

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, May 25, 1955.

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

TITLES OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

The SPEAKER—I have to inform the honourable member for Port Adelaide, in reply to a question raised by him on Thursday last, that the authority for the use of the title ‘Honourable’ by the President and members of the Legislative Council and by the Speaker of the House of Assembly is contained in Parliamentary Paper No. 136 in the Blue Book of 1860. The proposal was initiated in 1856 by the Governor of New South Wales and Her Majesty Queen Victoria signified Her pleasure ‘‘that all members of the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the House of Assembly should be entitled to the titular designation of ‘Honourable’ and should be so described in the several Acts and Instruments which may be issued under his authority.’’ This privilege was made applicable also to the Colony of South Australia as appears from the following extract from a despatch from the Right Honourable H. Labouchere, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies, to the Governor of South Australia, Sir Richard Graves MacDonnell, C.B., dated ‘‘Downing Street, October 30, 1856’’:—

I am now commanded to signify to you Her Majesty’s pleasure that the same privilege be extended to those who hold corresponding positions in the Colony under your Government.

Thus it will be seen that the title ‘‘Honourable’’ applied to members of the Legislative Council and, as used in His Excellency’s Speech in opening Parliament, stems from an authority almost a century old. It may be of interest to members generally to know that the title of ‘‘Honourable’’ lapses when membership expires, but it may be continued under certain conditions, viz.:—

To Presidents of the Legislative Council and Speakers of the House of Assembly on leaving office after three years’ service, on recommendation of Governor. (See P.P. 76 of 1894.)

To ex-members of the Legislative Council after 10 years’ continuous service, on recommendation of Governor. (See P.P. 63 and 79 of 1898-9.)

To ex-members of the Executive Council, who have been members of a Government for three years or head of a Government for one year. (See P.P. 113 of 1864.)

QUESTIONS.**MAIN ROAD THROUGH TOWNSHIPS.**

Mr. O’HALLORAN—Some considerable time ago, when the Minister of Works was also Minister of Roads, a promise was made that the Broken Hill highway, where it passes through various small towns, would be sealed with bitumen, and subsequently a programme was published indicating that Olary’s main road would be the first to be sealed and that others would follow in sequence. Of recent months, particularly during the summer because of the much heavier traffic, the dust nuisance has been greatly aggravated and local people want to know what progress, if any, has been made in these plans, and particularly when it is likely that the work will be put in hand. I think that the road through two of these towns has been sealed—Terowie and Oodlawirra—and I ask the Minister when the road through Whyte Yarcowie and the other towns will be sealed?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I would be surprised, and disappointed, to find that that policy, which I thought was a good one, had been departed from. I think that at least the sealing of the road through townships should get priority, and I am sure that that continues to be the department’s policy. I will get a more specific reply to the honourable member’s question and bring it down as early as possible, but I think he can take it for granted that that policy will be continued.

SOUTH PARA RESERVOIR.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Paragraph 9 of His Excellency’s Speech in opening Parliament mentioned the South Para reservoir. This is a most important scheme and various dates for its completion have been given since its inception, but unfortunately these have had to be revised from time to time. Has the Minister of Works any idea of when the scheme will be completed?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I do not want to say ‘‘No’’ because that seems so negative, but the scheme was amongst those with the highest priority, but, because of the growth of the metropolitan area the South Para scheme had to take second place to pumping from the Murray to get more water to the metropolitan area. That remains the position, for this morning, despite the good opening rains and the fact that very little garden watering is being done, I was astounded to find that even last week the intakes of the reservoirs were 3,000,000galls. less than we consumed. Therefore, it still remains imperative that we carry

on with first things first in order to get supplies and to complete the Mannum-Adelaide scheme. Short of that, the South Para which, of course, will supply water by gravitation and not pumping, will take the highest priority. There are many other areas without water and no doubt many of the 39 members of this House, including country members, will ask for a share of the money available for water supplies. At this stage I cannot indicate what amount will be appropriated for the South Para scheme but that scheme will be regarded as of first class importance.

RAIL CARS ON SOUTH-EAST LINE.

Mr. FLETCHER—Last Thursday I asked when the new rail cars would be put into service on the South-East line. Has the Minister representing the Minister of Railways a reply?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Minister of Railways has supplied the following reply:—

The department is awaiting the arrival of torque converters from the United States, which are required in the power transmission of the new country rail cars. It is expected that the first units of this equipment will be available shortly, but I am unable to give a precise date as to when we will have sufficient of the new rail cars in service to enable them to be run on the South-East line in place of the daily passenger train.

MENTAL INSTITUTIONS.

Mr. LAWN—Yesterday I asked a series of questions relating to our mental institutions. I asked how many of the adults in mental institutions could have been placed in infirmary accommodation elsewhere, to which the Premier replied "Between 300 and 400." I then asked whether it was the Government's intention to continue to put aged pensioners into mental institutions instead of providing infirmary accommodation elsewhere. The Premier's reply was, "The Government does not put aged pensioners into mental institutions. Practically all of the senile admissions are received into the mental institutions on the signed request of a relative or friend." It is obvious that there are no other places where these pensioners can be put and their relatives and friends must apply for their admission to mental institutions. Can the Premier say whether it is the Government's policy to continue, as in the past, to place pensioners in mental institutions on the request of relatives or friends or will the Government build infirmaries where these persons may be accommodated?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I repeat that the Government does not put these people into mental institutions. Their relatives request

the Government to receive them into institutions and submit the necessary medical certificates. The Government has, over a period of years, provided financial support to infirmaries and old folks' homes, and long before the Commonwealth scheme came into operation Parliament was asked to approve of over £300,000 being made available for such institutions. The Government will continue its policy of assisting in these matters. If the honourable member will repeat his question next Tuesday I shall be able to give him more precise information as to how the programme for infirmaries is working out.

ADVANCES FOR HOMES.

Mr. QUIRKE—As is well known, housing difficulties today are practically as great as they have been for many years. Notwithstanding the herculean efforts of the Housing Trust, to which I give a full measure of praise, the demand is still beyond its capacity. The position has become increasingly difficult for people who wish to build their own homes. The amount that can be advanced under the Advances for Homes Act is insufficient unless the applicant has at least £1,250. Very few young people desiring to build have £1,250 or £1,500 to add to the advanced amount. In view of these circumstances can the Treasurer say whether he has in mind increasing the amount that may be advanced under the Act?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—This is not merely a question of fixing the statutory amount which may be advanced under that Act. That would be a relatively easy matter to adjust by introducing legislation. The question is wrapped up with the amount of money the Government has available for this purpose. So far as I know, South Australia is the only State at present providing finance of this nature for housing. Each year out of our Loan programme we are taking certain sums, which are borrowed by the State for its public works, and making them available through the State Bank and Housing Trust for the sale of homes on which finance is required. Last year when the late member for Mitcham asked whether it was proposed to increase the amount of advance from £1,750 to a more appropriate amount, taking into account modern prices, I pointed out that that would not make additional funds available but would only mean that certain clients would get more and others nothing. My prediction was correct because the State Bank did run out of the money allocated by Parliament for this purpose and it has been necessary to provide further finance to enable it to carry on.

The future of housing is somewhat obscure at the moment. The Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, under which the States have been getting money for the bulk of their housing in the last 10 years, has expired and up to the present there has been no suggestion of its renewal from the Commonwealth. That agreement is of importance to all States because in the past large sums have been made available at 3 per cent interest. Last year the amount available was £30,000,000, but if at the Loan Council meetings to take place next month some agreement is not reached with the Commonwealth, instead of Commonwealth money at a low rate of interest being available, the States will have to finance the whole of their house building programmes out of their own finances. The policy of the Government is to see that it gets as much money as it can for the activity, and if the money appears to be sufficient to enable the advance to be increased the Government will not hesitate to introduce legislation to have it done. Unless the overall amount is sufficient the Government will not bring in legislation which would give a larger advance to some people and nothing to others. I could give a definite answer immediately after the Loan Council meeting.

GENERAL HOSPITAL FOR NORTHFIELD.

Mr. JENNINGS—Has the Premier seen the report in this morning's *Advertiser* that a major hospital project in the Northfield area was being discussed with the Royal Adelaide Hospital Board, according to evidence given to the Public Works Committee? Not only would a major general hospital be greatly welcomed at Northfield and by all residents in the northern suburbs, but it is urgently needed. Has the Premier any details to give to the House?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Since the war the Government has already erected certain units at the Northfield hospital, particularly of the type Mr. Lawn questioned me about a few moments ago. We are providing at Northfield a certain amount of infirmary accommodation for old persons who do not require a tremendous amount of help, but nevertheless must have some assistance. That is why I suggested that Mr. Lawn ask another question next Tuesday. The only reason I did not try to answer his question more definitely today is that I believe that for certain of the wards erected by the Government we have not been able to secure the staff to enable them to be occupied.

Mr. Jennings—I am referring to a general hospital.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I realize the implications of the honourable member's question. When the Government took over the hospital it was an infectious diseases hospital, but it now provides for a large number of cases that are not infectious—aged persons of the infirmary type. It is being run as an adjunct to the Royal Adelaide Hospital and provides for many patients. Because of improved modern methods the incidence of infectious diseases has fallen sharply, which enables us to use the accommodation for other purposes. I shall get a statement from the Minister of Health and supply it to members next Tuesday.

ASSISTANCE TO FRUITGROWERS.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—About a fortnight ago the Premier received a deputation from the fruitgrowers in the Renmark Irrigation Trust area asking that financial help should be given to the settlers because of water rates becoming due shortly. They were due on May 21. The deputation arose from a mass meeting of growers and part of the resolution passed at the meeting said:—

That this meeting of fruitgrowers wish with the greatest concern the present position of many members of the industry due to lower returns and losses from adverse weather.

The resolution further said that the State Government should be approached for financial help in view of the imminence of the water rates the settlers had to meet. In presenting the case the money was asked for as a loan and it was suggested that it be repaid over a period of three years at a low rate of interest. The Premier will remember that the matter was discussed with the deputation, which left with the idea that the money would be advanced. Today's *Advertiser*, under the heading "Water rates embarrass Renmark packing houses," contains an article showing that there has been a good deal of confusion amongst the members of the deputation about the Premier's reply. Will the Premier make a statement to clarify the position so that we who represent the district will know what is taking place?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—As stated by the honourable member, the deputation waited on me and submitted that the Renmark Irrigation Trust was compelled by law to add 10 per cent to the water rates of settlers if they were not paid by the due date. They further pointed out that the season had been a bad one and that at present many of the settlers did not have the cash to meet the commitment imposed on them by the trust. They further said

that it would not be convenient in any case for the trust to forego the rates because they had extra expenses to meet. They asked whether it would be possible to arrange some temporary form of finance to assist the growers, particularly as much of their fruit had not been sold and their accounts had not been finalized. I told the deputation that the Government did not have any authority to make any advances of the nature requested by the honourable member and the deputation, but that I believed it could be arranged through the State Bank as a banking proposition, not by the State Bank lending the money to the settlers but by making money available to the packing sheds. That appeared to be acceptable to the deputation and I asked the chairman of the State Bank whether the bank would be prepared to make advances available on the basis that the packing sheds concerned would apply for the money required to meet the obligations of their particular settlers, that they obtain a first priority order to ensure that the bank be repaid, and that they give an undertaking to pay the bank when the fruit was sold.

The deputation expressed satisfaction with the proposals and it was arranged that the three packing sheds concerned should make application. When the applications came in the first provision was as proposed—that they apply for money—the second provision was as proposed—that there should be a priority procurement order—but the third provision was not in accordance with the proposal, because it was said that the repayments would be made when there was equity in the accounts of the settlers. Members will see that was a different proposal altogether, as equity may never be in the accounts of settlers. I immediately wrote to them pointing out that it appeared to be contradiction of the second provision, which related to a procurement order. In response I received a telephone message from one of the packing sheds saying that they were concerned about the position. I immediately said that if the State Bank packing sheds applied on their credit, on behalf of themselves, the necessary funds would be made available, but that the other packing sheds should apply to their bank. The matter rests there. So that there would be no lack of knowledge on the topic I instructed the State Bank to advise its local branch manager of the conversation and see that he confirmed it personally in the district.

RIVOLI BAY AS DEEP SEA PORT.

Mr. CORCORAN—Has the Premier the report from the Harbors Board that he promised on Thursday last regarding the possibilities of Rivoli Bay as a deep sea port?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have a brief report from the board. It has made some preliminary investigations, which do not appear to be favourable, but it states that no further investigation can take place unless detailed information is available with regard to tides and other matters. That would cost £5,000, and the board wants to know whether the Treasurer would provide that sum for that purpose. I am investigating that matter and I will let the honourable member know my conclusions after I have studied the documents more closely.

ADELAIDE-MOONTA DIESEL CAR SERVICE.

Mr. McALEES—A few years ago the Government promised that the Adelaide-Moonta line, would receive priority in the running of diesel rail cars, and it was stated that the cars would be on the rails last July. I believe, however, that because of trouble in the gear boxes the cars were not put into operation, although a trial run was made as far as Kadina. I do not know which July the Minister meant when he promised that the rail cars would be running. The members for Chaffey and Mount Gambier have asked that lines in their districts be given priority, but if any priority is to be given it should be to the Adelaide-Moonta line, because it was I who first raised the matter. Has the Minister representing the Minister of Railways a statement to make?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The policy of the Government is entirely that of the Opposition: the greatest good for the greatest number. I am sure the Railways Commissioner will adopt that policy and that when the rail cars are available he will put them on the lines that desire them most and that will use them most. I will inquire when that time will be. The essential parts are not forthcoming and just as the ancient Egyptians could not make bricks without straw, so the Commissioner cannot put a diesel rail car on to the line without the necessary parts.

CONSIGNMENTS FROM ADELAIDE STATION.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—On Sunday, May 8, one of my constituents tried to consign from the Adelaide railway station a parcel for Victoria, but the only section he found

open there was the luggage room. Further, he was told by the attendant that he could not, on Sunday, consign a parcel from the Adelaide station but that he could from a suburban station and it would be reconsigned from Adelaide. He then went to Bowden whence he consigned his parcel for which I have the receipt. Having regard to the possible number of people who may wish to consign parcels on Sunday, will the Minister representing the Minister of Railways take up this matter with his colleague and, if it is found advisable, open an office at the Adelaide railway station on Sunday for the consignment of parcels?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Yes.

LARGS BAY JETTY.

Mr. TAPPING—Has the Minister of Marine a progress report on the condition of the Largs Bay jetty?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I have had many representations and I do not know into what category a progress report would come. The last discussions I had with the Harbors Board were along the lines of the one I had with the honourable member: that we would have to abandon much of the seaward side of the jetty and concentrate on improvements for a pedestrian walk on the shore side. That has received the board's favourable consideration and my blessing. I will bring down a report on the stage reached on this project.

HILTON BRIDGE.

Mr. FRED WALSH—On a number of occasions I have brought before this House the condition of the roadway over the Hilton bridge and last year I claimed that it had reached a condition that would be considered dangerous by the general public. The experts in the Highways Department, however, stated that that was not so, but I disagree with them and claim that the road is now in a worse condition than it was 12 months ago. I now raise the question again because I understand that the Tramways Trust is to discontinue running trams down Rowland Road to Richmond and intends to run buses over the Hilton bridge, down Rowland Road and thence along the present tram route. This will add to the congestion on the roadway which is reaching a dangerous state because, owing to subsidence, it has now reached a grade of one in six for about 40ft., while it tends to a grade of about 40 degrees on the side used by the down traffic. Will the Minister of Works take up this

matter with the Minister of Roads and request early attention to levelling and remaking the roadway over the bridge?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I shall be glad to do that. I hope to bring down a considered reply early next week.

PETROL RESELLING LICENCES.

Mr. STEPHENS—Can the Premier say whether it is necessary for a person wishing to sell petrol to obtain a licence, and, if so, to which department he must apply?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Under the Inflammable Oils Act, all petrol stations and storage places, with some slight exceptions for primary producers who store petrol on their properties, must be licensed, and the Department of Industry and Employment controls the matter through the Chief Inspector of Factories.

BRIDGE ON MARION ROAD.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Will the Minister representing the Minister of Roads take up with his colleague the question of constructing a new bridge on the Marion Road to give direct access from South Road to Henley Beach Road? The Sturt Creek crosses the surveyed road at two places. In order to build a new bridge a new channel would have to be cut for the Sturt Creek and the two sections where it now crosses the road would have to be filled in. In view of the great development that is likely to take place in this area, particularly when Chrysler's proposed new plant has been established, it is most important that some traffic be diverted from the South Road.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will take up the question, but I am not pre-supposing that this work is the responsibility of the Highways Department. It may concern more particularly the local council.

CROYDON PARK SEWERAGE.

Mr. JENNINGS—About two years ago I raised the question of sewerage facilities for Croydon Park. I believe the work is now going ahead satisfactorily and I ask the Minister of Works whether he can say when it is likely to be completed.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—From long experience I believe most members ask when a work will be commenced. In this case the question is when it will be completed. It is going ahead very satisfactorily, not only at Croydon Park, but at adjacent areas too. It is expected that the whole of the work will be completed in October.

IRRIGATION WATER RATES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—A letter from the Chaffey Settlers' Association addressed to the Minister of Irrigation states:—

Owing to the bad season just experienced by the settlers, coupled with the economic position of the dried fruit industry, we request the Government, in view of their past assurances that increases in water rates will be reviewed, to consider:—

- (1) That a review of water rates be carried out without delay.
- (2) That the method of payment should be the same as that used in the case of advance accounts, namely three months from due date.
- (3) That the previous method of payment of annual commitments by procuracy order without interest be reinstated so that the burden to grower could be lightened. This would also assure the Government of payment.

These are reasonable requests, and I ask the Minister whether he has considered them and what conclusion he has reached?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The honourable member knows the rates for this year were fixed in April and the letter he read was sent to the department after the rates were fixed. I discussed the matter with Mr. Gordon (Assistant Director of Lands), and he sent a reply to the association.

Mr. Macgillivray—That would finish the settlers' chances.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Actually the letter is helpful in some respects. It states:—

In reply to your letter of the 6th instant I am directed by the Minister of Irrigation (Hon. C. S. Hincks) to advise you that, in view of the joint investigation to be undertaken by the Commonwealth Government officers and representatives of the Australian Dried Fruits Association into the dried fruits industry with the object of formulating a stabilization scheme, it would not now be an opportune time to review the water rates as requested by your association which, it is pointed out, are already lower than those charged to growers in the areas controlled by the Renmark and the Mildura Irrigation Trusts. Referring to the interest raised on amounts not paid within one month after the rate falls due, you are advised that this is done in accordance with the provisions of the Irrigation Act. The Act, however, empowers the Minister in any case of hardship to remit the whole or any part of the interest payable and I am instructed to state that this will be done where it can be established in individual cases that due to circumstances beyond the control of the settler the charge would create a hardship. In cases where settlers are unable to meet their payments in full, they will be asked by the District Officer to furnish details of their crops and expenditure for the year 1954-55, together with any other relevant

information that will assist in arriving at a decision on the payments that should be made and whether or not there is a case for the remission of penalty interest.

SOUTH-WESTERN DISTRICTS HOSPITAL.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Premier say how soon the Government is likely to commence investigations to establish a south-western districts hospital?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—At present the Government is using all its facilities to establish two or three institutions that are urgently needed. Number one priority has for some time been given to our three mental hospitals, which are overcrowded. For some time members have had reports showing how seriously overcrowded they are, and the Government has concentrated on the provision of additional accommodation.

In addition, we have employed outside architects to prepare plans with a view to pressing on with the establishment of a major hospital in the western districts, which will be the most modern and perhaps the largest in the Commonwealth. Many tenders are being called for this hospital, which will involve expenditure of about £4,500,000 in addition to what has already been spent. Furthermore, the Royal Adelaide Hospital Board has a major proposal for the establishment of a casualty clearing hospital in the metropolitan area, which is urgently required, and further plans are being prepared for a decentralization in the northern districts where there is a great housing development and additional population. I point out that with all the resources in the world that programme in itself would take three or four years to accomplish.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE: MR. G. S. HAWKER.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE moved—That one month's leave of absence be granted to the honourable member for Burra (Mr. G. S. Hawker) on account of absence from the State.
Motion carried.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

(Continued from May 24. Page 1.)

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham)—I greatly appreciate the honour of being invited to move the adoption of the Address in Reply, especially as it comes at the beginning of my membership of this House. I have been very fortunate. On the other hand, I am afraid my powers are not sufficient to do full justice to the invitation. I am, and will for some time remain, a learner,

and I hope a humble one, in the many ways of this place. The more one learns the more one finds there is to be learnt. I have found that to be absolutely true of life in general and I have felt it to be more than ever true in the last few weeks.

As I have no personal experience to guide me it was advisable that I should have recourse to the record of what has been said on similar occasions in previous years, and I read the *Hansard* reports with eager interest for that purpose, and in so doing it was almost a shock to discover that not twelve months ago a similar motion was moved by my predecessor, the late member for Mitcham. It is certainly a coincidence; in some ways a tragic coincidence and shows the impermanence and uncertainties of human life. No one present today, least of all myself, would have dreamt then of what has happened since. If the late member had any inkling of it he certainly allowed no suggestion to penetrate his remarks. During his lifetime I used to regard him a little timidly as more than a mere acquaintance of mine: rather as a wise old counsellor from whom I had already picked up a few good tips and from whom, in the future, I might learn many more. Since his sudden and tragic death I have come to know more of him than I had previously, both in the electorate of Mitcham and among members here. As I do my best to take his place I can say, with all sincerity, that I honour his memory to the full.

In his speech last July Mr. Dunks referred with satisfaction to what had lately been done by the Government and expressed the hope that the progress would continue. His hopes have not been misplaced. He hoped that the construction of the new high school at Unley would be proceeded with at an early date and went on to mention that the people of Highgate were eager for an infants school. I have recently been informed by the Minister of Works that preliminary estimates of the cost of the new high school range, according to design and accommodation, from £239,000 to £633,000, and that the scheme will soon be submitted to the Public Works Committee. The estimated cost of the infants school is £60,000 and tenders have been or are about to be called for its erection. Indeed, the amounts spent or to be spent in the Mitcham area upon such projects as these total approximately £223,000, not taking into account the Unley high school. I applaud that as I believe my predecessor would have done. The record of the present Government, in my electorate as throughout the State, is a good one and its plans for the future are no less encouraging.

I turn now to the contents of the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech. I will not take up the time of the House by considering it in detail. Overall it paints a prosperous and encouraging picture. I welcome it. I am proud to be associated with a Government which is able to report so favourably and, with due respect, I offer it my congratulations on its achievements. One of the most splendid during the last 12 months was the completion of the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline. It has saved the metropolitan area and some country districts during the last summer from a sticky, inconvenient and unpleasant situation. The cost of pumping water is heavy but the benefit derived by us far outweighs the necessary expenditure.

The picture is not without its gloomier patches: one could not expect it to be. I am thinking especially of paragraph 4 of His Excellency's Speech which refers to the disastrous and tragic bush fires which swept this State earlier in the year, causing much distress and loss. There is also a note of warning and even of anxiety sounded with regard to interest rates and their effect upon Loan moneys. That is a knotty problem to which we shall all have to give close attention.

Paragraph 35 sets out a large array of subjects upon which it is proposed to legislate or to amend existing legislation. As a lawyer, I have sometimes wished that the Legislature would stop tinkering so much with Acts of Parliament. I admit that on those occasions I have been looking at the matter from a viewpoint rather different from my present one, but often those efforts have seemed merely to change the law without necessarily improving it. So far as the batch of subjects referred to in paragraph 35 is concerned, we do not know yet and will have to suspend our judgment upon them.

There are three other items referred to in His Excellency's Speech on which I desire to comment. They concern first the Advances for Homes Act, secondly, prices and rents, and thirdly, library services. I have in some ways been forestalled this afternoon by the question asked by Mr. Quirke, but I do not expect that it will be the only time I shall be forestalled in this House. Under the Advances for Homes Act the State Bank, according to His Excellency's speech, is to make available about £1,500,000 this year for the erection or purchase of houses. I understand that the amount last year was £1,350,000. That was excellent as far as it went, but I agree with the import of the honourable member's question that it does not go far enough.

In this world few of us can have everything we want because it costs too much. That applies to advances under the Act, as explained by the Treasurer. If it is at all possible I should like to see the maximum permissible advance on mortgage substantially increased. In 1936 the maximum was £700. Since then it has been progressively raised, but I understand no adjustment has been made since 1951 when the present maximum advance of £1,750 was fixed. When that maximum has been lent by the bank it is often possible to obtain another £700 or so on second mortgage, but that still leaves a big gap to be filled by the borrower himself. I sympathize with him and should like to see the gap made smaller. I do not seek to hide a fellow feeling with the man who desires to start a home. My name has not yet been romantically linked with that of a young lady, but, if I am lucky, some day I shall be fortunate enough to enter the blessed state of matrimony, as I understand all other honourable members in this House have done. While the prospect of that, dim though it now is, fills me with the greatest pleasure, the thought of the cost to be incurred is appalling, and I can say that even though I can count myself, financially speaking, as one of the more fortunate people of about my own age in this State. The Government has already done magnificently in the field of housing, but if anything further can be done for those desiring to buy or build homes I think it should be done, if it is sound economically. I believe my suggestion would be economically sound, and it would help. That is why I would like to see the maximum amount raised if it is at all possible.

On principle, I am firmly opposed to controls of prices and rents. They contravene my political beliefs. His Excellency said that his advisers deem it necessary for the Acts controlling prices and rent to continue in operation. In past years I have looked upon the Prices Act and the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act as necessary evils, and I stress those words. To me they shall never cease to be distasteful. The question to be decided again this year is whether or not, and I have not made up my mind one way or the other, the controls are still necessary.

I am delighted that a Bill is being drafted to enable the payment of subsidies to councils that are prepared to establish and maintain public libraries. It is a splendid move, as most members will agree. Whilst not belittling in any way the work of our Public Library,

of which I have made use over many years, books should, as frequently as possible, be taken to the people because many of them will not go to the books. The result is that many people read books of little, if any, value. If good books were handier to them they might read them. The present position is a bad state of affairs. The strength of our democratic system of government depends on the level of intelligence and alertness of us all. The reading of good books improves the mind. It follows that few things could be better calculated to help our democracy than this move of the Government's. Incidentally, I should think that few moves would be less welcome to our communistic enemies than this one.

After these few remarks I do not want to be thought to have been blindly eulogistic of the Government, considering it, or any other body of human beings, to be without fault, because I do not. None of us is perfect, nor can we ever hope to be. I believe that there is only one perfect being in this universe and to Him all of us, whoever we may be, must look for all our strength and guidance. Although we are bound to seek perfection, through our very natures none of us can attain it. It follows that no Government, however good it is, can be entirely without blame, and we delude ourselves if we think otherwise. When considering problems, political or not, we must do so on their merits, bringing to bear both our own background of knowledge and belief, and also our consciences—our sense of what is right, just and fair, if you like to put it that way. In every problem there are conflicting facets. Our task is to reconcile them as best we can. The answer even then will not be perfect, but it will be an honest attempt to do the best of which we are capable.

Having said this, I confess freely that I have a strong bias in favour of the present Administration, which comprises members of the Liberal and Country League. I, too, am a member of that league and I subscribe to the principles and beliefs which it upholds. They correspond far more closely to my own personal beliefs than do those of any other political organization in this country. Further than that the league has in the past given me great support. I am therefore attached to my colleagues on this side of the House at all times, entirely of my own free will, by agreement on matters political and by a strong bond of loyalty. I hope that these few considerations will be the bases for my future actions in this House. I have pleasure in moving the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr. HEASLIP (Rocky River)—It is a privilege to be afforded the opportunity to second the motion that has been so ably moved by Mr. Millhouse. It is six years since I first had the opportunity to second the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. It was when I first came into this House. In the intervening years I have gained much knowledge of Parliament and Parliamentary procedure. I have heard it said repeatedly that the Address in Reply debate is a waste of time, but one of the things I have learned to appreciate is that it gives to all private members the opportunity to voice their opinions, particularly regarding domestic problems in their districts. I feel that the Address in Reply debate is worth while. It has been claimed that it takes up too much time, and that it is a waste of time, but if every member were to confine his remarks to matters in hand the length of the debate could be almost halved.

Since last session we have lost through death two valued members of this Parliament—the Honourable R. J. Rudall and Mr. H. S. Dunks. Mr. Rudall was originally a member of this place. Later he became a member of the Council. He served the State in various capacities. He was for some years a Cabinet Minister and we all learned to almost love him and to definitely respect him. Mr. Dunks was a member of this House for about 22 years, during which time he was Chairman of Committees for 17 years. He was never afraid to voice his opinions, though we did not always agree with them. Whatever he thought he said, and there was never any doubt in the mind of a member as to where he stood. As Chairman of Committees it was his duty to study the Standing Orders, and the decisions he gave, whether or not we agreed with them, were always unbiased, and in his view fair. All members learned to respect the late Steve Dunks and regretted his untimely death. I express my sympathy to the relatives of these late colleagues.

To the new member for Mitcham I extend a warm welcome. All those who heard him move the motion will agree that he is a young man of ability. He is the baby of this Parliament and his voice should be heard for many years throughout South Australia. He won his seat easily and increased the margin by which it was won previously. While his health lasts I am sure that he will retain the confidence of the electors of Mitcham and be returned to this House. The fact that he won by an increased margin displays the confidence of the electors

of Mitcham in the Playford Government, a confidence that I am sure will be reflected in the voting returns at next year's State elections.

I congratulate the member for Angas on his appointment as Chairman of Committees. I am sure that he will make it his duty to study and understand Standing Orders and that we will get from him the same impartial justice that we have known in the past.

Paragraph 3 of His Excellency's speech states:—

Economic conditions in South Australia continue to be satisfactory. There is full employment, and the demand for goods and services remains strong. The great amount of building activity, the ample programme of land development, and the steady flow of migration can be expected to keep the economy buoyant.

I agree that the economy of this State is buoyant, but what has contributed to that buoyancy? The Playford Government must take some credit for it because over the years it has been in power it has given the State stability and has introduced secondary industries to give the necessary balance between primary and secondary production. Whereas years ago South Australia was a purely primary-producing State it has now become industrially balanced, and, although we may go too far towards secondary production, the Government must be given credit for giving South Australia that great stability of which the people have taken advantage. South Australians are better off today than they have ever been, and this is at least partly due to the fact that primary producers are today getting better prices and enjoying better seasons than they have ever known.

Mr. Macgillivray—Some primary producers.

Mr. HEASLIP—Since the war all primary producers have enjoyed better prices and seasons, although I realize that there are some who today are not so well off. Although the prices for primary products are not at the very high level they were a few years ago, they are fairly stable at a somewhat lower level. Two factors make for a prosperous primary industry: high prices and good seasons. Prices can to some extent be controlled, and I have in mind the Joint Organization scheme, which was an artificial arrangement whereby the large surplus of wool at the end of the war was disposed of in an orderly way. Ultimately hundreds of millions of pounds was returned to Australia under that arrangement. While wheat prices were high Australian wheat-growers asked for and accepted a wheat price stabilization plan whereby they paid to a fund

portion of the high price ruling at that time. A moment ago Mr. Macgillivray interjected that only some primary producers were better off today, but I remind him that fruitgrowers were in recent years better off than ever before and that had they at that time entered a stabilization scheme they would have been far better off today and receiving at least a payable price for their commodities. Unfortunately, however, they did not enter into such a scheme and it is much harder to do so now that prices are low. In order to benefit from such schemes growers must be willing to give as well as to receive.

Cost of production is another factor affecting the economics of primary production. I am rather tired of hearing so many people, some of whom have never been on the land, telling primary producers to keep down production costs. If some of those people were to put their own house in order they would be far nearer the mark, because primary producers are at least able to compete in overseas markets whereas some of their critics cannot compete overseas and can sell only on the home market. In recent years production costs have risen in primary as well as in secondary industry and they are still rising, but, unfortunately for primary producers, these rises involve many items over which they have no control. For instance, they have no control over overseas freight rates about which there has been so much press publicity recently. Further, primary producers must pay rail freights, their only alternative being to cart the product by road, which many are doing today. Primary producers cannot control employment costs or the initial and maintenance costs of tractors. Those are typical of some of the costs that are increasing all the time. Indeed, the costs of primary production are today nearing a figure that will prevent the Australian primary producer from competing with the rest of the world.

Last year the average price for wool in South Australia was 75.22d. a pound, but for the first nine months of this year it has been 67.48d. During the last 12 months the price has dropped by 7½d. a pound and the wool-grower is not in as sound a position as he was a few years ago. Further, his costs are increasing all the time and he must watch them closely. The Australian wool clip for the 10 months is down by £49,000,000, which means £49,000,000 less that is being circulated in Australia. The prices for our primary products have dropped and are dropping, and they can be only partly controlled.

The other factor affecting primary production is the nature of the seasons. In recent years South Australia has passed through a period unknown before: since 1945 we have not had a season that could be called a failure. What has been produced over the past seven or eight years, and how does it compare with previous years? His Excellency said that last year we produced 30,000,000 bushels of wheat and 18,000,000 bushels of barley at an average production of 18.2 bushels an acre. No fewer than 840,000 lambs were slaughtered for export and of these 760,000 were actually exported—another record.

Mr. Macgillivray—South Australia must have had a wonderful Government over the last 10 years.

Mr. HEASLIP—The Government has been partly responsible, but I am now speaking of the seasons. During the past seven years the average per acre produced here has been 17 bushels of wheat and 20.5 of barley, but in the preceding seven years the average was only 11 bushels of wheat and 13 of barley. Over the last eight years South Australia has averaged 10,500,000 sheep and over the last three years 12,000,000, but during the preceding 10 years the average was only 8,500,000. This favourable state of affairs cannot continue for ever. I do not know how long it will continue, but it will not continue indefinitely unless history does not repeat itself, and I have found that history has a habit of repeating itself. What would happen if we suffered a bad year or two? It is no good getting a high price if the production is not there, and we should look ahead and be prepared for the time when we must inevitably encounter dry years. We are over the crest of the wave of prosperity and well down in the trough, but if our boat is caulked tight we will rise again from the bottom of the trough. On the other hand, if we do not rise we will sink before we rise again. Paragraph 3 of His Excellency's speech continues:—

A feature of the Australian economy, however, which gives special concern to my Ministers is the strong pressure to increase interest rates. Merchants, manufacturers and financiers—in particular, those engaged in financing hire purchase transactions—have entered the loan market seeking large sums for the extension of their businesses, and, in a number of instances, are offering high rates of interest. I have no quarrel with businessmen, particularly manufacturers, who borrow money because, if their manufacturing capacity is to expand, they must get finance. By doing so they build up something tangible which creates employment and will be worthwhile in the

future. I do not, however, agree with hire-purchase. All we are doing through hire-purchase is mortgaging our future.

Mr. O'Halloran—You did not give me much support last year when I tried to curtail it.

Mr. HEASLIP—The honourable member was trying to curtail it in very small items.

Mr. O'Halloran—But effectively.

Mr. HEASLIP—If your Bill would have been effective I would have supported it, but it would not have been effective or workable. There is no question that hire-purchase enables people to live beyond their means. They tend to mortgage next week's earnings to pay for what they get on hire-purchase. The housing problem has been mentioned in several questions and also by the mover of this motion. If hire-purchase finance could be made available to people who wish to build houses it would be a great thing, but the lending institutions are not prepared to do it. Hire-purchase increases demand, but by doing so it robs the means of increasing production, so ultimately it must defeat its own ends. Our purchasing power overseas has diminished so we have import restrictions, which means that we shall have to produce more for our own people. We must get the necessary finance to manufacture more, but if that finance is tied up in hire-purchase it is not available for manufacture. I hope the Government will take some action in respect of hire-purchase.

Last year I referred to railway freights on wool and quoted figures given to me by a stock agent showing that in 1952-53 the railways carted 76 per cent of our wool and 24 per cent was carted by road. In 1953-54 the railways carted 70 per cent and road transport 30 per cent. The figures are not available for 1954-55, but for the first six months the railways carted only 57 per cent, but road transport increased to 43 per cent. I said last year that the railway policy of increasing the freight rates on wool was wrong. Wool is the best paying commodity for the railways, but now they have priced themselves out of this field. I think that in a few years practically all wool produced within reasonable distances of the ports will be carted by road.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—But you still ask the railways to cart your superphosphate in order to produce the wool.

Mr. HEASLIP—I can speak of wheat, too. I can cart wheat by road transport from my home to Port Pirie more cheaply than the railways can. I cart my wool from Appila to Port Adelaide and save much money.

Mr. O'Halloran—You have to pay registration fees on your vehicles.

Mr. HEASLIP—Registration fees were increased steeply last year, but the fees have to be paid whether the vehicles are used on the road or stay in the shed. Everyone knows it is uneconomic not to use vehicles that are registered. Railway policy has been wrong. For instance, a farmer at Merriton ordered two scarifiers from Adelaide. The freight on the first one delivered was £6 17s. 6d. The second implement was slightly different from the first and because the railways had to use a truck suitable to carry it the freight was £11. The farmer complained, but the department said the charge was correct because a special truck had been used. That is not the way to get business and cut railway losses. In order to compete with road transport to Victoria the railways quote special rates for the transport of motor bodies, but they charge freights to our own South Australians that will have the effect of losing business.

His Excellency's Speech stated that legislation in regard to bulk handling of grain will be introduced. I hope it will come before the House as soon as possible, because bulk handling is vital to South Australia. The Electricity Trust, particularly in my district, is doing a splendid job. In the Napperby and Nelshaby areas 112 homes have been supplied with power, and at Wirrabara Forest over 20 homes have been supplied. In completing the Jamestown-Caltowie pipeline the Engineering and Water Supply Department has carried out a project that is really appreciated by the people. I feel sure that many constituents of the Leader of the Opposition will ultimately benefit from that scheme. His Excellency's Speech was a statement of good stewardship, and I have much pleasure in seconding the motion.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.40 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, May 26, at 2 p.m.