

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, November 4, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.

CEMENT SUPPLIES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I have recently received a number of complaints from people in my electorate regarding the difficulty still being experienced in securing adequate supplies of cement. Has the Premier any information on this subject and can he say whether there is any possibility in the immediate future of an improvement in the position which will ensure adequate supplies, particularly in country areas?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The position should undoubtedly improve, if for no reason other than that the Government at the moment is using 800 tons a month less than it was using in the immediate past. The Government was using large quantities of cement at Aroona Dam, but the pouring on that project was completed ahead of schedule. Within two or three days of completion there was a thunderstorm and about 100,000,000 gallons of water was collected by the dam. If any member is informed of a case where essential work is delayed because of inadequate supplies of cement and would notify the Chief Storekeeper of the name of the normal supplier, the Government will do its utmost to see whether special arrangements can be made for a supply.

MINOR SCHOOL WORKS.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—A grave cause of dissatisfaction amongst school committees and teachers in the country, and indeed also in the metropolitan area, is the inability to get work done at schools by the Architect-in-Chief's Department. Much of this delay appears to be due to the system under which the building inspectors of the Architect-in-Chief's Department work. A district schools inspector is empowered to authorize work up to £10 and school committees up to £30 without application, but building inspectors, who are experienced tradesmen, are limited to £10 and any work exceeding that must receive the Minister's authority. I am reliably informed that under this set-up a great deal of the building inspector's time is taken up with the clerical work involved in getting authority to proceed with necessary repairs. Moreover, the jobs inspected by him are the subject of requests for action from the Education Department which has made

sure through the district schools inspector that the requests are reasonable. After considering this matter I feel that much of this delay could be avoided if the building inspectors were given power to authorize work up to, say, £100. Will the Minister of Education consider this request.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I shall be pleased to do so.

Mr. HUTCHENS—On October 21, following on a question that had been asked of the Minister of Education by the honourable member for Angas, I asked whether the Minister would consider amending the regulations to enable minor works of up to £100 to be carried out by school committees. Yesterday a Minister in another place used these words:—

... following the arrangement recently approved by Cabinet for school committees to arrange minor works up to £400 with local contractors.

School committees are most grateful for this because they believe it will assist in having works and repairs carried out more quickly. Will it be permitted to spend some of this money without submitting plans?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I do not know who supplied that information in the other House yesterday, but there seems to be some confusion concerning this matter. The reply I gave to the member for Angas was a considered statement of new policy which I submitted to the Government and which was adopted. That allowed school committees eventually to obtain private contractors for works up to £400, but a wrong impression was conveyed in another place yesterday if it was stated that school committees, as such, could spend up to £400. That was never contemplated by me or the Government. Last June, I think, in reply to a question from the member for Flinders, I explained the alterations to the regulations permitting school committees to spend larger sums on repairs. Until then they were only allowed to spend small amounts of £10 or £20, with a maximum of £30 in one year, on repairs. The regulations were amended to increase those sums to £20, £40, £60, £80, with a maximum of £100, according to the size of the school. Those amounts could be spent on repairs, renovations, reinstatements, painting and the usual types of annual expenditure. I understood that the amended regulations were well received by school committees because they allowed them to get on with the job and not worry the Education or the Architect-in-Chief's Department with matters that they should not have to worry

about. Later, as a second instalment of reform, I recommended that the Architect-in-Chief should be further relieved so that works up to £400 could be carried out by local contractors, but the school councils and committees still had to submit plans, specifications and an estimate, preferably two estimates, of cost to the Architect-in-Chief. The reply given in the other place was over-simplified and has created a misunderstanding.

OAKBANK-LENSWOOD ROAD.

Mr. SHANNON—Not long ago a special grant was made to local government bodies to enable them to carry out various works before June 30, 1954, and generally speaking the obligation entered into by them was carried out. The Onkaparinga District Council applied for money for this purpose and specified the road from Oakbank to Lenswood as one of the projects it considered urgent. This road provides another route of access to the metropolitan area particularly for people living at Mount Torrens and Woodside. It is a shorter route than the Mount Barker Road, and relieves that road of considerable traffic. On about five miles of the road a good foundation has been laid and the surface prepared for sealing, and I believe this has cost nearly £16,000. The council has now been informed by the Highways and Local Government Department that no funds are available for sealing the road. If it is not sealed before next winter this money will have been wasted, because the foundation as well as the surface needs the protection of sealing. Is this money to be wasted or is further money to be made available for sealing before the next winter rains?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government's policy, with which I am sure the Commissioner of Highways would agree, is to seal roads, if possible, as soon as they are in a fit state. The finance available to the Highways Department is limited and the department has the duty of seeing that the money is fairly distributed and is used where most necessary. I traversed this road a few weeks ago with the Minister of Roads (Mr. Jude) and although I do not know whether any improvements have been made to it since then it was still in a fairly rough condition and seemed to need a good deal of work on it before being ready for sealing. However, I am not qualified to express an expert opinion on this matter, but I will refer the question to the Minister of Roads, and an inspector of the Highways Department will make a report upon it.

FISH MARKETING.

Mr. RICHES—I have received a letter from Messrs. Welsh and Tomalin, who are professional fishermen at Port Augusta. They have written concerning advice that they received from the Chief Inspector of Fisheries to turn back into the gulf 9,000 lb. of yellowtail caught last week because it was claimed that there was no market for that fish in Adelaide. Their letter states:—

We sold 2,400 lb. of snapper for 1s. 5d. a pound, retail price at that time was 4s. a pound. In July we sold 3,800 lb. of tommy ruff at the terrific high price of 6d., price 2s. a pound in the round. In August we sold 1,500 lb. of yellow tail at 10d. per pound, retail price 4s. per pound. In the same month 2,000 lb. of yellowtail, retail price 3s. 6d. a pound, and we received 5d. a pound. Also, is it possible to pass on to this fish-hungry State this last catching episode which has made us decide to put away our boat and gear and get out of the industry. On Friday of last week we had in our net over 300 yellowtail, about 9,000 lb. of fish, for which every previous year we have averaged 1s. a pound. We contacted the Adelaide Fish Market and the exact words of Mr. Daw were, "We don't want them. Sell them locally." I immediately informed Mr. Daw that that was too much for local consumption. He replied, "Well, the people of Adelaide don't want them." I suggested to him about putting them in the chill room for the Monday market. He replied, "The chill room is full up," and then he rang off in my ear. Then I contacted Mr. Moorhouse, Chief Inspector of Fisheries, and he said "You can sell the lot at 3d. a pound." I informed him that it cost us 4d. a pound to get fish to Adelaide. He came back with the brightest suggestion I have ever heard from any officer, "Let them out and catch them early next week." This is not another fish story. When we decided to let them go we made arrangements for two local business men of Port Augusta, Mr. Ivan Fullerton and Mr. Otto Rishmaller, and another professional fisherman, Mr. J. Abselom, to witness the 9,000 lb. of fresh fish deprived from the public of South Australia.

Will the Minister of Agriculture call for a report on the prices paid to fishermen and charged to the public of Adelaide and on the general question of marketing fish in South Australia? Will he also inquire from his department as to whether better and more helpful advice cannot be given to country fishermen when they seek its help?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I shall certainly have the matter investigated. I point out, however, that fishermen have at their disposal now many co-operative concerns which are a check on the price which fishermen obtain for their catches, and I would suggest

that if they find themselves up against marketing difficulties they should examine the desirability of forming their own co-operatives in centres where they do not exist already.

PRISON FARMS.

Mr. TRAVERS—Can the Premier indicate what the Government contemplates in relation to prison farms? I have in mind Kyeema and to what extent it is operating, and whether it will be continued as a prison farm. Secondly, has additional land yet been acquired at Yatala and, if so, in what way is it to be utilized? Thirdly, is the current rumour that it is the Government's intention to establish a prison farm on the River Murray correct?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Chief Secretary has approached me as Treasurer to see whether finance could be found and I have informed him that the Government could find the funds for a worthwhile proposition of this description. The latest information I have is that investigations are being undertaken to ascertain whether a prison farm could be usefully associated with the State forestry undertaking. I believe a good deal of progress has been made in that connection and that in the South-East a project will be developed that will enable prisoners to live more or less normal lives and to rehabilitate themselves in the way it cannot be done in a prison atmosphere. That would have my personal support and I think that of all my colleagues, and I know it is the desire of the Minister controlling that department. The Government has instructed the Crown Solicitor to proceed to acquire the additional land at Yatala and negotiations with the vendors are in hand. A member opposite asked a question recently on this subject and at that time I made some inquiries and found that only one of the vendors had quoted a firm price. As soon as the details can be settled the purchase will be finalized. I believe that Kyeema has proved to be only a limited success and its continuance is problematical. If the new enterprise in the South-East is commenced it will be on a fairly substantial scale and I think we would not maintain the two projects.

EXCHANGE OF LAND BY WOODVILLE CORPORATION.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I understand that the Woodville Council is negotiating with Pope Products for the exchange of a piece of land known as Princess Square situated in the Beverley ward for land in Findon ward adjacent to the Findon School on Crittenden Road. Residents adjacent to the Princess Square site are

anxious that the transfer shall not be made, as they wish it to be retained as a playing ground. Can the Minister of Lands say whether the transfer has been gazetted and what procedure must be followed by the people wishing to tender evidence in this matter?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—In cases of this nature a certain procedure must be followed before any transfer can be completed. The proposal for exchange of land at Beverley was gazetted on October 21 and in the *Gazette* notice persons are given forty days after October 21 to deliver to the Corporation of Woodville or its Town Clerk, in writing, any objection to the exchange and they are also asked to forward a copy of such objection to the Surveyor-General's office in the Lands Department.

HINDMARSH ISLAND SCHOOL TRANSPORT.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—Has the Minister of Education a reply to the question I asked yesterday regarding the transport of children from Hindmarsh Island to the Goolwa school?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Following on the honourable member's question I discussed this matter this morning with the departmental transport officer, Mr. Harris, who reports:—

Following invitation for tenders, a contract for this service was made with Mr. A. E. E. Southall. As Mr. Southall advised that he would be ready to commence operating on November 1, the Supt. of Primary Schools closed the Hindmarsh Island school and transferred the teacher as from October 31. Mr. Southall proposed to use a second-hand vehicle, but apparently altered his plans, and purchased a new chassis on which he is now building a body. Mr. Southall did not inform me of the new circumstances, and my first advice that the service did not commence last Monday was a phone call from Mr. Heggaton, chairman of the Hindmarsh Island school committee. As a result satisfactory arrangements have been made for the conveyance of the children to Goolwa until the new bus is ready.

HOUSING TRUST TIMBER HOMES.

Mr. JENNINGS—My question is prompted by the recent announcement that the Housing Trust intends to erect some homes constructed of Australian timber. The trust recently imported a number of timber homes from overseas, and when that scheme was about to be commenced it was announced in the press that it would provide an avenue for people to secure homes without undue delay. Although it is true that many people secured homes without the tremendous delay that would have been

necessitated by an application for a solid construction home, many applicants still have no immediate hope of being satisfied, although the scheme is almost completed. Will the Premier ascertain from the trust whether those applicants will be considered for homes in the new scheme without having to make fresh application?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—At present the trust has on its books applications for rental homes totalling some 18,000. This is due to a number of circumstances; the prime one is the shortage of homes, the second is that the trust's activity is a popular one with house seekers. Its policy is that those desiring a house should keep their application current by reporting to the trust at certain times—I am not sure how frequently. If the applicant shows no such interest in his application it is considered dormant and goes out of current consideration. I will refer the question to the chairman of the trust, and I have no doubt he will be prepared to transfer these applications over to the new scheme, but it will still be the obligation of the applicant to do the things normally required to be done under existing circumstances.

MURRAY BRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL.

Mr. WHITE—Some time ago I was instructed by the Murray Bridge High School Council to approach the Education Department regarding the purchase of a piece of vacant land contiguous to the high school. The council was of the opinion that if the department did not secure this land now it would eventually be taken up and built on and thus be lost to the department forever. Has the Minister of Education anything to report?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Following upon representations made to me by the honourable member I have investigated the matter, and find that the request is not a new one. It was first made to the department in 1952 and there was correspondence and discussions. It was not recommended by the department. My predecessor, the Hon. R. J. Rudall, submitted the application to Cabinet in August, 1953, but it did not approve of the purchase. Fairly recently the department received a further letter from the secretary of the high school council and I have received a report and recommendation on it from the department. It came to me only this morning and I have not made any decision, but portion of the report is:—

(a) There are at present 16 acres of land at the high school. This is a reasonable area and larger than several metropolitan high schools with much heavier enrolments. (b)

The school enrolment is still considerably below 300. (c) An 80-foot strip of land in front of the school was purchased four years ago. (d) Even if the numbers grow considerably in the next few years, there will be ample playing space. (e) It was pointed out that part of the land on offer is a stony outcrop and considerable grading would be necessary to make it useful for school purposes.

The recommendation to me is against the purchase of the land. It may be desirable, but it cannot be essential, and it is not considered to be nearly as urgent as other needs for the purchase of land which will inevitably arise during the next few months. It does not look any more hopeful to me now than it did apparently to my predecessor a year ago.

VICTOR HARBOUR TROTTERING CLUB BOOKMAKERS.

Mr STEPHENS—The following is an extract from the *Hansard* report of my second reading explanation of the Lottery and Gaming Act Amendment Bill:—

Mr. Stephens . . . There are 23 licensed bookmakers residing in the metropolitan area who are members of the Victor Harbour Trotting Club.

Mr. William Jenkins—That is not correct.

Mr. Stephens—After I spoke to the Police Commissioner his secretary showed me the official list and there were over 20 registered bookmakers shown as members of that club.

Mr. William Jenkins—There are not half that number.

Mr. Stephens—Then some have dropped out since last year.

Previously I had asked the Premier whether he would table the file showing the names and addresses of the bookmakers, which is required to be kept in accordance with the Act. A few minutes ago the file was handed to me by the Premier. Would Mr. Jenkins look at the file, which is official, now or later and admit my remarks were correct and that he was wrong? I do not think he would wilfully say that my remarks were not correct knowing that his statement was not true.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—I have in my satchel the official membership list of the Victor Harbor Trotting Club which I received the week before last from the secretary. At one time there were 23 bookmaker members of that club. During the last couple of years some of them have not renewed their membership. I think the honourable member has confused members with debenture holders. At present there are 10 paid-up members who are bookmakers. The others who were bookmakers and were members have gradually dropped out. One or two have died, and three or four have

gone out of the bookmaking business. At present there are either 10 or 12 registered bookmakers who are members and who have paid their fees for the current year. Those who have not paid the fees for this year are not members.

WOMEN POLICE AND AUXILIARIES.

Mr. GOLDNEY—Has the Treasurer obtained the information I asked for last night as to the number of women police and auxiliaries?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Acting Commissioner of Police reports as follows:—

In response to your telephoned request today the following particulars are supplied concerning the expenditure Estimates 1954-1955:—

Strength—

Women police (including four wardresses)	24
Women police auxiliaries (includes 18 for portion of year only)	52
	£ £

Provision sought—

Women police	15,670
Wardress	2,365
	18,035
Women police auxiliaries	£23,794

Salary range per annum—

Women police, £677 to £821.
Women police auxiliaries, £518 to £636.

Duties—

Women police are primarily engaged on normal police duties in a particular sphere covering various cases in which adult and juvenile females are concerned.

Women police auxiliaries are employed as telephonists, typistes and clerks, in the various police divisions and as mess personnel at the police barracks.

RENTS OF GOVERNMENT HOUSES.

Mr. LAWN—Yesterday I visited the Adelaide Gaol and inspected some of the cottages occupied by persons employed there, most of whom have appealed against increases in their rentals. At present a woman employed as a wardress at the gaol occupies what is known as the wardresses' cottage, which has accommodation for three permanent and one relieving employee. She is the sole occupant at the moment. I understand when she was engaged, her contract of hiring provided for free quarters irrespective of her rate of pay. She is now faced with the imposition of 28s. a week rent, 7s. 6d. a week lighting, and 4s. a week gas, a total of 39s. 6d. The rent on other similar cottages has been increased to between 25s. and 31s. 6d. a week. Will the Premier personally investigate this matter and state whether he thinks she is receiving a fair deal?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I am investigating these matters at the moment. I have obtained a report on Government rents

in response to a request from the Leader of the Opposition. The following is a table outlining the position:—

Tenants.	Number of houses.	Present average weekly rent.			Proposed average weekly rent.		
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Public Service officers	307	1	0	1	1	14	6
Weekly paid employees	224	0	16	9	1	6	9
Teachers	533	0	12	7	1	13	11
Woods and Forests Department employees	496	1	0	5	1	10	10

The position with regard to the Gaols and Prisons Department is that there are 63 houses, the total rent from which at present is £36 3s. 8d. The proposed weekly rent under the Housing Trust report which has been accepted is £88 13s. Members will realize that the average rent for these houses is less than 30s. a week and is no more than is being paid for temporary houses being erected by the Government. I will examine the information supplied by the honourable member and include it in the problem I am considering.

WALLAROO CLERK OF COURT.

Mr. McALEES—When speaking on the Estimates last night I referred to the transfer of the Clerk of Court from Wallaroo, but was not satisfied with the reply I received from the Minister representing the Attorney-General. There has always been a Clerk of Court at Wallaroo and he has had an assistant. The District Magistrate not only adjudicates at Wallaroo but on Yorke Peninsula and parts of Eyre Peninsula. The courthouse at Wallaroo has not been closed but a police officer is performing the duties of Clerk of Court. He is not a Justice of the Peace and cannot sign the documents as required by so many of the people in the district. The Clerk of Court and his assistant were always available to supply advice to persons requiring it.

The SPEAKER—If the honourable member is making a speech he should make it on the Estimates.

Mr. McALEES—No notice would have been taken of it then.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member cannot reflect on the Committee.

Mr. McALEES—I was not satisfied with the reply last night that because no crimes were being committed at Wallaroo it was necessary to shift the Clerk of Court. Will the Minister representing the Attorney-General ascertain whether the Clerk of Court will be restored to Wallaroo?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—With the greatest respect might I suggest that the honourable member has actually repeated the speech he made last night to which I replied on more than one occasion. I am prepared to reply again and until I am sufficiently understood. Although the line has passed I have the report relating to this matter still with me. It is as follows:—

Approval has been given to transfer the Clerk of Court from Wallaroo to Port Lincoln and the district will in future be known as the Port Lincoln Magisterial District instead of the Magisterial District of Wallaroo. This has been done because the local court work at Wallaroo has been greatly reduced. The work can be carried on by the police officer in charge as Clerk of the Court in a similar manner to a number of towns in South Australia.

Police Officers will also act as representatives for other departments.

I fully sympathize with the honourable member in this matter. Although last night I endeavoured to pay him the compliment that the great decrease in misdemeanours and litigation has coincided with his advent as representative of the electorate, apparently he was not satisfied. On the other hand, the honourable member for Flinders was anxious to have the status of the Port Lincoln court raised because of the large volume of crime and litigation that seems to have cropped up there. It is surprising that some members desire to advertise the amount of lawlessness in their electorates while others bemoan the fact that there is not as much now as before. I shall be only too pleased to make representations to the Attorney-General, but I cannot take the matter any further at present.

TRUST HOMES AT RIVERTON.

Mr. QUIRKE—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked a few weeks ago relating to the building by the Housing Trust of rental homes at Riverton?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Since the honourable member asked this question I have received a letter from a local industry requesting that six homes be built, but the report I have received from the Housing Trust is to the effect that it is endeavouring to arrange a contract for the building of three rental homes in that area. I have no doubt that if the demand exists the trust will increase its programme to meet requirements.

WATERFRONT STRIKE: FUEL SUPPLIES.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—Can the Premier say whether the disastrous waterfront

strike is likely to have any immediate effect on the fuel supplies of this State, and if so, what are the likely consequences to its economy?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It is not necessary for Government instrumentalities to take any immediate action, but any prolonged strike cutting off fuel supplies must have some ultimate effect. This morning I conferred with the Commissioner of Railways regarding the possibility of bringing increased supplies of coal from Leigh Creek, and he promised to confer with the Commonwealth Railways Commissioner to step up supplies to the utmost limit that the railways can manage jointly. I hope that it will be possible to step up the supplies from that source to 15,000 tons a week. This would be of material assistance. I think the Railways Department has sufficient liquid fuel to last for about five weeks. Although I cannot state the position of the Gas Company, I think it is probably in a difficult position. I cannot speak for the Tramways Trust, but I fancy it has taken out the grates that were used for Leigh Creek coal, and it may experience some difficulty in connection with its service. I assure the honourable member that the matter will be kept under close observation and that any necessary action will be taken.

TIMBER-FRAME HOMES PRICES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked a few days ago relating to the price of timber-frame homes?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have obtained a report from the Chairman of the Housing Trust, which sets out that the prices vary according to the type of house and the cost of land. The prices range from approximately £2,600 to £2,830, including land, fittings and fencing. It is expected that these houses will be available both for sale and for rental.

LIGHTING IN ASSEMBLY CHAMBER.

Mr. WHITE—I desire to direct a question to you, Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the House Committee. When I entered this House I was blessed with a very good pair of eyes but my vision gradually deteriorated and last week I was forced to consult an eye specialist, who said that the lighting in the place in which I was working was probably defective. I have made it my business to discuss this matter with other members in a casual way to ascertain whether they have had similar trouble and I have found there is a general complaint about the lighting in this Chamber. The eyes

of a member of Parliament are his tools of trade. He must be able to read and write and it is essential that his eyes be kept in good order. Has the lighting of this Chamber ever been investigated by an expert with modern ideas on the lighting of buildings? If not, will you have an investigation made, and if it is found that the lighting could be detrimental to the eyesight of members, will you take steps to have the defects remedied?

The **SPEAKER**—The lighting of the Chamber has been investigated by competent authorities and by the Architect-in-Chief's department. During this session the white light domes have been taken out and replaced by amber domes in the larger centre lights to reduce what glare there was. According to the authorities the glare has been reduced considerably. The smaller globes are covered by what are known as pearl shades and there is no glare from them. There is a minimum of glare now from the amber lights, and the official and technical advice I have is that the present lighting of the Chamber is not detrimental to the eyesight of members. Although we may all be feeling eye strain from close reading my recent information is that this is not due to any fault in the lighting of the Chamber.

RESIDENCE FOR WHYALLA WEST SCHOOL.

Mr. **RICHERS**—The chairman of the Whyalla West School Committee has informed me that straight across from the new Whyalla West school is a Housing Trust home admirably suitable as a residence for the head teacher. Both the school committee and the head teacher have been urging the department to secure this house, which has become vacant, and the department's last reply to the committee was that it should ask the teacher to apply for it in his own name and pay the full rent until next financial year, because the department did not have sufficient money to secure the house, which is still available. It would be a pity if the department were not able to get it. I ask the Minister of Education whether he will investigate this matter personally with a view to meeting the wishes of the Whyalla West school committee?

The Hon. B. **PATTINSON**—I am prepared to investigate the matter fully but I am not prepared to say offhand that I shall come to a different decision from that conveyed to the chairman of the school committee. I do not know the particular circumstances about this home but we have had many requests from head-

masters and school councils and committees to purchase trust homes in various parts of the country. Whether or not we are willing and anxious, the fact remains that the honourable member was substantially correct in saying that the department has not been allotted sufficient Loan funds for the purchase of all the trust homes that school councils and teachers desire. However, houses will be provided for those whom we consider to be in greatest need.

Mr. **Riches**—Could the department make up the difference in rent for 12 months?

The Hon. B. **PATTINSON**—I am prepared to consider that, but I do not know where we would be heading by creating a precedent by subsidizing rents. I am perhaps just as disappointed as the honourable member, but I simply cannot purchase all the trust homes for school residences that I desire because there was not sufficient money allotted to me in the last two or three months for that purpose.

HOUSES FOR SCHOOLTEACHERS.

Mr. **MACGILLIVRAY**—The Minister will probably recall that during debate this week I quoted a number of authorities, one of whom was the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer of Great Britain, the late Sir Reginald McKenna, who was also chairman of the largest banking institution in Great Britain. I also quoted the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and other authorities to show that money is only a matter of book-keeping. If the Minister had said he was sorry he could not get houses for his teachers because we had not the tradesmen, or the bricks, or timber I could have understood it, but as only a question of bookkeeping is involved I would like to know what system is taught in the schools and universities—whether it is the principles laid down by the authorities I have mentioned, or the outmoded idea that the financial system must be backed with gold or something that no-one knows anything about?

The Hon. B. **PATTINSON**—The schools under the jurisdiction of the Education Department do not soar into the realms of higher finance, but deal more in the simple rule that two and two make four and not five.

Mr. **Macgillivray**—I am debating a very serious question.

The Hon. B. **PATTINSON**—It is a serious question and I heard the honourable member make a very serious speech on it. It is very difficult, of course, to understand always the spoken word on these matters, but I would be prepared to study the honourable member's remarks.

Mr. Macgillivray—Will the Minister ascertain what his department thinks about the matter?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I shall be very interested to do that.

DESIGN OF TIMBER HOUSES.

Mr. CORCORAN—I understand that the Housing Trust has decided on a new design for timber homes for the new satellite town near Salisbury, and I ask the Premier whether the trust considers this design superior to the present timber house, and, if so, is it intended to erect this type of house in country towns?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I believe it is the trust's intention, but I will obtain a report from the chairman to confirm it.

HOMES FOR AGED COUPLES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—With reference to legislation now before the Federal Parliament to enable subsidies on a pound for pound basis to be granted to the religious organizations maintaining homes for aged folk, it appears that if that scheme is properly implemented it will remove, or at least reduce, the necessity for the State Government to make further provision on the lines made through the Supplementary Estimates a short time ago. If a substantial saving is effected in this way will the money saved be used to speed up the erection of houses by the Housing Trust for aged couples, and particularly the extension of this scheme to country towns at an early date?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The State scheme referred to was introduced only towards the end of last year when Parliament approved of the expenditure in the Supplementary Estimates. It arose from the fact that the State had had a buoyant year and the financial position of the Treasury was very sound. I explained to the religious bodies concerned that it was a good time to hop in for any work they wished to undertake because the money might not be available on some future occasion. I am pleased to say that they took advantage of the scheme to a very remarkable extent and that great assistance will be given to the community by their efforts, which I very much appreciate. I assure the honourable member that moneys available to the Government will be used to the greatest possible extent and, as far as the Government can see, to the greatest benefit of the community. I am now seeking a substantial additional sum at a fairly low rate of interest, and if negotiations are successful the Government proposes to tie it up to the Housing Trust for the provision of rental houses in

the country. It is much more difficult to provide rental houses in the country at economic rents than it is in the metropolitan area and, on the other hand, the rents that can be obtained in the country are substantially lower than in the city. A considerable amount of thought is being given to this problem by both the Housing Trust and the State Treasury.

PORT LINCOLN-WHYALLA HIGHWAY.

Mr. RICHES—About three years ago an arrangement was made between the Highways Department and the Whyalla Town Commission, at a time when there was a shortage of equipment and manpower, that the commission should embark upon construction of the highway from Whyalla to Port Lincoln, but suddenly it was given three weeks' notice to stop the work, which meant that the plant was idle and the arrangements were upset. Earlier this year the commission was encouraged to reorganize its equipment and to start the work again, but in a recent issue of the *Whyalla News* I read that once more it had been advised that the grant had been reduced, and that the work had again stopped. Will the Premier obtain a report as to the reason for the withdrawal of the grant and the stoppage of this work?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes.

THE ESTIMATES.

In Committee of Supply.

(Continued from November 3. Page 1298.)

MINISTER OF LANDS AND MINISTER OF REPATRIATION.

Lands Department, £513,015; Government Motor Garage, £24,285; Advances to Settlers, Vermin-proof Fencing and Loans for Fencing and Water Piping, £1,282; Miscellaneous, £84,764—passed.

MINISTER OF WORKS.

Public Works Department, £6,683; Engineering and Water Supply Department, £1,821,000; Architect-in-Chief's Department, £212,000; Government Offices, £117,000; Cemetery, £17,000; Public Stores Department, £99,674—passed.

Aborigines Department, £145,500.

Mr. RICHES—I heartily endorse the Treasurer's recent announcement that the Government is to explore the possibility of erecting more homes for aborigines. I am pleased to see that an extra £5,200 is to be made available for the purchase of houses for aborigines.

Can the Treasurer say whether any of that sum will be used on housing at the Umeewarra Mission near Port Augusta? Some years ago a few two-roomed cottages were built by a missionary from materials supplied by the Government at a cost of £30 a cottage. Those cottages had served a useful purpose, but there is a need for more and for an improvement in living conditions at the mission.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will bring the honourable member's observations to the notice of the department. I understand that the houses are erected by the Housing Trust and that the total grant was not used last year merely because the contractors were unable to complete their contracts. I am not quite clear on where the houses are as the explanation states that they are to be erected throughout the State.

Line passed.

Public Works, £853,000.

Mr. JENNINGS—Last year £34,000 was provided for the reconditioning of the old wing at the Yatala Labour Prison, but only £5,965 was spent. In view of the fact that over £28,000 of last year's grant remained unspent, does the provision of only £20,000 this year mean that work is to be curtailed?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No. A speculative grant was made last year, but now the cost of the work is known more accurately. The Government is confronted with a large expenditure on capital works, and this item must be regarded merely as a stop-gap to meet the present position.

Line passed.

Miscellaneous, £28,049—passed.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

Education Department, £4,981,000; Libraries Department, £97,335; Museum Department, £34,486; Art Gallery Department, £15,063.—passed.

Miscellaneous, £767,200.

Mr. DUNSTAN—We should long ago have abolished the present institute system in this State and adopted the system of free municipal libraries operating in Great Britain and the other States of the Commonwealth. The institute system was tried in England during the last century and it has been found everywhere to be unsuitable to modern conditions. A system that works on subscriptions and a small subsidy has meant a steady decline in the adequacy of our institute libraries since they were established towards the end of the last century and in the early years of this century. South Australia

is worse off for library services than any other State. Although we have a good Public Library on North Terrace, most librarians feel that that library should be a reference rather than a lending library and that we should have more free lending libraries throughout the State. Research into this question has revealed that our library services reach a much smaller proportion of the community than can be considered healthy in a modern democratic society. The institute library in my district is faced with an almost impossible situation. It has an extremely good building that was given to the people of Kensington and Norwood by Sir Edwin Smith, but since the depression of the thirties it has experienced a continual whittling away of its funds. Today it does not receive enough money in subscriptions and subsidies to pay the salaries of its staff, let alone maintenance expenses. It owes money to the Kensington and Norwood Municipality for maintenance costs, and it is not in a position to maintain an adequate library service. In a district where 16,000 people should be served by that library there are only 470 subscribers, and that number has been built up over the past year from 300. As it is unable to spend money on books it is unable to provide anything like an adequate library service. To maintain a good and adequate service we should be spending 8s. a head of the population, but we could maintain a fairly good one which would be much more satisfactory than the present totally inadequate service and would be a satisfactory beginning, for less than 3s. a head. It cannot be said that the non-claimant States are not doing something in this regard. In Melbourne 16 municipalities allot £60,000 from rates for free municipal libraries, which are subsidized pound for pound by the Government. In New South Wales last financial year the amount spent on free libraries was £125,320. Queensland also has free municipal libraries which are subsidized by the Government. South Australian municipalities have power under the Local Government Act to rate for libraries and if the Government through the Libraries Board were to offer a subsidy on a pound for pound basis for free municipal libraries they could be instituted in South Australia. There are communities here anxious to institute them and I understand that Mitcham is already moving in that direction. At Castlemaine in Victoria they are spending 7s. 6d. a head on free library activities, at Port Melbourne 9s. 7d. and at Box Hill 6s. 10d. Newcastle in New South Wales is spending 6s. 8d. a head and Canterbury 7s. 6d.

It has been found that wherever free libraries are instituted there is an immediate enormous increase in the use of libraries and they form the basis upon which adult education can be carried on. They have led also to a big increase in interest in public questions generally, and an upsurge of interest in community activities as a whole. It is long past the time when they should have been instituted here. At the last annual general meeting of the Institutes Association of South Australia a motion was carried with only one dissentient vote that a free library service should be instituted. People who have been desperately trying under most unsatisfactory conditions to carry on our library services voluntarily recognize that this service has to be provided. Actually it should have been undertaken before, but let us make a start right now.

Line passed.

MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYMENT.

Department of Industry, £55,837; Factories and Steam Boilers Department, £42,088; Miscellaneous, £1,450—passed.

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF FORESTS.

Minister of Agriculture Department, £7,411—passed.

Agriculture Department, £478,900.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I am surprised to see that the salaries of some of our leading officers of the department have been reduced. I had hoped that at least some of them would have been increased. For instance, the salary of the Director of Agriculture has been reduced by £80, that of the Soil Conservator by £81 and that of the Chief Horticulturist by £51. I should like to know the reason. Can the Minister of Agriculture give me any information regarding the department's intention in the use of the Chief Horticulturist? During the Address in Reply debate I said his services were far too valuable to be wasted on outside duties, such as Chairman of the Potato Board. He is practically irreplaceable and is possibly without peer in Australia. There have been tremendous advances in horticultural science and I feel that he should be fully occupied leading research work in this sphere. If he were allowed to concentrate on these jobs he could possibly supply the answers to many present day problems.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN (Minister of Agriculture)—The question of apparent decreases in salaries was dealt with last night by the Treasurer when he dealt with a similar

inquiry concerning another department. It is purely a question of a different method of making payments this year. If the honourable member looks at the front page of the Estimates he will see it is stated that they are prepared on a cash basis. Previously the salaries were calculated on the full amount payable for the whole of the 12 months. This time they are calculated on the number of pay days in the financial year. Salaries are paid fortnightly and in one year there may be 26 pay days and in another 27. In one year there may be a salary payment which has relation to the previous year. These Estimates do not cover the full 12-monthly period. Last night the Treasurer set out the position.

Mr. Macgillivray—The actual salary could alter each year.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—Yes, if we continue in the same way as this year. In a subsequent year it may appear that there has been a salary increase.

Mr. Macgillivray—What was wrong with the old system?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I have not had a long experience in the compilation of the Estimates and I suggest that the question be put to the Treasurer. In regard to Mr. Strickland, my department is being divided into three main sections—a plant division, an animal division, and an extension service and publicity division. Three new heads will be appointed, but I cannot say now who they will be because the matter has not been finalized.

Line passed.

Agricultural College Department, £95,521; Produce Department, £208,000; Fisheries and Game Department, £9,794; Chemistry Department, £36,243; Miscellaneous, £96,500—passed.

MINISTER OF IRRIGATION.

Department of Lands, £423,770—passed.

MINISTER OF MINES.

Mines Department, £650,000—passed.

MINISTER OF MARINE.

Harbors Board Department, £1,460,850; Miscellaneous, £150—passed.

MINISTER OF RAILWAYS.

Railways Department, £14,628,982.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The expenditure last year on refreshment services was £148,960. The proposed expenditure this year is £137,712, a reduction of £11,248. A possible explanation for the reduction is that the department recently let to private contractors a number of refreshment rooms that were formerly operated

departmentally. Can the Treasurer say how many of the departmentally run refreshment rooms have been let to private contractors in the last 12 months, and can he name the stations?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The explanation given by the Minister of Railways for the reduced expenditure is that there has been a reduction in staff, and a saving in overtime and penalty time is expected. Refreshment rooms at Bowmans and Riverton have been leased.

Line passed.

Transport Control Board, £15,892—passed.

Miscellaneous, £102.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—For many years under railway legislation there was no appeal against a dismissal, but in 1941 the then Leader of the Opposition introduced a Bill providing for such an appeal in the same way as there was an appeal against punishment meted out by the Railways Commissioner. The move met with much support in this House. Admittedly, some of the support was qualified, but the general feeling was that there should be an appeal against a dismissal. It was regarded as anomalous that a man fined, cautioned or reduced in grade should have the right to appeal against such a decision, whereas a man who, after many years of faithful service, was dismissed because of one misdemeanour should not have that right of appeal. As a result of the Bill and subsequent discussions, conferences were held between the then Minister (the Honourable M. McIntosh) and the railways unions and eventually a compromise was agreed upon that an amendment should be inserted in the Railway Commissioner's Act relating to the appeal board. New section 44a was inserted. Among other things it provides:—

If any officer or employee is charged with misconduct or the breach of any rule, by-law, or regulation of the railway service, and the Commissioner is of opinion that the charge is of such a nature that the appropriate punishment for a person guilty thereof would be dismissal, the Commissioner may, by notice in writing, call upon the officer or employee to show cause before the board why he should not be dismissed on the ground that he is guilty of the matter charged against him.

Members will see that the provision that the Commissioner might call upon an employee to show cause before the board why he should not be dismissed was not mandatory on the Commissioner. It was left to the Commissioner's discretion to exercise the powers provided in the section. I think that was done

because it was felt that some misdemeanors might be so serious as to merit dismissal and that no good purpose would be served by compelling the Commissioner to state a case to the appeal board because it would be a complete waste of time.

The Hon. T. Playford—An engine driver drunk on duty, for example?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes. The board would simply confirm the Commissioner's recommendation that the offence merited dismissal. The Minister of Railways made one or two pungent remarks when he was reporting to the House the result of the conference which had been held between himself, the then Leader of the Opposition and interested persons. He said:—

If the Commissioner thinks that there may be just cause for dismissing an employee for misconduct, he may call upon the employee to show cause before the board why he should not be dismissed. The employee may then, if he desires, have the whole case investigated by the board, which will submit the evidence and its report to the Commissioner. The Commissioner, on receipt of that report, may take such action as he deems just. The effect—and this is perhaps the most important provision—is that no man will be dismissed without a hearing.

Mr. Richards said that the Opposition agreed with the conference and would agree to all amendments. He said:—

The people I am representing are prepared to give the proposal a trial and see how it works out. I believe that it will be an infinitely better system than the one they have been working under and I do not see why it should not work amicably.

The war conditions became so serious that the Commonwealth Government was forced to take complete control of manpower resources. In so doing it took over the functions relating to employment in various types of work which had formerly been carried out by authorities established over a period of years. In South Australia it provided for a Railway Service Appeal Board which, for the duration of the National Security Regulations, superseded the State law. The regulation governing that appeal board provided the right of appeal to a railway man who was dismissed from the service. With the end of the war the Commonwealth regulations expired and we reverted to State control and to the provisions of State law. Although men are dismissed from the railways service from time to time, so far as I can ascertain there has been no instance of the provisions of section 44a being used. I asked responsible officers of the railway

unions if they knew of any instances, but they did not. On October 19 I asked the following question on notice:—

1. Has the Railways Commissioner dismissed any railways employees during the period 1950-51 to 1953-54, without taking the action prescribed in subsection (1) of section 44a of the South Australian Railways Commissioner's Act?

2. If so, will the Government consider amending that subsection, if necessary, to render such action obligatory on the part of the Railways Commissioner?

The Hon. C. S. Hincks, for the Honourable M. McIntosh, replied:—

The Railways Commissioner reports:—

1. A number of the staff have been dismissed during the past three years for a variety of offences, including larceny of railway property, being under the influence of liquor while on duty, unsatisfactory conduct while on duty, civil offences, and refusal of duty.

2. Subsection (1) of section 44a of the South Australian Railways Commissioner's Act provides, *inter alia*, that the Commissioner may, by notice in writing, call upon the officer or employee to show cause before the Appeal Board why he should not be dismissed on the ground that he is guilty of the matter charged against him. If the Act were amended to make this action obligatory on the part of the Railways Commissioner, it would mean that no servant of the Commissioner could be dismissed, notwithstanding the seriousness of his offence, until that servant had at least the opportunity of giving notice in writing to the secretary of the board, of his intention to show cause, for which he is allowed fourteen days after the receipt of the notice from the Commissioner. I believe it would be to the detriment of departmental discipline to deprive the Commissioner of the power to summarily dismiss an employee from the service where such action is manifestly justified. There is nothing to prevent an employee of the department who has been dismissed appealing to the Commissioner for his case to be reconsidered. I am, therefore, strongly of the opinion that subsection (1) of section 44a of the Act should not be amended.

From that reply members will see that the attitude of the present Commissioner is that section 44a should be disregarded and thus we return to the position which obtained prior to the passing of the amending Bill in 1941. I do not think Parliament intended that. I think when it passed the amending Act of 1941, Parliament intended that some use should be made of it. We did not make it mandatory because we felt that certain cases might merit instant dismissal without any further inquiry. Fairly recently a good employee was dismissed because he picked up a lump of coal that had fallen off a tender and used it in his fire, which is a common practice amongst people living near a railway line. He was charged

with this offence and also with taking from the yard of the home that he had once occupied some obsolete railways material. When the facts were brought to the notice of the previous Commissioner the man was re-employed in a position slightly below his previous grade and was soon promoted to his old grade. However, I cited this case to illustrate that there are degrees of larceny of railway property. I do not disagree that it is a serious offence to be under the influence of liquor while on duty, because that could endanger lives and property. However, I think it is going too far to dismiss a man who is convicted of a civil offence, although I realize that this provision is administered with a great deal of discretion. I recollect that many years ago a railway fireman was dismissed because he became involved in a street brawl, even though he was off duty. Subsequently, after a good deal of argument, he was reinstated and eventually became a first class enginedriver. The provisions of section 44a have some merit and it appears from the Commissioner's report that they have been allowed to fall into disuse. I ask the Minister of Railways and the Government to consider this position. I do not suggest that the law be amended at present, but if the wishes of Parliament are to be disregarded we should consider whether some action should not be taken in the matter.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have listened to the observations of the Leader of the Opposition with interest and I think I can meet his request to some extent. I do not think it would be wise to take away from the Commissioner the power of dismissal in dealing with severe cases. I was pleased to see that the Leader appreciated that the safety of the railways requires that the Commissioner should have some powers for the disciplining of the organization. The amendments quoted by the Leader were compromise amendments. I agree that they mean something and are not so many words. The most useful course is for the Minister of Railways to confer with the Commissioner to see if it is possible to draw up a list of offences such as mentioned by the Leader that could be regarded as borderline offences. I agree that there are plenty of civil offences that should not render a man ineligible for duty in the railways. I will take up this matter with the Minister of Railways and see whether it is possible to put before Cabinet lists of offences that are serious and that if clearly proved would warrant the Commissioner taking immediate action, and a list of borderline offences. I accept without any reservation

that the provisions of an Act of Parliament mean something and that the provisions in this Act means that Parliament considered there were appropriate cases that should be fully inquired into before a dismissal should take place. I will have the matter examined and in due course advise the Leader.

Line passed.

MINISTER OF ROADS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Office of Minister, £4,646; Highways and Local Government Department, £210,278; Miscellaneous, £84,950—passed.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2).

The Estimates having been adopted by the House, an Appropriation Bill for £40,525,326 was founded in Committee of Ways and Means, introduced by the Hon. T. Playford, and read a first time.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time. The Bill is for the appropriation of £40,525,326, details of which are set out in the Estimates. Clause 2 provides for the further issue of £23,525,326, being the difference between the total of the three Supply Bills passed (£17,000,000) and the total of the appropriation required in this Bill. Clause 3 sets out the amount to be appropriated and the details of

the appropriations to the various departments and functions. This clause also provides that increases of salaries or wages which become payable pursuant to any return made by a properly constituted authority can be paid and that the amount available in the Governor's Appropriation Fund shall be increased by the amount of money necessary to pay the increases.

Clause 4 authorizes the Treasurer to pay moneys from time to time authorized by warrants issued by the Governor and provides that the receipts obtained from the payees shall be the discharge to the Treasurer for the moneys paid. Clause 5 authorizes the use of loan funds or other public funds if the moneys received from the Commonwealth and the general revenue of the State are insufficient to make the payments authorized by this Bill. Clause 6 gives authority to make payments in respect of a period prior to July 1, 1954, or at a rate in excess of the rate in force under any return made by the Public Service Board or any regulation of the Railways Commissioner.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.15 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, November 16, at 2 p.m.