If one looks at the approaches to the city one can see the growing lines of parked motor vehicles, all evidence of the increase in the prosperity of the State. People do not want to travel in a regimented vehicle that puts them down at a stopping place that suits some people but not others. They prefer to travel in their own vehicles.

Mr. Macgillivray—If the city is so prosperous, why do taxpayers in the country have to pay for tram losses in the city?

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—The city motorist who does not drive his motor car outside the city contributes to the maintenance and construction of country roads, and the city taxpayer who has no children makes his contribution towards the upkeep of country schools.

Mr. Macgillivray—Do you suggest that the country people don't do that?

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—No. It is possible for the city taxpayer not to make use of certain amenities, yet make a contribution towards their cost so that the burden on someone else will be lighter.

Mr. Macgillivray—Is not the transport in a country town provided by the local people? Does the central Government make any contribution?

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—Yes. There are grants to local authorities for expenditure on local roads. My point is that the tramway problems are enhanced by the unparalleled prosperity of the State. Reference has been made to the setting up of a co-ordinating committee for city transport. I cannot debate it at this stage but I suggest that it may provide part of the solution of this extremely worrying problem of financing all forms of public transport. I was staggered by a statement by the member for Adelaide, which, although made rather half-heartedly was nevertheless made,

that the tramways had brought here to advise them some overseas experts who had stood over certain tramways officials and compelled them to accept their report which they knew was unsatisfactory and inadequate to solve the problem. I do not suggest that the member would have said this if he had not believed it to be true, so I think this Committee is entitled to more of the inside information that he has, and which I doubt whether the Government has heard about yet. It is a very damaging statement indeed for the honourable member to make without producing any evidence that this report was forced on the tramways officials even though they knew it was not satisfactory.

I do not wish to say anything more on the Supplementary Estimates. I feel that religious and charitable institutions are infinitely to be preferred to a Government institution, however well conducted, if they are able to cope with the problem of housing for the needy aged. I express my concern about the tramways problem, but trust that the co-ordinating committee to be set up will solve some at least of the difficulties. I support the first line.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.23 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, June 9, at 2 p.m.