

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, June 9, 1955.

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

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The SPEAKER—I have to inform the House that His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor will be pleased to receive members for the presentation of the Address in Reply at 2.15 p.m. today.

At 2.5 p.m. the Speaker and members proceeded to Government House. They returned at 2.24 p.m.

The SPEAKER—I have to inform the House that, accompanied by the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply to His Excellency's speech and by other members of the House, I proceeded to Government House and there presented to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor the Address adopted by the House on June 8, to which His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply:—

I thank you for your Address in Reply to the speech with which I opened Parliament on May 19, 1955. I feel confident that you will give full and careful attention to all matters placed before you, and I pray that God's blessing may crown your labours.

QUESTIONS.**INTERSTATE ROAD HAULIERS.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Following on the decision of the Privy Council in the Hughes and Vale case last year all States, including South Australia, endeavoured to provide that interstate road hauliers would make some reasonable contribution towards the maintenance of the roads. I have been unofficially informed that this morning in Melbourne the High Court decided that the steps taken in all the mainland States were *ultra vires* of the Federal Constitution. Has the Premier been informed of the decision of the High Court? If so, has he had time to consider it, and is it possible in some other way to see that these people make the same contribution towards the maintenance of roads in South Australia as our own road hauliers, whose vehicles are registered here, have to make?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have not received an official communication on the decision, consequently I have not seen any of the reasons, nor have I been able to study the judgment or obtain any advice on it. I have no doubt, however, that the unofficial news that the Leader disclosed is correct. Indeed, I was

informed during the hearing of the case that it appeared extremely unlikely that the States would win the case. South Australia's case was heard last of all, and although our legislation is not the same as that of other States, it was clear to those presenting the case on our behalf that at least three of the judges had made up their minds prior to the arguments being submitted to them. That, of course, is only hearsay. The judgment presents a most difficult problem because the South Australian law that has been upset provided for registration of motor vehicles using our roads and that the whole of the proceeds from such registration should be spent on upkeep of roads. The amount of tax was precisely the same as was being paid by South Australian citizens themselves for those services. There was no discrimination whatever nor could the law be held to be against interstate trade, because everyone who owned a motor vehicle in South Australia was subject to the same law as interstate carriers. It seems to me that in view of the judgment any law imposing any charge whatever upon interstate trade can be upset. For instance, harbour fees could be attacked on precisely the same grounds. They are levied for the upkeep of harbours and in respect of ships engaged in interstate trade there is no logical difference between harbour fees and road registration fees. Members can see that this judgment of the High Court is one which will have a profound repercussion upon all legislation that we have passed; indeed, it is a judgment that will require close examination. This South Australian law that has been disallowed did not discriminate against interstate trade, but provided for certain charges to be made on registered vehicles for the upkeep of our roads, and no interstate trade by motor vehicles can be possible unless someone provides something to maintain the roads. We are now placed in the anomalous position that South Australians must be called upon to maintain roads for people, who are not residents of this State, to use free of charge. I will closely examine the judgment and reply to the Leader's question in more detail after I have seen the grounds for the decision and whether it was a unanimous one. Although I am not a lawyer, I regard the decision as being most extraordinary.

SALISBURY SCHOOLS.

Mr. GOLDNEY—I am concerned about education facilities in the Salisbury area, including the area known as Salisbury North

and the new satellite town where a rapid building programme is in progress and where schools will soon be needed. What provision is the department making for both primary and secondary education in this area?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The honourable member wrote to me and asked some questions in the House last year about the proposed high school for Salisbury, and I informed him that the Government had purchased about 20 acres of land for the proposed school. At the time the land was acquired the department did not know that work on the satellite town two miles north of Salisbury would begin as early as it has. An investigation is now being made into the expected secondary school enrolments from the Salisbury and Salisbury North areas with a view to ascertaining whether a separate high school at Salisbury is required by the beginning of the 1957 school year, but for the present and for 1956 it is considered there will be adequate accommodation for secondary students from those areas at the Enfield high school. I regard the second part of the honourable member's question, which relates to primary and secondary education in the satellite town, as the more urgent, and after a conference between Housing Trust and Education Department officers it was decided that far more primary and secondary education facilities would be necessary than were formerly expected. It has now been decided that the Education Department will require sites for at least seven primary schools, a high school, a boys technical school, a girls technical school and a trades school in the satellite town. An agreement has been reached with the Housing Trust on the location of those sites and negotiations have been concluded with the trust for the purchase of the sites, totalling 132 acres. Cabinet has approved of the purchase of that land for these purposes.

EMPLOYMENT AT WALLAROO.

Mr. McALEES—I understand that bulk handling facilities may be installed at Wallaroo in the near future. Certain constructional work, such as iron frames, will have to be carried out in connection with the scheme. Will the Premier see whether, instead of this work being carried out at Islington or some other centre such as Port Pirie, it could be carried out at Wallaroo in order to help relieve unemployment there?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will have the suggestion examined, but I point out that the contracting authority in this matter will be not

the Government but the bulk handling company. Consequently, I cannot commit the company, whose directors are not yet appointed. I can inform the honourable member, however, that Cabinet has accepted an offer from the firm of Cheesman & Co. to take over and establish a modern engineering plant in a large building at Wallaroo, and that firm can now go ahead with its plans for development there. I believe those plans envisage not only the servicing of shipping, but also other constructional and contract work.

SUPPLIERS OF LIQUOR TO ABORIGINES.

Mr. TRAVERS—On May 31, the Premier gave certain information in reply to a question by Mr. Macgillivray concerning the number of people convicted under section 172 of the Licensing Act in respect of supplying liquor to aborigines and half-castes. That section, which is very wide in its operation, includes people holding any of the 11 kinds of licence included in the Act and also applies to sly grog sellers. Can the Premier say whether any of the convicted persons were holders of licences under the Act?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No licensed persons were involved in the charges referred to by me in reply to Mr. Macgillivray's question.

TRAMWAYS TRUST SALARIES.

Mr. LAWN—I understand that, arising from the recent marginal increases, the salaries of the General Manager, Commercial Officer, and Industrial Officer of the Tramways Trust were increased by £700, £400 and £300 respectively. Can the Treasurer say whether this statement is correct; if not, what are the correct amounts; what are the total salaries of those officers; and from what date do the increases operate?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will obtain the information.

MURRAY BRIDGE PUBLIC OFFICES.

Mr. WHITE—Last December tenders were called for the erection of a building at Murray Bridge to incorporate accommodation for officers of the courthouse and the Departments of Agriculture and Lands and Irrigation. It has since been found necessary to refer this project to the Public Works Committee. Can the Minister of Works say whether the committee has the matter in hand?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The estimated cost of the building originally proposed was considerably below £30,000, the limit prescribed in the Public Works Standing Committee Act, but by the time tenders had been called the several departments had asked for increased accommodation, the cost of which brought the amount above the maximum allowable under the Act and consequently the matter had to be referred to the committee. Part of the land was contributed by the council, and although one does not like to look a gift horse in the mouth, considerable cost is involved in foundations because of the irregularity of the site. The plans are all in readiness and I would expect that the committee would be able to give an early report. When it is received by the Government it will be given prompt attention.

LAND AGENTS ACT.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Recently a New Australian interviewed me stating that he had purchased a house in my electorate at a four-figure price, whereas it had been bought by the vendor not long before for approximately £500. I took up the matter with the Attorney-General's department with a view to having investigations made by the Land Agents Board because I considered there had been some sharp practice. The New Australian paid £200 deposit and spent other money in trying to make the place—which, incidentally, is over 100 years old—habitable. He was subsequently informed by the local government authority that the place was not fit for habitation. Would it be possible to amend the Land Agents Act to provide that, prior to his offering it for sale, a vendor shall ascertain through the council concerned whether it considers the house fit for habitation?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—It would be possible. Whether it is necessary or desirable is another matter. I shall be only too pleased to take the matter up with my colleague, who is at present considering amendments to the Act.

HIRE PURCHASE.

Mr. QUIRKE—The *Monthly Review of Business Statistics* issued by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, in relation to hire purchase, gives the following information: The total balances outstanding in Australia, including hire charges and insurances from March, 1954, to December, 1954, rose in that period of nine months from £118,675,000 to £160,434,000, an increase of

£41,759,000. Figures for the actual amount represented by hiring charges and insurances are not yet available, but the average proportion of each agreement provided by finance companies is 63 per cent, exclusive of hiring charges and insurance, and so the return to these companies must be very great indeed, as the service is not cheap. Under hire purchase agreements the purchaser meets two profits—really four. They are in two groups—one to the manufacturers, the wholesalers and retailers and another to the finance company. It must be recognized that these huge amounts are mortgages on goods that have been produced and current. Future production relies on the same sources for survival, giving a return to those who reap but do not sow out of proportion to the whole, thus constituting a heavy burden on the consumer. Does the Government consider that any legislative action can be taken to curb the profits taken by finance companies, as apparently there is no other medium for making finance available to the people who keep the wheels of industry turning?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If the honourable member suggested a type of law I could tell him whether it was practicable or not; but whether it is possible to devise a law which is practicable is a much more difficult question. No doubt this matter will receive consideration when the Loan Council meets the week after next. Whether out of the joint wisdom of the Treasurers of the various States a practicable solution can be arrived at I cannot say. If the honourable member asks me another question after the Loan Council meeting I shall then be able to disclose the nature of the discussions.

STRATHALBYN RESERVOIR.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—Has the Minister of Works a reply to my recent question concerning the raising of the banks of the Strathalbyn reservoir?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Following upon representations made by the honourable member and from my own observations it seems desirable and possible to raise the spillway and enlarge the capacity of the reservoir. Plans have been taken out towards that end. The work involved will run into above £30,000 and therefore must be referred to the Public Works Committee. On the other hand, having regard to the final development which has taken place in the district, the Government regards this as a work of some priority, and plans and specifications will be submitted to Cabinet at an early

date and in due course to the Public Works Committee for consideration. The plans are well advanced. It is realized that great advantages will accrue from increasing the capacity of the reservoir.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Resulting from legislation passed last session a commission was appointed to investigate and report upon electoral boundaries. As this matter is of major importance to the political Parties and many individuals, can the Premier say when the findings of the commission will be presented to the House?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No. I noticed that about a fortnight ago the commission invited interested parties to make submissions, but I am not able to say what stage the commission's deliberations have reached. A commissioner was appointed for the Port Augusta circuit to relieve Sir Geoffrey Reed, the chairman of the commission, and as far as I know there is nothing to unduly hold up inquiries.

DRIED FRUITS INDUSTRY.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Has the Premier seen the statement in today's *Advertiser* dealing with the dried fruits industry in which Senator George McLeay, Minister for Shipping and Transport, said that the dried fruits industry could not expect a subsidy? Seeing that the Commonwealth Government subsidizes other activities, including gold mining companies which pay fairly substantial dividends, and which, I understand, are free of income tax, will the Premier take up the matter with the Prime Minister and ascertain what is behind a policy that allows the Commonwealth Government to subsidize the bodies I have mentioned but refuse aid to the dried fruits industry? Gold mining in particular is of no direct interest to South Australia, but the State has great commitments in connection with the dried fruits industry.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I cannot logically see any reason why one industry should be singled out for assistance whilst another is not given the same overall consideration. The two industries mentioned are both primary industries and have similar problems. The problems in the dried fruits industry are economic problems of high cost of production in an internally controlled economy which has to export a large surplus to a market that is governed by a world economy, not an internal

economy. It seems to me obvious that as our transport regulations are held to be invalid the marketing regulations would be more susceptible to attack. If the recent interpretation of the High Court is now the law of the land it goes a long way in connection with the internal planning and marketing we have undertaken previously. I cannot see why one primary industry should enjoy a special protection whilst it is denied to another. All secondary industries are run on a common basis and have the right to place their cases for protection before the Tariff Board. If, after hearing those cases, the board considers that assistance is justified, it decides accordingly. I must agree with the honourable member that if protection applies to some primary industries—and I do not criticize it because I think it is the natural corollary to giving protection to secondary industries—it should apply generally.

WILMINGTON SCHOOL.

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—The Minister of Education will recall his visit to Wilmington school some months ago and having his attention drawn to the inadequate playing grounds, and the possibility of purchasing land immediately adjoining the school. Has the matter been further brought under his notice and has he come to a decision?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I recall the visit to the Wilmington school in company with the honourable member and I was made aware of the inadequate playing grounds. I was impressed with the excellent way in which the school and premises were kept, but the ground space was inadequate for organized sport or for future development. It was pointed out to me that property adjoining might be obtained but it was then not for sale. It has now been made available to the department and the Government has authorized me to purchase it.

COCKBURN STREETS.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Minister of Works obtained further information on the question I asked on June 2 regarding the Broken Hill highway through Cockburn being sealed similarly to other towns on the highway?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—From my colleague the Minister of Roads I have received the following report from the Commissioner of Highways:—

As the main part of the township of Cockburn is separated from the through road to Broken Hill by the railway line the dust

nuisance should not be as bad as in other towns along this road. As funds for these works are restricted it was decided that consideration of the sealing of Cockburn streets would be deferred until the other townships had been sealed.

WALKERS FLAT PUNT.

Mr. WHITE—Has the Minister representing the Minister of Local Government ascertained the reason for the hold-up in completing plans for improvements to the approaches to the Walkers Flat punt?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I have obtained the following report:—

When the question of raising the Walkers Flat punt approaches was put to this department, a survey was made and preliminary plans prepared. To extend the period of operation of this ferry in flood time it is necessary to raise the approach, and this must in some measure restrict the flow of water during a flood unless additional flood openings are provided. These preliminary investigations show that the cost of providing a new bank and flood openings would be excessive when compared with the benefit gained by the extended time of operation. From aerial photographs, however, it appears that the upstream inlet to the lagoon may be restricted in such a way that the length of the flood openings could be considerably reduced. In order to decide this an extensive survey upstream of the ferry is necessary. As funds for the actual work are not available at present, this survey has been deferred as staff are fully occupied on undertakings of a more urgent nature. However, investigations will be carried out as soon as staff are available.

CLARE PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Mr. QUIRKE—During the Address in Reply debate I asked whether it was intended to install a septic tank system at the Clare primary school. Has the Minister of Works any information on that subject?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The objective of the Government, and the Education Department in particular, is to give better amenities wherever they can be achieved. Now that Clare has a good water supply it has been decided that provision will be sought on the Loan Estimates for the next financial year to enable this work to be done. When it will be done depends on the amount available, because as the honourable member will agree, it is more essential to have schools, even if they have to put up with some disabilities, than to provide niceties for schools that already have accommodation. The Government's plan envisages that, given a reasonable return to the State by way of Loan funds, the work will be on the coming year's programme.

IMPURE PENICILLIN.

Mr. HUTCHENS—In the *Sunday Mail* of April 23, under the heading, "Defect in S.A. Drug," the following appeared:—

At least two Adelaide people have suffered severe effects after injections of penicillin suspected of being impure. The suspected batch of penicillin is being recalled. Dr. Southwood said that the defect was not serious. The two patients suffering from effects of the injections are a 29-year-old Kilburn woman and a 16-year-old Kilburn youth. Both told a *Sunday Mail* reporter today of days of pain and suffering. They are still recovering from their experience. The woman said: "On Thursday week my doctor gave me an injection of penicillin for influenza, and another injection the following day. I hardly slept that night and in the morning I could hardly move from the waist down."

Can the Premier inform me whether the Public Health Department has made any investigation?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I shall obtain a report for the honourable member.

WINE GRAPE AREAS SURVEY.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—In the current issue of the *South Australian Producer* is a very informative but not altogether comprehensive report of a survey that has taken place in this State covering all wine grape growing areas. Has the Minister of Agriculture seen the report, and if so, can he make it available to members? It would be of particular interest to those who have the responsibility of representing wine grape growing districts.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I received the report, compiled by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, in February last. It was then marked "Confidential," and I have not yet received a release. The letter accompanying the report indicated that the contents should not be disclosed as the bureau wanted to check the information, and I have not yet received the checked report.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Will the Minister inquire how the press can get information which it freely publishes, yet the information is withheld from members of Parliament who have a responsibility concerning it?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I shall be glad to do so. I cannot possibly break a confidence until given a release. If other people have been doing that, I cannot help it, although whether that has been done I do not know. The other organizations provided with copies of the report may have since received a checked report, whereas I have not.

PORT AUGUSTA-WOOMERA ROAD.

Mr. RICHES—Will the Minister of Works inquire from the Minister of Roads about the programme envisaged by the Highways Department and the Federal Government for improvements to the Port Augusta-Woomera Road? For some years representations have been made, particularly from Woomera, that it be made an all-weather road and that a programme of sealing should be embarked upon.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will take up this matter with my colleague and bring down a report as early as possible.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON CONSOLIDATION BILLS.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD moved—

That the House of Assembly request the concurrence of the Legislative Council in the appointment for the present session of a Joint Committee to which all Consolidation Bills shall stand referred, in accordance with Joint Standing Order No. 18, and to which any further question relating thereto may at any time be sent by either House for report.

That, in the event of a Joint Committee being appointed, the House of Assembly be represented thereon by three members, two of whom shall form the quorum of the House of Assembly members necessary to be present at all sittings of the committee.

That a message be sent to the Legislative Council transmitting the foregoing resolutions.

That Messrs. Brookman, O'Halloran and Pearson be representatives of the Assembly on the said committee.

Motion carried.

PARLIAMENTARY DRAFTSMAN.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD moved—

That Standing Order No. 85 be so far suspended for the remainder of the session as to enable the Parliamentary Draftsman and his assistant to be accommodated with seats in the Chamber on the righthand side of the Chair.

Motion carried.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.

His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, by message, recommended the House to make appropriation of the sums set forth in the accompanying Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure by the Government during the year ending June 30, 1955, for the purposes therein stated.

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

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply.

Motion carried.

In Committee of Supply.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—The Supplementary Estimates now before the House provide for expenditure totalling £704,147 on urgent and essential matters: It is necessary to have Parliamentary approval for funds to meet costs incurred in connection with pumping water through the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline for use in the city and metropolitan area, and in the country areas supplied from the Warren Reservoir, and for pumping water from underground supplies in the suburban areas. When I prepared the Budget for this year reservoir storages indicated that only a limited amount of pumping from the Murray would be necessary towards the end of the summer and that pumping from bores would not be necessary at all. However, as members well know, the very dry summer which followed poor late spring reservoir intakes made it necessary for the Government to proceed with all haste to bring the pipeline into use at the earliest possible moment and to pump Murray water into our reservoirs continually during the whole summer.

There is no question at all that the completion of the pipeline not only saved the metropolitan area from most stringent restrictions in the use of water, but in addition made it possible for sheep owners to retain their flocks in country areas supplied from Warren Reservoir. It is only during the last few weeks that pumping has ceased. The increase in pumping costs above the Budget estimate amounts of £212,000, and provision of this additional amount is included in these Estimates.

There are also other urgent payments which it is necessary to effect this financial year. However, because of savings in other directions and buoyancy of revenues generally, the giving of approval to these Estimates will not substantially increase the Budget deficit for 1954-55, which I estimated last October to reach £1,933,600. Members will recall that last year the Government made special grants to assist with the provision of additional accommodation at homes for aged persons. This year it is proposed to assist in similar fashion with the provision of additional hospital accommodation at private hospitals, and an infirmary, operated on a non-profit basis by various religious organizations. In each case the Government will find half the capital cost of any extensions or proposed extensions on the basis of moneys actually expended, or firm commitments made, during the period January

1 to June 30, 1955. As was the case last year the Government will require a certificate from the Auditor-General as to the amount of grant to be made to each hospital, and will moreover require the controlling authorities to submit their plans to the Minister of Health for his approval.

The grants to be made, subject to compliance with the above conditions, are estimated at—Calvary Hospital, £33,000; Memorial Hospital, £30,000; McBride Hospital, £13,000; and Central Mission Old Folks' Home Inc. (Infirmiry), £36,250. The subsidy to Calvary Hospital will be used for extensions to the new nurses' block, provision of additional toilet and bathroom facilities at the old nurses' home, extensions, both in space and equipment, to kitchen accommodation, and provision of six extra beds in the general hospital. The provision of this additional nurses and kitchen accommodation will then permit more beds to be added to the hospital when further finance is available to make the extensions.

The Government subsidy to Memorial Hospital (Methodist) will enable another floor to be built on the maternity section—providing a further 22 maternity beds and bringing the total maternity accommodation to 62. A new lift will be installed and modern nursery accommodation provided. McBride Hospital is a very old building and both the east and west wings are in a bad state. The west wing in particular is in poor condition and it is proposed to demolish this wing and replace it with a two-storey wing consisting of kitchens on the ground floor and wards on the first floor. The east wing, which is badly affected by salt damp, will be restored and converted into a nursery and post-natal section. This work and the furnishing of the new sections will enable accommodation to be increased by eight beds. In the absence of such alterations and restorations accommodation would have to be reduced.

It is also proposed to grant a subsidy of £36,250 to the Central Mission Old Folk's Home Inc. towards the establishment of an old folk's infirmiry. This subsidy will permit the building of a self-contained infirmiry which will provide accommodation for 41 beds for old people who are sick, bedridden, or chronically ill, and in need of nursing care. The infirmiry will include kitchen, bathroom and toilet accommodation, and quarters for the staff. A clinic for the use of doctors, with full hospital equipment, excluding surgery, will also be provided. A special grant of £10,000 is proposed for the Adelaide Children's Hospital towards a new operating theatre.

Present theatre accommodation is inadequate to cope efficiently with the increasing demands of the hospital. Provision is made for a grant of £9,400 to the Children's Hospital towards the purchase of Estcourt House. By arrangement with the James Brown Memorial Trust, Estcourt House will be sold to the Children's Hospital. After alterations are made to provide accommodation for nurses, Estcourt House will be available for reception and treatment of convalescent patients, thus relieving the overcrowded state which exists in the Children's Hospital on frequent occasions.

The sum of £3,850 is provided in the Estimates as a grant to the Ashford Community Hospital towards the purchase of a property to enlarge the hospital. The Government also proposes to make a grant of £15,000 to the South Australian Spastic Welfare Association towards the building of a new wing at the association's home at Woodville. The Government has agreed to assist in the provision of an old folks' home at Port Lincoln and £1,600 is included in these Estimates as a subsidy towards the purchase of land. There are other hospitals which have plans for expansion of accommodation but which are not able to comply with the conditions at this juncture. A separate approach at a later date is expected from them. The amount of £12,500 has been included in the Estimates to enable ambulance services to be expanded into country areas, and £500 is provided as a special grant to the Bush Church Aid Society's Flying Doctor Service which has its headquarters at Ceduna.

The amount of £5,245 is provided as a special payment to His Excellency the Governor, his family and his staff, as a partial recompense for losses of personal effects and clothing in the disastrous bushfire which completely destroyed the Vice-Regal residence at Marble Hill. Similarly, the caretaker suffered very heavily, and as this officer sacrificed the chance of saving his own possessions, the Government has deemed it proper to assist him in the replacement of his losses; £1,150 has been included for this purpose. The sum of £25,652 is provided under "Publicity and Tourist Bureau and Immigration" for the purchase of land at Magill and at Eden Hills for conversion to national pleasure resorts.

Under the heading "Treasurer-Miscellaneous" provision has been made for a further contribution to the Advances for Homes Insurance Fund towards meeting claims for earthquake damage in respect of homes mortgaged to the State Bank under the Advances for Homes Act. When presenting Supplementary Estimates to the House last year I

mentioned that, at that juncture, it was not possible to assess the amount of claims to be met, as at that time many claims had not been lodged and in very few cases had inspections been made by the bank's officers. Damage in these homes has been somewhat the same as the experience of all of the insurance companies, namely, that the overall damage was considerably greater than the first impressions. The Government has provided £70,000 to date, and a further £25,000 is now included in these Estimates. As all the damage to homes has not yet been assessed the ultimate cost cannot be given, but it is now estimated at £184,000. Payments to date total £144,000.

Last year I asked the House to approve a gift of £10,000 to the Government of New South Wales to assist those persons who had suffered hardship in floods in that State. This year's floods were even more disastrous and whole towns were wiped out. I ask the House to approve a similar grant this year. The amount—£10,000—is shown under "Treasurer—Miscellaneous". An amount of £5,000 is included under "Minister of Lands—Miscellaneous" as a special grant to the National Park Commissioners for the erection of a new kiosk and dwelling to replace the kiosk destroyed by fire a few weeks ago. Many thousands of our people enjoy the facilities offered by the National Park all the year round and the kiosk is an essential part of the National Park. The sum of £50,000 is included under "Education Department" for the purchase of twelve new buses, which are required for conveying children to school. The increasing number of children attending school places a strain on transport facilities and, as it is not always possible to obtain additional buses by charter, it is necessary for the department to provide the necessary transport. Buses at present owned and operated by the department number 85, whilst nearly 300 buses are hired daily for conveyance of children.

A further £12,000 is provided under "Minister of Education—Miscellaneous" as a further grant to the School of Mines. This requirement arises in the main from increased salaries which have been granted to the teaching and administrative staff. An additional £67,000 is required to meet salaries and wages in the Agriculture Department. Of this amount, £55,000 will be required to meet the wages of employees engaged in stripping and spraying in areas affected by the outbreak of fruit fly in December, 1954. Fruit fly outbreaks have proved very costly to this State. Since the first appearance in January, 1947, approximately £1,000,000 has been spent in

measures designed to prevent the spread of this pest and if possible to eradicate it. However, there can be no half measures about this campaign. We must not only control the outbreaks as they occur, but must also take all possible steps to prevent further outbreaks. To do this we must have the co-operation of everyone, which, I am grateful to say, we have had. Costly as the measures are, the Government is sure that it is doing the only possible thing. In this it is supported by the best expert advice available.

The sum of £50,000 is included in these Estimates as a grant to the Bushfire Relief Fund. The Bushfire Relief Committee, of which my colleague the Minister of Agriculture is chairman, is in the course of examining applications for relief, and the amount provided, together with £108,000 contributed by the generous citizens of the State, and a further £50,000 contributed by the Commonwealth, will be distributed to those who lost so much of their possessions in the Christmas Bush Fires. The sum of £5,000 is provided as a grant towards the cost of a Chapel at Roseworthy Agricultural College. This chapel will be built as a memorial to students and former students of the college who fell in the two world wars.

Under the heading "Mines Department" £30,000 is included to meet the cost of an aerial magnetometer survey. This survey, which is being undertaken on a charter basis by a private aircraft company, is being conducted for the purpose of logging the State's various mineral deposits. Under this same heading £30,000 is provided for the expense of the Security Section of the Mines Department. This provision is required primarily to enable the Police Department to be recouped the cost of providing security guards at the Mines Department laboratories at Parkside and the pilot plant at Thebarton. An amount of £5,000 is provided under "Minister of Marine—Miscellaneous" as a payment to the Port Adelaide Corporation to assist with the provision of services by the corporation in areas affected by acquisitions of properties by the Government.

The final amount on the Estimates is £6,000, which is provided under "Minister of Railways—Miscellaneous" as a contribution to the cost of that part of the city of Enfield drainage scheme which involves the construction of flood openings and drains on the Main North and Dry Creek loop lines. The Railways Commissioner is carrying out this work for the Enfield Corporation and all costs in excess of

this £6,000 will be met by the corporation. I move the adoption of the first line.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Prices Act, 1948-1954. Read a first time.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. This Bill is in the usual form and extends the operation of the Prices Act for another year. In view of the many and varied opinions which are from time to time expressed as to the desirability of extending this legislation, I propose to state shortly the reasons which have actuated the Government in bringing down this Bill. The most important reason is the necessity for South Australia to keep its costs of production as low as possible. Many South Australian manufacturers have to sell a substantial proportion of their output either in other States or in countries outside Australia. In either case they have to compete with the manufacturers of other States. But South Australia has not the easy access to some of the essential raw materials which the eastern States enjoy. A great deal of the material used in South Australian manufactures has to be transported here from a distance. Much of it comes from the States with which we are in competition. The material is on their doorstep, as it were, but has to be brought a long way to ours. Thus, our manufacturers have an initial disadvantage which has to be compensated for in some way; and the only way to compensate for it is to keep our local costs lower than those of the other States.

Experience has shown that control of prices is essential for this purpose. In two other States where prices have been de-controlled, the effect of de-control is that the increase in the "C" series index in those States has been about three times as great as it was in South Australia during the corresponding period. This is very convincing evidence of the serious effects of de-controlling prices at the present juncture, and of the advantage which South Australia gains by retaining control. Another reason which actuates the Government in proposing an extension of the Prices Act is the existence of trade associations and trade arrangements by which prices can be maintained at a higher level than would otherwise prevail. The effects of these arrangements on prices and on supplies of commodities are from time to time reported to the Government;

and so long as the Prices Act remains in force the Government is in a position to ensure that no harsh or unfair arrangements are allowed to operate. If the Prices Act lapsed, the Government would be powerless in such matters.

There is a further factor which also influences the Government. In some important basic commodities used in manufacture and production the local price, although adequate, is at present below the overseas price. In such cases, if there were no price control, the local price would immediately tend to rise to the level of the overseas price. The Prices Department is at present operating with a relatively small staff and many kinds of commodities have been de-controlled. Nevertheless, arrangements are in force between the department and persons and associations concerned in various trades and industries with the object of ensuring that prices remain reasonably stable. These arrangements are quite effective, but they depend for their effectiveness on the fact that the Prices Act is still in force and can be used, if necessary, to impose a stricter control. The department does not cost much, and the large savings and refunds which it secures for the public amply justify the modest expenditure. For these reasons the Government is not at present prepared to allow the Act to lapse. I assure members that every chance is taken to decontrol items when it can be done without injustice to the general public or without fear of unjustifiable increases taking place. It is sometimes put to me that at present it does not matter, because the Arbitration Court has suspended quarterly adjustments, but can such an argument be justified? Is it logical? How long could the industrial worker continue under a system which compelled him to absorb all price increases without any alteration of his wage? In those circumstances I think that members will agree that the suspension of the quarterly adjustments is an added reason for the continuance of an oversight over prices rather than for its discontinuance. I could give a long account of the problems which would confront us if we allowed our price structure to get out of hand. Already there is evidence of an overseas buyers' resistance for many of our commodities, and they can compete only at prices already obtainable on the Australian market which, in some instances, are certainly not profitable to the producer. In such circumstances I have no hesitation in asking the House to support the Bill.

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

STATUTE AMENDMENT (PUBLIC SALARIES) BILL.

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

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—

That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Agent-General Act, 1901-1953; the Audit Act, 1921-1951; the Constitution Act, 1934-1953; the Industrial Code, 1920-1951; the Payment of Members of Parliament Act, 1948-1953; the Police Regulation Act, 1952; the Public Service Act, 1936-1954; the Public Works Standing Committee Act, 1927-1954; and the Supreme Court Act, 1935-1953; and to repeal the Public Officers Salaries Act, 1953.

Motion carried.

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

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill provides for increases in Parliamentary salaries, and in the salaries of judges and of those public servants whose salaries are fixed by Act of Parliament. The justification for introducing the Bill is, of course, to be found in the increases which have recently been made, and are still being made, throughout the Commonwealth in almost all salaries and wages. The increases, as members know, apply not only to employees covered by awards of arbitration courts and tribunals, but to public servants of all grades, and to judges, members of Parliament and Ministers. South Australia has not taken the lead in this movement; but now that new standards of wages and salaries are established throughout the Commonwealth, justice requires that we should adapt ourselves to them.

The proposed increases are based on relatively simple principles. In the case of public servants whose salaries are fixed by statute, the Bill proposes the same amount of increase as they would have received if they had been covered by the award made by the Public Service Board last February. For judges, Ministers, and members of Parliament, and the holders of the principal Parliamentary offices, the Government is proposing rates which it considers to be justified, both by reference to the Public Service increases, and also by comparison with the rates which are in force or are in course of being adopted in other States. The increases proposed in the salaries of members of the Public Works

Standing Committee and the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation, though not large in amount, are greater in proportion than the other increases proposed in the Bill. This is justified by the length of time since the salaries were last altered. The salaries of members of the Public Works Committee have not been altered since 1927, and the salaries of members of the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation have not been altered since 1939.

The details of the Bill are as follows.

Clause 2 increases the salary of the Agent General from £2,000 sterling to £2,500 sterling. His allowance of £1,000 sterling is not altered. Clause 3 increases the salary of the Auditor-General from £2,750 to £3,500. Clause 4 increases the salary of the chairman of the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation from £100 to £200, and the salaries of members of the committee from £50 to £100. Clause 5 increases the amount provided for Ministers' salaries from £21,200 to £28,750. The £21,200 was made up of a lump sum of £19,000 mentioned in the Constitution Act and an allowance in addition of £275 per Minister payable under the Payment of Members of Parliament Act. In view of the new lump sum proposed, the provision for payment of the allowances of £275 will be repealed. Clause 6 increases the salary of the President of the Industrial Court from £2,500 to £3,250, and the salaries of Deputy Presidents from £2,100 to £2,750.

Clause 7 increases the basic salary of members of Parliament from £1,425 to £1,900. Members representing distant electorates will receive the same additional allowances as at present, that is to say £50 or £75, depending on the situation of their electorates. Clause 8 increases payments made to Parliamentary office holders in addition to their salaries as members. The payments to the Speaker of the House of Assembly and the President of the Legislative Council are increased from £625 to £850. The Chairman of Committees of the House of Assembly will have his allowance increased from £250 to £350, and the payment to the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Assembly is increased from £500 to £700.

Clause 9 increases the salary of the Commissioner of Police from £2,450 to £3,200. Clauses 10 and 11 deal with the salary of the Public Service Commissioner. They provide that the salary of the Commissioner will be increased from £2,600 to £3,500, and this new rate will include his remuneration as the chairman or a member of the Public Service Board.

Clause 12 increases the remuneration of the chairman of the Public Works Standing Committee from £400 to £600, and the remuneration of members from £250 to £400. Clause 13 increases the salary of the Chief Justice from £3,750 to £4,750, and the salaries of puisne judges from £3,250 to £4,000.

Clause 14 repeals the Public Officers' Salaries Act, 1953. The repeal of this Act is consequential on the provisions of the Bill. Clause 15 provides that the salaries fixed by the Bill for public servants shall be deemed to have come into operation on December 20, 1954. Clause 16 provides that the remaining salaries and other payments fixed by the Bill shall be deemed to have come into operation on the first day of the month in which the Bill is assented to. Clause 17 enables the Governor, on increasing the current salaries of the South Australian Railways Commissioner and the Commissioner of Highways, to direct that the increases shall operate from December 20, 1954. The salaries of these two officers are fixed by the Governor. It is proposed to grant them increases in salary to commensurate with the increases granted to other public servants of similar rank, and that the increases should take effect from December 20, 1954. Clause 17 provides the necessary authority for making the increases retrospective. Clause 18 is a machinery provision.

Members may ask why the Bill provides for increases in the salaries of public servants to take effect from December 20, 1954, while the other increases will not operate until the month in which the Bill is assented to. The Government does not, in general, favour the making of retrospective payments, and believes that such payments should only be made where a convincing case is made for them. In the case of the public servants covered by the Bill, there is a strong argument for making the increases retrospective to December 20 last, namely, that all other public servants have received increases dating back to this day. The Government does not, on the other hand, think that there is any special reason for making the other increases similarly retrospective. They are increases in salaries for which, it might be said, Parliament is the appropriate tribunal. Parliament is taking the first opportunity of dealing with them, and there is no reason to expect any undue delay in securing the decision of Parliament on them. In these

circumstances justice will be done if the increases take effect from the commencement of the present month.

Although it has nothing to do with this Bill, I want now to make a short statement in regard to the pensions payable to members of Parliament. It is often said that the lack of an adequate salary is the reason for their not being able to pay a greater contribution towards the pension. In South Australia pension rates are much lower than those in other States, yet the qualifying period here is much longer. It takes a South Australian member 19 years to qualify for a full pension. Under recent Commonwealth legislation a member of that Parliament can qualify in eight years. It has even been suggested that a shorter period should apply—the life of three Parliaments, which might be a short period indeed. Contributions by members for a pension are lower in South Australia than in the other States, and an examination is being made to see if an alteration in the scale of pensions here is warranted. If one is made, there must be a steep increase in the contributions by members. However, there can be no justification for seeking additional salary to meet the added expense for increased contributions. The salaries set out in the Bill are equitable taking into account those provided for public servants and members of other Parliaments, and the responsibility of members here and those elsewhere. The salaries to be paid under the Bill are not equal to salaries paid for comparable positions elsewhere. Members in considering this Bill are virtually fixing their own salaries. That places a responsibility on the House that I am pleased to say has always been carefully observed. This House has never sought to reach out and demand amounts that could not be reasonably justified by the amount of attention required by Parliamentary duties, the size of the House, the size of the districts and the cost of maintaining a service to the districts affected by the laws of our State. I submit the Bill for the consideration of members. I believe the decisions embodied in it are fair and I hope members will view them in that light.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.2 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, June 14, at 2 p.m.