

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, May 26, 1955.

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

QUESTIONS.**METROPOLITAN RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Two or more years ago a very ambitious scheme for the electrification of the suburban railway system was proposed and we heard much of it but there was no mention of any progress with the proposal in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech, nor any suggestion that anything is to be done about it. Can the Premier say whether this project has been abandoned and if not, when we are likely to hear more of it?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Consequent upon reports from the Railways Commissioner, who had drawn up certain proposals, the Government submitted the proposals for the electrification of metropolitan lines to the Public Works Committee for consideration. That committee made a favourable recommendation and the Government adopted the proposals and said that they would be put into effect as soon as opportunity allowed. Almost immediately some revolutionary advances occurred in mechanical traction and the Railways Commissioner forward a recommendation pointing out that diesel locomotives would provide all the advantages that could be gained from electrification and at a cheaper cost. They were much cheaper to install and had the advantage of being effective for use on many more lines. Under those circumstances the Government approved of the Railways Commissioner calling for tenders for three complete units to ascertain in practice whether his conclusions were correct before the policy was definitely changed. The construction of those units is well advanced and they should be available for use on metropolitan lines fairly soon. I will get a report as to when they will be available for traffic. They will provide an opportunity of testing whether their use is a superior proposal to the electrification scheme.

RESERVOIR INTAKES.

Mr. TEUSNER—I understand that during the last day or two there have been heavy falls of rain in various parts of South Australia. Can the Minister of Works say whether the precipitations have taken place in any of the water sheds of our metropolitan and country reservoirs which have been so badly

depleted in the last 12 months, and whether the intakes will be considerably augmented as a result?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I naturally expected that a matter of such importance would be inquired into and in consequence I have some figures in regard thereto. Notwithstanding that we had good opening rains, the net result in the metropolitan area last week was that the consumption of water exceeded the intake by three million gallons. As a result of the glorious rains which occurred in the last 24 hours over the whole State the position has improved to a vast extent. This morning I was informed that the intake in the metropolitan area had increased by 359 million gallons and the inflow was continuing at the rate of about 500 million gallons a day. By virtue of the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline and the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline, about 80 per cent of our reservoir consumption is tied up with the River Murray and an inflow into one reservoir may be regarded as an inflow into another. The net result is that in the last 24 hours there has been an intake of about 1,000 million gallons and the flow is continuing.

BIRKENHEAD OIL INSTALLATIONS.

Mr. TAPPING—The following statement attributed to the Premier, appears in this morning's *Advertiser*:—

The present distribution centre on Le Fevre Peninsula was not only dangerous, but was fast becoming ineffective, he said: The grouping of petrol tanks and installations in the centre of a harbour was asking for trouble under normal conditions, but begging for it in the event of war.

In view of the apparent danger attaching to the existing installations at Birkenhead can the Premier say whether the transfer of such tanks further down stream will be expedited by the Government?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No immediate action will be taken by the Government. All members will realize that having the whole of the fuel storage capacity for the State in the heart of the port is not good procedure, particularly in the event of war. I have no doubt that the case we can now put up for a refinery in this State would among other things, if our claim is accepted by some company, enable a refinery to be established at the place already planned for it on Le Fevre Peninsula. It will also enable a pipe system to be established across Torrens Island into the northern part of the metropolitan area. It would have two effects: firstly, it would provide

fuel more effectively to the State and in a safer manner, and, secondly, it would relieve the tremendous congestion taking place at Port Adelaide because all our fuel supplies have to be removed from almost the heart of the port by tankers.

COAL SUPPLIES.

Mr. DUNNAGE—A few days ago it was suggested in the press that South Australia, and perhaps other States, would have to import coal supplies from overseas because of the difficulty of getting coal from New South Wales. Can the Premier say whether the position has changed and whether it is possible for us to get our supplies from New South Wales?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The disastrous floods that took place in New South Wales, particularly on the coalfields, disrupted for some time the flow of coal to this State and meant that we used to a considerable extent what is regarded as our normal working stocks. The position has been somewhat difficult since then, but owing to the fact that new installations are coming into operation in Port Augusta—I think the fire on a new unit was lit only this week—and that we have been able to get some coal through Sydney, and further, that the Minister for Shipping is now making special provision for additional ships to be placed on the run, I expect that there will be no need for rationing nor any hold up of essential services. Another factor is that there are now available from Kwinana heavy quantities of crude oil for which some of our units at Port Adelaide are now being adjusted.

NOARLUNGA MEAT COMPANY CASE.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Today's press reports that the Commonwealth Government is to intervene in the appeal by the South Australian Government to the Privy Council against a recent High Court decision in favour of Noarlunga Meat Company Limited. It seems to me that this is one of those unfortunate cases, in which, whoever wins, it will cost the Commonwealth and the people of Australia much money. I understand that this action started because the company asked for a certain licence, which the South Australian Government refused. Can the Premier say what licence the company asked for and why it was refused?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The licensee was one to slaughter for export, and it was refused because public money had been put into the establishment of an export abattoirs in the

metropolitan area and the legislation that the South Australian Parliament had passed frowned upon additional export abattoirs being established within 80 miles of those in which public finance was involved. There is adequate killing capacity at Gepps Cross, and under the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Act no abattoirs may be established within 80 miles of such abattoirs unless a special licence is granted by the Minister of Agriculture. The licence was applied for, the circumstances were examined by the Minister, and he considered there was no justification for a licence. The Commonwealth then went over the head of the State and issued a licence. Important constitutional issues immediately arose: whether the Commonwealth has the authority to take over the control of production of any item that is to be exported, and secondly, whether the Act that the State Parliament passed is in fact valid, or whether the Commonwealth regulation supersedes it. Speaking personally, I can say that the issues are much more important than whether this small meat works gets a licence or not; that is only incidental and I am rather sorry that the company has been involved in what is after all a major constitutional issue. What is important is whether the Commonwealth powers over export enable it to control, for instance, the production of wheat on the farm on the grounds that it will be ultimately exported. The meat company referred to is supplying meat locally, not inside the metropolitan area. The High Court decision on the important part of the question, with three judges on each side, raised an important constitutional issue: whether the State controls production inside the State of those items which may ultimately be exported, or has no control over them and they can be regulated by Commonwealth regulation.

Mr. STOTT—It has been a well-known tenet of law in this country for many years that the Commonwealth has the exclusive right over export and import licences and that where a State law conflicts with a Commonwealth law the Commonwealth law shall prevail. The Premier this afternoon expressed sorrow for the company's becoming involved in a big constitutional issue. As the company is not involved in the constitutional issue will it be recompensed by either the State or the Commonwealth Government if this matter is argued in court over a period of from one to three months by barristers charging big fees?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No. Although I am sorry that the company is involved, I point out that it became involved because it did not accept the decision of this Parliament. It was refused a licence here and it applied for one from another authority that previously had never been held to have any authority beyond the wharves. The export powers of the Commonwealth had always been considered to be the powers which became operative at the time of export, not prior to export. The company itself decided to try the issue to decide the powers of the Commonwealth, so it became involved by its own action.

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—Has the Premier considered whether it is in good taste to discuss matters in this House which are before the courts and which are therefore *sub judice*?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I considered that matter when Mr. Macgillivray first asked his question, but I have always taken the view that, if possible, members should be given the opportunity of asking questions and having them answered. Technically, this matter is not before the Privy Council.

Mr. Macgillivray—That is why I asked the question.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not think the honourable member asked it because it was not before the Privy Council. He was probably prompted to ask it. I hope the Privy Council will accept this as a matter that should be considered. The view that the Government, and our Crown Law officers, take is one that is accepted by every State Government, and I inform members that the appeal we are making to the Privy Council is supported by every State Government.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier to withdraw his statement that I was prompted to ask the question I did. I asked it because I consider it my duty as an elected member of Parliament to get information when I require it. I take strong exception to the Premier's remark.

The SPEAKER—What is the point of order? The remark was not offensive. Honourable members can quite properly ask questions that they are requested to ask.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The Premier's statement that I was prompted to ask the question was offensive to me. I asked it because I considered it my duty.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If the honourable member feels it to be at all offensive I very willingly withdraw it.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The Premier said that this company has no permission to sell meat in the metropolitan area. Is it not a fact that it kept the metropolitan area supplied with meat when the Metropolitan Abattoirs was holding one of its not infrequent strikes? Is it not also correct that the inspiration of stultifying the Noarlunga Meat Company arose from the fact that it could well be a potential competitor with the socialistic concern which has cost the taxpayers so much money and which has, in fact, been most inefficient?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I do not know whether the company has supplied the metropolitan area with meat during a time of strike but I would not doubt it. Many country butchers did and some of them worked under the most primitive conditions, particularly in the Gawler area. They commenced all types of miscellaneous slaughtering facilities—some of them not so hot—to supply meat to the metropolitan area. That, of course, does not mean that it is desirable to continue that type of supply under normal circumstances. The reason the Minister of Agriculture turned down this company's application was that an Act of Parliament provided for the establishment of the Metropolitan Abattoirs and enormous sums of public money were invested in providing facilities. There were no more grounds for granting the Noarlunga Meat Company a licence than for granting licences to the other 20-odd applications before the Minister from time to time for licences in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Macgillivray—Why have a Metropolitan Abattoirs at all?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Parliament decided that it was necessary in view of the conditions that obtained prior to its establishment.

APPLICATIONS FOR RENTAL HOMES.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Has the Premier a reply to my recent question about the number of applications to the Housing Trust for rental homes?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—As promised, I have obtained a report from the Chairman of the Housing Trust, who states:—

Although the South Australian Housing Trust, by a constant review of the rental applications made to it, attempts to keep the application list confined to effective applications, it is virtually impossible, at any given time, to state the exact number of effective applications. The conditions of many applicants change and they no longer desire housing from the trust, but the trust is not informed of the

changed circumstances. However, it is estimated that, at the present time and as maximum figures, the trust holds the following effective applications:—

- (1) For emergency dwellings .. 4,700
- (2) For timber houses 3,300
- (3) For brick rental houses .. 7,500

In almost all cases the applicants for emergency dwellings have also applied for other rental houses.

Mr. STEPHENS—I understand that the Government decided some time ago not to build any more temporary homes, but as there are so many people requiring them does not the Government think that more temporary homes should be built so that people badly needing them can live under better conditions?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I examined this matter personally and discussed it with the Chairman of the Housing Trust a few weeks ago. Temporary houses were not built by the trust but by the Government. They were built at a time when it was not possible to use all the money we had available to us in conventional building and when many people were occupying shanties in the sandhills and similar structures because of housing conditions. Those conditions do not obtain now. Since the war the ratio of people to houses in this State has dropped from 4 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ a house: that is revealed by official figures of the Commonwealth Statistician. The reason there are always so many applications for emergency homes is that anyone who fills in an application form qualifies for an emergency home. A migrant who arrived here yesterday would qualify for consideration for such a home if his conditions warranted it. Under those circumstances there will always be many people, who would not normally be eligible for rental houses until they had waited their turn, wanting emergency homes. The objection to the member's suggestion is that we have now the possibility of using all the money available to us in constructing conventional permanent houses, which we believe is the best practice.

SMOKE AND DUST ERADICATION.

Mr. GEOFF. CLARKE—Will the Premier ask the Minister of Industry to find out from the City of Chicago in the United States what were the successful methods adopted there to reduce materially the bad effects of industrial smoke and dust in factory areas?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I heard a broadcast about this matter, but, speaking from memory, I believe it related not to Chicago, but to some other city. I will inquire and see which city took action, and what that action was.

PRICE OF SPLIT POSTS.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Has the Treasurer, as Minister in charge of prices, a reply to my recent question about the price of split posts?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I took up this matter with the Prices Commissioner, and he has now submitted a report, which shows that owing to certain circumstances and reasons he gave special approval. The docket is available to the honourable member. Briefly, transport charges were involved and, in the main, fairly heavy costs in getting these posts out from the hills; further, they were of a rather higher quality than those to which the usual price applied.

SCHOOL TELEPHONE ACCOUNTS.

Mr. JENNINGS—In reply to my recent question the Minister of Education said that it had been arranged that the Education Department would pay for calls made from schools to the department itself and said that, unfortunately, there was no definition of an official call, so that calls not made to the department would not have to be paid for by it. I am not at all happy about this decision. I feel that justice has not been done to the school committees. There must be many calls which are made by the headmaster which are on official business, but which are not made to the department. For example, a headmaster may ring me and ask that I address scholars on, say, Empire Day or Arbour Day. Such a call would be on official business, but the school committee would have to pay it. Will the Premier refer this matter to the Minister and have it reconsidered so that justice can be done to school committees?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The question is one of considerable difficulty. The Government must consider the position not only in regard to the Education Department but in regard to its other services. Many officers must be available by telephone after office hours and they must have the telephone connected to their premises. The Government has tried to work out something that would be fair to the officers concerned as well as to the taxpayer, but I will have the matter that the honourable member has raised investigated.

MAIN ROADS IN SOUTH-EAST.

Mr. CORCORAN—On several occasions I have raised the question of bituminizing certain main roads in my district. I am particularly concerned about the Kingston-Naracoorte Road, the Beachport-Millicent Road, to the intersection of the Princes Highway, and the Robe

Road from Robe to the intersection of the Beachport Road. From time to time I have made suggestions that the Government might consider the bituminizing of at least portions of them. I ask the Minister representing the Minister of Roads whether provision has been made on the Estimates for 1955-56 to bituminize those roads, or even portions of them.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Estimates for 1955-56 have not even been considered by Cabinet yet, but as the honourable member has stressed the importance of those roads I will bring his question under the notice of my colleague, and I am sure it will not be overlooked when the Estimates are framed.

CONTROL OF NOXIOUS WEEDS.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—Late last session, in reply to a question, the Minister of Agriculture said that a committee was studying the method of more effectively controlling noxious weeds and he hoped to introduce legislation concerning this problem, but was unable to do so because the findings of the committee were not complete. Can the Minister say what progress has been made and if legislation is likely to be introduced this session?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The committee has completed its task and I have its recommendations in hand. It now remains for Cabinet approval of the principles involved in those recommendations and if that is forthcoming a Bill can immediately be drafted.

COUNTRY WATER ASSESSMENTS.

Mr. QUIRKE—Last year we amended the Act which provided a maximum charge of 7d. an acre on water land and left the fixing of charges to the discretion of the Minister. Has the Minister of Works arrived at any formula in relation to these charges and can he indicate how the charges will be assessed on new country water schemes?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—There are two questions involved. The first relates to how the charges have been altered. From memory, the minimum has been increased from 4d. to 8d. and the maximum from 7d. to 1s. 9d. Thousands of assessments have gone out and it is hoped that the increased revenue will reduce losses by, speaking from memory, from £140,000 to £150,000. Not more than five people in the country have regarded the new assessments as unfair, the remainder have paid the assessments without question. I point out that for every extra pound they pay in rates they secure a further 12,000 gallons of water, so in effect, the rating is not increased to a great extent.

The second question related to how it affects new schemes. Before a scheme costing over £30,000 can be approved it must run the gauntlet of inquiry by the Public Works Committee. The new rates are such that it does not make much alteration to the finances of a scheme. As a matter of fact many areas, including that represented by the member for Murray, have offered to pay as much as five times the existing rate to secure water. Each scheme in the future must be considered on its merits. It helps to make it more economical to the State if we can get 1s. 9d. as a maximum as against 7d. previously applying. To that extent it has improved the prospects of new schemes because it reduces the overhead costs all round.

ROADS IN HOUSING TRUST AREAS.

Mr. JENNINGS—On Tuesday I asked the Premier a question concerning Housing Trust assistance for the construction of roads and pointed out the poor condition of streets in Northfield and Clearview. Since the recent rains roads there have deteriorated from very bad to worse. Has the Premier a reply to the question that he promised to refer to the trust?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I pointed out previously that the control of roads is vested in the district councils and any action the Housing Trust takes is supplementary to council work. It is not actually the roadmaking authority. The Chairman of the trust reports:—

In the past two years the South Australian Housing Trust, in conjunction with the Enfield Corporation, has constructed over 12 miles of roads in the Northfield-Clearview area. These roads have been sealed with bitumen. Some further roads in the Northfield area have been formed and cindered and, in general, are in reasonably good condition. These will be metalled and sealed as soon as circumstances permit. In Rowe Avenue and some adjacent roads in Northfield and in a few streets in Clearview, sewerage trenches were dug during the last few months and have not yet had time to consolidate. In instances, the houses are not yet completed. The recent rains have had their inevitable effect on these drains, but as soon as weather conditions permit the roads will be completed. I would point out, however, that the number of roads in this area yet to be completed is only a very small proportion of the total roads in the area and that most of the roadwork has been carried out.

SWAN REACH PUNT.

Mr. STOTT—It has been reported to me that, following on the sinking of the Swan Reach punt in the river, caused by a farmer taking his superphosphate over in the punt, there will be a hold-up for some time. Will

the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Roads to expedite the lifting of the punt and whether some inquiry could be made to redesign the punt in order to prevent a repetition of this occurrence?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I suggest it is far easier to redesign the vehicle than the punt. It takes many months and thousands of pounds to construct a new punt, whereas the size of the truckload can be regulated by dropping off a few bags of superphosphate. I will inquire from my colleague about the occurrence.

HOUSING TRUST LAND PURCHASES.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Has the Premier a reply to my recent question about further purchases by the Housing Trust of land between Smithfield and Gawler?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The trust has not purchased and does not contemplate the purchase of land between Smithfield and Gawler, but it has recently purchased an additional area contiguous to the new town of Salisbury for the purpose of providing a reserve of land for future development.

IRRIGATION WATER RATES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Has the Minister of Irrigation a reply to my recent question regarding the water rates schedule appearing in the *Government Gazette* of April 21?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—That schedule is correct. The charge of £7 an acre made to the low lift pumping areas at Cobdogla and Chaffey is for five general irrigations, whereas the rate of £6 10s. an acre for Loveday and Nookamka is for four general irrigations.

NEW TOWN NEAR SALISBURY.

The SPEAKER laid on the table a progress report by the Public Works Standing Committee, together with minutes of evidence, on a water and sewerage scheme for the new town near Salisbury.

Ordered that report be printed.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption of Address in Reply.

(Continued from May 25. Page 67.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I join with His Excellency in the sorrow he expressed at the deaths of the late Hon. Reginald Rudall and Mr. Steve Dunks, which occurred since Parliament prorogued last year. I expressed myself on this matter

on the motion of condolence carried last Thursday and I have nothing to add to my earlier expressions of sympathy for the relatives of the two gentlemen. They were highly esteemed in this Chamber. Before going to the Legislative Council Mr. Rudall served with considerable distinction in this House.

We commenced this session somewhat earlier than usual, and to some extent that represented a concession to the Opposition, which for many years has contended that the work of Parliament should be divided among two sessions each year to give Parliament a better opportunity to discuss the important matters that come before it. Further, it would assist the Government in its administration.

Mr. Lawn—This Government has no policy to legislate on.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I thank my colleague for the interjection and assure him that its implications will not be lost sight of during my speech. Although the Government apparently does not completely agree with the suggestion of the Opposition that we should have an autumn session, a short adjournment during the winter months, and a spring session, it has come a considerable way towards the goal the Opposition seeks to achieve, and I suppose the Premier, when delivering his policy speech before the election next year, will claim credit for modifying Parliamentary procedure in this way.

Yesterday we heard the newly-elected member for Mitcham, Mr. Millhouse, deliver his maiden speech. It was well constructed, well delivered and easy to listen to. I congratulate him on his appearance in the House and on the delivery of his first speech here. We also heard Mr. Heaslip and, having heard him before on many occasions, some members consider that he is learning little with the passing of time. The member for Mitcham remarked that there was a close affinity between himself and the Liberal and Country League. One would have expected that, in view of the fact that he secured selection as its candidate for this blue ribbon Liberal and Country League seat. He also said that the Liberal and Country League had some principles, but that was news to me because I have been in this Chamber for many years, and if the Liberal and Country League has any principles it has concealed them excellently. I shall be delighted to hear the member for Mitcham express those principles at a suitable opportunity. I have turned grey waiting to hear of them for over 30 years.

The member for Rocky River (Mr. Heaslip) had two main themes in his speech, and they

were excellent points. One was on costs, but we have heard this question raised ever since 1918, particularly from representatives of the primary producing areas. Even in the depression, when one-third of our people were out of work, we were told about costs, but it was of no use manufacturing or producing anything then in a community that had no purchasing power. Today, because of the abounding purchasing power available, the position is reversed, and I do not suppose any section has gained more as a result than have primary producers. I realize some sections of primary production have not participated to the same extent as the majority, but most primary producers have benefited greatly as a result of the current prosperity of Australia. Wool and wheat are our main two primary commodities, and they depend considerably on the export market, but over 70 per cent of our primary products are consumed in this country. Therefore, the future of our primary production is linked irrevocably with the continued full employment of our workers on a fair basis of wages and conditions.

Mr. Heaslip also referred to the vexed question of hire-purchase, which looms large in the public eye because of certain propaganda that has appeared in the press recently. Last session I expressed my opinions on this question very forcibly and I was supported by my colleagues. Although we agree with the principle of time payment and are satisfied that it provides a service to the community and enables young people to have those things that their parents could only wish for, it is something that should be controlled. My Bill provided that the real rate of interest should be stated clearly in the contract and that there should be progressive reductions of instalments as the purchaser redeemed his commitments. In other words, the rate of interest stated should be the true rate, not a rate that becomes doubled, as at present, as the result of the hirer having to pay interest on the full amount until the last instalment is paid. I set out a formula which was criticized by some members opposite, but they were not able or prepared to suggest how it should be improved. Another provision stated that the husband and wife should be signatories to a hire-purchase agreement if they were living together. Mr. Heaslip, and other members opposite, had the opportunity to vote for the second reading so that the measure could be considered in Committee, but they defeated it. Therefore, it is idle for them now to shed crocodile tears about the evils of hire-purchase. They must accept the responsibility for any evils.

The speech with which His Excellency opened Parliament represents an excellent piece of window dressing on the part of those who compiled it for him. We all know that the Governor's speeches are compiled by the Ministry and are used to put forward the best story that can be evolved from an unsatisfactory record. His Excellency's speech was an excellent piece of work because it was the result of considerable practice by the Government. I have read previous opening speeches and have compared certain paragraphs in this year's speech with those of previous years. I had time to refer only to the Opening Speeches of 1953, 1954 and 1955. In 1953, dealing with the Yorke Peninsula water scheme, the following appeared:—

Works for providing a permanent water supply for Yorke Peninsula are well in hand.

In 1954:—

Further substantial progress will be made in the Yorke Peninsula water scheme during the next twelve months.

In 1955:—

Good progress is being made on the Yorke Peninsula water scheme, which is already benefiting the northern end of the peninsula and will be extended as far as Edithburgh.

In respect of the Uley-Wanilla scheme the following appeared in 1953:—

Good progress has also been made in the Uley-Wanilla scheme, which the Government expects to complete by June, 1954.

In 1954:—

It is anticipated that the scheme will be completed next year.

In 1955:—

The scheme has been substantially completed and is now in full operation.

In 1953, in respect of a water scheme for Millicent His Excellency said:—

A proposal to provide a water supply for Millicent by pumping from bores has been referred to the Public Works Committee.

There was no mention of that scheme in 1954 or 1955. One wonders what has happened to the Government's enthusiasm for providing the people of Millicent with a reticulated water scheme as was announced in 1953, but which has apparently been forgotten ever since. On the question of wharves I found these comments in respect of Port Lincoln.

In 1953:—

Preliminary work in connection with additional shipping accommodation at Port Lincoln is proceeding. This scheme includes new berths for overseas vessels and facilities for the discharge and storage of oil and sulphuric acid in bulk.

In 1954:—

The proposals for the better shipping facilities at Port Lincoln have been worked out in detail and are receiving the consideration of the Government.

In 1955:—

Plans are being formulated and preparations made for further development . . . at Port Lincoln.

From the *Advertiser* of May 24 it is apparent that people of Port Lincoln are becoming concerned that, despite these promises, nothing has been done or is likely to be done to improve the shipping facilities at that important centre. War Service Land Settlement has also been mentioned in each of those years. The following were the comments:—

In 1953:—

720 have been placed on blocks and a further 100 selected for consideration.

In 1954:—

760 now on blocks and a further 110 approved for consideration.

In 1955:—

844 now on blocks and 87 approved for consideration.

From those figures it would appear that 124 soldier settlers have been placed on blocks during the last two years. That is not good enough. We know that many ex-servicemen have withdrawn their applications because they realized they had no possible chance of being settled on the land. We know also that a number are still hanging on, but are growing older as the years pass, waiting for the land promised them so many years ago.

In His Excellency's speech he referred to the economic conditions in South Australia and to the great amount of building activity, the ample programme of land development and the steady flow of migration that could be expected to keep the economy buoyant. The position is that we have not satisfactorily solved the problem of soldier settlement and we have made no efforts to evolve schemes of land settlement to provide something for the many hundreds of young men who were too young to go to the war but are now clamouring for opportunities to settle on the land. Every week I am approached, either personally or by letter, by people seeking land in pastoral or farming areas or in any part of the State where it is possible for a family to make a living. I have to send them away with the same statement—that unless they can secure sufficient finance to purchase an existing holding there does not appear to be any hope for them. Of course, it is obvious that if a man has sufficient finance to purchase a

property at prevailing high prices he can invest his money in gilt-edged securities and live comfortably on the interest. I suggest that while these conditions exist—and they do exist as any country member and most metropolitan members realize—the economy of this State is not sound or on a proper basis.

In the Opening Speech of 1953 it was stated that five research centres were being established at Loxton, the Upper South-East, the Lower South-East, Wanbi and Parafield. There was no mention of this in 1954 and 1955. Of course, these centres may have been established but I very much doubt it because I feel confident that if they were the person who drafted the Speech would not have lost the opportunity of telling the world. In respect of forests the following appeared.

In 1953:—

4,800 acres approved for planting during the season.

In 1954:—

4,800 acres to be planted during 1954, bringing the total to 125,000 acres.

In 1955:—

4,300 acres to be planted, bringing the total to over 125,000 acres.

It is obvious that if there were 125,000 acres planted by the end of 1954 and an additional 4,300 acres were to be planted in 1955 the total plantings must exceed 125,000.

In respect of the Goodwood-Marino railway duplication, in 1953 His Excellency said that it had reached Edwardstown and would be continued towards Oaklands during the forthcoming year. In 1954 we were told that operations would be continued as rapidly as possible but there was no mention of it in 1955. I understand that practically no progress has been made during the last six months.

Mr. Frank Walsh—The weeds have grown feet high.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—That is so. The line should have been completed and in use earning revenue to meet interest and sinking fund on the capital cost. We have all been worried about seasonal conditions in recent years in view of the long period of good seasons that we have enjoyed, so perhaps the weeds on the Marino line are being maintained as a fodder conservation reserve. I can think of no other reason why that work has not continued.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Perhaps it will be discontinued while the Public Works Committee considers putting the line underground.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—If that is so I venture to prophesy that most members of this Parliament will be underground before it comes

to fruition. In respect of Leigh Creek coal production the following has appeared in the opening speeches. In 1953:—

The trust will during the coming year proceed with works for raising output of the field. There was no mention of the quantity produced during the financial year 1952-53. In 1954 this was said:—

The field will be progressively developed in order to make the State independent as far as practicable of outside supplies.

Again there was no mention of the quantity produced for the preceding financial year. In 1955 we were told:—

Output is rising steadily and will this year exceed 500,000 tons. Operations are being carried out to raise the productive capacity of the field to 1,500,000 tons a year.

The production for 1954-55 will represent only about 10,000 tons a week. Production exceeding that has been announced several times in past years. I have a distinct recollection that when, for some reason or another, there was a shortage of Newcastle coal, the production at Leigh Creek increased to 13,000 tons a week. I wonder how much progress has been made in this venture. It is impossible to make any comparisons because of the absence of production figures in previous years. I think members are aware that I am a staunch believer in the exploitation of this field and I fought to have Leigh Creek developed before the Premier was a member of this Parliament. Unfortunately, my agitations did not meet with success.

I realize there is a limit to the quantity of coal that can be mined by the open cut method and I am doubtful about the economics of deep mining that coal, particularly in view of the increasing competition from heavy fuel oil. The Premier indicated this afternoon that with the opening of a new refinery at Kwinana in Western Australia the quantity of heavy grade fuel oil would rapidly increase and the competition with coal from this type of heat producing commodity must have more serious effects as the years pass. I often wonder whether, instead of purchasing further expensive plant and developing the Leigh Creek field to the maximum, it would not be wiser to embark on a balanced programme in order to keep some Leigh Creek coal in reserve in the event of a future emergency, because, if 1,500,000 tons of coal is to be mined at Leigh Creek each year, the known reserve capable of being won by the open-cut method will soon become exhausted.

I now refer to the development of the pyrites deposits at Nairne. In 1953 we were told that it was expected that by 1955 the

output from Nairne, together with the acid made from the waste smelter gases at Port Pirie, would supply the needs of the superphosphate industry for many years. In 1954 we were told that the production of pyrites from the Nairne deposit would commence during that year and that the sulphuric acid from it would make South Australia independent of outside sources of sulphur for superphosphate. Again, in 1955 we are told that the pyrites mine at Nairne, the associated chemical plant at Birkenhead, and the new sulphur plant at Port Pirie will shortly be working and will make South Australia independent of imported sulphur for the manufacture of fertilizers. I remind members, however, that Nairne has not yet commenced to produce and that recently it was revealed that adequate supplies of superphosphate were not available for seeding at a convenient time.

Recently we have heard questions about the considerable shortage of superphosphate in this State. I realize, of course, that efforts have been made to blame everybody except the people really responsible. Mr. Heaslip, who is such a firm believer in private enterprise, recently asked the Minister of Agriculture a question about the difficulties of farmers in his district in obtaining superphosphate supplies, and suggested that the Railways Department might be at fault, but the Minister showed that no blame attached to the Railways Department, but that rather it lay with the farmers who did not order their supplies in time, and with the companies which were unable to manufacture sufficient to meet the growing demand in this State. Therefore, I wonder what has become of all those blessings that were supposed to be about to flow from the development of the pyrites deposits at Nairne and the operation of the chemical plant at Birkenhead. Further, I understand that the operation of the latter project will result in the closing down of a useful industry at Wallaroo, a town that has received many nasty knocks over the years, including the closing down of the mines and smelting industry and abortive attempts since then to establish an industry that would have absorbed some of the labour still available in the area.

My purpose in referring to these promises is to show that it is a characteristic of this Government, and particularly of the Premier, to make these high-sounding and optimistic statements from time to time almost *ad infinitum*. Year after year these stories are told and retold like the fables of old, and many people really believe that all these

things have happened when, in fact, they are still in the shop window just as they were three years ago.

Both the member for Mitcham and the member for Rocky River referred to the prosperity of this State; they painted a magnificent picture and would have us believe that our prosperity is due solely to the Playford Government. No credit was given to the beneficent providence that sent us the longest period of good years in the history of white settlement in this State. These good seasons, together with the high prices which certain of our export commodities have brought and are still bringing, have resulted in a real prosperity to South Australia. It is a great pity that those two members are not speaking today instead of yesterday, for now they would have been able to credit the Government with the copious rains that have fallen yesterday and this morning.

Most of our primary industries are prosperous, but, unfortunately, that does not apply to our great dried fruit industry on the Murray nor to our great viticultural industry. Those two industries are getting into increasing difficulties, but no practical steps are being taken or suggested by the Government to relieve them. We have an obligation to those people, not only because they are primary producers, but also because in the main they are ex-servicemen who fought for the country, some of which they now occupy. I realize, of course, that this matter requires a certain amount of Commonwealth-State co-operation; but I point out that Mr. Playford, who is the only Liberal State Premier, should be able to influence the Liberal Prime Minister to induce the Federal Minister for Commerce and Agriculture to implement some scheme of assistance to the dried fruits industry, particularly by way of some sort of price stabilization. The viticultural industry should also be assisted by the opening up of overseas markets for its products.

Paragraph 6 of His Excellency's speech contains the following statement:—

Practically all the settlers under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme are meeting their liabilities to the Government and are in a sound financial position.

Why are not all these settlers meeting their liabilities?

Mr. Macgillivray—In many cases their liabilities are not yet fixed.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, and I assume that in those cases where they have been fixed those who are not meeting them are

those engaged in the dried fruits and viticultural industries, and that they will be unable to meet those liabilities until something is done to improve their marketing and other conditions.

As usual, those features of our State's economy which have afforded great and lasting benefits to the people of this State and for which this Government has been responsible are not the result of what is usually claimed to be Liberal policy. As I understand it, Liberal policy is that of free enterprise or private enterprise with no Government interference, in other words a completely anti-socialistic policy, whereas Labor members have the term "socialistic" applied to them. Most of the beneficial features to which I refer are essentially socialistic works. I refer particularly to the Advisory Committee on Agricultural Extension Services for Country Women, which will consider ways and means for the instruction of country women in the application of scientific knowledge to agriculture and everyday life. An excellent service has been rendered by the Department of Agriculture through its advisory bodies. Of course, I realize that the country women's advisory organization may be a means whereby ladies with slight leanings toward Liberalism may discuss candidates for the coming elections.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—Politics are barred at meetings of such bodies.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, but it is hard to prevent discussions after the meetings. I am, however, willing to take that risk because I believe that this organization will be as beneficial as the Rural Youth scheme. Such schemes increase the interest of the people in agriculture and help to make people land-minded; but what is the use of making them land-minded and continuing to keep them land-minded unless they are provided with the opportunity to have access to and produce from the land? That is where the Government has failed lamentably and that is why I will not hesitate to condemn it on every occasion, because, although I am not unhappy about the continued industrialization of South Australia, I believe that we have gone too far in that direction and that the only way we can get people to return to the land industries is to give them opportunities for settlement under such conditions that will give their families a secure and decent living.

Sawmills are an important adjunct to the socialistic afforestation programme of this State, and we are told that a new sawmill is

being established at Mount Gambier and that great progress is being made there. That is all to the good; indeed, it is a great pity that that sawmill was not established some time ago because there is in the forest areas adjacent to the proposed new mill a large acreage of pines which reached maturity and which should have been milled about 10 years ago. I am not suggesting that they would deteriorate to any extent as a result of not being milled at that time, but if the Government had shown sufficient foresight to put in a mill then we could have milled sufficient timber to enormously speed up the housing programme.

Mr. Jennings—And Housing Trust tenants would not be paying £3 5s. a week for imported timber homes.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—That is so. I have seen houses built by the Forestry Department in the South-East from locally grown and milled timber which were superior to imported houses that were subsidized by the Commonwealth Government, but on which the trust has to charge exorbitant rents. If a sawmill had been established in the South-East five or six years ago many people would not now be in the unfortunate plight in which they find themselves. Mr. Lawn, and other members on the Opposition side, have stated that many people are homeless or about to become homeless, with no prospect of securing accommodation. In association with the sawmill being erected it is proposed to treat *pinus radiata* for use as railway sleepers. Many years ago the Railways Department conducted experiments on the Gladstone-Wilmington line with pine sleepers treated in various ways. In 1925 the Railways Standing Committee inspected those sleepers near the Melrose railway station and found that, according to the type of treatment, greater or less success had been achieved. Untreated timber was practically useless because it sweated. Sleepers treated with various types of chemicals were not very successful, but those that were treated with creosote were reasonably successful. I do not know what method will be applied in the South-East, but the limited success that was achieved at Melrose about 30 years ago should encourage the Forestry and Railways Departments to persevere in their efforts to evolve a satisfactory system of treatment. The cost of imported sleepers is enormous, both in construction and maintenance.

The uranium mining and treatment plant in my electorate is another socialistic venture, and although I give the Premier full marks for his enthusiasm in being one of the first to pioneer

the exploration of uranium fields, I give particular credit to the officers of the Mines Department. They are mostly young men whose energy and ability in evolving efficient mining and treatment methods have earned the praise of every authority inspecting Radium Hill. This shows that State schemes can succeed, and they must succeed.

In opening Parliament His Excellency stated that the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline had proved its value. It has, but unfortunately it is also a costly asset. I understand that the cost of power alone for pumping water over the hills to Adelaide is about £1,000 a day. I do not say that in a critical way, for I see no alternative method.

Mr. Macgillivray—You could have taken the people to the water, which would be a lot cheaper.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Unfortunately, that does not form any part of the plans of the present Government, but there would be a possibility of doing that if a Labor Government were in power, and also of developing the Moorlands Coalfield, which was mentioned by the Premier on a number of occasions until the representation of the district changed its political colour.

Mr. John Clark—The Moorlands coalfield was mentioned in the Governor's speech two or three times.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, and it was also mentioned several times in policy speeches by the Premier. The Labor Party would use that coal for supplying power to Murray Bridge, Tailem Bend, Mannum and other river centres, but such a supply will have to await the introduction of democratic elections. According to His Excellency's speech, £6,000,000 will be available for road works. That is a lot of money by any standard, but we are not getting results. I am not now reflecting on the Highways Department or councils, for I believe they do the best they can with the money available. One difficulty is that the problem of road construction is changing yearly with the advent of heavier commercial vehicles and fast-moving private cars. The day of the floating surface has gone, for as soon as employees cover the road with rubble fast motor cars throw it into the air and the wind takes it to the side of the road. Recently I saw a piece of floating surface in my electorate which was put down by the council under the supervision of an inspector of the Highways Department. It looked an excellent road, but today it does not exist. Heavy Easter traffic weakened it before it consolidated, and the dry period did the rest. The

material put on that road is now on adjacent paddocks.

The Highways Department should examine the possibility of constructing a little less perfect road. I suppose the department reasons that if it puts down an unorthodox road and it proves a failure it will get the blame, but it should not. The Minister should ask the department to experiment and not wait until the road has become consolidated. I know one road that was almost ready for sealing three years ago, but it had to be reconstructed twice before it could be sealed. I am prepared to take my share of responsibility if any experiments fail, but I do not think they would fail. When I was overseas two years ago I saw many macadam roads in the old world and in America that were tidied up and sealed with a light dressing of bitumen, and they were standing up to traffic well. The same could be done here.

In northern areas particularly, we have many large towns which are the centres of business for a community spread over a considerable area. The people around Crystal Brook, Gladstone, Jamestown, Peterborough, and Orroroo often go into those towns on business. It will be many years before extensive road reconstruction takes place in those districts, but the roads leading from those towns should be bituminized for some distance so that country people would be able to travel over good roads for at least some distance. The question of a steel works for South Australia was first raised by the Opposition on November 2, 1953. Early this year, after a meeting of the Parliamentary Labor Party, I wrote to the Premier as follows:—

I desire to submit for your consideration the following resolutions which were carried unanimously at a meeting of the Parliamentary Labor Party held on Thursday, 10th inst.:—

“That the Parliamentary Labor Party views with grave concern the apparent failure of negotiations between the Government and the B.H.P. on the question of the establishment of a steelworks at Whyalla and, in view of the resolution carried unanimously in the House of Assembly on November 4, 1953, ‘that this House believes in the desirability of establishing a steelworks in the vicinity of Whyalla’, urges upon the Premier the calling of a Special Session of Parliament to—

- (1) hear a full report on negotiations and the reasons for their failure, particularly in view of the reports given to Parliament;
- (2) consider the consequences to this State of continued exportation of iron ore in increasing quantities for another ten years without the establishment of any compensating industry in South Australia;

- (3) discuss an approach for capital outside the B.H.P. Co. for the establishment of a steel industry and necessary measures to be taken to secure delivery of iron ore for such an industry;
- (4) pass legislation to secure for the State any deposits of iron ore which may be found outside existing leases;
- (5) consider existing leases in view of the failure of the B.H.P. to honour the spirit of the 1937 agreement.”

2. “The Parliamentary Labor Party draws attention to the serious worsening of the housing position, imposing great hardship on many people, and urges this as a further reason for calling a special session of Parliament to discuss appropriate measures to rectify the position.”

My party is strongly of the opinion that these matters are of sufficient importance to warrant an early special session of Parliament and trusts your Government will accede to its request.

I received the following acknowledgment from the Premier:—

I desire to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th instant setting out resolutions carried at a meeting of the Parliamentary Labor Party held on the 10th instant and in which you ask for a special session of Parliament. I will write you again upon this matter in due course.

I have not heard anything further from the Premier but he will probably say that this is the special session of Parliament. If it is, I would like to hear in the near future something more specific about the action the Government proposes taking in this regard. Paragraph 24 of His Excellency's speech stated:—

The deposits of iron ore in the Middle-back Ranges are the State's most valuable mineral asset and it is one of the Government's paramount interests to secure the establishment of a steel industry on Spencer Gulf in the vicinity of these deposits. The Broken Hill Proprietary Company, however, does not see its way clear to undertake such a project. Its reply to the resolution passed in Parliament and to the Government's repeated requests to complete the Whyalla development programme as outlined by the company in 1937 is not acceptable to my Ministers. They have no intention of asking Parliament to repudiate the company's indenture; but on the other hand, they are not prepared to acquiesce in the present unsatisfactory position. An investigation is in progress to ascertain whether sufficient high-grade ore exists outside the company's leases to enable a steel industry to be established in South Australia. If the results of this investigation should prove unfavourable, my Government will appoint an expert committee to advise what measures can be taken to ensure that South Australia shall derive adequate benefit from its iron ore deposits.

Mr. Lawn—What does that paragraph mean?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—That is what I am trying to find out. It is carefully worded but if

one could take the literal meaning of it and know that it was to be effectively implemented one could be happy about it. However, in view of what has happened in the past I have some doubts how far the Government is prepared to go. Immediately after His Excellency's speech last Thursday the *News* came out with the headline, "B.H.P. Slated on Whyalla." The article beneath it commenced:—

Reply by Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. to the Government's requests to complete the Whyalla development programme, as outlined by the company in 1937, was not acceptable, Sir Mellis said.

I know that that was said in paragraph 24 of His Excellency's Speech, but it is not the first time it has been said and I am afraid it will not be the last. The impression that could easily be conveyed by the *News* article is that some substantial action is to be taken immediately by the Government. There is a long history associated with this subject. I wish to make it quite clear from the outset that I am not attacking the B.H.P. Co. I believe it has been a great Australian industrial enterprise. It has developed the iron and steel industry without bounty or tariff protection. In other words, it has done a good job of work for Australia as a whole, but when we realize that it has derived its success from the iron ore deposits of South Australia and has failed to use any substantial quantity of those deposits in and for the benefit of South Australia, then it has not done much of a job for this State. That is where I quarrel with the B.H.P. on this issue.

This matter became pertinent in the 1930's before I was a member of the State Parliament, and consequently I have not a personal knowledge of what transpired then. I do know that in 1937 what has become known as the B.H.P. Indenture Bill was introduced to this House, that a Select Committee was appointed to examine it and that the committee comprised Mr. (now Sir Richard) Butler; Mr. (now Mr. Justice) Abbott; the present Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Christian; Mr. Richards, a former Leader of the Opposition; and Mr. Lacey, the then Leader of the Opposition, unfortunately since deceased. I read the debates which followed the report of that committee and discovered that Messrs. Christian, Richards and Lacey took a viewpoint different from that taken by Messrs. Butler and Abbott. The first group was concerned, as far as I can gather, with two main issues; firstly, the very long term for which it was proposed to extend the leases and, secondly, the fact that there was to be no

right to increase the royalty during the term of those leases. They were the two main objections of the gentleman concerned and they were in the majority. However, the question was debated in Parliament and through the whole debate it is apparent that no one had any doubt that the company would establish a steel works at Whyalla in the then comparatively near future. According to the statements made in the House, the company's representatives expressed the view that they did not want to be tied to any particular date because that date might coincide with a depression when it would be extremely difficult to raise the necessary capital. There was never any doubt in the minds of any of the members of the committee who heard the witnesses on behalf of the company that it was the company's intention to establish a steelworks. In fact Mr. Butler made it very plain in his remarks. According to *Hansard*, on November 16, 1937, he said:—

All the negotiations that took place were definitely along the line that steel works would ultimately be established.

That statement was apparently accepted by the House at the time and the B.H.P. Indenture Bill was carried by a large majority. I think only three members voted against it and I do not know whether they voted against the whole Bill or only certain provisions in it. It was virtually an unanimous decision. Time passed, but nothing eventuated and nothing substantial has happened since. There was a provision in that Bill that when the company was prepared to establish a steelworks the State Government would, on request, provide an adequate water supply. The Government of the day was so sure that the company was going to establish a steelworks at Whyalla that it did not wait for the company to give notice in the usual way. The question of a pipeline to Whyalla was referred to the Public Works Committee and reported upon favourably and the Government began the construction of the line. The water has been into Whyalla for about 11 or 12 years but the steelworks is not yet there. I suggest that the fact that the Government of the day went ahead with the pipeline indicates still further that there was at least a firm gentleman's agreement between the company and the Government that a steel works would be established.

The *Advertiser* report of the Premier's 1953 policy speech contains the following:—

Discussing the possibility of a steel industry at Whyalla, the Premier said that with increasing population and consumption, it was predicted that Australian steel requirements in 1960 would be about 5,000,000 tons. In

addition to its importance to the defence of Australia a steel plant with a capacity of 1,000,000 tons at Whyalla promised attractive economic advantages to South Australia and the Commonwealth. With the object of furthering this project, investigations had been undertaken to discover additional ore reserves. These investigations had revealed distinct possibilities of new discoveries of high grade ore. Already an immense tonnage of lower grade iron ore containing 25 to 40 per cent iron had been revealed by drilling. This material could be looked upon as a future source of iron.

That statement was made in February, 1953, but since then the Government has taken no positive action to see that the gentleman's agreement to establish a steelworks at Whyalla was honoured. Further references to this matter were made in His Excellency's Speeches when opening Parliament in 1953 and 1954. In 1953 he said:—

The Government is giving special attention to our iron ore resources with the object of ensuring that these ores are used in the best interests of the State. It is the policy of the Government to encourage increased production of iron and the establishment of a steel-making plant at Whyalla.

In 1954 he said:—

Iron ore discussions are taking place with the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd. regarding the establishment of a steel industry at Whyalla.

In 1953 exploratory investigations were being made, but the question has not yet been resolved. It must be resolved soon. Paragraph 24 of His Excellency's speech at the opening of Parliament this year states:—

They (the Government) have no intention of asking Parliament to repudiate the company's indenture.

Why was that statement made? Was it with a view to inducing me to say that I would favour the repudiation of the company's indenture? I do not stand for that sort of thing, nor does any other member on this side, but we believe that when people accept an implied obligation, as the B.H.P. did in this case, it is their duty to honour it, particularly when they are dealing with a great national resource that is a particular benefit to the people of this and other States. I do not suggest for one moment that we should act unfairly towards the B.H.P., but a firm proposal should be put to them and they should be asked whether they are willing to provide sufficient ore to enable a steelworks to be established at Whyalla as early as possible. Of course, if they are in a position to establish their own steelworks, I would be happy to see that.

The Government should also seek agreement on the development of the large area which, according to the Mines Department estimate, contains about 5,000,000,000 tons of low grade ore, and efforts should be made to see whether it is possible, before the deposits now under the control of the B.H.P. are exhausted, to ensure the development of an iron and steel industry in South Australia by the blending of the ores. That question should be determined here and now. I am not happy about the suggestion that we should wait a few more months or perhaps years while further boreholes are sunk, because during that time the most valuable deposits may become exhausted and then we would be hawking around the world the idea of the establishment of a steelworks backed by the 5,000,000,000 tons of low grade ore. I am willing to give the Government a reasonable time, but something definite must be done this session to resolve this most important question once and for all.

Mr. BROOKMAN (Alexandra)—On the opening day this House passed a motion regretting the death of one of our late members, Mr. Steve Dunks, and sympathetic reference was also made to the death of the Hon. Reginald Rudall, Attorney-General and member of another place. Because the motion was carried unanimously I will go no further than to mention my own whole-hearted support of it. We have indeed suffered a severe loss in the deaths of those two gentlemen.

Yesterday the motion for the Address in Reply was moved by the newly-elected member for Mitcham, and his was one of the most able maiden speeches I have heard since I have been a member. I congratulate him on the pleasing way in which he moved the motion, and I believe that he approaches the life politic with extreme sincerity, that he is deeply interested in it, and that he will undoubtedly succeed. From my observation I would say that the most successful members are those who are willing to work the hardest, and I believe the honourable member will be one of those who will work very hard and that he will be a great acquisition to this House.

Despite the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition about the speech by the member for Rocky River, I consider that Mr. Heaslip made a sound speech. He sounded a cautionary note about the future of the economy of the State, and his was a worthy contribution. He spoke about the rising costs in primary production, saying that they must be watched, but for some unknown reason Mr. O'Halloran

apparently did not understand his remarks, because he appeared to confuse them with home market conditions, whereas Mr. Heaslip showed that he recognized that our welfare depends to a large extent on overseas markets, particularly in the United Kingdom. Further, Mr. Heaslip showed concern that those markets were less certain at present than they were a year ago. With those sentiments I agree entirely, for none of our primary products is selling with the certainty that present conditions will continue. Certainly, the price of wool has been maintained at a relatively high level, but the demand has weakened a little over the last few years. Indeed, the average price of wool at the recent sales was not much higher than the cost of production. The sheep population of South Australia is high, mainly because additional areas in the high rainfall areas are being developed to absorb a large number. Those numbers have increased mainly because the southern district, including the South-East and central areas, have taken larger numbers, whereas the pastoral areas have not increased their holdings greatly.

According to figures published by the Government Statist, the number of sheep in the northern, western, lower north and upper north pastoral areas has increased since 1944 by only 345,000, whereas the number in the central, Murray mallee and the south-eastern districts has increased by 1,116,000—about three times the increase in the pastoral areas. That is interesting because it means that more wool is now being produced in country that is more expensive than the pastoral areas to buy, develop and maintain. The land in the central and southern districts must be given superphosphate, whereas that in the pastoral districts need not be treated in that way. Further, that land must be developed to a great extent by the use of heavy machinery, which increases the cost of production of wool to a relatively higher figure than previously obtained. Pastoral areas can produce wool much more cheaply than the central and southern districts. This trend is frequently overlooked: the areas that are producing more wool at present are more expensive to farm.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins—And more subject to disease.

Mr. BROOKMAN—That is so. Diseases in sheep are few in the pastoral areas; apart from the blowfly the main trouble is the drought itself, but in the southern districts there are many diseases which either have to be treated or prevented at very high expense. I do not agree with the references of the

Leader of the Opposition to our water supplies. He made a long speech today, and it is of interest to remember that a few years ago not one member of the Opposition spoke on the Address in Reply. I forget why, but I think they considered that some emergency needed their silence, and I think perhaps it was a good way of treating the emergency. On this occasion however, the Leader of the Opposition spoke at length and criticized His Excellency's speech trenchantly. I thought, however, that his criticisms were, in the main, trivial and his criticism of our water supplies particularly so. He seemed to take Governors' speeches over the last two or three years as a book of statistics and to follow those figures instead of looking up detailed statistics, and he treated them as though they were the last word and then proceeded to show how bad they were. He said that the Uley-Wanilla water scheme was one of the few things in which progress had been made, but very noticeably he made no reference whatever to the completion of the Mannum-Adelaide main. Admittedly, he brought it in later but, with a satisfied look on his face, said it was very expensive. We know it was expensive, but I consider it to be one of the finest feats of engineering that South Australia has ever achieved. The Morgan-Whyalla main was a very fine piece of work, but the Adelaide-Mannum main was even greater in some respects; in any case it was done very quickly and efficiently and I have heard of no criticism of the way in which it was carried out. We know that the maintenance of this supply, too, will be expensive for the obvious reason that the water has to be pumped over a range of hills before reaching the point of consumption, but it will undoubtedly save Adelaide from severe emergencies for some time to come. One would not like to forecast how long that situation will last, for the only people able to make any forecast based on reliable information are those who have studied both the engineering and statistical problems associated with the matter. However, we know that it has made this State much safer industrially than it could ever have been without it.

In addition, I am glad to see, the Government is pressing on with the provision of water by other schemes. Realizing that pumped water is so expensive the Government places greater importance still on the supply of water by gravity, and the South Para reservoir, which some of us saw a few months ago, is approaching completion. In my own district a project is under discussion which I

hope will be approved. The proposed Myponga reservoir will be approximately the size of Mount Bold reservoir, and will have a safe annual draw-off of about 2,900 million gallons, greater, I think, than even South Para. This water will gravitate to Adelaide and consequently will be considerably cheaper than water that has to be pumped. A large part of my district will be served by it, and I point out that although this district is not considered to be a dry one it has two features: the eastern side, which is in the Adelaide hills, is well served by rainfall, but a strip along the coast which, although not badly served by rainfall, is difficult country for the collection and storage of water and has poor underground supplies. The areas along the beaches have suffered particularly in the last few seasons, due, not only to the shortage of water, but poor pressure because some of them are served by a main which long ago became inadequate to supply water from Mount Bold.

The provision of water is by no means the sole responsibility of the Government and I consider that a tremendous quantity will be conserved in the farming areas by people who wish to put in their own irrigation schemes. They will probably do it much cheaper than by getting water through Government schemes. Last year I visited the McGarvie Smith Animal Husbandry Farm at Badgery's Creek, directed by Mr. H. J. Geddes, who is the pioneer in Australia of water conservation in shallow dams. In New South Wales this practice has been gone into very thoroughly, but it has not yet been adopted here to any extent. Badgery's Creek has a rainfall of about 26in., which is not bad in total, but the incidence of it is most uneven and unreliable, and it is utterly impossible to depend on it for anything but stock water. I went to the farm in July last year and the surrounding country could literally have been burnt out, as it was covered with dry *paspalum*, and no rain had fallen since the previous February. There was a nice green paddock where the irrigation was taking place due to the ability of this man to store water in shallow dams. He does not dig a big waterhole. By taking out, say, a cubic yard of clay he would probably be able to store only a cubic yard of water. He said the important thing about water storage is the ratio of water stored to soil excavated and he considered that the best possible was a ratio of six to one. By putting a shallow dam on

a relatively level valley floor he is able to collect a large area of water.

Mr. Pearson—What would be the evaporation?

Mr. BROOKMAN—That is the biggest drawback to the system. For instance, it would be very cheap to make a dam only one foot deep covering a large area, but it would not be much good if there was a loss of perhaps 2ft. by evaporation in the summer.

Mr. Macgillivray—In some parts of South Australia evaporation could be easily 6ft.

Mr. BROOKMAN—But in this area I should say it would not be more than 3ft., and not all the evaporation takes place in the summer. In addition, there is a certain amount of summer rainfall which falls on the surface of the dam itself, which is an offset to the evaporation.

Mr. Macgillivray—Nevertheless the evaporation is very high.

Mr. BROOKMAN—I think you would have to give away the first two feet on the average dam. This man has a series of dams in one valley with a total storage of nearly 24 million gallons. If he does not have enough water in one valley to fill all these dams he carries a contour drain from a neighbouring valley for perhaps a mile or so. In addition, upon Badgery's Creek itself, which is a swift flowing stream after a heavy rain but ceases to flow in a few days, he has what is known as a turkey-nest dam, which is a shallow ring of soil providing a catchment to a depth of about 6ft. above the original level of the ground, except around the edges where it is deeper because he uses that soil for building the dam. When the creek is running he puts in several tractors with big pumps and pumps this dam full very quickly. Of course that involves double pumping, but he points out that big pumps have recently been devised so that the average farm tractor can probably deliver anything up to 8,000gall. a minute, which is cheap pumping by any standards. Therefore I believe that in certain areas in South Australia excluding the South-East, which has very good underground supplies close to the surface, there will be considerable development in irrigation in the next two years, apart, of course, from irrigation along the River Murray and the lakes.

I listened carefully to the Leader of the Opposition when he referred to steelworks for South Australia, but I do not share his, perhaps I might say, reckless desire for action. We should not be in a hurry to do anything about establishing a steelworks. We should not urge the Government to do anything more quickly than is being done now. I am not

sure whether the Leader of the Opposition hinted that the Government should establish a steelworks.

Mr. Davis—What is wrong with that?

Mr. BROOKMAN—It would be a great mistake, because I do not think a Government steelworks would be sound economically. Very few Government works compare favourably with private enterprise. I am very pleased that the Government intends extending library services throughout South Australia. Paragraph 34 of His Excellency's speech states:—

The Government has given consideration to the extension of library services throughout the State. A Bill is being prepared which will enable subsidies to be paid to local governing authorities which are prepared to establish and maintain public libraries.

South Australia has developed its public library service considerably and, in addition, the schools have their own services and they have been considerably extended in the last few years. I think Mr. Millhouse, in moving the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, said he believed in taking books to the people rather than in asking them to find books in the central library. I thoroughly agree with him. The country lending service is a good one for those people who are interested in books and wish to get information, but one cannot say it meets the needs of people who hardly recognize that they have any need.

If libraries are extended throughout the State and books are put in front of people I am sure it will encourage more reading. Not

everyone acknowledges that he gets value from books. I believe that in London no-one is more than about half a mile from a library. In New South Wales the free library service has been expanded considerably in the last few years in much the same way as is envisaged in the proposed legislation. Victoria has had a similar library system for some years, and the demand for books is snow-balling. At first councils were a little tardy to foster the scheme, but the demand for books is now increasing each year. I think that Tasmania also has a free library service and that Sir John Morris was one of the pioneers of the movement. In New South Wales two or three men worked hard to develop the free library service. I think Mr. Remington and the librarian of the New South Wales library were two that sponsored the service there. For some years South Australia has been lagging in this field in not decentralizing its library facilities to any extent. Last night I read some of the speeches I made in 1949. In that year I asked the Government to consider establishing a free library system; consequently, I am gratified to see that something will be done. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

Mr. JOHN CLARK secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.38 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, May 31, at 2 p.m.