

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, August 19, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.**CLEARING LAND IN SOUTH-EAST.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has any investigation been made into the activities of people clearing large areas of land in the South-East that was formerly covered with native growth, particularly as to the wisdom of clearing loose, white sandhills? It seems that it would be wise, before much of this clearing is done, for the Soil Conservation Branch, if it has not already done so, to have an examination made with a view to offering advice to those people in order to prevent difficulties that may accrue in the future from much of this type of clearing.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The position generally is that the Soil Conservator has to approve of any clearing done, particularly in the mallee areas, but to what extent the South-East is covered by that general rule I do not know. I will have the matter investigated and bring down a reply.

AMENDMENT OF ADMINISTRATION AND PROBATE ACT.

Mr. TRAVERS—Two years ago Parliament raised from £500 to £2,800 the exemption from succession duties for a widow acquiring the estate of her deceased husband, the object being to save the widow from any necessity to sell the home to pay the duty. I accept that principle, but it seems to me that there is now a great need to amend section 54 of the Administration and Probate Act. This section gives the widow who acquires the estate of an intestate husband a first charge to the extent of only £500. This figure was fixed in 1892 presumably to ensure that the widow would get at least the home, and having regard to the principle adopted in the Succession Duties Act and the greatly altered value of money, I ask the Premier whether the Government will consider amending that section? If the widow takes the first £500, under the present law, the remainder is shared with the next of kin. This may well mean that the widow would have to sell the house and possibly a wealthy brother of the deceased living overseas, who had perhaps not seen the deceased for half a century, would share with her in the balance of the estate. Will the Premier have this matter investigated?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes.

TEA SUPPLIES.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I have received a telegram worded as follows:—

Must register protest tea price announcement; causing panic buying by public. My stocks exhausted Saturday. Position chaotic. Desire immediate retail price increase—Myers Bros., Ascot Park.

Will the Premier inform the House whether there are still adequate supplies of tea in this State and whether the price increase will come about before they are exhausted?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—When we received advice that the Commonwealth Government proposed to alter the wholesale price of tea an investigation of stocks was made not only in this State but in Victoria and, I think, New South Wales. Supplies in this State are adequate and stocks held by retailers have proved to be very substantial. Under those circumstances it is not proposed to alter the price until some of the stock at least has been sold in accordance with the price at which it was bought.

SHIPMENT OF WHEAT.

Mr. McALEES—It has been reported to me from Wallaroo that wheat is going to be shipped from Cowell to Port Victoria by ketches and thence by road to Ardrossan, a distance of about 30 miles, whereas it has always been the custom to ship it to Wallaroo or Port Adelaide. Port Victoria as a shipping port went out with sailing ships, as did Port Germein. Can the Minister of Agriculture give the House any information on this matter?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I assume that the honourable member refers to wheat shipped across the gulf to Port Victoria and then transported to Ardrossan. If that is so, I will have the matter investigated and bring down a reply.

TRAVEL CONCESSIONS TO PENSIONERS.

Mr. JENNINGS—Because of the failure of the Federal Government to honour its pre-election promise to increase aged and invalid pensions, will the State Government assist these people by granting them travel concessions on public transport?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No.

STEEL WORKS AT WHYALLA.

Mr. RICHES—An article in the *Advertiser* of August 16 contains a review by Senator Spooner of the steel position in Australia. It concluded:—

It would not be possible to meet the present demand for all the different categories of finished steel products. There was no immediate

prospect of enough fencing and wire netting being produced, he said. The demand for steel posts could still not be met in spite of the increase from 2m. tons a year in 1952 to the present 12m. tons a year. The demand for steel rails and structural sections was something like 100,000 tons a year above production. Galvanized sheet iron demand was 165,000 tons a year and production was only 130,000 tons. However, by the end of next year galvanized sheet iron production should be very much more than the local demand, he said.

On the following day Mr. A. M. Simpson, president of the South Australian Metal Industries Association, stated:—

The steel position was causing great concern to Australian consumers who were being compelled to buy at least part of their requirements abroad.

These reports bear out the Director of Mines' reports to Parliament last year and the preceding year, in which he urged the establishment of a steel works at Whyalla, and demonstrate the need to push with the greatest possible vigour the advocacy for such work. Earlier this session the Premier said that discussions were taking place on the matter but that he was not anxious to make any further statement at that stage. In view of the position that has arisen, people in my district desire to know whether the Premier can now indicate what consideration Cabinet has given to this situation, and say what progress has been made in the discussions referred to.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—This matter has been examined by the Government in all its aspects. A number of conferences with the Broken Hill Proprietary Company have been held and a further conference is to be arranged, probably next week or the following week. I am not yet able to give the honourable member any advice or solution of the problem, but I assure him that the Government is doing its utmost to make satisfactory arrangements.

FIGHTING FIRES IN BUILDINGS.

Mr. PEARSON—*Reader's Digest* of May, 1954, contains an article headed, "They Stop Fires by Remote Control." The method is to use a fog nozzle inserted in one of the windows of the building which is ablaze, and it is claimed that the results are phenomenal. Admittedly, the article appears in a magazine, but it is documented and quotes other authorities, notably the *National Safety News*, the organ of the National Safety Council of Chicago, and it is backed up by Fire Chief Layman in his

book *Attacking and Extinguishing Interior Fires*, published by the National Fire Protection Association of Boston, Mass. Will the Premier bring this under the notice of the Chief Secretary for reference to Mr. Whyte, Chief Fire Brigades Officer, to see if it can have any valuable application here?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes.

HOMES FOR AGED PEOPLE.

Mr. TAPPING—Last night the Federal Treasurer announced that his Government would make £1,500,000 available as subsidies for homes for the aged. Will this affect the subsidies given by the South Australian Government to aid such homes?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Last year the Government promised a 50 per cent subsidy on capital expenditure in connection with homes for the aged and I told the religious bodies concerned that the matter was under discussion with the Commonwealth Government and that the subsidy might not be renewed this year. They made their applications accordingly, and some £300,000 has been paid out to assist churches in establishing old folks' homes. Since that time we have had communications from the Federal Government and we are now negotiating with it to see to what extent the Commonwealth's proposals cut across our scheme and how it may be modified. We have had some difficulty in that the Commonwealth has not yet reached a clear definition as to how it proposes to pay the subsidies and this makes it difficult to get a decision on policy. However, I will advise the honourable member as soon as possible.

WHYALLA SOUTH SCHOOL.

Mr. RICHES—Has the Minister of Education had an opportunity to inquire into complaints about fencing at the Whyalla South School about which I asked a question yesterday?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The Architect-in-Chief reports:—

The first letter from the school committee was dated May 5, 1951, not five years ago as stated. Subsequently the committee submitted quotes for a fence between the school and the adjoining town oval only. This fence has been erected. The next reference to fencing the balance of the site on the road boundaries was a letter from the committee on June 21 this year. Contract plans for the fencing of the remaining three sides of the fence will be completed next week. Tenders for the work are expected to be called for within three weeks.

METROPOLITAN ABATTOIRS BOWLING GREEN.

Mr JENNINGS—Last week, when asking the Minister of Agriculture a question about work on a bowling green at the Metropolitan Abattoirs, I indicated that at that stage I was not certain whether my information was reliable and went to considerable pains to say that I was making no allegation in the matter, but merely seeking information. Since then I have received further reports and find that the expenditure referred to, rather than being a waste of money as my informant alleged, is being incurred in a very beneficial way; in fact, the General Manager of the Abattoirs is to be commended rather than criticized. As I understand the Minister has received a report on this matter, can he give me a final answer?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—When the honourable member first raised this matter I acknowledged that he did not endorse the innuendo implicit in his information and said that I could give no credence to such a rumour; but, unfortunately, that statement was not published in the report. A report, which I have received from Mr. Wharton (General Manager & Secretary of the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board) and which fully bears out what I thought when the question was first raised, states:—

The bowling green at the Abattoirs was established by the Board in 1923 and was used by employees until 1937 when the club disbanded. As a large number of employees now live near or on the Board's property it was decided to rehabilitate the green to provide the employees with means of recreation. It is intended to again form a club. The green is not for the sole benefit of the General Manager but for employees generally. The board considers that it is not unnecessary expense to rehabilitate the green and points out that apart from the green keeper the labour expended has been surplus to off season killing requirements.

A further report states:—

The position was that the green got into such a condition that it was not known whether it could be rehabilitated. About March, 12 months ago, an officer of the Department of Agriculture inspected the green and advised placing sheep thereon to see whether their droppings could be used for manure for improving the grass. He again inspected the green about October when it was decided to go ahead with the scheme. The green keeper also does other gardening work. At times there have been other men also employed on the green and garden as, owing to the uneven kill, work of some nature has to be found for the employees, and, if they were not employed in the gardens, other work would have to be provided to keep them occupied.

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GAWLER SEWERAGE SCHEME.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—In reply to a question of mine on notice on August 3, regarding country sewerage, the Minister of Works informed me that although a scheme for the town of Gawler was referred to the Public Works Committee on December 16, 1949, it had not yet submitted a report. I make it clear that I am not criticizing the committee, but I should like to know whether the chairman can inform me if a report on this scheme can be expected in the near future, and, if not, has he any idea how long it will be before a report is made?

Mr. SHANNON (Chairman of Public Works Committee)—I cannot say when the report is likely to be issued. The committee has not yet received from the Engineering and Water Supply Department (Sewers Division) any plan of what is proposed for Gawler. I understand that the department first wants to know what are the ultimate requirements of the proposed satellite town near Salisbury which is to be built in the near future, as I understand the department believes it will be able to connect the satellite town, North Salisbury and Gawler with the one treatment plant. I assure the honourable member that as soon as the evidence from the department is tendered the committee will not delay proceeding with the inquiry.

JURIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

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

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution—That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Juries Act, 1927-1937.

Motion carried. Resolution agreed to in Committee and adopted by the House.

Bill introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONTROL OF RENTS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD obtained leave to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act, 1942-1953.

PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Having obtained leave, the Hon. T. PLAYFORD introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Public Service Act, 1936-1953. Read a first time.

TOWN PLANNING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I move:—

That this Bill be now read a second time. The Bill makes some far reaching amendments to the law relating to town planning. In the first place, it is proposed that there should, in the general interests of the community, be further control over the subdivision of land into building allotments. In the second place, the Bill provides the legislation necessary to enable a plan for the proper development of the metropolitan area to be prepared and given effect. The existing law relating to the control of subdivisions is contained in the Town Planning Act, 1929, and the general scheme of that Act is as follows.

The Act applies to plans of subdivision of land, that is, where the plan, in addition to dividing land into allotments, shows any new or intended street, road or reserve. Plans of re-subdivision are also controlled. These relate to cases where land is divided or subdivided into allotments but where new roads are not involved. The Act applies only to plans which subdivide land into allotments for sites as residences, shops, factories or other like premises and does not apply to agricultural land. Section 101 of the Real Property Act provides that if land is subdivided for sale into allotments, a plan of subdivision must be deposited in the Lands Titles Office. Section 18 of the Act carries the matter further, and, in effect, provides that before an owner of land can use it in a manner which has the effect of subdividing it, a plan of subdivision must be deposited. Thus, the combined effect of the Real Property Act and Town Planning Act is that, before urban land is subdivided or re-subdivided, a plan of subdivision or re-subdivision must be deposited in the Lands Titles Office or, if the land is not under the Real Property Act, in the General Registry Office.

The Town Planning Act provides that before it is deposited with the Registrar-General, a plan of subdivision or re-subdivision must be approved by the Town Planner and the council concerned. In the case of certain re-subdivisions it is provided that the consent of the Town Planner only is required. The grounds upon which approval to a plan may be withheld are laid down in regulations made under the Act and the Act provides that, in the event of the Town Planner or council refusing approval to a plan, the person concerned has

a right of appeal to a board called the Town Planning Appeal Board. One defect of the present Act is that a plan of subdivision, when submitted for approval to the Town Planner or the council, must, to a large degree, be considered alone although it is obvious that what should be done with respect to one parcel of land may be considerably affected by what is done or is proposed with respect to other land. Whilst the Town Planner and, to a lesser degree, the council may have some knowledge of what is happening elsewhere that knowledge is by no means complete.

It is therefore proposed by the Bill to set up a body to be called the Town Planning Committee which will have the duty of dealing with plans of subdivision and will also be given highly important duties concerning the broad aspects of town planning for which the existing legislation makes no provision. This combination of duties will make the committee particularly well fitted to undertake the supervision of subdivisions. The committee will consist of five members and the Town Planner will be its chairman. The other four members will be appointed by the Governor and their term of office will be four years. One member will be appointed as deputy chairman. A quorum will consist of three members of whom the chairman or deputy chairman is one so that either the chairman or the deputy chairman must be present at every meeting. Members will be paid such fees as are fixed by the Governor. Under the Bill, all plans of subdivision will have to be approved by the committee and the council concerned. As has been previously mentioned, the grounds upon which a plan may be refused approval are set out in the regulations and it is proposed that, as far as the council is concerned, this state of affairs will continue. As regards the committee it is set out in clause 6 that approval to a plan of subdivision is not to be given unless the committee is satisfied that the plan of subdivision complies with the various requirements set out in the clause. In general, these are as follows:—

The land must not be liable to inundation by drainage waters or flood waters and all the land must be capable of being satisfactorily drained. The land must be suitable for the purpose for which it is being subdivided and sufficient provision must be made for shopping sites. Natural beauty spots must be preserved but if the committee is satisfied that the land in question has been offered to the Government or the council at a price deemed reasonable by the Land Board and the offer has been

declined, approval to the plan is not to be withheld on this ground. The road pattern must be satisfactory and tie in with the road pattern of adjoining land. The plan should provide for reasonably adequate public reserves having regard to existing reserves. Two other very important matters are provided for. It is provided that the subdivider must either form and pave all the proposed roadways in the subdivision or must make arrangements with the council for the carrying out of this work at his expense. The provision in question requires the subdivider to provide a roadway 24ft. in width paved with metal, consolidated to a depth of 4in. and sealed with bitumen, tar or asphalt. This is a roadway suitable for an ordinary suburban street. This provision makes an important change in the law and places upon a subdivider the duty of providing in his subdivision the roadways of any new street or road. This obligation will, of course, be additional to that imposed by sections 319 and 328 of the Local Government Act under which contribution to road and footpath costs can be required of owners of land abutting on a street or road. These provisions will, no doubt, be invoked by councils to defray some of the costs associated with constructing water tables, kerbs and footpaths in the new streets.

A further requirement as regards land in the metropolitan area is that a plan of subdivision is not to be approved unless the Engineer-in-Chief certifies that the land can be advantageously and economically sewered and reticulated with water. Instances have occurred in the past where land which either cannot be effectively sewered or can only be sewered at unduly high cost has been subdivided and sold. The purchasers have then either had to be left without sewers or the State has had to incur excessively high expenses to provide this essential service. It is considered that land in the metropolitan area which cannot be economically sewered or reticulated should not be subdivided unless very good reason exists to the contrary and to meet this remote contingency it is provided that, if the Minister consents, approval may be given to a subdivision of land which cannot be sewered. As regards plans of re-subdivision, no alteration to the present Act is proposed and the Town Planner and the council will continue to deal with these plans. Re-subdivisions are numerous but of no general importance. They occur in cases where, for example, an owner of an allotment desires to transfer a strip of land to his neighbour or where the owner of, say,

three allotments, wishes to sell the land in two parcels each consisting of one and a half allotments.

As has been mentioned, there is now a Town Planning Appeal Board to which appeals against refusals to approve plans can be made. It is proposed by the Bill to abolish this board. In future, appeals from a refusal of a council to approve a plan of subdivision or from a refusal of the Town Planner or the council to approve a plan of re-subdivision will be to the committee. If the committee refuses to approve a plan of subdivision it is provided that the applicant may require its reconsideration by the committee. If, upon reconsideration the committee still refuses its approval, the committee must report its reasons to the Minister and once in every year the Minister is to lay these reports before Parliament.

The other important matter dealt with by the Bill is contained in clause 9. There has been considerable public discussion on the necessity of a plan to regulate the development of the metropolitan area, and clause 9 contains provisions to enable such a plan to be prepared. The committee is required to make an examination of the metropolitan area and an assessment of its probable development. The committee is to have regard to various fundamental matters which should be considered with respect to the growth and development of an area such as the metropolitan area. Transport problems must be studied and consideration given to what provision should be made for principal highways. The provision of open spaces is another important matter for consideration. A metropolitan area must provide for its industries and there should be a proper balance of industrial areas and residential areas. The siting of areas for industrial development is therefore of importance. The economical provision of public utilities should be considered and the growth of the metropolitan area should be directed to localities where the provision of these essential services is economical.

All these and other general matters must be considered by the committee which, under the Bill, is required to produce, in due course, a plan setting out what should be done for the proper development of the metropolitan area. With the plan the committee is to present a report. The plan and report are to be laid before Parliament and either House may, from time to time, refer the plan back to the committee for re-consideration and revision. After every revision of the plan by the committee the plan is to be submitted again to Parliament.

Either House may disapprove the plan either in whole or in part. If the plan is not disapproved, the plan or part is to be deemed to be approved by Parliament and may then be submitted to the Governor for approval. If approved by the Governor the plan then will have the force of law and all subdivisions of land must conform with the plan.

In addition, the Governor is given power to make any regulations for carrying the plan into effect. It is provided that any council by-laws which conflict with the plan or the regulations are to cease to have effect. Thus, the Bill requires the committee to prepare a plan for the development of the metropolitan area for the purpose of securing that development will proceed on the lines which are best in the public interest. That plan will be subject to Parliamentary scrutiny and approval and will, after being, in effect, indorsed by Parliament and the Governor, have the effect of law and lay down the general manner in which the growth of the metropolitan area will be regulated.

The task given to the committee will take some years to fulfil and some interim legislation to control subdivisions contrary to public interest is considered necessary. It is therefore provided that the Governor, where satisfied that it is in the public interests so to do, may by proclamation declare that any land in the metropolitan area is not to be subdivided. No such proclamation is to be made after the developmental plan has the force of law and upon the plan having the force of law, any such proclamation is to cease to have effect. If, for example, some of the rapidly diminishing tracts of land which should be preserved as open spaces are proposed to be subdivided before the committee produces its plan, it is obvious that, in the public interest, a brake should be placed on this process and this provision will enable such a subdivision to be held up until the plan is ready. Thus, the general effect of the Bill is that the committee constituted by the legislation will undertake the important task of preparing a developmental plan for the metropolitan area. At the same time, provision is made for adequate control of subdivisions so that the public interest may be conserved. The committee is given the duty of considering plans of subdivision and, with the knowledge which must come to it in the process of preparing the developmental plan, it must follow that the committee will be eminently suited for this task.

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

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT ADVISORY COUNCIL BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 12. Page 374.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill, like much of the legislation introduced by the Government, goes a considerable distance towards the implementation of the policy that we on this side of the House have expounded over the years, but like all the efforts of the Government it stops short of being effective. I do not know whether this is by accident or design; probably it is felt that if the policy announced by the Opposition were accepted *in toto* the Government would find it difficult to justify the criticism it has to use in an endeavour to get sufficient numbers of people to vote for it and thus keep it in office. The present set-up is that the Opposition is in the game but does not share in the fame. The rules made by the Government for the distribution of voting strength, as we all know, do not require a great number of people to be convinced to keep it on the Treasury Benches.

For some considerable time the Opposition has urged a policy that includes the appointment of a Minister of Transport and the co-ordination of all transport matters through an appropriate body responsible to the Minister and through him ultimately to Parliament. When the Tramways Trust Bill was before the House in 1952 I made these remarks that appear on page 734 of *Hansard* for that year:—

This evening I am saying nothing that I have never said before. I saw this problem years ago and made a number of statements on it, one of which will bear repetition. In a broadcast on February 16 of this year I said:—

The unfortunate position of the tramways is, of course, closely bound up with the whole transport system. It is not merely a matter of rising costs, although this is an important aspect. Transport should be brought under one authority, at least for the metropolitan area; and it is of such great importance that nothing less than complete nationalization of the tramways will solve the problems with which the trust is confronted. It is quite clear that the trust itself is unequal to the task, and it should be relieved of its authority and responsibility. I suggest that the Municipal Tramways Trust Act should be amended to provide for the control by a board of three members, one of whom would be the General Manager, as Chairman, appointed by the Government, one would represent the interest of the community (also appointed by the

Government) and one elected by employees. I would make this board directly responsible to a Minister, who would be the connecting link between the board and Parliament.

I made those suggestions before any report had been made by the committee of inquiry and to some extent they are incorporated in this Bill, but the Bill does not go far enough, for I believe all transport should be co-ordinated under a Minister of Transport, who would be responsible to Parliament, and that there should be a board to control the tramways and probably one to control the railways.

I was referring to the committee of inquiry that had presented a report to the Government in 1952 on which some of the amendments to the Municipal Tramways Trust Act were then discussing were based. I also said:—

There should be an overall form of control and co-ordination. We should not refuse a charter to private enterprise to furnish our transport requirements in those areas where it can furnish it more efficiently and cheaply, for I believe that, in order to efficiently meet public demand, there is room in our transport system for public and private transport provided they are properly co-ordinated. Such co-ordination, however, is not altogether a job for the Tramways Trust but rather something about which this Parliament should have the final say. It might be administered by the trust but the Minister of Transport, a person responsible to this Parliament, should have the final say in determining high policy on these matters.

In this measure the Government gives wide powers to a body to be known as the Metropolitan Transport Advisory Council. The point that immediately arises is whether the proposed council, which will comprise three members, will be adequate for the task. In the original draft of the Bill the council was to comprise five members, but when the Bill appeared on our files the personnel had been reduced to three. I do not know what happened in the interim but we should seriously consider whether a council of three will be sufficient to discharge the functions expected of it. Great wisdom must be exercised in selecting the members. The Premier gave no hint who they might be. Although we do not expect them to be named individually I think we are entitled to know the type of representation the Government visualizes. An important feature is that the council is to report to the Minister of Railways. In addition to exercising certain control over railways policy it must also exercise control over the policy of

the Tramways Trust. At the moment I do not know which Minister controls the trust.

The Hon. T. Playford—The same Minister.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I rather suspected that the Premier himself controlled the trust, as he is the Treasurer and as such has had the unenviable task of finding the large sums of money that have been required by the trust in recent years and which apparently will be required for many years to come. That supports my contention that it would have been better to adopt Labor's policy and have a complete co-ordination of all forms of metropolitan transport under the control of a Minister responsible to Parliament. At present the responsible Minister is a member of the Legislative Council and it will not be possible for members of this House to question him on the activities of this council charged with the task of reporting to him. This House—which is supposed to be the popular House because it is alleged to represent, although it doesn't, the majority of the people—will have no real or personal opportunity of questioning the Minister in charge of this important council on the reports which will be presented to Parliament through him. Clause 14 is the vital part of the Bill because it really provides the council with its powers. For instance, it provides that it—

... may make orders giving to the South Australian Railways Commissioner or to the Municipal Tramways Trust or to both of them directions as to the policy to be pursued by the said Commissioner or trust.

That opens up a wide field. We are given to understand, although we have had no officially authenticated statement on it, that it is the intention of the present Tramways Trust to abandon trams and substitute various types of motor buses. That is a matter on which this council could make an order requiring the trust not to pursue that policy. It is wise that the council should have power to make orders either to the Tramways Trust or to the Railways Commissioner, but, instead of its being only required to report to a Minister, the council should be working under the direction of a Minister and thus Parliamentary responsibility would be ensured in relation to its decisions. The clause also provides that—

(2) Such orders may be made for all or any of the following purposes:—

- (a) ensuring that adequate public transport services are provided for the metropolitan area or any part thereof;
- (b) preventing duplication or overlapping of public transport services in the metropolitan area or any part thereof;

(c) Otherwise securing economy and efficiency in public transport services in the metropolitan area or any part thereof.

(3) Any order made under subsection (1) of this section may be varied or revoked by a subsequent order made by the Governor on the recommendation of the council.

(4) It shall be the duty of the South Australian Railways Commissioner and of the Municipal Tramways Trust to comply with every direction given to him or it under this section: Provided that where any such direction cannot be complied with except by the expenditure of money voted by Parliament it shall not be necessary to comply with such direction until money for the purpose of defraying such expenditure is so voted.

So we see, firstly, that this council can make orders on the Railways Commissioner and the Tramways Trust which those authorities are bound to observe unless they involve the expenditure of additional money, and then Parliament has to be consulted; and it seems to me that this is the only respect in which Parliament will be consulted. Although the Bill refers only to the Railways and Tramways there are other forms of transport that should be placed directly or indirectly under the council's supervision. We have on our files a Bill relating to the control of taxicabs in the metropolitan area and it provides for the setting up of a body to control the licensing and general operation of taxicabs. They are an important form of transport and I suggest that the Transport Advisory Council should have the same over-riding and advisory power in respect of taxicabs, and at the appropriate time I intend to move an amendment on those lines. It may be found by the council that some co-ordination of the activities of taxicabs will become necessary in order to conform to the general economic and efficient scheme of transport which this council is being specially constituted to create. Apparently it is the present intention of the Government, as expressed in the Bill relating to taxicab control, that the Adelaide City Council shall be the licensing authority, and I may disagree with that when I speak on that Bill. Some 20 suburban councils will be dependent, insofar as the taxi requirements of their areas are concerned, upon the decisions of the licensing authority, which is one of their number, and I think it would create confidence among them if they knew that if they had complaints they could take them to an authority such as the Transport Advisory Council instead of to the City Council, which is the proposed licensing authority and would be the final arbiter on the subject.

The Hon. T. Playford—If that suggestion were put into effect I think the council would have to be somewhat larger.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I think it should be larger in any case. A body of three men is not enough in view of the importance of the task imposed upon them. Some support for the creation of an appellant body is to be found in the report of the Committee on the Licensing of Taxicabs appointed some two years ago under the chairmanship of His Honour Sir Kingsley Paine, the members of which were the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Baden Pattinson (then chairman of the State Traffic Committee) Sir Arthur Rymill and Mr. Chas. Sutton representing municipal bodies. In paragraph 31 of its report the committee stated:—

The committee has further considered the practicability of an advisory committee representative of all metropolitan councils being appointed to assist the Adelaide City Council in its administration to the new scheme. This should import an advantage in that such a committee could supply to the central authority, when any matter under consideration is likely to be affected by local conditions, full knowledge of those conditions. Any such advisory committee would not be given executive powers and its influence would only be persuasive.

So the committee itself suggested some form of advisory committee. It is admitted that what they had in mind was a committee widely representative of suburban councils, but it seems to me that the council proposed under this Bill would be an eminently suitable authority to exercise the duties which the Taxicab Committee suggested might be exercised by an advisory committee. Of course, other questions of road transport may also require consideration in the years to come and it may be necessary to widen the scope of this legislation to provide that those forms of transport should also be subject to some control. I have in mind private motor cars and parking arrangements, which are fraught with considerable difficulties now and which will be fraught with more as the years go by. To sum up, I think that the three existing forms of transport, namely, railways, tramways and taxicabs should be subject to the co-ordinating control of the authority proposed to be created under this Bill. To the extent that it does provide for that co-ordination with the idea of increasing efficiency and maintaining maximum economy I entirely support the principles of the measure.

Mr. BROOKMAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

**BUSINESS AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT
ACT BILL.**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 18. Page 420.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill simply provides that where an auctioneer engages in the selling of business premises he shall conform to the principles set out in the Business Agents Act. I see no objection whatever to that, and as he is not expected to provide an additional fee because he already pays a high fee for his licence, it will not inflict any hardship upon him, but it will provide a safeguard for the public. I do not know whether it is strictly necessary, for I think that licensed auctioneers in South Australia are well screened before being licensed. They have responsible duties to perform and, so far as I know, those duties are well and meritoriously performed. I see no objection to the provision that they should conform to the scheme set out in the legislation, therefore I support the Bill.

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

ANATOMY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 18. Page 421.)

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—I support the Bill, because nothing but good can result from its operation. A similar Bill was introduced last session, but it was not proceeded with in order that the general public might become aware of the Government's intentions. Ample time has been allowed for anybody to protest against the legislation, but no protests have been received. The Bill will make lawful a practice that has existed for a number of years—the use of an eye of a deceased person who, during his lifetime, expressed permission for such action. By this means people whose sight has failed have received the benefit of corneal grafting and enjoyed life more abundant. As the Bill provides ample safeguards against abuses and because of the beneficial results to be enjoyed from its operation, I feel every member will support it.

Mr. BROOKMAN (Alexandra)—I, too, support the Bill, which legalizes a sensible process. This subject has received plenty of publicity in the past few months, and no opposition to the legislation has been voiced. By the performance of corneal grafting new life may be

brought to people who have lost their sight, and the provisions of the Bill, based as they are on a commonsense foundation, will be welcomed.

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

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 18. Page 422.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This Bill extends the operation of the Prices Act for a further 12 months, and I do not object to that extension, although I believe the efficacy of the legislation at present is not great. In saying that I am not reflecting on the Premier, who controls this branch, or on the prices officers. Some years ago the idea was sold to the people that we should have price decontrol, so we worked on the lines that wherever possible prices would be decontrolled, but I am afraid that in some respects it was more apparent than real. Despite that criticism, the measure does afford some protection. The present legislation permits the re-control of commodities which have been decontrolled. We have had instances of where, after an experience of decontrol, certain articles have been re-controlled. I should like to make a suggestion to the Premier some time ahead, because it generally takes two or three years for the Government to adopt another plank of the Labor Party's platform; and if I make a suggestion this afternoon, by the time the Premier gets around to repealing this legislation he will do what my Party has always thought should be done, namely, have permanent fair prices administration. In other words, there should be a Fair Prices Act, which would be a permanent safeguard against the exploitation of the public by unscrupulous traders. That has been the practice in Queensland since about 1916 and it has worked advantageously. The cost of living index in Queensland can be traced ever since it introduced fair prices legislation, and it will be found that the cost of living in that State has always been below that of any other State. So I suggest that the Premier consider the repeal of the prices legislation and substitute a permanent Fair Prices Act on the lines of the Queensland legislation. With that reservation, I support the second reading.

Mr. DUNKS (Mitcham)—I regret that once again I have to say something about this legislation. Although some time ago we were given

an indication that it would be repealed, we find that it has come up again for consideration. There is differentiation between the States. In one State the prices of certain things is fixed, whereas in other States they are not. In some instances the price of goods produced by a primary producer is not fixed until they go to the wholesaler in the metropolitan area, and then to the retailer. As I have said on numerous occasions, if we are to have price fixation surely it must apply from the time an article is produced until it is sold. For instance, if we are to have price fixation on meat, surely there should be price fixation at the time the beast is sold, but that is not so. Previously, when we had price control on all meats it was found that when beef, mutton, lamb and pig meats came on the market the highest bidder became the purchaser, and then he had to get out of it the best way he could under price fixation.

Mr. Pearson—He did not have to buy the beast.

Mr. DUNKS—The people have to be fed, and if the butcher did not buy the beast, it would be equivalent to his going on strike. Of necessity he had to buy some meats, and, having done so and paid a high price in competition, found that there was no competition left in the retail trade, as he was told at what price he must sell. The worst feature of this legislation is that it is not price fixation, but profit fixation. The first thing that the price control authorities do is to get a man to send in his trading account, and if he is in business in a big way and shows that, because of his turnover and mechanization he is able to make a profit probably of one half per cent on his turnover, then the retail price of that article is fixed in effect by the more prosperous man. This has resulted in the little man from time to time going out of business. We had instances of this only lately in the cafe business in the metropolitan area. Today with the high wages, increased rents, and prices fixed, many of the small cafes are going out of business. I cannot say that I can give instances of many butchers doing so, as like some grocers they work on small margins because they do a lot of their own work.

I contend that when goods have been decontrolled the customers have not been exploited, because over the years we have found that supply and demand and competition between the traders have had the effect of keeping down profits to a fair and reasonable figure. I could point to dozens of items which have been decontrolled and which it has not been

necessary to recontrol. There is a plentiful supply of most goods at the moment, so much so that they are coming from all States in competition with South Australian manufacturers; and to some extent it amounts to unfair competition because the manufacturers in the other States are in a much bigger way and so highly mechanized that they are able to place their goods in this State. In the old days this would have been looked upon as dumping. They say, in effect, "If we can recover our overhead at the factory and break square, we can make a profit in our own State by distributing our goods in the other States." In many instances that is what is happening to South Australia. Because goods are in plentiful supply this legislation should be taken from the Statute Book. Someone said it should be left there and be used if things get out of gear and people exploit the position. It was also said that if we repeal it altogether and then want to re-control prices we shall have to pass another Bill. Must we continue telling our traders what they must do? If we must, we should guarantee them a certain net profit. Workers are given a guarantee that they will get a full week's wages, whether they work one or not. If the employer has only enough work to keep an employee working for, say 36 hours, he is compelled to pay him for 40 hours' work, but he must stand the loss of those four hours. If the Labor Party had been in power and had carried a resolution at its annual conference that the prices legislation should be discontinued it would have been incumbent on it to repeal the measure.

Mr. Tapping—It is most unlikely that it would resolve that way.

Mr. DUNKS—I am not sure about that but I am speaking of a principle. There is nothing further from my mind than that a resolution would be passed by the Party to which I belong compelling the Government to do something, but is a resolution had been carried 12 months ago suggesting that the legislation be discontinued it would have been an indication to the Government that something should be done. When the Bill was dealt with last session I said that the Government would have another 12 months in which to review the position and that I hoped it would not be introduced this session. In the second reading speech all the Minister said was that the same Bill as last year was being introduced. He gave no real reason for its introduction. In effect, he said that the legislation should be kept on the Statute Book in case it should be needed. In

nearly every State price-fixing has been abolished, and in every State except South Australia there is a Labor Government. What a reflection on a Liberal Government which is supposed to encourage people to go into business and stay in it if they can make a profit! What a reflection when Labor Governments in other States repeal the legislation and it is retained here! Last session the Commonwealth felt that it was necessary to forego price control, just as a previous Commonwealth Labor Government decided to throw price control overboard and leave the matter in the hands of the States, telling them it would find money for them to conduct Prices Branches. Last year the Menzies Government told the States it would not find the money; thus price control in South Australia means expense for the Government. We have increased motor fees, harbour charges, etc., because the Grants Commission has said that we should be getting more revenue from these items. What does the commission say about continuing with price control when in the opinion of thousands of people it is unnecessary? Is it required to prevent people from making more than a certain profit? If that is the view of the Government, then I know the answer, but I am not satisfied.

Mr. LAWN—It is to prevent exploitation by people like you.

The SPEAKER—I ask the honourable member to withdraw that remark.

Mr. LAWN—I do, but the honourable member will tell you that he believes in the survival of the fittest.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member must not impute an unworthy motive like that.

Mr. LAWN—The honourable member says it is not an unworthy motive.

Mr. DUNKS—I was asking whether it was the policy of the Government to prevent people from making more than a certain profit. If that is the position, the legislation should go further than it does. The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker and the grocer, who are in a small way, are the business people who suffer under price control. A number of small bakers have gone out of business because they cannot make a profit following on prices being fixed on the operations of mechanized bakeries. If what I suggest is Government policy, then the Government should be honest about it. If the reason is to keep down the cost of living, we should be told that, but we have been told nothing except that the legislation is in the interests of the people generally. I have said

that it is an unnecessary expense to have price control. Probably with the exception of cement or some other building material, goods are in plentiful supply. We have all the food we want, goods for our homes, and there are plenty of motor cars, washing machines, refrigerators, wireless sets, and other things. If goods are in plentiful supply, it is time the legislation was repealed. I was disappointed to see it introduced again with only a small explanation from the Minister. We should have had more information given to us. I know the reaction at the last elections by the majority of people I represent against this type of legislation. If the legislation is still in force by the next elections because of the support that will be given to it by the Opposition in particular, then we shall be looking for trouble. The Government should decide by next year that it is out of date and unnecessary. We carried on before World War II without price control, but no-one made great fortunes, for competition was so keen that traders could not afford to price themselves out of the purchasing power of the public. I do not think I can be so optimistic as to believe that the Bill will not pass, because it has been introduced by the Government and it will be supported, as in past years, by the Labor Party. I am greatly disappointed that the Government has seen it as its duty to again extend the legislation. I will vote against it and will continue, as I have for a number of years, to talk against it whenever I get an opportunity outside Parliament.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—I support the Bill, and I assure the member for Mitcham that it will not be necessary for the Government to depend on the Opposition to carry it. The Premier commands a sufficient majority in his own ranks; indeed, he commands a sufficient majority in the other House too.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member must not discuss what the other House may do on this Bill. I ask him not to develop that line of argument.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I was only making a passing reference for the honourable member's edification. Further, he complained bitterly about what happens at certain annual conferences. He is a member of an organization with its head office on North Terrace, but I did not see any statement in the press that the Liberal and Country League, at an annual convention, had carried a resolution

condemning the Government for its prices legislation. If he has not been able to persuade the Leader of his Government, or sufficient members of it, to repeal this legislation he should not come crying a two-way proposition as he has this afternoon. I have never made any apology for my approach to this question. If price control were used as it should be we should be much better off than we would be under any of the suggestions of the member for Mitcham. He said he did not know of any butchers having a lean time, but I have had complaints from small butchers in the district of Goodwood that they were unable to get a reasonable return for their labours. The member for Mitcham probably knows more about the catering industry than I do, but it seems to me that pies, pasties, and small cakes are being sold up to a price, though not made up to a satisfactory quality. Probably the South Australian Railways refreshment rooms are the only organization supplying these goods of a reasonable quality. The railways are the only organization that has not reduced the standard since price control was introduced. Some firms that had a high reputation for quality in the past have lost it, for now their pies and pasties are mostly puff pastry around fresh air. They have very little meat.

Mr. Dunks—Would the honourable member care to say that outside Parliament?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I would, and also show where these poor standard goods are being sold. If the honourable member considers my remarks a personal reflection I say that he is not involved yet. I have never reflected on his business.

Mr. Dunks—You are reflecting on the whole of the trade in general.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—This is the only time that any reflections have been made on it. If the honourable member wants any further proof on these matters I will furnish it.

Mr. Brookman—How much profit do the railways make?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I do not know. If the honourable member wants that information he should ask the Minister of Railways. I am prepared to say where people can get value for their money, though I am not here as an agent for the South Australian Railways or any baking firm. Although Mr. Dunks introduced the question of the effect of price control on small business people, I do not know how far he is prepared

to go to assist them by prevailing on his Government for a continuation of rent control on business premises.

The SPEAKER—I call the honourable member to order on that point, because there will be a Rent Control Bill.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—He said that the Grants Commission might not be prepared to allot money to this State to pay the salaries of the Prices Department. However, while the Government still receives large sums from the betting tax, which should never have been imposed, sufficient could be provided from that source to finance this department. During its limited existence the Prices Department did everything possible in the interests of the community, particularly those who have endeavoured to purchase homes, not necessarily from the Housing Trust, the State Bank or the War Service Homes, but from speculative builders. When instances of overcharging were referred to the department, the people eventually got some satisfaction.

The SPEAKER—Does the honourable member think the price of housing comes within this Bill?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—It is all under price control. When I have received complaints about prices asked for new buildings I have always advised people not to attempt litigation until they had consulted the Prices Department which, I believe, is fair to both sides. The biggest fault I can find is the limited opportunity provided for prosecution; when breaches are committed people should not be warned and permitted to do the same thing again, but should be prosecuted. There should be a further safeguard on this question for the people who are trying to administer a difficult Act.

I believe that our Prices Commissioner is in a position to make an accurate estimate of the quantity of tea available for sale. If some action is not taken a considerable profit will be made overnight because of the increase in the price of tea announced this morning. I was pleased to hear in reply to a question this afternoon that the Government is still interested in this matter, and is endeavouring to offer some limited protection to the people. I support the second reading.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—Although I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that permanent prices legislation is necessary, I do not agree that this Bill should be withdrawn. I feel that the public demands a statement from the Premier as Prices Minister in view of the increase announced this morning in tea prices

at the same time as the announcement of a decrease in the prices of wine and brandy. The people that I represent are in the main the poorer people; those who live by their activities in industry for which they receive the basic wage or a little above it. They do not live from investments on the Stock Exchange, the practice of usury or from money invested in private enterprise.

Mr. Shannon—I would hazard a guess that there is more beer drunk in the metropolitan area than tea.

Mr. LAWN—These people would drink beer rather than brandy, but the price of beer is not to be reduced. The people represented by members opposite—private investors and farmers or those with shares in Elder Smith's, Goldsbrough Mort or legal firms—do not drink very much beer, but they consume much more brandy than the workers.

Mr. Heaslip—How do you know that?

Mr. LAWN—From personal observation. That section of the community has received some benefit as a result of a reduction in the price of brandy, but the people I represent, whose wages have been pegged since August, 1953, and whose main beverage is tea, will be expected to pay over 1s. per pound more for it. Bread has also increased by $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound loaf. We have been told repeatedly that prices follow wages, but that apparently is not so considering the price increases that have taken place since the pegging of the basic wage. In 1948 the South Australian Government told the people that prices should not be under the control of the Commonwealth Government and that it could legislate to control prices far better than the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth has announced that it is reducing the tariff on brandy but the State Prices Department has indicated that it will increase the price of tea. Why must the price of that commodity, which is consumed by most pensioners, be increased when wages are pegged? I have complained to the Premier orally and in writing about the interest rates charged by money lenders.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member should not develop that argument on this measure.

Mr. LAWN—I understand that investigations are made into costs and charges before prices are fixed. Mr. Dunks contended this afternoon that the Government, instead of controlling prices, was fixing and restricting profit. It is my intention to refer to the interest charged by money lenders and the interest rates, charged

under hire purchase agreements. If Mr. Dunks is correct in his assertion, I cannot understand why such interest rates are charged.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member should not debate that on this Bill. He can discuss it fully on a Bill to amend the Money-lenders Act.

Mr. LAWN—There is always some excuse for the privileged.

The SPEAKER—I am only pointing out what is provided in the Standing Orders.

Mr. LAWN—I am not disputing that, but the people of South Australia want to know why it is that when they borrow money they have to pay exorbitant interest rates? The Premier said that his Government could legislate to control prices and that it could control them better than the Commonwealth, but such rates are not being controlled. If he were questioned he would probably say, "They cannot be controlled under prices legislation but only under the Money-lenders Act." There is always some means of escape for the privileged section of the community. Mr. Dunks suggested that apart from cement and some other building materials there were no other articles in short supply. He referred to motor cars. The Tariff Board is quite satisfied that there is no ample supply of motor cars. When they are plentiful the tariff on imported motor cars will be increased. Whilst I do not own a motor car, I know of other people who have had to wait months before obtaining delivery of Australian-produced cars. Press advertisements relating to imported vehicles refer to the lengthy delay before delivery can be effected.

I should also like to know why a certain motor firm, which I mentioned last session, after paying several millions of pounds back into its organization revealed a profit of £4,000,000 last year. Although this year's balance-sheet has not been issued I understand it will reveal a similar profit. What supervision is being exercised by the Prices Department over its activities? Apparently little, if anything, has been done. That firm has made the greatest profit of any industry in Australia. Even the Broken Hill Proprietary's record profit obtained this year was only £3,800,000. I think Mr. Dunks will agree, on reflection, that the Prices Department is neither profit-fixing nor profit-restricting. I agree that there should be price fixation but that it should be under Commonwealth control and not left to the individual States. I remind those who suggested that the lid

should be lifted from price control and that producers should be enabled to sell their goods at whatever price they can obtain, of what has happened since the State became the price-fixing authority. Let me remind members once again of the biblical injunction in Proverbs 11, 26: "He that withholdeth corn the people shall curse him."

Mr. HAWKER (Burra)—I regret that the Government thinks it necessary again to extend this legislation for another year. I know that the Government and the Prices Department can advance several good reasons why it should be continued, and give several examples of how goods have been made cheaper to the general consumer by price control, but my point is that many of the evils that price control is designed to rectify are themselves the result of control. One has only to look at some items that were in plentiful supply before the war, when there was no such legislation, and the consumer got a fair deal. I think I should mention two things which particularly affect the man on the land—fuel and superphosphate. Neither was controlled prior to the war and there were ample supplies. Latterly there has been ample superphosphate, although that was not the case a little while ago, but it has been thought necessary to control the prices of those two commodities.

The Government ought to be very careful not to build up a feeling in either the buyer or the seller that price control is a permanent feature of our legislation because if it does the seller will see that he gets the greatest possible profit; if he knows that he can sell his goods at the prices fixed by the Prices Department he will not take the same care in respect of quality as he would otherwise. On the other hand, buyers who have been educated for years to accept price control feel that they have no need to walk even across the street to see if the other shop can sell the goods more cheaply. I feel that we are building up a community that is lazy. That is the greatest danger I see in price control, and I would ask the Government to watch very carefully that this legislation does not defeat its own ends. I know perfectly well that while we have price control legislation it makes socialization much easier and therefore I would expect members opposite to give the Bill their full support.

Mr. JENNINGS secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.20 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, August 24, at 2 p.m.