HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday November 25, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.

SOUTH-WESTERN DISTRICTS HOSPITAL.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Some time ago the Minister of Education and I prevailed upon the Government to acquire a section of land on Adelaide Road, near Oaklands, as a site for what will be known as the South-Western Districts Hospital. As many homes and factories are being established in that area will the Minister of Lands, as Minister at present in charge of the House, ascertain from the Minister of Health when the Government will draw up plans for that hospital?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I shall be quite happy to take the question up with the Minister of Health and will bring down a report as soon as possible.

CONTROL OF NOXIOUS WEEDS.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—On October 20 I asked the Minister of Agriculture whether he would give consideration to his department taking over control of noxious weeds where councils had failed to effectively control them. The Minister replied that he had convened a meeting of the Noxious Weeds Advisory Council, which had before it various suggestions for the taking over of such control. I have received a letter from the District Council of Port Elliot and have a newspaper cutting relating to Canadian methods of control, which have prompted this question. Has the Minister anything further to report from the council on this matter?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—When I formerly referred to this matter, in answer to a previous question, I expressed the hope that I would have a Bill on this matter ready for submission to Parliament this session. I regret that that will not be possible because of the work still to be done in formulating some effective scheme of controlling noxious weeds. The council has met and made certain submissions which I have discussed with individual members of the council, but there are still many difficulties to be ironed out before a Bill can be prepared. I hope to have something definitely ready for next session.

APPRENTICES INQUIRY COMMITTEE.

Mr. HUTCHENS—In 1950 a meeting of State Premiers resolved to set up an apprentices inquiry to be known as the Commonwealth-State Apprentices Inquiry Committee. That committee tabled in March of this year a report in which attention was drawn to the difficulties experienced by young men living in country areas in securing apprentice training in the country. In clause 26 of its report the committee recommended that where young men had to come to the city for training they should be paid a living away from home allowance. Can the Minister of Lands say whether the Government has studied this report and does it intend to comply with the recommendations?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—This matter is being considered at present and as soon as finality is reached I will advise the honourable member.

BOUNDARIES OF HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—In your capacity as Speaker, Sir, I ask you to clear up something which I have found difficult to follow, namely, what are the actual boundaries of this Chamber? This follows on what happened just before a division in the Committee yesterday. I have always thought that the bar of the House of Assembly was the boundary line between the Chamber proper and that portion of this Chamber which is not on the floor of the House proper. I have always understood that if anyone were called to the bar of the House to give evidence, information, or advice to the House that he would appear at the bar to do so, but while there he would technically not be on the floor of the House. Often a representative of Her Majesty the Queen comes before the Chamber bar, which is always drawn against him. Also, in another Chamber I have seen honourable members of that Chamber, on a division, simply withdrawing behind the bar, and they are not counted in the division. Because of this, there has been much confusion in my mind, and I believe those of other members, and I should like you, Sir, to clarify the position.

The SPEAKER—Standing Orders provide that any member of the House of Assembly, upon entering the Chamber, shall proceed to his place and be seated, and, therefore, if any member of the House is within the precincts of the House of Assembly it is his duty, under the Standing Orders, to proceed to his place and be seated. The boundaries of the House of Assembly are the four walls of the House of Assembly. The whole area is within the

perspective of the Speaker, and anyone can be seen within the four walls, which comprise the precincts of the House for the purposes of honourable members' protection in regard to their rights to vote, to take their place and be seated, to rise from their place and address the House, or to present a petition or ask a question. Last evening the member for Flinders was within the perspective of the Chair, he being within the four walls of the Chamber, and he could be seen from the Chair. When the doors were locked it was his duty to return to his place and exercise a vote in accordance with his opinion. If the honourable member had not done so he would have been called by the Chair to the table and it would have been explained to him that he was within the precincts of the House and he would have been asked, before honourable members, to exercise a vote at the conclusion of the count before it was declared.

The honourable member's second question was about the bar, but there are other and deeper significances and traditional implications about it than were referred to by the honourable member. The Governor's messenger is admitted by the Speaker, and only by the Speaker can he be admitted. The bar is drawn and the Sergeant-at-Arms attends the bar traditionally to protect the bar and to see that, after the message is delivered, the Governor's messenger retires, when the bar is again recessed as in the normal proceedings of the House. Under the Constitution the Governor's messenger often has to attend the House to convey messages before certain matters can be dealt with, particularly financial measures, and also in regard to assents to Acts, but the general significance of the bar is different from the point in respect of the Committee's proceedings last night. Probably there is a different Standing Order in the Legislative Council and what the circumstances are I cannot say on this question.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Can you elucidate one further point, Sir? Why is the bar drawn when a vote is taken in this House if it has no particular significance in that case?

The SPEAKER—The bar is drawn because it is laid down in the Standing Orders that on a division being called for the bells must be rung throughout the building to notify members that a division is imminent and to enable them to attend in their places and exercise their constitutional right of voting. When the sand glass, which measures the time, is run out, the doors are locked by direction of the Speaker and every member within the precincts of the House must vote, the bar being drawn. That Standing Order has been in force since 1857 and therefore we follow it.

PRINCIPAL LIBRARIAN, LIBRARIES DEPARTMENT.

Mr. DUNSTAN—I understand that shortly the position of Principal Librarian will become vacant and that a circular from the Department of Industry has been issued advertising this position amongst public servants. The circular requires applicants to state their library experience if any, but I also understand that the position has not been advertised in the press here, or, so far as I can ascertain, elsewhere. I believe that it is normally the practice to advertise such a position in the press here, and in other States and overseas as well. For instance, that practice was followed when the position of Tasmanian Chief Librarian became vacant, and I think in the case of the recent Western Australian vacancy. I ask the Minister of Education why that principle has been departed from? Of course, it may be that there is a suitable officer available within the department, but I want to know why the broad field of librarians has not been notified, though it seems that public servants without any library experience can apply for it.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—As the honourable member said, the advertisement apparently emanated from the Public Service Commissioner. I have no personal knowledge of this matter, but I shall ascertain the particulars and let the honourable member and the House have them next week.

SUBSIDIES FOR SHOW SOCIETIES.

Mr. WHITE—During the past few months I have had a couple of inquiries regarding subsidies for country show societies, and I ask the Minister of Agriculture if he can tell me whether all show societies participate in the subsidies paid and how the amounts of the subsidies are calculated?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I have examined the list of show societies that participate in this grant, which is provided each year on the Estimates, and my impression is that all benefit from this money. At any rate I do not know of any that do not. If the honourable member knows of any that do not I shall be glad to examine individual cases. The grant made to each society is 20 per cent of the prize money paid by it. Individual applications must be made, supported by audited accounts of the prize money dispersed.

BLACK MARKET IN CEMENT.

Mr. JENNINGS—It has been reported to me several times lately that there is at present a rather flourishing black market in cement, due to the current shortage. Although I do not believe that reputable distributors are engaged in it, according to my information some people who have regular quotas from distributors are finding it more profitable to black market than to use them. This is putting many people who cannot otherwise get cement to the necessity of paying a higher price for it. Will the Premier have the position investigated? I realize the difficulties involved in such an investigation, but if he could have a Government officer examine the quotas on the books of distributors he might find that some people with quotas are not using but are black marketing the cement.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Some time ago the Prices Department considered that a considerable amount of cement may have been sold through some agents at a price above the fixed price; it took great care to try to get convictions and did, I think, clean up the matter fairly satisfactorily. At present there is no need for any black marketing in cement, even if some people are short of supplies. As I have previously stated, the volume of production is very high; in fact, recently the Government discontinued using cement on one of its big projects for a considerable period, and that released an extra 800 tons a month for private use. If any *bona fide* user of cement is having difficulty in getting it I will do my utmost to arrange for a supply. Up to the present I have been able to arrange such supplies, and I think I can still do that without difficulty. Therefore, there is no reason why any person genuinely requiring cement should go short. I believe that some cement is being exported to Victoria, but that is going in through indirect channels, and so far as I know, could not be stopped.

ELECTRICITY TRUST CHARGES.

Mr. FRED WALSH—I was always aware that the Electricity Trust demanded a small deposit from the tenants of premises before supplying electricity—a practice that I believe was carried on from the old Adelaide Electric Supply Co. I am now advised, however, that the trust requires a deposit of £15 from occupiers of shops and premises. I have in mind particularly delicatessens and small mixed businesses. The trust pays an interest rate of 2½ per cent on these deposits, which I understand are kept as a security on accounts. It would be interesting to know the number of defaulters on these accounts, particularly in businesses of this nature. The trust retains this money so long as the person remains a tenant and uses the electricity, and one assumes that it is used up in the conduct of the trust's affairs. As I consider the imposition is unjust, will the Treasurer request the trust to review this practice with a view to eliminating or at least considerably reducing the amount of the deposit? Failing this, will the trust increase the rate of interest paid on the deposit to at least that paid to subscribers to the last trust loan, namely, 4¾ per cent?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I am not conversant with the matters mentioned by the honourable member, but I will have them examined and report to him next week.

CITY CAR PARK.

Mr. DUNNAGE—The motor vehicle parking problem in the city is becoming more acute every day. Parking facilities cost from 3s. to 5s. a day, and between Unley and Adelaide cars are parked half way along the roads through the parklands. Business people have told me that because of this problem they experience considerable difficulty in delivering their goods within the city, and it has been suggested that the Government might consider the building of a flat top over the railway property between the Adelaide railway station and Morphett Street to take parked cars. Has the Premier a statement to make on this matter?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Suggestions of this nature have been examined from time to time. One suggestion was that excavations should be made under Victoria Square to provide parking facilities; but from the point of view of earning interest any such project would involve the motorists in a high daily fee that would be greater than any parking fee they pay at present particularly as most motorists at present park their cars in the public streets for nothing.

WOODVILLE RAILWAY CROSSING.

Mr. STEPHENS—On the down side of the Port Road at Woodville where the Adelaide-Henley railway line crosses the road the roadway on each side of the line is badly worn, allowing the rails to project above ground level dangerously. The Railways Department is liable to keep that part of the road in repair. Will the Minister see that the road is put in a state of repair?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I know the line referred to because I pass over it every day. I will take the matter up with the Minister concerned.

PRICES OF MEAT.

Mr. HEASLIP—This morning's *Advertiser* says that Victoria has decontrolled meat prices and as a result it is expected that they will fall. I understand the South Australian Government has been trying out the strip branding of meat as an alternative to price control. Has the Premier any information on the matter and can he say whether there is any likelihood of meat prices being decontrolled in this State?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government has made a definite offer in regard to strip branding. In addition, an advisory committee, representative of various sections of the meat industry and consumers, has been appointed and has met at least on one occasion and made recommendations on prices. I am informed that the move in Victoria for decontrol follows a difficulty in getting legislation accepted by Parliament. It is to assist the passage of this legislation that meat has been decontrolled for a trial period, during which the reaction can be seen. We are interested in what is happening in Victoria and to note the reflex in the cost of living figures. That will not be known until a second quarter has elapsed because the decontrol will be effective only partially in this quarter. Close attention is being paid to the Victorian move.

Mr. DUNKS—If it is proved in Victoria that meat prices are reduced or not increased as the result of decontrol, will the Premier promise to decontrol meat prices in this State?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Meat is a commodity that is subject to violent seasonal fluctuations. There are certain times in the year when the prices would be normally decreased or increased, apart from whether we have decontrol or control. We must see whether the prices of meat coming under the C series index figures in Victoria fluctuate above or below the prices under the C series in the States whether there is control. If it is found that decontrol in Victoria causes a fall in the prices coming under the C series figures, and it is not reflected in the other States where there is control, I can say assuredly that there will be decontrol in South Australia.

WATER SUPPLIES IN EDWARDSTOWN.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Recently I had brought under my notice the poor water supply available to a resident of Raglin Street, Edwardstown. He has been there for many years. Apparently the water main was laid some years ago but because of the increase in the number of houses built in the street he is on a dead end and is not able to get enough water for bathing and domestic purposes. Will the Premier take up the matter to see what can be done to help this resident and others in the area?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Recently a number of cases were reported to me, but sometimes the fault does not rest with the mains of the Engineering and Water Supply Department but in the service to the house. I will have tests taken to see if it is possible to rectify the position.

CHRISTMAS EVE SHOPPING HOURS.

Mr. TEUSNER—I have had requests from a number of traders' organizations in my electorate, particularly Nuriootpa and Angaston, where shops come under the Early Closing Act. They ask that because Christmas Eve this year falls on a Friday night the Premier might make an order to enable shops in rural areas coming under that Act to remain open on the Friday night. Has he any information on the matter?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes. A number of petitions have been presented to the Government. Speaking from memory, petitions have come from Peterborough, Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Renmark and Clare. Officers in the districts concerned were asked to report on the petitions. In almost every case they were supported by the shopkeepers, employees and the public generally, although in one instance the employees opposed the proposal and in another they were divided on it. The evidence supplied by the officers making the investigations was overwhelmingly in favour of granting the petitions and as a result the Government has decided to issue a proclamation. It may have been done today. The proclamation provides that Christmas Eve this year will be a late shopping night in all country areas where shopping hours apply, and that would include the honourable member's district.

SUPERANNUATION PAYMENTS.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—On July 29 I drew the attention of the Premier to a letter I had received from an ex-public servant, pointing out the anomaly between the superannuation payments to a State officer and those to a Commonwealth officer. The Premier in his reply said:—

Just prior to the last Commonwealth elections both Parties were making statements that they would abolish the means test, which has a material bearing on whether or not money should be made available.

I forwarded the Premier's reply to my correspondent from whom I received a further letter to the effect that the Premier's hope that the means test would have been abolished did not materialize and all that happened was that it was liberalized slightly. He wrote:—

A man who has paid for only four units would find that his superannuation is actually 10s a week less than what old age pensioners get for nothing.

He suggests that the State Government might see fit to increase the value of a superannuation unit by 2s. 6d. which would bring it into line with the Commonwealth superannuation scheme. In view of the effluxion of time since my last question is the Premier now in a position to do anything about this matter?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If I made the statement attributed to me in *Hansard* then I made an incorrect statement, because at the last elections the Labor Party promised the abolition of the means test and the Liberal Party some amelioration of it. I announced in reply to a question from the Leader of the Opposition that the Government intended to introduce a Bill to amend the Superannuation Act this session. The purpose of that Bill is to increase the value of a unit by 2s. 6d. a week. I hope the Bill will be ready for introduction this year and that the House will be able to deal with it next week before we adjourn for the Christmas vacation. There are one or two other matters contained in the measure but I will not go into them now. The honourable member's request has actually been approved. I point out that the amount mentioned in connection with four units of superannuation received by his correspondent does not preclude the man from receiving some pension allowance—in fact I think he would receive the full pension under the circumstances mentioned. The liberalization of the pension scheme now provides that a total income of either £11 or £13 a week can be received before the pension cuts out. It is erroneous to suggest that superannuation received by retired public servants is not a benefit to them because a public servant would have to be on a high standard of superannuation before the old age pension benefit would cut out. If the honourable member is interested in the figures I can obtain precise ones. When the Bill is introduced next week I hope to be able to supply information on that matter.

PRICE CONTROL AND "C" SERIES INDEX.

Mr. DUNKS—Does the Premier consider that price restrictions should only be imposed on items connected with the C series index and would he be prepared to decontrol all items not connected with the C series index? Can he say what use is being made of the C series index since the Federal court decided not to take it into account?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The answer to the first question is "No." The Government believes that any commodity in respect of which the public is being or may be exploited should be controlled or where special circumstances exist. It does not merely protect the public from exploitation on C series index items. There are many items the Australian production price of which is lower than the imported price. It is still necessary to import some goods because sufficient are not produced in Australia and if there were no price control the Australian produce would immediately increase to the overseas price. That would be inevitable because the Australian production would be just as valuable. The Government de-controls items when it believes there is a satisfactory supply and that normal trading competition exists.

As to the second question, it is true that at present the court does not alter the basic wage quarterly on the C series index, but if there were any pronounced rise in the C series index the court could not ignore it, because obviously a worker could not continue to live on a set wage with rising prices unless his standard of living was to be depressed, and under Australian economic conditions the court would not approve of depressing the standard of living. If there were a sharp increase in the price of commodities it would be inevitable that the court would immediately resume taking the C series index into consideration. We would then revert to the position we were in not long ago when every quarter there was a sharp rise in prices which necessitated a sharp rise in wages which, in turn, necessitated another sharp rise in prices. The dog was chasing its tail and our economy was becoming inflated and getting into an unhealthy condition. I believe that stability is of advantage to everyone and for that reason it is necessry to see that the C series index items do not rise if it is possible to stabilize them, but we are interested in commodities other than those listed in the C series index.

PRICE OF TEA.

Mr. LAWN—Is the Premier aware that there have been two recent press reports—the second in this morning's *Advertiser*—allegedly emanating from those associated with the tea trade, that there will be a further rise in the price

of tea on about December 4 of 5d. or 6d.? Does he know anything about another rise, and can he say whether he will make further representations to the Commonwealth Government for an additional subsidy if the price rises?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not know of any move to again increase the price of tea, but I must point out that on previous occasions the Prices Ministers had no foreknowledge of more than a few hours of any price rise. Since the last rise there has been a further fairly sharp increase in the price of tea to Australian importers. For instance, an export tax has been levied in Ceylon and that has meant that the price to Australia has gone up by about 6d. a pound. The press statements arose out of the belief that that 6d. must ultimately be passed on to the consumer. With regard to the latter part of the honourable member's question, I can only say that I cannot give an answer to a hypothetical question. Until a price rise takes place and the circumstances are taken into account it would not be proper for me to make any pronouncement.

TUBERCULOSIS HOSPITAL.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I believe that in the event of the State Health Department and the Commonwealth Health Department agreeing to the erection of a hospital for tuberculosis patients the Commonwealth Government would reimburse the State Government for the expenditure. If that is so, would it be necessary for the project to go before the Public Works Committee for inquiry and report?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—This question has arisen on a number of occasions and I believe the Crown Law opinion was to the effect that it was necessary for such a project to be submitted to the Public Works Committee. The work is undertaken by the State Government and, although it is true that the Commonwealth reimburses the expenditure, the fact remains that the payments are initially made by the State Government and all such payments must have the approval of Parliament. The Government cannot make any payments unless Parliament has appropriated the amounts. It cannot get any appropriation until it introduces a Bill, but a Bill cannot be introduced until the Public Works Committee has reported on the project. I will check the position, but I believe that it is necessary for the State Government to get a report from the Public Works Committee in the circumstances referred to.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION: ELECTORAL DISTRICTS (RE-DIVISION) BILL.

Mr. PEARSON—I ask leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr. PEARSON—I desire to refer to the vote taken last evening on the Electoral Districts (Redivision) Bill and the division called on the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I regret that I was inadvertently the cause of a misunderstanding in the Chamber. I knew that I was paired with the member for Stuart, Mr. Riches, who is absent from the State. Some last minute alterations to the pairs list were necessary in respect of other members, and to enable them to be made I was asked to remain within the Chamber until the Government should not profit from it unfortunately the time expired and the doors were locked and I was still within the precincts of the Chamber. I realized that I had no option but to return to my place and exercise a vote. The Premier, realizing that an honest mistake had been made and that the error was on our side of the House, suggested that the Government should not profit from it and that I should cross the floor when the division was taken. I want to make it quite clear that he did not direct me. His actual words were, "I think the best thing you can do under the circumstances is to cross the floor." Although I am strongly opposed—

The SPEAKER—Order! To go on in that strain would be argument and a personal explanation cannot be debated.

Mr. PEARSON—I want to make it clear that my intention was to support the Government, but I crossed the floor for the reasons I have given and voted against the Government so that the long standing practice in this Chamber of strictly honouring any undertakings between members could be maintained.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2).

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

STAMP DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE'S REPORTS.

The SPEAKER laid on the table the first progress report of the Public Works Standing Committee on Myponga Reservoir and Trunk Main (Darlington Storage Tank), and its second progress report on bulk handling of wheat.

Ordered to be printed.

ELECTRICITY TRUST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA 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 Electricity Trust of South Australia Act, 1946-1952.

Motion carried.

Resolution agreed to in Committee and adopted by the House. Bill introduced and read a first time.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I move—

This this Bill be now read a second time.

It deals with two matters affecting the Electricity Trust, namely, the retiring age for members of the trust and the appointment of district advisory committees. The retiring age is dealt with in clauses 3 and 4. The general question of a retiring age for members of boards appointed by the Government was recently dealt with by Parliament in the amending Public Service Bill. Parliament approved of a general rule that such members should not be subject to a retiring age. The Government considers it equitable that the same principle should now be applied to the members of the Electricity Trust who are at present subject to a retiring age under the special legislation applicable to the trust. Clauses 3 and 4 are designed therefore to repeal the existing provisions on this subject. Clause 5 deals with the constitution of district electricity advisory committees. The policy speech delivered on behalf of the Government prior to the last election contained the following passage:—

The work of decentralizing industry has proceeded and gratifying results have been achieved. A large amount of secondary industry has been established in conjunction with the forests in the South-East, and this development will be accentuated when the proposed new sawmill is erected at Mount Gambier. The projected power station also will greatly enhance this region's capacity for development. The power stations at Port Augusta and Port Lincoln will enable a more balanced development to take place in those regions. In connection with country power supplies it is proposed that a number of electricity management committees should be appointed. These committees will contain representatives from the local governing authorities, local interests, and the Electricity Trust, and will be available to advise and to assist the trust in the extension of supply in their respective areas.

The chairman of the trust has informed the Government that the very considerable extension of the trust's undertaking into the country calls for a measure of assistance from local bodies in order to enable the trust to make decisions with adequate information as to the special requirements and possibilities of the areas concerned. For this reason the Government has decided to ask Parliament for authority to create district electricity committees, to operate within defined districts prescribed by the Governor. It is proposed that committeemen will be appointed for a term of four years. The formation of a committee will be to advise the trust on matters relating to electricity supply within its district. Reports may be made by a committee either pursuant to a reference by the trust, or on the initiation of the committee itself. The trust will be empowered to pay travelling allowances to committeemen; but otherwise the committees will act in an honorary capacity. The Bill contains provisions for majority decisions by committees and for determining, by regulations or decisions of committees, the mode in which their business will be conducted. If we can get a measure of decentralization into this matter it is a step forward.

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

EARLY CLOSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Early Closing Act, 1926-1953. Read a first time.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The object is to make tobacconists' shops exempt under the Early Closing Act. Before 1923, tobacconists' shops were exempt shops under the principal Act. This meant that tobacconists were not required to comply with the provisions of the principal Act relating to closing times. In 1923, as a result of petitions and requests from tobacconists, tobacconists' shops were made non-exempt shops. However, they were not required to close at the ordinary closing times, being permitted to remain open until 8 p.m. on week days and Saturdays, and 9 p.m. on Fridays. Certain tobacconists' goods were made exempt goods from the ordinary closing times to the tobacconists' closing times. In 1945, at the request of tobacconists, the present closing times of 6 p.m. on week days and 12.30 p.m. on Saturdays were fixed.

Last year, as members will remember, for the greater convenience of the public the Act was amended to permit tobacco, cigarettes and cigarette papers to be sold by exempt shops after the closing times for tobacconists' shops.

Thus hotels, cafes, small goods and sweets shops, among others, were permitted to sell tobacco and cigarettes at any time. This amendment was strongly opposed by the Retail Tobacco Sellers Association. The association claimed that the public already had ample opportunity to buy the goods, and that the amendment would gravely damage tobacconists' businesses. The association, however, did not then ask that tobacconists also should be permitted to sell tobacco, cigarettes and cigarette papers after hours. Accordingly, last year's amendment was framed so that it did not affect the closing times of tobacconists' shops.

The association has now approached the Government with the request that tobacconists should be enabled to keep their shops open after their present closing times, and at least enabled to sell tobacco, cigarettes and cigarette papers after those times. The association claims that the business of its members has been seriously affected by the amendment made last year. The association points out that tobacconists' shops are generally very near a number of other shops. Many of these are exempt and sell tobacco and cigarettes, so that the loss of business may be very considerable. The association claims that their loss through the amendment is particularly serious on Saturday afternoons and public holidays. If tobacco and cigarettes, the principal stock of tobacconists, can be sold by shops other than tobacconists' after the closing times for tobacconists' shops, there seems every reason for permitting tobacconists to sell tobacco and cigarettes after their present hours, should they desire to do so. The Government is accordingly introducing this Bill to make tobacconists' shops exempt shops.

The Government has considered the question of what goods tobacconists should be permitted to sell after hours, and has decided that all the tobacconists' goods which are at present exempt goods between the closing time for ordinary non-exempt shops and the closing time for tobacconists' shops with the addition of pipe cleaners, should be wholly exempted. These goods are as follows:—tobacco, cigars, cigarettes, cigarette papers, snuff, tobacco pipes, cigar and cigarette holders and cases, matches and tobacco pouches. The Government thinks that to restrict tobacconists to selling only tobacco, cigarettes and cigarette papers after hours would be unreasonable. The Bill accordingly makes the goods mentioned exempt goods. In order to safeguard the business of non-exempt shops the Bill prevents the sale of more than one box or book of matches.

Under the principal Act there is a procedure whereby on presentation of a petition a class of shops may be removed from the list of exempt shops.

Mr. Dunks—Are exempt shops allowed to sell pipes?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not think so. The Chief Inspector of Factories, who has examined the whole question dealt with in this Bill has recommended that this procedure be not available for the removal of tobacconists' shops from the list of exempt shops until after the expiration of three years from the passing of the Bill. The Government has accepted this recommendation and the Bill provides accordingly. Clause 10 makes tobacconists' shops exempt shops. Clause 11 makes the tobacconists' goods previously mentioned exempt goods. Clause 13 prevents the presentation of a petition for tobacconists' shops to cease to be exempted until after the expiration of three years from the commencement of the Bill. The remaining clauses of the Bill make consequential amendments to the principal Act.

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

FRUIT FLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN (Minister of Agriculture) 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 provide for compensation for loss arising from measures to eradicate fruit fly.

Motion carried.

Resolution agreed to in Committee and adopted by the House.

HIDE AND LEATHER INDUSTRIES ACT SUSPENSION BILL.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN (Minister of Agriculture) obtained leave to introduce a Bill for an Act to suspend the operation of certain provisions of the Hide and Leather Industries Act, 1948.

COMMONWEALTH AND STATE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTAL AGREEMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. C. S. Hincks, for the Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to authorize the Treasurer to enter into an agreement with the Commonwealth and the other States for the purpose of

facilitating the sale of houses built under the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement. This agreement was executed in 1945 and the Commonwealth and all the States of Australia were parties to it. Its basic purpose was to bring about the erection of houses for rental purposes and the only provision relating to the sale of houses is contained in clause 14. This provides that a house built under the agreement can be sold but that, in the case of a sale, the State must pay to the Commonwealth the full amount of the purchase price and the agreement then ceases to apply to the house. In practice, this has meant that, if a tenant of an agreement house desired to purchase it, he had to make arrangements for the payment of the full purchase price either by the unlikely contingency of providing that amount from his own funds or by securing mortgage finance from some appropriate source and finding from his own resources the difference between the mortgage loan and the purchase price. The result has been that only a limited number of agreement houses has been sold. It is in order to encourage and to facilitate the sale of the agreement houses that the amending agreement in the schedule to the Bill has been agreed upon between the Commonwealth and the States concerned.

The scheme of the amending agreement is as follows. A dwelling erected under the agreement may be sold to the tenant at a purchase price fixed by the State. The minimum deposit is to be 5 per centum of the first £2,000 of the purchase price and 10 per centum of the balance. Included in the rents paid by the tenant prior to becoming a purchaser is an amount for the amortization of the capital cost, and these amortization payments can be credited to the purchaser and regarded as part of his deposit. The interest to be charged on the sale to the purchaser is fixed at 4½ per cent, the maximum advance is to be £2,750 and the period for the repayment of the advance is not to exceed 45 years. Thus, if the purchase price of a house is £2,500, the minimum deposit required would be £150. If the purchase price is £3,000, the minimum deposit payable would be £250 in order to comply with the requirement of a maximum advance of £2,750.

When a house is sold, the State is to pay to the Commonwealth the amount of the deposit and is then to repay to the Commonwealth in equal instalments of principal and interest over 45 years the outstanding loan liability as between the Commonwealth and State with respect to that house. Thus, the State will become liable to repay to the Commonwealth the liability outstanding under the agreement in respect of the capital cost of the house but the State will be entitled to retain any excess amounts paid to it by the purchaser. As before mentioned, the interest rate payable by the purchaser will be 4½ per cent. Moneys being currently advanced to the State by the Commonwealth under the agreement bear interest at 3 per centum. From the difference between 4½ and 3 per centum the State will meet the administrative costs involved in the sale of the houses and the collection of instalments, and should build up a sufficient reserve to meet any losses resulting from defaults by purchasers.

Special provision is made where the purchaser is eligible for assistance under the War Service Homes Act. In such a case, the house will be transferred direct to the applicant or the Director of War Service Homes, according to the circumstances of the case. The loan account of the State under the agreement will be credited with the purchase price of the house but the arrangements for the sale of the house to the applicant will be left to the Director in accordance with the War Service Homes Act. Thus the effect of the amending agreement is to enable an agreement house to be sold to the tenant on favourable terms. Apart from the minimum deposit, the rate of interest to be charged and the maximum term of the advance, the conditions of sale are to be those fixed by the various State authorities. The purchase price, with the exception of the deposit required from the purchaser, will in effect be financed from the loan moneys already advanced by the Commonwealth to the State for the erection of the house and, whilst the State must take the responsibility for repaying to the Commonwealth the outstanding liability on the house, the difference between the interest rate payable to the Commonwealth and that payable by the purchaser which will be retained by the State should be sufficient to provide for the costs of administration and to secure the State from loss.

In this State, the Housing Trust is the housing authority which operates under the Housing Agreement. However, the trust did not commence building under the agreement until the beginning of last financial year and consequently the amending agreement will not have the same effect in South Australia as it will have in other States. In South Australia the trust has, since 1946, been carrying out a house sales scheme outside the agreement and about 7,500 houses have been built and sold

under this scheme which, of course, is still in active operation.

The agreement dealt with by the Bill relates only to houses built under the Housing Agreement and does not apply to the ordinary house sales scheme of the trust. Since working under the Housing Agreement, the trust has used agreement loan funds to finance its rental programme. Many of these houses are double unit houses and are therefore not suitable for sale. Other houses built by the trust under the agreement are single unit houses, most being of timber frame construction including imported timber houses.

It is expected that, if the amending agreement is executed, many of these houses will be sold to the tenants and, in fact, it is known that a substantial number of the tenants desire to purchase the houses in which they live. As to whether the scheme for the sale of houses will apply to future houses will depend upon the form of any future housing agreement. The present agreement expires at about the end of 1955 and, when consideration is given to its possible continuance, the question of the sale of houses built under the agreement will obviously need to be taken into account.

The Bill authorizses the Treasurer to execute an agreement in the form of the agreement contained in the schedule or an agreement substantially to the same effect. If the Bill is passed by the Parliament of this State and the Commonwealth Parliament passes a Bill authorizing the execution of the agreement, then the effect of the amending agreement is that it will take effect as between the Commonwealth and this State even though all the States concerned have not authorized or approved the amending agreement. It may be expected that the Commonwealth Parliament will consider the appropriate legislation early in the new year and the result will be that, if this Bill is passed in this session, sales of houses as provided by the amending agreement could be proceeded with in a few months' time.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL, No. 2 (SICK LEAVE).

Second reading.

The Hon. B. Pattinson, for the Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is a short Bill dealing only with the question of special sick leave for public servants who are temporarily incapacitated from the performance of their duties as a result of sickness due to war service. In recent years a number of officers have been obliged through sickness due to war service to absent themselves from duty for periods in excess of the maximum amount of sick leave which can be granted. In such cases they usually apply to the Government for special leave. There is a provision in the Act which gives Ministers certain powers to grant leave in these cases, but it does not go far enough.

Section 75a of the Act provides that the Minister in control of a department may, if he is of opinion that special circumstances justify him in so doing and on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner, grant to any officer of the Public Service special leave of absence. Such leave may be granted without pay, or on reduced pay, or on full pay; but if it is granted on pay it must not exceed 16 days in any year on full pay, or a proportionately longer period on reduced pay.

In granting the leave it has been the practice of the Government to deal with each case on its merits. Where the officer receives pension from the Commonwealth under the Repatriation Act the leave is granted on a rate of pay representing the difference between the officer's pension and his salary. However, the time limit of 16 days on full pay or a proportionate period on reduced pay has proved insufficient in a number of cases of recurring illnesses. The Government has investigated the matter and would be willing to grant some of the officers concerned special leave in excess of 16 days or its equivalent in any year if the law permitted. It is therefore proposed by this Bill to remove the limit of 16 days in cases where special leave is granted on account of illness due to war service, and to provide that in such cases the amount of leave will be in the discretion of the Minister. In cases, however, where special leave is granted for reasons other than sickness due to war service, the existing limit of 16 days on full pay or its equivalent on reduced pay will be retained.

In preparing this Bill the Government gave some consideration to the question whether it should have any retrospective effect. Whatever decision is made on this question, there will necessarily be some anomalies arising from the fact that some cases fall within the provisions of the Bill and others do not. However, after considering the various factors, the Government has decided to ask Parliament to make the Bill retrospective to the beginning of this calendar year. This will mean that officers who during

this year have had to take leave without pay because of sickness due to war service, may be paid their salaries for the period of the leave, less any war pension received from the Commonwealth for the same period.

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

WEST BEACH RECREATION RESERVE BILL.

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House the appropriation of such amounts of the general revenue of the State as are provided by clause 17 of the Bill.

Second reading.

The Hon. C. S. Hincks, for the Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to provide for the creation of a public reserve at West Beach to be known as the West Beach Recreation Reserve and to establish a trust to manage the reserve. The area of land in question, about 375 acres, is situated to the west of the new airport and between the sea coast and Tapleys Hill Road. This land was purchased a few years ago by the Housing Trust and it was intended to develop the land as a large housing estate. However, this area is probably the only extensive tract of sea front land which has not been subdivided or built over and the view was consequently taken that it would be better for this area to be kept as an open space and not turned into another closely settled urban area. Accordingly, the trust transferred its holding to the Treasurer and the Corporations of Glenelg, West Torrens and Henley and Grange were asked whether those councils would be willing to combine and undertake the management of the land as a public reserve.

When the proposal was first placed before the three councils, all agreed that this presented a fine opportunity to preserve for posterity an extensive area as a public reserve and all the councils agreed to collaborate for this purpose. However, at a later stage, the Henley and Grange Council withdrew from the scheme but the two other councils, Glenelg and West Torrens, have combined to give the proposal enthusiastic support and details of this Bill have been worked out in consultation with them.

The Bill provides for the constitution of a trust consisting of a chairman and six members. Each council will appoint three members of the trust and the six members so appointed will appoint a seventh person as a chairman. The term of office of members will be three years and provision is made for one appointee from each council to retire in every year. The trust is authorized to remunerate the members at a rate, in the case of the chairman, not exceeding £100 per annum and, in the case of other members, not exceeding £50 per annum. The usual provisions relating to the incorporation of the trust, casual vacancies, voting at and conduct of meetings, audit of accounts, appointment of employees and so on are included in the Bill. After the first members of the trust are duly appointed, the Treasurer may transfer to the trust the land in question and this land is to be held and maintained by the trust for all time as a public reserve.

Clause 17 provides that the Treasurer is to pay £20,000 to the trust, and clause 18 requires each of the two councils over a period of seven years to pay to the trust £1,430 a year. Thus, whilst the Government contribution will be £20,000, the two councils will, over the period of seven years, contribute a similar amount to the trust. In addition, the two councils are authorized to make further contributions to the trust but the contributions by the two councils must be equal. The trust is given power to borrow on overdraft or on debentures. If money is borrowed on debentures, the prior consent of the councils must be obtained and clause 24 provides that the two councils must make good any default of the trust. The Bill exempts from stamp duty the transfer to the trust of the reserve and the transfer of any land which the trust may purchase to augment the reserves. It is also provided that the reserve is to be exempt from local government rates and land tax.

The trust is given power to carry out works on the reserve, to erect buildings and otherwise to improve the reserve. It is given power to grant leases and licences over parts of the reserves, buildings and so on. While the manner in which the reserve will be developed will of course, be for the decision of the trust, it may be expected that facilities such as caravan parks, ovals, golf courses, kiosks, other buildings for the use of the public, etc., will be erected and, these can, in an appropriate case, be expected to be let on lease or hire to sporting bodies and others in order to produce an annual income for the trust. It is also provided that the foreshore immediately adjacent to the reserve is to be under the control of the trust instead of the council. This will enable the reserve and the adjacent foreshore to be developed and maintained together. The trust is given power to

make by-laws for the control of the reserve and the foreshore. A by-law of the trust must be confirmed by the Governor.

Clause 37 provides that, if the Henley and Grange Council at some future time wishes to join the trust, it may do so on terms approved by the trust, and Glenelg and West Torrens Councils and the Governor. It is provided that the Governor may by proclamation make any necessary provisions relating to the constitution of the trust and other relevant matters arising out of inclusion of Henley and Grange Council in the trust. Clause 38 provides that, if any part of the reserve is needed for a public purpose, it may be resumed by the Governor. No compensation is to be paid for any land so resumed but compensation is to be paid to the trust for any improvements made by the trust on the land resumed.

Thus, the effect of the Bill is that a large tract of land with a sea frontage will be reserved for all time as a public reserve. It will be managed by a trust controlled by the two local government authorities concerned and the trust will have ample power to carry out the work necessary to create out of the reserve an extremely valuable public asset and, in order to provide financial assistance for this purpose, the trust will receive £20,000 from general revenue. The Bill is a hybrid Bill within the Joint Standing Orders and, after its being read a second time, it will be necessary for it to be referred to a Select Committee.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON (Minister of Education)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is a one-clause Bill which proposes to empower the Teachers Salaries Board to give some retrospective effect to its awards. The provisions of the Education Act by which the board is constituted at present do not permit this to be done. When the Teachers Salaries Board was created in 1945 its powers were largely modelled on those of the Public Service Classification and Efficiency Board which then had no power to make retrospective awards. Since that time, however, the Public Service Board has been granted such a power. Owing to the rapid changes in money values and wage rates salary claims have increased in number; and because of the increasing complexity of the principles governing comparative wage justice, claims have tended to take longer to hear and determine. For these reasons the Public Service Board was given power in 1948 to make retrospective awards and there is every reason to believe that it has used this power with care and in the interests of justice.

The South Australian Institute of Teachers recently approached the Government with a request that the Teachers Salaries Board should be given a similar power. This request is supported by the Teachers Salaries Board. The board pointed out that for a variety of reasons claims for increased salaries now take longer to hear and determine than previously. The board endeavours to hear claims as quickly as possible but a certain amount of delay is inevitable. If the right to an increased remuneration exists at the time when a claim for it is made, it is desirable, in the interests of justice, that the payment of that remuneration should not be unduly delayed. Compensation for any delay can, in effect, be given if the tribunal makes its award retrospective to the date of the claim, or to such later date as may be justified having regard to the time necessarily taken in hearing and investigating the claim.

For these reasons the Government has agreed to submit this Bill for enabling the Teachers Salaries Board to make its awards retrospective within the limits I have explained, in cases where it is equitable to do so. I may mention by way of support for the Bill that the State Industrial Court has been authorized by legislation passed by this Parliament to give such retrospective effect to its award as the court may consider fair, right and honest, so long as the award does not operate prior to the date when the court first took cognizance of the matter in question. This is a power very similar to that proposed in this Bill.

Mr. JOHN CLARK secured the adjournment of the debate.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS (REDIVISION) BILL.

In Committee.

(Continued from November 24. Page 1523.)

Clause 5—"Redistribution."

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I move—

In subclause (2) to delete "twenty" and insert "five"; to delete "the same principle, *mutatis mutandis,* shall apply to"; and after "areas" to insert "shall be regarded as being

approximately equal to each other if no such district contains a number of electors more than 20 per cent above or below the average of the respective numbers of electors in all such districts.''

This amendment is entirely different from my amendment which was debated at length yesterday, and it reduces the margin of tolerance permitted in the metropolitan area above or below the average to five per cent. There is no justification for a tolerance of 20 per cent in metropolitan constituencies. There are no difficulties of transport and no great variations of any nature to warrant such a wide difference in the size of electoral districts. I have always accepted the principle that for country areas there are reasons for this margin of tolerance and I do not propose to disturb that principle.

If this clause is accepted in its present form it will pave the way for a gerrymander within a gerrymander so far as metropolitan electorates are concerned. It will be possible for one electorate to be as small numerically as 17,000 or as large as 27,000. In the industrial areas, from which the Labor Party derives most of its support, we could still have electorates containing 27,000 electors, but in what have been somewhat rudely referred to as ''posh'' areas, from which the Liberal Party derives the bulk of its support, we could have electorates of only 17,000. We must remember that the commission to be appointed is not to be a permanent body such as is provided for in the Federal Electoral Act. The provision in the Federal Act is that whenever a certain number of the electorates go above or below the quota a meeting of the Electoral Commission must be convened and a redistribution effected. If we pass the Bill in its present form and the commission makes a redistribution no further redivision will take place until another measure has been passed by Parliament. I fear that the commissioners may take the stand that Parliament allows them a tolerance of 20 per cent above or below the average number of electors as an instruction, but that would be totally undemocratic. This is one of the worst features of the Bill. I cannot see why a margin of five per cent would not amply meet any conceivable circumstance.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I should like to examine the amendments.

Further consideration of clause 5 deferred.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

RIVER MURRAY WATERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 18. Page 1438.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—This is another Bill introduced by the Government which I have to support because its principles are those that would be enacted by a Labor Government. It provides for a further increase in the size of the Hume Dam so as to increase the total storage to 2,500,000 acre feet. I think this is the third time that the capacity of the Hume Dam will have been increased by agreement between the contracting parties of the Commonwealth, Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia, and according to the information supplied by the Minister it will be the last time because the maximum capacity of the reservoir will have been reached. The Bill provides for the financial responsibility for carrying out the work to be borne by each of the parties in conformity with the formula adopted when the agreement was first signed. The extra storage will be invaluable in periods of low rainfall and it will have a beneficial effect in flood control. Additional storage is vital. We have so many dry areas in Australia and so few large rivers, particularly in the southern part of the country, that we should make maximum use of the waters in those rivers. We have made considerable use of Murray waters, but there are great possibilities for future development, particularly in South Australia. I believe that not many years ago we were using less than 50 per cent of the water we were allowed, whereas the other States were using practically all they were permitted. Therefore, there is still scope for irrigation development in this State, but sooner or later we must consider what type of production we shall foster. I support the second reading.

Mr. MICHAEL (Light)—I support this important Bill. It has been found desirable to store more water in the Hume Reservoir as more water will become available from the Snowy River because it has been found more economical to store that water in the Hume than in the Snowy Mountains project. I think Victoria was the first State to realize the importance of irrigation to Australia because it was a small State and did not have as much room for expansion as some other States. I think the late Alfred Deakin was one of the pioneers of irrigation development in Australia. In the 1880's he made a trip to

America that resulted in the Chaffey brothers coming to Australia and starting irrigation schemes at Mildura and Renmark. Irrigation is something that must be planned ahead. We have heard suggestions recently that we should mark time now because it seems that there may be some difficulty in getting markets for irrigation products, but I maintain that we must have faith in the future and plan ahead. It takes at least five years to bring an irrigation area into full production and if we wait until markets are available someone else will take the markets. Last year I had the privilege of inspecting the projects being undertaken by the Snowy Mountains authority, and I believe that they will enable a great step forward in Australia's development. The aim of the scheme was to supply hydro-electric power and to use the water for irrigation purposes in the country west of the Great Dividing Range. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. O'Halloran) said that South Australia was not using its full quota of water, and that is true. If South Australia does not do everything possible to develop irrigation schemes there will come a time when some of the other States that are using their full quota will ask for a variation of the agreement to enable them to use more, and we should do everything in our power to avoid that by using our full quota. I realize that in South Australia most of the water must be lifted because it is not possible to irrigate by gravitation the same as in most parts of Victoria and New South Wales; but we should use every effort by means of irrigation to grow crops that can be raised economically in our State. South Australia should have a bigger share of the Australian production of fruit, which is a crop producing a high return per acre. Although there may be a short period ahead when we will have some difficulty in finding markets for our products, we should not be afraid of that, because taking the long-term view it is desirable for us to use every effort to provide for the use of as much Murray water as possible in order to be prepared when additional markets become available. Our population is increasing; indeed, some American visitors to this country have said that within 10 years Australia could double its population. Any such increase would result in a considerably increased market in Australia for the products of the Murray Valley. Somebody recently said that the area around Whyalla, Port Augusta, and Port Pirie might one day carry a population greater than our present metropolitan population, and that would be a great market for the products of the Murray Valley. Some day atomic energy may provide a means of lifting more water more cheaply than is the case at present. With faith in the future this Government should develop the Murray Valley so that we may be prepared to take our fair share of increased markets.

Mr. WHITE (Murray)—I would be neglecting my duty as a representative of an electorate contiguous to the Murray if I did not indicate my support for this Bill, the main object of which is to ratify an agreement between the Commonwealth Government and the State Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia regarding the expenditure of money on the Hume reservoir so that it will hold more water and on certain embankments in the Echuca area so that the water will not be wasted. When this work is done I understand that South Australia will receive an additional allocation of water sufficient to supply the domestic and industrial needs of an additional 500,000 people and the irrigation needs of 27,000 acres. South Australia will therefore eventually derive much benefit from this Bill. I was interested to hear the statements of the member for Light (Mr. Michael) about irrigation. I believe that much can still be done by means of irrigation on land adjacent to the river. The land is fertile, but in many cases does not enjoy a good rainfall, and areas that can be irrigated economically where the lift is not high can be made to respond to this treatment and to give landowners a good living.

In many cases private enterprise is playing its part. In my district between Mannum and Nildottie there are about 20 private irrigation projects mainly producing vegetables for sale in the Adelaide market. I believe the time will come when the major supply of vegetables for the city will come from the Murray districts, because the gardeners close to the city who formerly supplied vegetables for the Adelaide market are finding that their land is gradually being built upon and that they are being forced further away from the city. Those who have had experience in vegetable production near Adelaide and have since migrated to the river districts claim that they can there produce vegetables equal in quality to those produced nearer the city. Further, in the river districts they work under more congenial conditions because of the drier climate which obviates the necessity of their working under wet conditions.

The Murray Valley Development League, which has as its objective the development of land in the Murray Valley, claims that the Valley is capable of carrying 1,000,000 people. A study of the map and of the potential of this area reveals that this objective is by no means impracticable, and legislation such as this will help to conserve the Murray waters and therefore achieve it. No one could object to this Bill. Within the last few days in a debate on another Bill we have heard much about decentralization, and the conservation of our Murray waters so that they may be used for irrigation and reticulation to our farming areas is one of the most practical steps that we can take towards decentralization. I emphasize the importance of reticulating Murray water on to farms close to the river. There are vast areas there where people are growing cereals and running sheep but where the supply of water is a major problem. I know of people living within two or three miles of the river who have to cart water practically every year, and it seems a pity that reticulation schemes are not available to them. No doubt as the economic position of the country changes water will eventually find its way to those districts. The reticulation of water to farms is another important step towards decentralization because it provides a facility enjoyed by people in more favoured areas and is an inducement to country people—particularly young people—to remain in the country. Because the Bill helps in these directions I have much pleasure in supporting it.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (Chaffey)—As one who has made a major part of his income for the past 30 years by using water from the Murray I feel that I should speak on this Bill. Previous speakers have dealt with it from the State's point of view, but I consider the greatest advantage from this Bill will not be enjoyed by this State because we are using only about one-third of our allocation: the other two-thirds is flowing into the sea. If the only argument in favour of the Bill is that it will add to the storage capacity of the Hume Dam so that more water will be made available to South Australia it will only mean water running to waste. Very few Australians apart from those using the Murray water realize the great importance of the River Darling and of the Lake Victoria catchment area, which is just beyond the boundary of this State. Both these supplies cannot be used by any other State: they are the complete monoply of this State.

With some other honourable members I had the opportunity a few years ago of following the Murray from its source to its mouth, and all members of that party were impressed by the hunger for water evident in Victoria. That State is using 100 per cent of its allotment. South Australia uses only 33⅓ per cent. Obviously only Victoria will be able to use any additional water available from the Hume Reservoir. I do not mind that because the settlers along the river, in Victoria particularly, will be able to get water which is denied to them now. When the dams and locks were installed in the Murray it was not with the major intention of supplying irrigation needs. The river in South Australia was locked for shipping purposes. Some of us who live on the banks of the river regret the deliberate action of State Governments through various railway departments in killing the river shipping trade. In Victoria and South Australia the practice has been to push forward the railways as near as possible to the river and then offer cut-throat rates which shipping, the cheapest form of transport, could not meet. Then, having killed the shipping, the railways increased their rates.. It seems that shipping on the river has gone for all time. The locks have not met the needs of irrigation. The Berri lock has caused endless trouble to the department and residents in the area. It has been found on occasions that following on a flood the roads in the area were not usable for seven months. I hope the position will soon be rectified. Government departments are notoriously slow in acting and Ministers are slow to take the advice of men on the land who know. They prefer to go to Government experts. There is to be a great expenditure of money on the Hume Reservoir and it is hoped that the position of the Berri lock will be rectified.

Previous speakers have referred to the extra production that will follow the increased settlement along the river. At present there is the great problem of cost. In the irrigation areas there is the production of vine fruits and tree fruits. The settlers have to export about 80 per cent of their production and it is sold in Great Britain where generally the people get about £6 to £7 a week in wages, whereas the producers here have to pay an average basic wage of £12 to £13 a week. Our producers cannot continue in that way and recoup costs, so the Commonwealth Government must do something. The Commonwealth sets out the hours of work, conditions of employment and

the basic wage. In other words, it ties down the industry and it should therefore come to the aid of the irrigation settlers. The prices of machinery, water, superphosphate and practically everything else the settlers need are fixed in accordance with Australian conditions. We are pricing ourselves out of the overseas markets. It may be said that this is not peculiar to the dried fruits industry. Recently the Commonwealth Government decided to pay a subsidy on gold mining, but I do not know that the digging of gold benefits anybody. It is said that we dig a hole in one country and take out gold and then bury it in a hole in another country. I cannot remember when I last saw gold and I do not feel any the worse for it. There is a Commonwealth subsidy on sulphuric acid and those who get it are allowed to earn 12½ per cent on the invested capital before there is any interference with the subsidy. Both the State and the Commonwealth Governments have big investments along the river and it is time they realized that if the country areas are to be developed on intensive lines they must see that the settlers get a reasonable standard of living. They do not ask for more and they do not ask to be allowed to earn 12½ per cent on their investments in property. It would be absurd to ask for that. Only secondary industries can get away with it. All the settlers want is a reasonable standard of living plus a margin of profit and not 12½ per cent. This aspect of the Bill is more important to South Australia than the actual money to be spent on the Hume Reservoir. I am not opposed to that expenditure because it will help the Commonwealth and not only South Australia.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.33 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, November 30, at 2 p.m.