

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, August 5, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.**DRIVING TESTS FOR MOTORISTS.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—On November 10 last year I asked the Minister of Lands, who was leading the House in the absence of the Premier, whether the Government intended to introduce legislation to provide for tests for applicants for drivers' licences, either new or renewal licences, and he replied that the Government proposed to defer a decision until a recommendation had been obtained from the State Traffic Committee on a scheme of classified licences and tests in the particular class of vehicle the applicant desired to drive, which had been recommended by the Australian Uniform Road Traffic Code Committee. He then explained the various types of licences that had been considered by the Committee. Can the Premier say whether a report has been received from the State Traffic Committee and whether further consideration has been given to the matter by the Government?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—A number of reports have been received from the Committee on a variety of traffic problems and they have been automatically passed on to the Parliamentary Draftsman for consideration. I am not certain whether a report on this particular matter has been received but I will check the position and advise the honourable member next Tuesday.

PETROL SELLING STATIONS.

Mr. SHANNON—Will the Premier arrange for an officer to undertake a survey of retail petrol selling stations and make available to honourable members information regarding the number of stations now operating, the number in course of construction and the number of known projected stations?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Prices Commissioner has already investigated this matter and I have had preliminary reports from him. Under the Prices Act information is obtained under an oath of secrecy and I am not sure whether this information is to be regarded as confidential or not. I will have the investigation extended to the item mentioned by the honourable member. I take it that he desires to know what are the proposals for future extensions by the various companies. That will of course involve our asking the companies to give us their future

plans, and they may not be prepared to do that, except confidentially. The Government is just as concerned as honourable members and the public about this mad policy of building a large number of petrol stations in excess of public demand and at a very great waste of materials and manpower at a time when these could be used for housing and other matters. I will try to get the honourable member the fullest information.

Mr. HEASLIP—Obviously, there is a good margin of profit in the resale of petrol, which enables the retailers to build unnecessary petrol stations. Can this practice be discouraged by reducing the margin of profit on petrol sold by them with a resultant reduction of price to the petrol-consuming public?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—There has been no increase in the profit margin to the retailer of petrol for a long time and, frankly, I doubt whether it would be fair to decrease the present margin for retailers. Since this margin was fixed costs of distribution have increased and the sales volume of each reseller has undoubtedly gone down, so he is making less profit. Probably a more useful investigation would be to examine the transactions of the wholesale firms, because if they have so much money to spare that they can indiscriminately build unprofitable petrol stations, it would seem that the report by the Victorian Prices Branch, which examined petrol prices throughout Australia, did not give the full picture. I will certainly take up with the Victorian Branch the question of whether there should not be a general reduction in the profit margins for wholesalers because they are the people who are financing these extra stations.

Mr. DUNNAGE—Some time ago I contacted the Premier about petrol selling stations and suggested that perhaps a committee could be set up similar to that which now decides where picture theatres should be built. I understand the committee is representative of distributors and picture theatre proprietors, with an independent chairman. Would it be possible for a similar committee of representatives of oil companies and petrol resellers, with an independent chairman, to decide where it was desirable to have new petrol stations, and to make a general overhaul of the position? As Mr. Travers said we are getting a considerable number of petrol stations and I understand the companies intend to build many more. Will the Premier consider setting up such a committee and doing something to control the building of petrol stations?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The committee mentioned by the honourable member in regard to picture theatres arose out of disputes which existed between motion picture exhibitors and producers of films as to the conditions under which films should be sold and exhibited. There were requests from both sides for amendments to the law so that the matter could be controlled by rigid statute. After some discussion both sides asked if I would arbitrate on the matters in dispute and provide a chairman for an independent committee to deal with the future position. That was possible because both sides agreed to accept the arbitration which they proposed I should undertake.

Mr. Riches—Does it determine the disposition of theatres?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No. It controls the terms under which exhibitors hire films from producers, the percentage rejection of films, and a number of associated matters, such as the period which should elapse between the showing of films in the city and the suburbs. It has no jurisdiction over who should build theatres and where they should be situated. In the matter raised by Mr. Dunnage neither side has asked me to look at the problem and adjudicate, or suggested that it would accept any decision I made. In these circumstances it would be a waste of time to try to effect a settlement in this way. When the matter is examined by the large oil companies and they realize that their action is bound to cause not only them but other people a substantial loss and that they will not be allowed to recoup those losses from the general public, I think we will find that wiser counsels will prevail and that there will be a much more reasonable approach to the problem.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Suggestions made so far have been that the Government should take mandatory steps to stop the multiplication of petrol stations, but it must be obvious to the Premier that there is too much easy money in the petrol and oil business. I think the position would be best met if the Premier and the other Prices Ministers reduced the prices of petrol and oil. That would be a very effective way of dealing with the problem and it would provide justice to the consumers. The Premier is fully aware of what is going on. Will he give the matter consideration?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I indicated to Mr. Heaslip that I proposed to take up the matter with the Victorian Prices Branch, which is the investigating branch for oil and petrol in Australia. Most of the large oil houses have their head offices in Melbourne.

AMENDMENT OF FEDERAL CONSTITUTION.

Mr. TRAVERS—There is a report of a projected all-Parties conference in Federal circles relating to proposed amendments of the Commonwealth Constitution. Presumably, if agreement is reached a referendum will be necessary to put the proposals into effect, and as it is a very costly procedure I ask the Premier whether the State Governments have been invited to participate in any way in the conference with a view to straightening out some of the difficulties which have arisen between the States and the Commonwealth; and if they have not been invited, will the Premier consider making representations to the Commonwealth Government on the matter?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Our long experience since Federation has been that when the Commonwealth Government proposes to make Constitutional alterations they usually forget that we are operating under a Federation and neglect to consult the States on the proposals they intend to submit to the people. Consequently, the proposals so submitted have frequently not been approved by the States, and as a further consequence the States opposed them when they came before the people and they were thus defeated. We have had a series of such experiences over a long period. My opinion is that no amendments to the Federal Constitution will ever be successful if they depend upon a referendum unless they are supported by both political parties and by both Federal and State authorities. Experience has shown that if State authorities are opposed to a proposal the State authorities, being much closer to the people, are always able to influence the vote. As far as I know the States have not been consulted in anyway on the amendments now proposed, nor have the grounds for the amendments, or what they envisage, been conveyed to me personally. I have seen press references to the matter, but certainly no invitation has been extended to me to attend, and I do not believe any other State has been consulted. Whether the proposals are such that the State would care to enter into their discussion I shall not know until I have seen them, but a conference of purely Canberra origin and only including the Federal authority would find great difficulty in having its decisions accepted by the people.

MARION ROAD CROSSING WARNING DEVICE.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The warning device installed at the Marion Road crossing on the

Adelaide-Marino railway line starts ringing on the approach of a train to each station on either side of the crossing. As this causes unnecessary delay to road traffic, will the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Railways, ascertain from the Railways Commissioner whether such delay could be minimized?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will obtain a report for the honourable member.

MACCLESFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—Can the Minister of Education say what progress has been made on the preliminary work for a new primary school at Macclesfield?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I am advised that the Architect-in-Chief has finished taking levels of the land, which is irregular. The drawing of plans for the new school has been commenced, and, as soon as they have been completed, tenders will be called for the building.

IRRIGATION WATER RATES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Last session I drew the attention of the Minister of Irrigation to a committee that had been appointed by the Government to consider changes in water and drainage rates payable by lessees in irrigation areas, and he said:—

If any settlers or settlers' organizations have any factual evidence to submit on costs and will do so before the end of March, 1954, their submissions will be taken into consideration when dealing with the rates for the current financial year.

I understand that a deputation placed before the Minister details of the serious drop in returns from citrus and dried fruits and other products from the irrigation areas. Can the Minister indicate the composition of the deputation and what results it achieved?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The deputation referred to which waited on me on April 2, 1954, comprised Mr. H. W. King of Berri, Mr. E. Miller of Waikerie, and Mr. C. W. Till of Barmera, representing the following organizations: Australian Dried Fruits Association (Berri and Barmera Branches), Murray Citrus Growers' Co-operative Association (Berri and Barmera Branches), Upper Murray Grape Growers' Association, and the Australian Primary Producers' Union (Berri Branch). On April 20 I replied to the deputation as follows:—

Referring to the petition submitted to me on the 24th February, 1954, on behalf of the committee appointed by the petitioning associations in which a request was made that reductions be granted in water rate charges,

both for "general irrigations" and "special irrigations" to those which applied in 1948 and to the supporting representations made by the deputation when it met me on Friday the 2nd instant, I wish to state that, after consideration of the matters submitted I have reached the conclusion that there is no justification for a reduction of the charges, which it is pointed out are less than those made by the Renmark Irrigation Trust for general irrigations, and also less than charged by the Mildura Irrigation Trust for both generals and specials. It is expected that Government costs for the operation and maintenance of the irrigation areas will be higher this year than in 1952-53, but notwithstanding this it is not proposed to increase the irrigation and drainage charges for the current year. I should be glad if you would communicate this reply to the petitioning associations.

HOME FOR ANGASTON SCHOOL TEACHER.

Mr. TEUSNER—Because of the need of accommodation for a married school teacher and his family at Angaston I recently asked the Minister of Education whether a house could be erected by the department on an allotment close to the school. Can the Minister inform the House what action, if any, has been taken?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON— I authorized the construction of the building a short time ago and the Housing Trust undertook to build it, but some delay has occurred because the trust has been endeavouring to obtain a satisfactory tender for the work. It is now considering tenders, and if one is accepted the work can be commenced within a few weeks thereafter, although it is not known whether any of them will be accepted.

IMMODEST DRESS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Recently this State was shocked at the exploits of teenage vice gangs operating at one of our beach areas. A police inspector, according to a week-end newspaper, disclosed that teenagers who have banded together in a secret organization were drugging themselves. A number have already appeared in the Police Court and Juvenile Court on charges of having unlawfully had carnal knowledge of and indecently interfered with girls, some in their very early teens. With others I am convinced that much of this is due to the decline in the sacred observance of Christian ideals, and the parading of people almost in the nude wearing the briefest possible bathers. Accordingly, many people were perturbed to read that a special feature of a proposed drive-in theatre is that patrons may attend dressed only in bathers. As councils

seem reluctant to enact or to enforce by-laws prohibiting the unnecessary exposure of the human body, I ask the Premier whether the Government will consider amending the Police Offences Act to enable the prosecution of those who offend by such exposure?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It is already an offence for anybody to indecently expose himself, and as far as I know the police administer that law effectively, because from time to time I see reports of prosecutions. I have had no reports either from the Police Department or the magistrates that this law is not effective. However, I will obtain a report to see if there is any weakness in the general law and if there is I will advise the honourable member what action the Government will take.

OIL BURNING LOCOMOTIVES.

Mr. STEPHENS—Some time ago I directed a question to the Minister of Railways about complaints from residents adjacent to the Port Adelaide railway line that the oil burning locomotives being used were causing such vibration that their houses were being badly shaken, causing ceilings to split and walls to crack. The Minister said he could not remedy the position then because of the shortage of coal, but hoped that when the coal position improved the railways would be able to alter the method of firing. I have received many complaints lately about damage still being done and I understand that the same sort of oil burning locomotives are being used on this line. Will the Minister representing the Minister of Railways take this matter up with his colleague and see whether something can be done to prevent this trouble?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will gladly do that. I had a conversation with the Railways Commissioner before and I know he was concerned to remedy any disability. I hope that he will be able to afford some relief, if not immediately, in the near future.

PORT LINCOLN SEWERAGE SCHEME.

Mr. PEARSON—When I looked up the reports of the Public Works Committee I found that a scheme to sewer Port Lincoln was recommended on February 5, 1952, at a cost of £170,000. I imagine that the cost would be much more today, but I ask the Minister of Works whether he would get a statement on the prospect of sewerage Port Lincoln and whether he would give me a progress report on the sewerage of the hospital and school?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—It is true that I have had preliminary reports on several schemes. I do not think we have had a final report of any of the schemes, but they are awaited. As the honourable member said, the estimate of £170,000 is now out of line with reality on present-day costs. The Government is considering what should be done in reference to this and other schemes that have been reported upon. No decision can be reached until the final reports are received. It is recognized that the position is acute at the hospital and school. Two engineers of the Sewerage Branch visited Port Lincoln last week and discussed plans for carrying out the work with the western districts engineer. It is planned to transfer men and equipment to Port Lincoln and to have everything ready to commence work immediately the cast iron pipes come to hand. These are expected to be delivered next month when a start will be made. The men of the western water district will lay 10,000ft. of cast iron pipes while sewer men will proceed with the construction of 3,700ft. of sewers leading to the hospital, high school and primary school. The ejector station will be built and machinery installed more or less simultaneously with the other work so that the whole scheme should be ready for use by the end of this year. This work is regarded as more urgent than the general sewerage of the town. I understand that the council has adopted the wise policy of insisting on the installation of septic tanks where there is an adequate water supply.

RENTAL HOUSES IN COUNTRY AREAS.

Mr. STOTT—Can the Premier say whether the Housing Trust is still building houses in country areas and, if so, are they being built for rental or for purchase? At Karoonda there are six young married men who require houses. There is plenty of work in the town but the local business people are unable to obtain labour because they cannot provide homes. Will the Premier ascertain whether houses can be built at Karoonda on a rental basis?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The trust is building houses in the country both for purchase and rental but it cannot effectively provide rental houses except where large numbers are required because of the high costs of servicing homes and collecting rents. It cannot economically provide homes where there is only a limited demand. The trust is prepared to erect homes on farms for the occupation of rural workers and in this connection is prepared to assist with finance.

TEROWIE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Can the Minister of Works say whether finality has been reached regarding the application by the Hallett District Council for a further grant for assistance to provide electricity for an extension of the lighting system at Terowie?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Minister of Local Government will visit Terowie in the company of the Leader of the Opposition tomorrow when it is intended to discuss the matter fully with the district council. I hope, as a result of that discussion, that some finality may be reached.

TRAFFIC ISLANDS.

Mr. SHANNON—It came to my knowledge last night that a person who was driving a car on Portrush Road was forced on to a traffic island at the intersection of Portrush Road and Greenhill Road. As a result, he was taken to the Royal Adelaide Hospital and the car was removed by a breakdown service. For those who have not seen the island or made a close examination of it I will describe it briefly. It is about 80ft. in diameter. It has a concrete retaining wall around it about 15in. to 16in. high. The island itself rises in the middle approximately another 3ft., so any motorist having the bad luck to be forced to jump the wall has to climb still further, and if the car happens to be on its side—as I believe was the case last night—it has a fair chance of rolling over. I made an investigation around the whole structure—having spoken to a council employee who told me that a number of accidents had occurred there—and I could not find 3ft. of that concrete wall which was not marked in some way by vehicles. In at least three places the crown of the wall has been broken away. Where the accident occurred last night at least 1ft. to 15in. of the top of the wall has been broken right away. Although there have been complaints about the so-called archipelago at the corner of Park Terrace and Victoria Avenue near the Mental Hospital, I cannot see much harm in it, nor can I see much wrong with the one at the corner of West Terrace and South Terrace.

The SPEAKER—I think the honourable member is arguing about all the islands around the city.

Mr. SHANNON—I am comparing what is a reasonable approach to this traffic problem with what has been done by the Burnside Council at the corner of Greenhill and Portrush Roads.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member may explain his question, but he is really saying what he wants done. He should ask the Minister for that.

Mr. SHANNON—I would like the Minister to examine the position with a view to getting the State Traffic Committee to agree to a standard practice in these traffic islands by adopting a method of construction that will provide some opportunity of escape for the motorist who is forced by other traffic that is disobeying the traffic laws to mount the island as the only means of avoiding a collision, as was the case last night. Will the Premier take up with the State Traffic Committee the question of uniformity of traffic islands?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The topic that the honourable member has raised by way of discussion is of considerable importance. I agree with his observations and contentions that whereas properly constructed traffic islands can minimize accidents, if they are constructed in such a way as to be obstructions to traffic they can have just the opposite effect. I shall have the matter investigated from those two angles. Another angle which has just occurred to me is the question of the liability of councils as a result of the obstructions they place on roads. Frankly, when an obstruction is put on a road and it causes an accident I would think, without knowing much about the law, that there is a reasonable case against those who placed it there. I will examine the matter first as to the protection to councils who put in proper traffic controls, and secondly, as to what constitutes a proper traffic control and who should administer the law.

LOCK TOWNSHIP WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. PEARSON—Can the Minister of Works tell me whether it is proposed to improve the water supply at Lock by attention to the main from the Tod River trunk main into that town?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Following on the honourable member's representations and a deputation, the matter was thoroughly investigated. It was realized before that, due to increased consumption in and adjacent to Lock, and an increased demand on the main pipeline from Lock to Rudall, from which the branch to Lock is taken, the supply at the township has become unsatisfactory, particularly during peak periods. Costly boosting has been undertaken to remedy the position, but it has not always been successful. With

the new storage tank in the hundred of Smeaton it will be possible to meet the requirements of the town with a larger main. I have therefore approved the expenditure necessary to replace the existing main to Lock with larger pipes. I hope conditions will then be satisfactory.

SOUTH-EASTERN LANDS DEVELOPMENT: COUNTIES OF BUCCLEUCH, BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS.

The SPEAKER laid on the table the progress report of the Parliamentary Committee on Land Settlement on South-Eastern Lands Development, Crown Lands in the counties of Buccleuch, Buckingham and Chandos.

Ordered to be printed.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption of Address in Reply.

(Continued from August 4. Page 269.)

Mr. CORCORAN (Victoria)—I support the motion and take the opportunity to bring before the House many matters in my district requiring the Government's attention. I express my gratification at the visit to Australia of Her Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. For the first time in our history this great country had the privilege of a visit from a reigning Monarch. It is beyond me to calculate the good that may result to the British Commonwealth of Nations as a result. All of us must have been inspired by the great demonstrations and manifestations of loyalty. There is no doubt about the loyalty of Australians to the Crown. I was happy to know that the people of Mount Gambier, where I was born, had the privilege of gazing upon our illustrious Queen. They came from far and near. No other human being could have stirred the people as Her Majesty did. When visiting the district some weeks afterwards in company with the Minister of Education we took the opportunity to ascertain from the school children how many had actually seen the Queen, and rarely did we meet a child who had not done so. The Queen's visit will wield a mighty influence in binding and consolidating the various countries which make up the British Commonwealth of Nations, in which the hope of this world rests. With our illustrious Queen at the head, we have every reason to look forward with hope. Although conditions throughout the world are not what we should

like them to be, let us trust that we shall continue to enjoy the right to work out our own destiny in our own way.

I pay a tribute to Her Gracious Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh and trust that she will be privileged to reign for many years and that no further coronation will be necessary during the Twentieth Century. We say God bless her and long may she reign. I pay a tribute to those responsible for the organization associated with her visit to South Australia. I do not want to differentiate in giving credit, but we must pay a special tribute to the State Director of the Royal Visit (Mr. M. A. F. Pearce). I do not think any member will dispute that he successfully handled all problems, and, with the wholehearted co-operation of others, the visit was an unbounded success.

We must not overlook the fact that twice during our lifetime all the privileges and benefits bound up in our way of living have been seriously threatened, but owing to the efforts and sacrifices of our fighting forces we have survived those threats. No doubt if the same state of affairs arises again the men of this country will respond and go forth to defend it. As one who knows the futility of war, I hope nothing could happen requiring our men to respond as they did before. We have every reason to be proud of our Monarch, and satisfied with our way of life. When we look around and study the conditions in other countries which have had other systems of government, such as in Italy and Germany where those in charge led their people to utter destruction, ruin and devastation, and also Russia under the present form of dictatorship, it makes us appreciate our system of government. Although Russia may be driving along now, undoubtedly it will ultimately go the same way as Italy and Germany and right will triumph. Right will always triumph.

Members on this side were in agreement with the Government's proposal to appoint two additional Ministers because they knew that this was essential for the efficiency of the Government's operations. It was impossible for any one man to successfully handle all the work associated with railways, roads, harbours and local government. The newly appointed Ministers have the capacity, ability and the will to work to bring about greater efficiency in their departments. From my association with the recently appointed Minister of Education I have no doubt of his capacity to handle South Australia's educational problem. The Education Department must be made to

function to the best possible advantage, and I have every confidence in Mr. Pattinson's ability to carry out his job. I sympathize with him on the many problems facing him, and he can rest assured of my wholehearted support in his efforts to improve conditions in the education system throughout the State and in my district in particular.

I express appreciation to the former Minister of Railways and Local Government, the Hon. M. McIntosh, for the courtesy and attention he has shown me on every occasion when as a member I have approached him. Mr. McIntosh gave members every consideration when they brought their requests to him. Of course, he did not accede to all requests, but credit must be given to him for his efforts in those portfolios. The recently appointed Minister of Roads, the Hon. Norman Jude, is tackling another great problem, which has been created through the neglect and deterioration of our roads during war-time. The way in which the Minister is moving about the State in an effort to gain firsthand knowledge of conditions augurs well for his success in this portfolio. He has already covered much of the State, and I am looking forward to his visiting my electorate, for nobody knows what bad roads really are until he has visited that area. I have promised the members of the local councils there that Mr. Jude will be visiting their districts to make himself familiar with local conditions. He, too, will have my whole-hearted co-operation in his efforts to do what is best in his department.

I congratulate the recently appointed Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Arthur Christian, in whom I have every confidence. I pay a tribute to the former Minister of Agriculture, Sir George Jenkins, for the services he has rendered to the State over many years. Sir George must feel gratified when he realizes the way his efforts in the interests of South Australia have been widely acknowledged. I congratulate the Chief Secretary, Sir Lyell McEwin, on the knighthood recently conferred upon him, and trust that he will be spared to enjoy many years of health and happiness. I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on having established a record of 21 years' unbroken service as Speaker. I am happy to say, Sir, that at the end of that period you still enjoy the confidence of the House and are regarded by every member as being endowed with the impartiality and decorum so necessary to the performance of your duties.

In the district of Victoria the people are looking forward to the further development

of roads. The way councils are tackling the problem of roadmaking and maintenance has been criticized, and it has been suggested by some members that the work should be carried out by private contractors. The Leader of the Opposition, however, said, in this debate, that the experience of councils had led them to revert from the private contract system to the day labour system, and that is true. Our roads should be further developed and improved so that more land can be opened up. South Australians expect an early improvement in our roads because of the increased revenue available from motor registration fees, as the whole of that revenue is to be spent on roads. Indeed, according to His Excellency's speech, we can look forward to the expenditure of more than £4,000,000 this financial year. A substantial part of that sum will be spent on roads giving access to soldier settlers' blocks. In the past year I have made complaints about the condition of roads of access to soldier settlements. Although money has been allotted to councils for these roads, no work has been done on them. The councils have offered reasons to justify this, such as the scarcity of labour and equipment. This problem must be tackled with a spirit of determination to see what can be done in the current financial year. It is no good talking about road construction at this time of the year, because the work on one section causes damage to another; we must wait until the dry weather and then push on with the work.

I urge the Government to consider surfacing three roads in my district. They are between Kingston and Naracoorte, which is a main road 62 miles long, Robe to Beachport and Beachport to Millicent. I do not suggest that all this work could be done at once, but we should have a plan to enable us to tell people what is intended. Even if it takes five or six years they will reconcile themselves to the conditions if they know that at the expiration of a certain time the work will be completed. The Government is pacifying road users by patching the roads with materials that provide only temporary relief, and which are thrown up as mud in the winter and dust in the summer. The method may have been inevitable in the past, but the sooner we dispense with it and construct roads of a permanent nature the sooner we will deal with the problem satisfactorily. Last year I was told that consideration would be given to surfacing of these three roads and I will be very disappointed if I do not see some provision in the Estimates this year to carry out part of the programme. I am approached constantly by people using

roads at the back of Lucindale and those leading to other soldier settlements, and asked to make representations to get something done. I have told them to wait until weather conditions improve, and that they will probably not have the same reason for complaint at the end of the financial year. A month or two ago with Mr. Fletcher I had the pleasure of accompanying the Minister of Lands and the Chairman of the Lands Development Executive on an inspection of the progress that has been made in the development of the South-East. If anyone is doubtful about the reports of what has been done there they should inspect the area. We travelled from Monday till Friday, and from about 8.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day inspecting established pastures and areas ploughed. I have no fault to find with that scheme except that there is not enough of it. When I saw the successful pastures established as a result of the activities of the Lands Development Executive and then the thousands of acres held privately on which no development has taken place I thought that the Government should consider bringing some pressure to bear on those people to do something to develop the great resources bound up in those areas, and if they refuse to do so the Government should exercise its powers under the Compulsory Land Acquisition Act and take them over. Before I went to the area I thought the work would be proceeding very slowly but I was impressed by the rapidity with which it has been carried out. At one place I viewed an area of 5,000 acres from the top of a hill, and saw 10 or 12 Majestic ploughs each turning over 10 or 12 acres a day, so it will be realized how quickly the work is being accomplished. I was struck by the possibility of utilizing Government equipment for the development of adjacent areas because it is beyond the financial capacity of an individual to buy such machinery. If this could be done something might be accomplished with the undeveloped land. We often think of the part that we play in development of land without paying any tribute to the part played by machinery manufacturers, but we should realize that it is due to a plough and tractor that we are able to get on with such jobs today. We would have no hope of carrying them out if we had to use horses; it would be a matter of economic impossibility. It would be of advantage if the Government could arrange for members to inspect the South-East because those who have not seen the work going

on would then know what is proceeding. In 98 cases out of 100 those who have settled on the land down there are successfully established. Almost all those I spoke to, and those down on the famous Eight-mile Creek area that I used to read about but did not actually see, were successfully established. I will not say that all the problems in those areas have been solved, but they can be surmounted and the settlers are happy and satisfied. The people who make the biggest noise are those who have been unsuccessful, though it may not have been their fault. If they were not endowed with the qualifications necessary to undertake the work would it be reasonable for us to conclude that they should make a success of it? However, I urge the Government to examine the large estates. I think 400 returned soldiers have qualified to be placed on the land, but there is not sufficient land for them. The Government should see what the people holding the broad acres are doing about developing them. There is an obligation on the Government to see that these broad acres are fully developed, because if something is not done about this matter soon we may not be permitted to hold this country; we may finish up as boundary riders for the Japanese or some other people.

I referred to compulsory acquisition, but I am not unmindful of the rights of private ownership and I will not be a party to confiscating property. I would tell the big land-holders of their obligations and if the Government failed in its obligation it would then be a party to the downfall that would ultimately overtake us, and there would be no one to blame but themselves. I acknowledge that most of the soldier settlers should be thankful for the opportunity of establishing themselves on the land. I realize that returned soldiers do not want anything more than justice. They do not want charity, and I know that the conditions under which they have been settled are totally different from the conditions under which the returned men of World War I were settled. One of the redeeming features of our present land settlement scheme is that ex-servicemen are now being settled on a perpetual lease basis. There were some objections to the Bill that the Commonwealth Government ratified some years ago because a perpetual lease clause was included, but I know that the Chifley Government insisted that it remain, otherwise the States would not get Commonwealth assistance in this scheme. The perpetual lease clause was insisted upon because it gave settlers a reasonable opportunity to

hold their farms. Returned soldiers after World War I took up farms on the agreement to purchase system. They had to pay principal and interest commitments annually, and when the markets collapsed they were confronted with mounting financial obligations that they could not meet. Practically the only settlers to survive were those who had land on perpetual lease. This system not only safeguards the interests of the returned soldier, but prevents the possibility of re-aggregation of large estates.

In the Tantanoola area much of the land was allotted in small blocks, but as time went on and settlers failed the land fell into the hands of the big landholders. I have no particular quarrel with them, for whatever the big landholder does is his own business and he has the right to take advantage of any laws and privileges. Do not blame him if he is not getting on with the job of land development; blame the Government that tolerates it! Sentiment must no longer prevail. We must push aside sentiment, for there is no sentiment in business. We must remove sentiment in order to act in the best interests of the nation and do what we know to be right. I congratulate the Minister of Lands on the success of his efforts so far. He has my moral support, but I shall keep on advocating my views about land development, and he realizes it. A large area was purchased on Kangaroo Island and I have heard both favourable and unfavourable comments about it. Some have spoken about its production possibilities, but others have referred to the disadvantages of isolation and poor transport facilities. I am sure these disadvantages can be overcome. If 71,000 acres of land is awaiting development let us get on with the job. I understand a faster shipping service will be provided, and this may remove the disabilities on the island. The Minister of Lands has told me that he is greatly impressed with possibilities there and has high hopes.

There are considerable difficulties in educating children in the far-flung parts of my district. People engaged on land development work there have many problems in the transport of their children to school. I compliment the Lands Development Executive on the assistance it has rendered in establishing and maintaining roads. Without the use of its equipment local councils could not have done as much as they did. It is essential that everything possible be done to provide transport for school children in the remote areas. I realize that the Minister is seriously considering the

matters I brought to his notice, but at this time of the year we are confronted with adverse road conditions. Local councils must be depended upon to maintain good roads to scattered areas. They are facing their responsibilities but when they appeal to the Minister of Local Government for financial assistance I hope he will satisfy himself of the reasonableness of their demands and not turn a deaf ear to their pleas. I support the Government's policy of closing small schools and establishing area schools. The Education Department is responsible for the conveyance of over 10,000 children to country schools, but those children are not picked up at their homes and delivered to the school. Some have to travel three or four miles to the pick-up point. I was speaking to children at the Penola School and three or four of them indicated that they had to ride ponies distances of up to four miles to the pick-up point. When they arrived they had to feed and water their ponies and unharness them. When they returned at night they had to saddle them and then ride home.

We must do our utmost to cater for the needs of the people outback. I applaud the courage of the women who go with their husbands into the remote areas and share the trials and tribulations associated with establishing the farms. I will fight for these people on every occasion and I hope the Government will not be unsympathetic as it must have some appreciation of the part played by these people. I noticed in the Governor's speech that 766 ex-servicemen have been settled on the land and that a further 110 applications have been approved. When we have met our obligations to the returned soldiers—and our first responsibility is to them because we made them promises—we must consider settling the thousands of other young men who are willing and capable of undertaking settlement. There is no necessity to worry about the disposal of the resultant increased production because not far from Australia people are dying in thousands from starvation. Those who suggest reducing the areas planted to food are more communistic than those they accuse of Communism. We must exploit our food producing potentiality and feed the teeming millions to the north and keep them quiet. Communism does not thrive where people are prosperous and enjoy the benefits of life, but in down-trodden countries where people are treated like dumb animals. If we do not assist those people we will have to pay the price. We have the resources—let us develop them.

The broadening of the gauge in the South-East is proceeding slowly. When it was completed to Naracoorte the Premier said that the line would be extended to Mount Gambier within 12 months. It took three years. Similar hopes were expressed about the section from Mount Gambier to Millicent but work has been continuing there for about 18 months. No doubt there are reasons for the delay but I sincerely hope they will be overcome and that something will be done to expedite this work which, when completed, will be of great value not only to Tantanoola and Millicent but to Cellulose (Australia) Ltd. which has been established in that area. The success of that industry is an argument in favour of Labor's policy of decentralization. I urge the Government to proceed with all possible speed with the broadening of that gauge. Mr. Dunks referred to land settlement and to the wool production of this State.

Mr. Lawn—Is he another King William Street wheatgrower?

Mr. CORCORAN—He informed members that he had unlimited practical experience on a farm in Victoria. I do not doubt the authenticity of his claim, but I must contradict some of his remarks. He said we were living on the sheep's back, which is not far from the truth; wool is the main factor in our economic system; it provides most of the financial credit we have in the Old Country. He said, however, that it was land in the far north, held mostly under perpetual lease, that was carrying the bulk of the sheep and that the South-East did not play a big part in wool production until the introduction of superphosphate. That is contrary to fact. I refer the honourable member to Coola station, which ran 90,000 to 100,000 sheep way back when I was an infant. There were many others—Mount Schank, Mingbool, Koorine, Penola, and Nangwarry. At Coola there were 32 shearers—16 on each side of the board. It produced about 1,200 bales of wool, and that was before superphosphate was ever thought of. The South-East was not behind the times. There were men in those days who had a full conception of what was bound up in wool production. I can remember when they scoured their wool, but we have slipped back in that regard. Nowadays, it is all sent away and we pay freight on the dust and dirt in it.

I think the member for Mitcham will agree, on reflection, that all the sheep stations too numerous to mention were playing an important part in South Australian's economy from its

earliest days. Happily quite a number of them have gone out of existence. There was Moorak, owned by Col. Percy Brown, who went down in the "Waratah," which disappeared between Durban and Cape Town many years ago. Look at Moorak today; where there was one station owner and half a dozen boundary riders there are now hundreds of families happily established and enjoying every degree of prosperity. Such progress supports Labor's policy on the subdivision of large estates. There were Kongorong, likewise part of Mount Schank, Wrattenbullie, Penola—all those places are things of the past, but their owners played their part in the days gone by. I am not ashamed to tell this House that about 50 years ago or more I picked up wool at Coola, and it was a flourishing station then and had been for perhaps 40 years before that. I was paid 12s. 6d. a week and worked from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. I am none the worse for that for I suppose the physical exercise stood me in good stead in later years, and it was all experience. I hope, however, that the Government will take steps to see that the balance of Coola and Mount Schank and Mingbool and other stations—and they hold quite substantial portions yet—are acquired for soldier settlement. We have no doubt about their suitability for the purpose for we know how successful the settlers already on parts of Coola have been. These places require little in the way of preparation for development excepting fences and homes. This is something for the Government to consider seriously, for in this way it would be able to cater for quite a number of the servicemen who are still waiting for land.

I regret to say that the important town of Naracoorte is still without a sewerage scheme, with no signs of getting it. It is a regrettable fact that in these days of prosperity that the Premier talks so much about we cannot provide amenities of this sort whilst the people are in a position to pay for them. I agree with the member who suggested that instead of talking about reducing taxation we should talk about providing these essential amenities while the people have the money to pay for them. If there is a turn of the tide they may not be able to afford them. The health of the community is bound up in efficient sewerage. I know that this matter has been referred to the Public Works Standing Committee and on the last occasion I inquired it was still there, but I hope that the Committee will soon be able to reach a conclusion and submit a report so that

during this financial year a definite step forward may be taken to provide Naracoorte with sewerage. The same need arises in Mount Gambier, Bordertown, Port Pirie and other towns but nothing seems to be done, and this does not say much for the progress we are making. I ask members to visualize the state of affairs during the depression days and compare them with the situation in this boom period. I cannot see that much progress has been made in providing our people with long-needed services. Therefore, I ask the Government to give very serious consideration to these things and try to devise ways and means of providing this amenity which is so closely linked with the health of the people.

I do not propose to weary the House any further because I will have opportunities during the debate on the Estimates to discuss other important matters which I have at heart. I am concerned about the welfare of the district I represent and I am trying to do the best I can for it. The general impression of people outside is that when the House is not sitting members simply sit down and do nothing. I wish they could get an insight into the life of a Parliamentarian for they might then develop a more sympathetic attitude. He is generally a man who is putting all he can into the job; a conscientious man trying to do his best for the people he represents. My retort to those who talk in that strain is, "Do not imagine that members are having a holiday, for a man who has been in Parliament for any length of time is one who has at heart the interests of the people he represents."

I content myself in conclusion by again assuring the Government of my support when it brings before this House anything I consider to be in the best interests of my district, but I will fight strongly against anything I consider to be contradictory to the principles of democracy. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

Mr. RICHES (Stuart)—Mr. Corcoran has a big voice, a big heart and a big outlook and I commend him for his contribution to this debate. I humbly associate myself with the tributes he paid to the Ministers who have been elevated to Cabinet rank and the one who has retired. His gracious tributes are supported by members generally, but it was characteristic of the honourable member that he took unto himself the voicing of those sentiments. Generally, the tone of the contributions in this debate have reached as high a

standard as I have heard in the last 21 years. Notable have been the contributions by our younger members: I thought Mr. Dunstan and Mr. Jennings excelled themselves. The House has in them a definite acquisition. I associate myself with the sentiments expressed by Mr. Corcoran in relation to the very great pleasure we had during the recent visit of Her Majesty the Queen. It was an education to me. There were two outstanding features of the Royal Visit. One was the remarkable unifying influence that we experienced. I do not know of anything in recent years that has drawn our people together with such remarkable success as the Royal Musical Festival at Wayville and the other public functions associated with Her Majesty's visit. The other outstanding feature for me, and it was something I did not expect to see here, was the remarkable spontaneous response from our people. I thought the Australian was not a demonstrative individual. I had read that as Her Majesty moved about the cities in the Old Country it was customary for the people to line the route, take up positions early and wait long hours to see her, but I did not expect it to happen here. To my surprise it did. As I have moved about my electorate I have learned that people travelled hundreds of miles and went through all sorts of trials to get a glimpse of Her Majesty. I express pleasure at the Royal visit and I congratulate all who were associated with the arrangements. I was particularly pleased at the large number of public functions.

I support the motion, but desire to express my keen disappointment at the lack of any real policy in the Governor's Speech. A few years ago we looked on the Opening Speech as a statement of Government policy and as an outline of the business to be placed before Parliament, but an examination of the Opening Speech this year shows that it is merely a wordy document purporting to be a record of the Government's achievements during the past year, with a somewhat casual reference to some of the minor and in the main routine matters that would be dealt with during the session. I sympathize with those who had to compile the speech because of the difficult task they had set before them in giving an inspiring account of Government achievements. It is small wonder that the first page of the speech under these circumstances had to be devoted to the recording of the wheat, wool and barley harvests, the estimated potato crop, a reference to the fruit harvest and the good lambing

expected. Then followed a recital of the progress of the public works being undertaken in the various parts of the State—the normal public works that are carried out in any State. I suppose the inference to be drawn is that but for the fact that there is a Liberal and Country League Government in office these things would not be done. That, of course, is just too silly to merit serious thought. Credit might have been given to the Government for putting the uranium at Radium Hill, and for decentralizing industry by placing coal at Leigh Creek and iron ore at Iron Knob. These seemed to be the only things that were overlooked: perhaps the omission will be remedied next year. The Opening Speech dragged to a conclusion with a reference to some of the routine matters to be introduced. What is left of price control is to be continued. The Inflammable Oils Act is to be amended, and so on.

There is little to indicate that consideration has been given to the real problems facing the State—problems associated with education, hospitalization, decentralization of industry and population, housing, transport and the like. Some statements have been made since the Opening Speech was delivered, and from them and a perusal of the Bills of which notice has already been given it would appear that any resemblance between the Opening Speech and the real legislative programme to be dealt with is purely coincidental. This has been brought about by pressure of public opinion and the publicity given in our newspapers to various matters. In the Opening Speech we heard very little about them. State Parliaments are or should be closer to the people than the Commonwealth Parliament. They more directly govern the way of life and have a greater influence in determining the standard of life of the ordinary citizen than do Commonwealth Parliaments. One would have expected to read into the Governor's Speech some indication that the Government was prepared to grapple with the problems associated with our expanding population, and that there would be a clear indication of policy on matters like housing, education, hospitals, decentralization and transport, in addition to other matters of vital concern, but the speech is as devoid of policy as the River Torrens is of fish. The Government seems to be adopting the attitude that the seasons are good, production is high, and all is well. I was interested to hear the warning given by Mr. Heaslip in this regard. He sensed complacency on the

part of the Government in this matter and his warning was a timely one.

The Government also claims that the wage earner was never better off than he is today. What this has to do with the legislative programme I do not know, but the Premier sought to elaborate on the matter when he spoke. No doubt he expected to draw fire from this side of the House, and I am sure that he will not be disappointed in this respect. I claim that it is far from the truth, because the average wage earner finds that the desirable and most important things of life are more difficult to obtain today than immediately after the war. It is more difficult for the worker to purchase a home today than it was a few years ago when one could be purchased on a deposit of £100.

Mr. Dunks—What about his motor car, refrigerator and washing machine?

Mr. RICHES—The lending institutions today require such large deposits that a smaller percentage of the people than ever can afford to purchase a home. Can the honourable member deny that?

Mr. Dunks How does the price of a home and the wage received today compare with the price and wage of 30 years ago?

Mr. RICHES—That is not the whole story. The lending institutions do not recognize that. They are not prepared to increase their advances according to increased costs of construction. They require from the home purchaser a far greater deposit; it is out of all proportion to the alteration in money values and the increase in wage levels.

Mr. Dunnage—That is not correct.

Mr. RICHES—It is. Fewer people today are able to own a home.

Mr. Dunks—Prove it with figures.

Mr. RICHES—I know the position from experience. If the honourable member were remotely in touch with the people in his district he would know it also. At the last Federal elections both Parties announced that they would take up this matter so that there would be a more liberal advance from the banks and other lending institutions to enable people to purchase a home. Whereas after the last war one could be purchased with a deposit of £100, a deposit of nearer £1,000 is needed today.

Mr. Dunnage—Nowhere near it. Go to the Housing Trust and find out.

Mr. RICHES—The trust has had to step in and give second mortgages. By and large the only relief being given to the housing situation

today is that provided by the trust. The advances from the ordinary lending institutions are not keeping pace with the housing demand. I expected to find some reference in the Opening Speech to this matter. I thought I would see an indication that the Government would move to increase the amount that can be advanced by the State Bank to home purchasers, but there is no mention of it. I hope it does not mean that the Government will not pay attention to the matter. It should approach the problem realistically and make advances available to home purchasers so that the thrifty wage earner can purchase a home. The acquisition of a home is one of the most desirable things in life. We would be doing a wonderful service if we encouraged the people to possess a home. The economy of the country has so changed since the end of the war particularly, and more particularly since the defeat of the Chifley Government, that it is more difficult for a person to possess a home. It is my experience that the number of people enquiring about purchasing a home is not so great. Many people want to own a home but the deposit required is beyond them. The great demand today is for rental rather than for purchase homes.

No-one can deny that a crisis is developing in this State in regard to the education of our children. The inadequacy of staff and accommodation has been dealt with at length by the members for Norwood and Gawler and it is a matter of concern to all. I do not propose to go over the ground they have covered so excellently. They have made out a case which I feel must receive the Government's attention. It is true, as Mr. Dunstan said, that much more money is needed. Whatever the position in other States, it is obvious that a larger education vote than that envisaged is required for South Australia. Mr. Dunstan has suggested education loans. I am prepared to agree with him that money is required for buildings. In fact, most of our school buildings are built out of loan money, and I am of opinion that a greater allocation must be made for education if we are to be fair to the coming generation. Loans from capital expenditure in relation to education are possible. The practice of constructing buildings from loans has been adopted by this State over the years. What is needed is a more realistic approach to this problem; a greater proportion of loan moneys should go to the Education Department for urgently required buildings. I am

not at this stage prepared to support a loan for departmental expenditure on other than capital works. The cost of education should be financed from the State's revenue, and with hospitalization it should be a first charge on revenue.

As to the case made out for increased expenditure for carrying on education, the Premier implied that because South Australia is a claimant State and because one of the non-claimant States in particular was not spending quite so much per capita on education, it would be quite impossible for this State to increase the education vote. I hope that is a correct resume of what he intended to convey. However, a perusal of the Commonwealth Grants Commission's report for 1953 showed that for the training of teachers the expenditure in South Australia per capita in 1952 was 4s. 2d., in Western Australia 7s., and in Tasmania 4s. 11d. It also shows that the per capita payment for education generally in South Australia was 118s. 8d., in Western Australia 143s., and in Tasmania 141s.; so of the claimant States we spend less per capita on education than any other. The Premier's excuse for refusing to grapple with the problem, which was intended as a reply to Mr. Dunstan, will not stand investigation.

I should like Parliament to call for a statement from the Education Department as to the reasonable needs of the State in connection with the education vote. I suggest that the report would be staggering. I understand that the present practice is for the department to submit recommendations for expenditure and to confine its estimates to an amount somewhere approximating the sum which it thinks the Government may make available. But let us have a statement from the department as to the extent of its real needs and then let the Government or Parliament get down to a discussion of ways and means of finding the money, or show some good reason for curtailment. The department is made to fit its programme into the pattern demanded either directly or indirectly by the Treasury. It has to plan as best it can with the amount of money it thinks is likely to be made available. It would be profitable if the departmental officers were given an opportunity to state the reasonable education needs of the State and for the Government to attempt to adjust the State's economy to fit the pattern thus presented. I doubt whether there would be a State surplus if the Education Department met present demands.

Mr. Dunstan examined the position in relation to departmental staff shortages and rightly indicated that higher rewards and allowances are required if young people are to be enticed into the department. I support the call for a recruiting drive. In this connection I draw attention to what I believe to be an untapped source of supply of teachers. Allowances should be increased to make it financially possible for a country workingman's son or daughter to enter the Teachers College. The payment to a preliminary probationary teacher is about £1 a week, with £45 a year allowance for boarding away from home. Board is not available for anything like that sum, and in practice the whole of the student's pay and allowance has to be supplemented from the home budget. To many this is impossible, and to others it represents an undue hardship. Unless the family is living in Adelaide, or is fortunate to have relatives or friends living there, it is not financially possible for the ordinary wage-earner to send his son or daughter to the college. I know there are bursaries and exhibitions, but if the student accepts the £1 a week already referred to the bursaries are automatically cancelled. I know also that some country students are going into the department. This is to their credit, because they are doing it at considerable sacrifice to themselves and at considerable cost to the family.

Another feature of any recruiting drive might well be the establishment of branches of the Training College in the country. We might call them regional training colleges. It has been suggested by educationists that the Whyalla multi-purpose school would lend itself admirably for such a purpose. I have heard of no argument against them. The department has to call women into service to attend country primary schools for a few months, and then they are sent out as teachers. Surely the set-up of the multi-purpose school at Whyalla could be conveniently used to establish a training college. Similar regional training colleges could also be set up in other districts.

Mr. John Clark—It is done in New South Wales.

Mr. RICHES—I did not know that. It would be an incentive to young country people to enter the department, because they could then stay with their own people, and it would be possible for a wider section of the community to enter the teaching profession, which I think is the most important of all. These people are entrusted with the teaching of our

young people, the moulding of their thinking, and to a large extent, the moulding of their character. We should see to it that education and hospitalization have a first call on the State's revenue and upon our planning. The need for young people to come to the city is a definite disadvantage, and some decentralization would be of considerable benefit. The department is training emergency teachers in country primary schools. Surely better results would be obtained if proper training facilities were provided in some of the larger country towns.

I shall refer to some of the schools being erected in country areas, particularly the one at Willsden. This is the new Housing Trust settlement near Port Augusta. The first portion of the building has been erected. It is the type commonly referred to as a "pre-fab." I know the circumstances leading up to its erection and do not want to criticize any officer of the department, but it is not a building of which the State could be very proud. It had to be erected in a hurry. A crisis had developed in accommodating the children and time was the essence of the contract. That crisis should never have developed because the situation had been placed before the department for at least two years before it realized it had to build this school. It was due entirely to procrastination by the department. The existing buildings were erected and have been accepted, but the people hope they will be regarded as temporary. They ask that all additional buildings at this site should be of brick or cement and in keeping with the standard set in other parts of the State. I pay a tribute to the planning and construction of the schools at Whyalla South, Whyalla West, and Woomera, and ask that the remaining buildings listed for Willsden should be of a comparable standard. The other schools are equipped with shelter sheds, ablution blocks, cast enamel hand basins and other facilities which are lacking at the Port Augusta schools. The wash basins at these schools are the old fashioned sheep-trough kind and there is no ablution block at any of the schools.

Mr. Hutchens—You do not mean to say they have put a sheep trough at the new school.

Mr. RICHES—The one at Willsden school is of the sheep trough type.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—Is it not more hygienic to wash under running water than in a dirty basin?

Mr. RICHES—I do not know what that has to do with it. The cast enamel hand basins at the Whyalla schools are under running water.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—The practice is to put a plug in a basin and frequently the basin is left in a dirty state.

Mr. RICHES—There are also plugs in the other type. I am asking that the conditions at the Port Augusta schools should be similar to those at the other schools referred to in my district. The 1954 lavatory accommodation at the Willsden school is at least 50 years out of date. The present buildings may be acceptable as a temporary means of meeting the crisis, but under no circumstances could they be accepted as a suitable standard for a new school which will almost certainly have to accommodate approximately 1,000 scholars in the next few years.

I referred to the fact that today the ordinary wage-earner found it more difficult to purchase his own house and to educate his children than was the case a few years ago. I mention it in answer to the contention of the Premier and the member for Torrens that the men in industry were never better off. Last week, at the request of the Port Augusta High School council, I asked the Minister to look into the matter of allowances for books for high school students. A few years ago these were provided free, I think, for all high school children, certainly for those who were in the compulsory age group. Incidentally, I believe that they should all be in the compulsory age group until they attain the age of 16. But the day of the free books has gone. The department decided to make a cash grant instead of providing the books and limited this grant to £3. I have seen accounts for books amounting to just under £11. All fees for students attending technical classes were increased at about the same time as the free book provision was withdrawn. And we could go on.

The member for Torrens in his address last evening claimed that the Labor Party had been guilty of a levelling down process until today the professions were losing young men to industry because greater rewards were offering to labourers or artisans of various types, but I deny that the Labor Party has ever advocated or supported a levelling down programme. We have always advocated a levelling up programme. I may be wrong, but I have always held the belief that there is a dignity attachable to honest labour and that the wife and children of the labourer are entitled to at least some of the comforts of life usually provided for the women and children who are supported by the professions.

Mr. Dunstan—The member for Torrens would say you are preaching greed and fear!

Mr. RICHES—It is only justice. I agree that over the years the lot of the wage-earner has been improved, but I deny that anyone has suffered thereby or that the system has got out of focus. When the member for Torrens was speaking in this debate, I interjected:—

Are you suggesting that young men have deliberately gone into industry rather than law when they have had the opportunity of studying law?

Mr. Travers replied:—

Yes, and that was the finding of the committee. If they choose law their education is paid for. There is hardly a man at the University paying his own way. These boys are lured away by the high wages offering in industry. A boy desiring to enter the legal profession has to do about four years at a secondary school beyond the compulsory school-leaving age, followed by about five years the University.

That explains why young men are not entering the legal profession in greater numbers: the average citizen cannot afford it. Another difficulty is the fact that in some instances suitable subjects are not taught in country high schools. How many lads, for instance, have been unable to take Latin at a country high school and later, on coming to Adelaide to do Leaving Honors, have had to start at the beginning with first year Latin? How many working men can afford to give their sons nine years schooling beyond the compulsory school leaving age? Make it financially possible for young men and there will be no dearth of students. I do not believe that any young man today who has the opportunity of taking a course in law would deliberately throw away that opportunity and take work as a labourer or as an artisan instead. I know of no working man's son doing it. Further, I doubt whether there is a professional man's son labouring anywhere. I agree with the member for Torrens that our best young men should be attracted to the legal and other professions, and I believe that given the opportunity they will enter the professions. Another paragraph in the Governor's speech calling for comment contains just a line and a half, but it has to do with one of the most important matters facing this State today. The paragraph states:—

Discussions are taking place with the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Ltd. regarding the establishment of the steel industry at Whyalla. That is all. In spite of the long discussion that took place in this House last year, the resolution that was carried, and the repeated reports by the Director of Mines to this Parliament not only last year, but for the last two

or three years, we get one and a half lines. On the next sitting day I asked the Premier if he would elaborate on that statement, and he replied that discussions have taken the form of an interchange of several letters and that two conferences have been held between representatives of the B.H.P. Co., the Minister of Mines and himself. The Premier continued:—

Discussions are continuing, but the position is as I reported it to the House last year. At present the B.H.P. Company is building an enormous strip mill at Port Kembla, which is taking all its available resources, and is very firm in its statements 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.

The B.H.P. is firm in its statement that it is not in a position to make any further extensions in the Whyalla area. Does the Premier expect this House to accept that as a satisfactory reply to the case presented here by the Director of Mines? The Director in a case that has never been answered called for the erection of a steelworks at Whyalla within two years. That was three years ago. He drew attention to the time factor and the heavy cost to Australian industry involved in the importation of steel from overseas and warned that the necessity to import steel would increase. Parliament has never had submitted to it a more complete case for the establishment of an industry or a more definite warning as to the future or a more accurate assessment of the requirements of industry; but, because the interests concerned are bigger than the Government, no other report has received such scant attention by those whose responsibility to the State demands that action should be taken to correct the existing anomaly: a State with one of the richest deposits of iron ore in the world is short of steel and galvanized iron and has to import its requirements from overseas. Steel for preliminary work at the Port Augusta power station had to be imported from France and steel has had to be imported from Japan, of all places, by the Sydney Water Board. Mr. Dickinsons' warning is proving to be all too well founded, but the B.H.P. Company is firm in its statement that it is not in a position to make further extensions in the Whyalla area. To the extent that it has built an enormous strip mill at Port Kembla, as stated by the Premier, and has developed Yampi Sound at the expense of establishing steelworks at Whyalla,

the company has got away from the spirit, if not the letter, of the agreement with the Government. When the agreement was before Parliament in 1937, the then Premier said:—

I am certain that the establishment of this blast furnace will be followed by the establishment of steelworks, and I can visualize the development in this State in connection with secondary industries. I am sure that every member will approach the question with that aspect in view. Not only should members consider what it gives to us today, but what it will mean to South Australia in the future. It means a lot today to have a firm prepared to spend approximately £1,500,000 on the works set out in the agreement. Ultimately we can look for the establishment of steelworks. No matter to what part of any country we may go, it will be found that once a blast furnace has been established for the manufacture of pig iron, steelworks ultimately follow. That is a natural corollary

The position is that blast furnaces for producing pig iron do not of themselves require a great deal of water and no large Government water schemes are demanded for this purpose.

Clause 13 of the agreement stated:—

In order to assist the company to further extend its work by the establishment in the vicinity of Whyalla of coke oven plant and/or works for the production of steel, rolling mills, and other plant, the Government on being notified by the company that it is prepared to establish any such works will use every endeavour to provide the company with a supply of fresh water at the site of such works sufficient for the full requirements of the company at such fair and reasonable price as may be mutually agreed upon.

I wish to make certain points regarding that agreement. Firstly, the South Australian Government is receiving, by way of royalties from the iron ore depositists, only about half the rate being paid to other people for road metal. Secondly, under the agreement, the Government undertook to refer to the Public Works Committee the proposed construction of the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline. Parliament was told that that pipeline was not required for a blast furnace, but for a steelworks, and members were asked by the then Premier to accept this agreement on that basis. The agreement placed no obligation on the State to provide a water supply before the company indicated in writing its intention to construct a coke oven or steelworks. The Government has carried out the agreement to the letter, but the B.H.P., by transferring some of its resources from Whyalla to Port Kembla, has broken faith with this Government to the extent that the establishment of a steelworks at Whyalla has been delayed. It is time that the Premier, and South Australians generally, took a stand on

this matter. When the agreement was submitted to this House for ratification in 1937, members were given to understand that the steelworks would be part of the programme, and the Premier's so-called explanation for the failure to commence this work affords no comfort today. Since that agreement was drawn up and agreed to by the Parliament of the day on the basis suggested by the Premier, the B.H.P. has engaged in the building of the strip mill at Kembla. Because of this it cannot honour the spirit of the undertaking, says the Premier. We are entitled to ask what he is doing about it, for this is a tremendously important subject to South Australia not only from the point of view of the overall steel supply, but also in relation to the establishment of the subsidiary or ancillary industries referred to by Mr. Butler. Only last week the Premier announced that another tube factory will be established in South Australia—in the metropolitan area. Had the steelworks been established at Whyalla as they should have been there would have been a good case for the establishment of this industry in the country. No one knows how many other industries the State is missing, or which are being centred in the city instead of building up our country districts. I was pleased that the Hon. W. W. Robinson and the Hon. F. T. Perry, who, by the way should have first-hand knowledge of the demand for steel in this State, referred to the desirability of establishing the steelworks in the course of their speeches in another place. Mr. Perry expressed pleasure that discussions were taking place and wished the Government every success. He said:—

As a State we have, or had, a valuable asset at Iron Knob in a very rich iron ore deposit. Parliament in its wisdom gave certain concessions to the B.H.P. which in the course of time and circumstance have proved to be of considerable advantage to the company but of little comparative return to the State. When the royalties of 3d. and 6d. a ton for iron ore were fixed in 1937, the basic price of steel was under £10 a ton whereas now it is over £30. I have every respect for the B.H.P. which has pioneered the steel industry in Australia and still produces the cheapest steel in the world, but some elasticity should be shown by mutual consent of the contracting parties and a new royalty fixed in view of the changed circumstances in the value of money.

Mr. Perry was a member of this House in 1937 when the agreement to which I have referred was drawn up and approved by this Parliament, so his comment is worthy of note. I expressed the same opinion last year, and hope that now it has Mr. Perry's support more

attention will be paid to it than apparently has been done in the past. I am of the opinion that if circumstances had operated against the company they would have had no hesitation in approaching the Government as in fact they have done in another venture in which they are interested asking for an alteration in the terms of the agreement by mutual consent. In addition to urging the importance of the time factor in considering the establishment of steelworks, I remind the House that the Director made the following points:—

1. South Australia provides 99 per cent of the total iron ore production of Australia. Its known reserves of high-grade ore are not unlimited but are adequate to support a new steel plant of up to 1,000,000 tons capacity for a period of 30 years in addition to supplying Port Kembla and Newcastle. The reserves should not be depleted to an extent which will prejudice the establishment of a large-scale steel works in South Australia.

2. In the three years 1949 to 1952, Australia imported the equivalent of up to 1,138,000 tons a year at prices up to 100 per cent above those for Australian steel. The total premiums paid as a consequence of a shortage of Australian manufactured steel would have more than financed a new steelworks of 1 million tons capacity.

3. The time lag involved in the construction of a large steel plant is a factor of vital importance.

The State is entitled to some better statement from the Premier than a report that the B.H.P. has spent its reserves elsewhere. There should be a conference between the Government and the B.H.P. and a joint scheme evolved as was done in the case of Nairne Pyrites and the sulphuric acid plant. This House should not be content with any further delays.

I express my pleasure that the Premier has at last accepted the principle that the Flying Doctor Service is a service to the people, that it is highly commendable and deserves to be supported by the State, and has announced the magnanimous provision of £500 for this year with no payment whatever for last year or any preceding years in spite of repeated assurances in this House that, if it could be established that this service is one that we should support, provision would be made for the years under review. However, the grant of £500 is welcome but I ask the Premier when considering the Estimates this year to provide for a subsidy for services rendered last year. I also ask if he will regard this as just a beginning, and in future make an assessment of the actual service rendered to the community and provide a subsidy more realistic than the token he has just announced. This service has to maintain two aeroplanes and pay two doctors who are taken

on long visits to various parts of my district. They visit the hospital at Cook every month and the fettlers along the line come in regularly for consultation. The service is of inestimable benefit to the people in those areas and is far in excess of a mere ambulance service. The regular monthly visit to the Coober Pedy opal field is regarded as one of the finest things that have happened to the field. I could tell many stories not only of services rendered to our people by this service enabling people to be further treated in Adelaide. It looms very large in the respect and regard of people on the receiving end, and as it is a service that the State has at last seen fit to recognize, I hope that more substantial subsidies will be granted in future.

I commend the Government on its announcement of assistance to be given in the establishment of old folks' homes, a step long advocated by members on this side. At last ways and means have been found to provide assistance to people who are after all shouldering a responsibility that rightly should fall on all. I draw the Premier's attention to the need for providing financial assistance to country ambulance services. The policy of the Government is that all services should be under the control of the St. John's Council. I have no quarrel with that decision, because I have very great admiration for its work. I understand that this body has applied this year for an increased allocation of Loan funds in order that it may in turn be able to grant some measure of assistance to country ambulance services, and I urge the Premier to give full consideration to its request. I have been assured that last year the council was anxious to help country ambulance services but could not do so because of lack of funds. I hope that the programme will not be curtailed this year, because country ambulance committees are finding it difficult because of rising costs to carry on the services to which they are committed and Government assistance for country services is just as essential as it is for the metropolitan area. I hope that in the Estimates this year a grant will be made to the council sufficient to enable it to assist country services.

I commend the work that is being done in the propagation of native trees, because this work will have a great effect in regenerating some of the treeless areas in this State and improving living conditions in our dry districts. By the propagation of native trees it will be possible to rehabilitate some of our dry farming areas. I am happy at the

interest shown throughout South Australia and beyond in the work being carried out at the Port Augusta nursery. I was intensely interested, in a recent visit to the Wail nursery in Victoria, to see how trees are propagated and made available to the drier parts of the Wimmera district for sheltering stock, wind-breaks, ornamentation and pasture improvement. The man in charge of the nursery told me that one lot of 7,000 had been propagated from seed taken from the Nullarbor Plains, another of 12,000 from seed taken from trees on the West Coast, and several thousand from seed from the Flinders Ranges in the north of the State. I asked why it was that in the areas where we badly needed trees we had not done more in propagating native trees. I am happy that the nursery at Port Augusta is propagating them and making them available through agricultural bureaux and other means to people all over South Australia. Trees are even being sent to Darwin and places north of Brisbane.

Recently we had a visit from Mr. W. S. Kelly who at Tarlee is organizing landholders with a view to making extensive plantings on a commercial basis. It would be of tremendous advantage to this State if we could persuade people to plant native trees. They grow where we thought it was not possible to grow trees on a large scale. I had a report from a Mr. Foulis at Willowie that last year he planted over 70 trees and, even without artificial watering, he had 100 per cent success. He has ordered another batch of trees. In the Port Augusta township the council has planted many, and during last summer they required only five waterings. The new method of propagating by means of tubes instead of earthenware pots, with the lengthening of the root system, has brought this activity well to the forefront. Better transport facilities have also helped. We can confidently look forward to a regeneration of many of our farmlands and other areas in the dry north as the result of the work being pioneered at the nursery. I am glad the schools are showing an interest. Where it was difficult to establish trees because of the need of having them cared for during school holidays, through the interest being shown by the Inspector of Schools in the district these schools are being encouraged to cover their bare ground with trees.

Mr. Macgillivray—What kinds of trees are there at Port Augusta nursery?

Mr. RICHES—I do not know them all, but there are many eucalypts and acacias.

Mr. Macgillivray—Any oaks or sheoaks?

Mr. RICHES—Oaks, but not sheoaks. Catalogues are available at the nursery. On the day of the opening of the new power station at Port Augusta we were pleased to have a visit from a district council in the honourable member's own district. The councillors filled a motor car with trees to take back to Berri. They assured me they would try to plant many trees in the next planting season.

Mr. Macgillivray—The Berri council assured me that they thought highly of the nursery.

Mr. RICHES—I am glad to hear that. I support the motion.

Mr. McALEES secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.54 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, August 10, at 2 p.m.