HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, June 30, 1955.

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

QUESTIONS.

COUNTRY HOUSING SCHEMES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I understand that the Housing Trust has told the Peterborough Corporation that it does not propose to build any more rental houses in that town for the present because there are not sufficient applicants, and I read recently that a similar position obtains at Murray Bridge. The trust's contractor at Peterborough was slow in building the group of houses that has only recently been completed, and as a result of the delay some of the applicants were forced to seek accommodation elsewhere. I ask the Premier whether arrangements can be made for local authorities to be consulted by the trust, when it is proposed to build rental houses in country districts, so that they can check the applications. Further, if the trust could give the approximate date when the houses would be available for occupation it would facilitate applicants making arrangements for temporary accommodation while awaiting trust homes.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I know the trust is always most anxious to confer with councils in assessing their housing problems and in seeing that the requirements of the district are met as far as possible. There is always the problem that the trust, to a certain extent, is in the hands of a private contractor in regard to the time it takes to build houses. On occasions it has let contracts to a reputable builder only to find that sometimes, through circumstances over which he has no control, he is held up. I will place the honourable member's remarks before the Housing Trust and see that they receive consideration.

HIGH LOADS ON PORT ROAD.

Mr. STEPHENS—This morning a vehicle with a copper tank on it travelled over the Port Road and damaged some of the overhead wires used by trolley buses and impeded traffic. Police protection was supplied for this vehicle, but the load seemed to be too high. If it had been carried at night time less traffic would have been stopped. Will the Premier take steps to see that damage and inconvenience does not occur again from such a cause?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will inquire into the matter.

COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES.

Mr. TEUSNER—Two or three years ago I introduced a deputation to the Minister of Works about a water supply for Mount Pleasant, Springton and Eden Valley, and I ask him whether this question has been further considered?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Originally, a local scheme was visualized for Mount Pleasant, which included the utilization of a bore that was made available by Mr. Stanley Murray. Then, because of the progress of the district, it was decided that a much bigger scheme could be advantageously undertaken, and that included a broad scheme extending from the Mannum-Adelaide main through the hills areas. I understand the investigation into the scheme, as a whole, has not been completed by the Public Works Committee, although it has reported on taking water to the Warren on the one hand and to the Onkaparinga Valley on the other, because of the acute water shortage. Therefore, I do not know the committee's views on the whole scheme, but it has not been overlooked by the Government. It is one of those projects that are very desirable; the only point is which shall come first, that scheme or any others before the committee.

SOUTH AND CROSS ROADS INTERSECTION.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Will the Minister of Works ascertain from his colleague, the Minister of Roads, the cost of the land acquired for the alterations at the intersection of South and Cross Roads, Emerson, and also the estimated cost of the lighting system and gates, when erected?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will ascertain the details required by the honourable member.

VICTOR HARBOUR CAUSEWAY.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—Earlier this session I asked the Minister of Works what progress had been made in the supply of timber for the repair of the Victor Harbour causeway, and he replied that, although 451 loads of jarrah had been ordered from Western Australia in November last, only 40 loads had come to hand. Can he now say what progress has been made in the supply of timber and when the work is likely to be commenced?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Through the Harbors Board I have received the following report:—

The jarrah required for the rehabilitation of this structure comprising 451 loads (each of 600 super feet) was ordered in October, 1954. Of this only 53 loads have been received to date

despite vigorous efforts by the Public Stores Department. However, the *Borda* is expected shortly with 14 loads, whilst a further 100 loads will be coming forward in the *Baroota*, which is to commence loading in Western Australia on June 25. The suppliers have intimated that substantial shipments will be made in July and the order completed in August. Strong representations were made to the suppliers by the Chief Storekeeper and it appeared that the Western Australian Government was limiting the number of trees that could be felled; also that supplies of jarrah were being sent overseas, doubtless at a higher price than that ruling for Australian use.

It seems, therefore, that not only private enterprise but sometimes socialistic Governments desire to get higher prices overseas than they can get locally.

RACING OFFENCES.

Mr. FRED WALSH—My question follows the pattern of one I asked a year or two ago about a case, the outcome of which was a successful prosecution. A few weeks ago, as a result of investigations by the stipendiary stewards into an incident at the Morphettville racecourse, a jockey was found to have a battery in his whip and was subsequently disqualified for 10 years. Later, the trainer of the horse was also disqualified for 10 years, and later still another man was warned off all racecourses in Australia. There have been allegations of conspiracy, and I am of the opinion that where there are such allegations concerning the running of horse races, whether in regard to the use of a battery, or dope, or preventing a horse from doing its best, and the public have been defrauded, legal prosecutions should be launched against those responsible because that is the only way the racing game can be cleaned up: the ordinary penalty imposed by racing clubs is not a sufficient deterrent. Will the Premier ask the Chief Secretary to obtain a report from the Police Commissioner on the result of police investigations into what has become known as the Thundering Legion battery case, and, if there is any evidence of conspiracy, will prosecutions be launched?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The procedure adopted in these cases has been that, if the Police Commissioner or any member of the police force considers there are grounds for investigation, an investigation is made as a matter of course. Although I do not know it officially, I have noticed from the press that the police investigated this matter. The second logical consequence in the normal procedure is that after police investigations the matter is referred to the Attorney-General's office and, if a case is made out that would justify prosecution, the Crown Prosecutor is instructed to act. I am sure that procedure has been carried out in this case. How far the investigation has gone and what it has disclosed I do not know, but I will obtain further details for the honourable member.

PORT LINCOLN HARBOUR IMPROVEMENTS.

Mr. PEARSON—Can the Minister of Works say what is the present position concerning improvements to the Port Lincoln harbour?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—A scheme estimated to cost about £1,500,000 for the improvement of that harbour has been submitted to the Public Works Committee. This includes about £1,000,000 as the cost of a bulk handling installation if such a scheme is considered feasible and is approved by Parliament. The balance of the amount is for new wharf accommodation and facilities for coastal trade. The Public Works Committee has, I believe, taken all the evidence it desires, including that from the Harbors Board and Railways Departments, and there will be no delay on its part; therefore, I expect that its report will be available soon, probably on the early resumption of this session.

POLICE FORCE.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked last week about the strength of the Police Force?

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

Although the strength of the force is not up to the full authorized establishment, it is certainly not undermanned, nor is there a serious shortage of personnel at present. The strength reduction from all causes including death, retirements, resignations, dismissals, etc., is less than three per cent as compared with the total strength at this time last year.

SITTINGS OF HOUSE.

Mr. LAWN—Can the Premier indicate when the House will resume after the short recess?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—On August 16.

GEPPS CROSS FEEDER SERVICE.

Mr. JENNINGS—Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I asked recently concerning the extension of the Enfield bus service to Gepps Cross?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I have received the following report from the General Manager of the Tramways Trust:—

It is the intention of the trust, when the Enfield tram service is converted to bus operation, to extend the bus service to Gepps Cross,

thus eliminating the need to transfer at the present Enfield tram terminal. Further extension to Pooraka is not at present contemplated, owing to insufficient patronage offering, but this development is being kept in mind for action when circumstances warrant it.

Mr. JENNINGS—I thank the Minister of Works for the information. Will he inquire from the Tramways Trust when the conversion of the tram service to a bus service is likely to take place? The answer did not indicate whether it would be two years or 10 years.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will get the information as soon as possible.

WALLAROO FISHING INDUSTRY.

Mr. McALEES—Can the Minister of Agriculture intimate whether it would be possible to establish a fish canning factory and a fish market at Wallaroo? This would have the effect of keeping people in the district where their homes are instead of their coming to the metropolitan area.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The Government does not establish fish canneries or fish factories, but it does lend assistance, financial and otherwise, to the establishment of such undertakings. I think the best method of establishing such an industry is the co-operative principle whereby fishermen combine and establish their own factories. That has been done in nearly all fishing ports in South Australia and the system has worked admirably. The Government has provided a good deal of financial assistance for such enterprises. I am sure that if such a proposal comes from Wallaroo it will be considered.

MILLICENT WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. CORCORAN—A water supply for Millicent was spoken about before the last election and I raised the question of its progress on a number of occasions, but the scheme is still not completed. I do not know who has been responsible for the lack of progress—the Government or the local council. Can the Minister of Works say what the prospects are for the finalization of this scheme in the near future and indicate whether there is any obstruction to it?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I think I have heard nothing of this scheme for the last 18 months, either from the member or anyone else. It seems to me that what God has freely given no one wants. Millicent has all the water it at present wants. Apparently the people at Millicent are happy with the present conditions. The scheme is before the Public Works Standing Committee, but I do not think either the committee or the people of Millicent have urged that the committee proceed with that work.

Mr. Corcoran—The Government promised the scheme.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Government did not promise a scheme, but a scheme was submitted for consideration. Many people favoured it, but as many opposed it. The position is that the scheme is before the committee, but I have had no report concerning it.

COAL FOR LOCOMOTIVES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I have been informed by the secretary of the Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen that the coal from New South Wales being used in South Australia is of poor quality resulting in loss of time and increased working costs. Will the Minister representing the Minister of Railways ascertain whether steps will be taken to improve the quality of the coal, thereby obviating those conditions?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I know that there has been a long-standing complaint, and justifiably so, about the coal being used. I will take up the matter with my colleague to see if it can be improved.

MILANG WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—Has the Minister of Works any reply to my recent request that a survey be made of the water position for farmers near Milang? They have bores which are unsuitable for stock. Can they be served with a reticulated system from the existing township supply or, if not, will the Minister examine the possibility of supplying them from another source?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—A scheme has been designed to serve the township and extensions to rural areas for stock watering would necessitate an immediate enlargement of the public plant and probably larger mains would be required later. A scheme is being prepared for an extension to supply properties to the north-west of the town and plans and estimates will be completed as early as possible.

COURSE FOR BAKERY APPRENTICES.

Mr. HUTCHENS—A constituent recently asked me if I would ascertain whether his son could receive further instruction to assist him in his occupation as an apprentice in the baking trade. There is no class for bakery apprentices at the School of Mines and the

secretary of the Bakers' Union has intimated that it would be desirable to establish one there. Will the Minister of Education have the matter investigated to see whether that is practicable?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes.

TAPEROO TEMPORARY HOMES.

Mr. TAPPING—I have received a letter from the Taperoo and District Progressive Association, Inc. It is headed "Temporary Homes at Taperoo District," and reads as follows:—

I have been instructed to ask you to consider action that would hasten the removal of the hundreds of Housing Trust temporary homes in the district and their replacement with permanent type homes. It is certainly not the wish of the association that people should be dispossessed of their homes, but we would point out that the five-year time limit agreed to for these emergency structures has now been reached. The association would welcome their replacement with the Housing Trust permanent rental or purchase type homes such as are being built in many other suburbs, but which do not seem to have been considered for the Taperoo district.

Will the Premier consider that request?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—These houses are occupied and are urgently needed. Heavy expense would be involved in transferring them to another district and no useful purpose would be served in doing so. Under these circumstances I cannot agree to take up the matter.

Mr. TAPPING—I believe the Premier missed the point when he answered my previous question. I did not suggest that the temporary homes be transferred to another area but that they should be gradually replaced by permanent homes.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The replacement of the homes by permanent homes would mean that there would be that number of homes fewer to be occupied in the metropolitan area. The Housing Trust is building to its full financial resources at present. Under the circumstances I cannot agree to the request at this juncture. At present there is a strong demand on the Government to increase the number of temporary homes because of the difficult circumstances of many people who have no permanent accommodation. I refer to people who have been evicted and have not applications of long standing with the trust, people who have recently arrived here, and people who through one circumstance or another have been deprived of their present houses. Under the circumstances I think the honourable member should place before the Taperoo Progress Association the facts I have stated and when it realizes the position I am sure it will not desire to press its request.

OPERA ADMISSION PRICES.

Mr. LAWN—An opera season is being held at the Theatre Royal. Moving amongst the people it has become evident to me that a large number of them desire to hear the opera but are prevented from doing so because of the high admission prices. I realize that there is no price control in regard to amusements, but in view of the increasing interest, more particularly amongst the poorer section of the community, in opera will the Premier see whether there is any possibility of having the admission charges reduced for the present season?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It is very speculative whether the people running the opera will get their money back. It is a commercial undertaking and not essential in the strict sense of the word, and that is why I feel I cannot do what the honourable member suggests.

LOAD LIMITS OF TRAMS AND BUSES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Can the Premier say if it is a fact that the Tramways Trust has power under its Act to make by-laws fixing the load limits of trams and buses owned by the trust, and is it the practice of the Government Motor Garage to inspect privately owned buses and fix load limits for them? Would it not be better if an authority could be vested with the power to fix load limits on all types of vehicles used in the metropolitan area? I understand that although the trust has the power to make by-laws it has not made any concerning load limits of its own vehicles. Will the Premier investigate the matter during the Parliamentary recess with a view to a uniform system being established?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Under the Act the trust is the licensing authority for all public transport in the metropolitan area, apart from taxis. I believe all buses are under the control of the trust, and it arranges for inspection and safety limits to be imposed on them. I will get a report on the matter.

SICK LEAVE FOR DAILY PAID EMPLOYEES.

Mr. FRED WALSH—I am not sure whether the matter I am raising is dealt with by Act of Parliament or regulation, but I understand that members of the Public Service are granted

additional sick leave when treated at Springbank Repatriation Hospital for a war disability, but daily paid employees who may be suffering from a similar disability and who are under treatment at the same hospital, are not granted additional leave and in consequence are required to take sick leave that is due to them, and forfeit other time, if necessary. Could consideration be given to extending the concession to ordinary daily paid employees?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I think the matter comes under the purview of the Minister of Industry, but seeing that the question has been addressed to me and that most of the employees are in my department I will take it up with my colleague and let the honourable member know the view of Cabinet as early as possible.

BULK HANDLING OF GRAIN BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council with the following amendments:—

No. 1. Page 5, line 34 (clause 7)—After "affects" insert "the appointment of the manager or secretary of the company or".

No. 2. Page 6, lines 20, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 37 and 39 (clause 9)—After the word "wheat" wherever occurring insert the words "or other grain".

No. 3. Page 6, line 38 (clause 9)—Leave out "wheatgrower" and insert "grower of wheat or other grain".

No. 4. Page 6, line 29 (clause 9)—Leave out "in" and insert "from".

No. 5. Page 8, line 7 (clause 12)—After "factory" insert "or at any other place in the town in which his mill or factory is situated".

No. 6. Page 9, line 40 (clause 14)—Leave out "approved" and insert "reported on".

No. 7. Page 9, line 41 (clause 14)—Leave out "or" and insert "and approved".

No. 8. Page 14, line 40 (clause 33)—At the commencement of clause 33 insert "(1) Subject to subsection (2) of this section".

No. 9. Page 14, line 43 (clause 33)—At the end of clause 33 add the following subclause:—

(2) The company shall not receive any bagged wheat except at a place where no licensed receiver or other wheat merchant is carrying on the business of receiving wheat.

No. 10. Page 16, line 12 (clause 34)—Add the following subclauses:—

(3) Where the Minister is of opinion that any regulations (being regulations on matters mentioned in subsections (1) and (2) of this section) ought to be made in the public interest, or in the interests or for the protection of any class of persons, he may submit a draft of such regulations to the company with a request that the company shall recommend the making of such regulations.

(4) The company may within two months after the receipt of the draft regulations make representations thereon to the Minister.

(5) If the company does not notify the Minister within the said period that it is willing to recommend the regulations the Minister, after considering any representations made by the company, may recommend the regulations and if he does so the regulations may be made without the recommendation of the company.

Consideration in Committee.

Amendment No. 1—

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN (Minister of Agriculture)—I move to amend the Legislative Council's amendment No. 1 as follows:—

To strike out "the" first occurring with a view to inserting "any", to strike out "the" second occurring with a view to inserting "a", and to insert "by the provisional directors" after "company".

The amendment would then read:—

Any appointment of a manager or secretary of the company by the provisional directors or

The effect would be that the provisions of clause 7 would be operative in regard to this matter only until the permanent directors of the company had been elected. It is felt that the provisional directors should not proceed to the important task of appointing the permanent manager or secretary of the company. That should be left until the elected directors, with the Government's appointees, are on the board.

Mr. HEASLIP—The clause should remain as it left this House. The company will be finding the money necessary, but it is having restrictions placed on it which no other company has had. Parliament has advanced money to other companies and has risked the taxpayers' money, but without placing any restrictions on the directors. I cannot understand why this company should be singled out. If I were a director, or even a provisional director, of this company I would not be prepared to remain on the board. If the directors cannot direct they should not be asked to carry on.

Mr. STOTT—The effect of the Minister's amendment is that the appointment of any officer by the provisional directors will be subject to the Minister's approval.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—Only if there is disagreement between the Government's directors and other directors.

Mr. STOTT—Even that would not be acceptable. Obviously, applications will be called from all over Australia to get the best man available to manage the company. He will not want to be appointed subject to the

Minister's approval. Admittedly, the Government will have no say in the appointment of the manager after the elected directors take control, but can the company wait until that time? It will take at least 12 weeks for all the directors to be elected. I will not vote on the amendment.

Mr. Quirke—Why not?

Mr. STOTT—Because I do not want to be accused of voting on anything in which I may be interested. If the Legislative Council's amendment were defeated the provisional directors would appoint the manager or secretary to carry on until the elected directors took over. Then, if they thought he was not suitable, they could dismiss him. The success of the company will depend largely on the ability of the general manager, so we must get the best man possible in Australia, but we shall not if the clause is amended as suggested by the Minister. The position of the elected directors, as far as I am concerned, is that they could dismiss me when they take over. That is a power they have always had, and Parliament should have no fears whatever. Shareholders are the right people to say who the elected directors shall be and obviously when they take over they will appoint their officers. I admit that the Minister is trying to meet that position, but the whole amendment should be rejected so as not to hamper the company.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I propose to support the Minister's amendment because I think it improves the position suggested by the Legislative Council. However, if it should be carried I propose to vote against the Legislative Council's amendment as amended for I am firmly of opinion that having passed this legislation as the result of strenuous agitation by the farming community the less we interfere with the management of the organization the better it will be for the future success of the company.

Mr. FRED WALSH—I echo the views expressed by the Leader of the Opposition as I feel that we have no right to restrict the company unduly in the appointment of its manager and secretary. However, I rose mainly to intimate to Mr. Stott that he should not abstain from recording his votes. It is something unusual that a member should consider himself personally involved at this stage, and he should not have intimated that it was his intention not to vote. I suggest that he reconsider his decision.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—I think the amendment should be supported. Mr. Stott made a great point that the shareholders should have the sole right to appoint their officers, but I point out that there are no shareholders in this company, so his argument falls to the ground.

Mr. Stott—It has members.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—But they are not shareholders in the ordinary sense, which is the term the honourable member used. It seems to me that the provisional directors are no more than the term implies, and it is conceivable that in their wisdom, or lack of it, they might appoint a manager and secretary whom the permanent directors may not confirm in office. The amendment is a safeguard in several directions.

Mr. QUIRKE—I oppose the amendment, as I shall the Legislative Council's amendment. I have had over 30 years' experience in the management of companies, admittedly not as big as this one, but I have never found that splitting hairs and ordaining what shall be done within the company itself has proved effective. There is no necessity to tie up this company with all these pin-pricking regulations that will hamstring its activities, and that is what all these things will do and, perhaps, may be designed to do. I join issue with Mr. Stott when he says he will not exercise his vote and ask him to reconsider that decision. He is a member of the Committee and whether or not he has been connected with the introduction of this legislation it does not absolve him from his responsibilities. How is the company to get the best man available when he knows that conditions like this are likely to operate? I have every faith in the people who will be selected to run this company. Today the Minister of Agriculture, replying to the member for Wallaroo in relation to the fishing co-operatives, said there were no strings tied to the Government's assistance apart from representatives of the State Bank on the directorates and he informed us that these companies operate effectively with great profits to their members. There will be many thousands of members in this company who will have a vote, whether they are termed shareholders or not, so Mr. Stott's argument in that respect was valid.

Mr. SHANNON—When I first heard of this amendment I thought it went too far and it would be an interference in the efficient management of the company, but I point out that we have nothing before us to give a clear picture of how this company is to operate. We have not seen its articles of association;

we have a list of names of men who have been suggested as provisional directors. This is the first time we have heard of the time factor involved in the election of directors. I think Mr. Stott made two slips: first he said he did not propose to vote on the amendment—but he was prepared to try to influence members in the way they should vote. Obviously he is personally interested in this matter and, not only should he absent himself from voting, but he should be silent in the debate. If he has some personal interest in it that should be his attitude. Secondly—and I think it was a slip of the tongue—he said they could dismiss "me" from office. Are we to assume that the provisional directors have tacitly agreed as to who the secretary shall be? Will applications not be called for this position and the best man available appointed? Are we facing a *fait accompli* and is it a fact that all we have to do is to pass legislation, when certain men will step into their jobs forthwith? I am afraid it might be. I think this is a suitable safeguard against such hole in the corner tactics. After all, Parliament is granting probably one of the greatest privileges it has ever granted to a company in this State—a monopoly in a very big field.

Mr. Jennings—What about the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited?

Mr. SHANNON—That argument does not apply as it has been suggested that another company should be started in South Australia to produce steel. The monopoly to the proposed wheat handling company is absolute. It is most proper that this Committee should consider taking steps to see that the most efficient management offering is appointed to office.

Mr. Stott—It will be done.

Mr. SHANNON—If the amendment is carried, and then I would be a little more happy. What the Minister has suggested is a desirable compromise, and I am convinced it will overcome any possible friction. I know that Mr. Stott envisages that the provisional directors will appoint the manager and secretary.

Mr. Pearson—Would they be competent to do that?

Mr. SHANNON—I have certain evidence to the contrary. People are not very responsible who will assess the desirability or otherwise of certain projects without knowing anything of the facts, and that is what happened. They circulated a statement under their own name. That gives me valid reason for supporting what the Minister now suggests. We should safeguard, as far as it is possible, the taxpayers' guarantee. I foresee a tremendous difficulty if the provisional directors make appointments to the major offices and then later the directors elected by members of the organization disagree with what was done.

Mr. Pearson—Do you think that any responsible person would accept the position of manager if he thought that later there would be the chance of his being sacked?

Mr. SHANNON—I think it is important that that should be borne in mind. Any man capable of undertaking the position of manager will want to know that he will be approved by the people who will make the final appointment. If he were appointed by the provisional directors he would have no such assurance, but under the amendment he would have some assurance because he would have the two Government nominees on his side.

Mr. Stott—You have no right to make that assumption.

Mr. SHANNON—I trust the company will appoint men who are fully competent. If we cannot trust it to do that, we are taking a tremendous chance with our £500,000. Under all the circumstances the Minister's amendment will enable the company to secure the services of high ranking men. After all, the manager and secretary of this company should possess high qualifications.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I do not regard this as a very important matter, but there are one or two things which should be examined. In the first place if there were in this State a caretaker Government it would be highly improper for it, under any circumstances, to appoint senior officers to the Public Service, the judiciary or the Railways Department. It should not have the right to commit a future Government to such appointments, as it would be in office only to carry on essential administration until the position had been clarified by the appointment of another Government in the regular way by the people. Subclause (1) of clause 5 provides:—

> The provisional directors may remain in office until directors are elected in accordance with this section.

During the period of the provisional directorate there could be no directors from the Government because those directors would not come into office until the others had been elected.

Mr. Shannon—That makes this matter more important still.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I see nothing in the Bill to provide for the Government directors to sit with the provisional directors.

Mr. Stott—Subclause (11) makes it clear that they shall be appointed for such term as is fixed by the Governor.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—But subclause (1) provides that the provisional directors shall remain in office until the directors are appointed. There is no limitation on the prerogative of members of the company. They have it in their own hands. At this stage members of the company have no say whatever as to who their directors shall be, although eventually these positions will be endorsed by the members. Under those circumstances it would be highly improper for any but temporary appointments to be made until the permanent directorate is appointed.

Mr. Stott—Only temporary appointments would be made.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Then there is no objection to the amendment.

Mr. O'Halloran—And there is also no pur pose in it.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Except that it is disclosed that certain things should be done, but there is nothing in the Bill to that effect. No member can say what the decision of the directors may be tomorrow. After the Bill becomes law they may appoint a manager for a five-year term, which would be perfectly valid unless there were a provision preventing it. One member sitting behind me said that in cases where the Government gives a guarantee it does not take any action to control the company.

Mr. Heaslip—I said that with regard to the appointment of a manager.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government has never given a guarantee to a company where the control of that company is not much more rigidly bound up than is the case under this Bill. Where the Government has given guarantees and where the Government directors and elected directors do not agree, the general provision is that the matter shall be referred to the Treasurer for decision. There has never been any occasion to apply that provision in actual practice because the Government directors are reasonable and wish to further the interests of the company and the elected directors are reasonable and wish to further the interests of their shareholders. The only difference in this case is that we have no directors appointed by the members of the company at this stage.

Mr. STOTT—The Premier's point is clear and I do not dispute it, but members must understand that during this tentative period the company must carry on and there must be some machinery put in motion to enable that to be done. You cannot call a halt during the interim period between the granting of the charter and the election by members of their directors. The provisional directors must have power to appoint somebody temporarily for the purpose of carrying out the election. Because of the urgency of the position the company does not want to be hamstrung for say, three months until its directors are elected. Country bins must be designed in order to stop the debacle at Ardrossan, therefore it has been arranged that engineers shall plan country bins for the company. That work is being done on the condition that this Bill is passed and the directors' approval obtained. The elected directors will have the opportunity to approve such arrangements, but in the meantime some officers must be appointed, otherwise nothing will be done. I see no harm in that arrangement, but I see a danger in the risk of losing the confidence of the growers, who do not like Government control. This afternoon the chairman of the provisional directors and president of my organization told me that he thought the directors would not accept this provision under any condition, and I believe that I have the right to speak not only for my constituents who are members of the company, but also for the provisional directors. Any decision made by the provisional directors must be ratified or annulled by the elected directors later. It is not likely that the provisional board will have to appoint many officers. Even if one or two bins were to be constructed for the coming harvest only a small staff would be required. An engineer would draw the plans and the successful contractor would carry them out.

Mr. Shannon—A secretary would not be needed.

Mr. STOTT—Probably not. That would be a matter for the provisional directors. The honourable member seems to be seriously concerned about the secretary, but personalities should not enter into this matter. We should have confidence in the growers to elect the right men for the right jobs. If we create the impression that the Government is to exercise control, growers will not like it and it may take time to regain their confidence.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I agree entirely with Mr. Stott that this not a matter over which we should get unduly heated and I

also agree that the question of the appointment of these officers is important. It is not the Government's desire to unduly interfere in the affairs of the company. In the event of a disagreement between the Government directors and the provisional directors over appointments the matter is referred to the Minister.

Mr. Stott—What about the Premier's point that they won't be there?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—That depends entirely on when the Government guarantee is called upon. Obviously as soon as the guarantee is called upon the Government will want directors on the board. That will be the governing factor. If there is a delay of two or three months before permanent directors are elected will there be a delay for that time before any work is embarked upon? I suggest that the company will have to proceed with its undertakings and then the guarantee will be called upon and the two Government directors will be appointed. If the directorate, as then constituted, disagrees about the appointment of a manager and secretary the matter will be referred to the Minister. I do not think there is any real objection to that procedure. It only ensures that the initial appointments will be of such a character that the company will get away to a good start. If any member is interested in controls that exist in other legislation, I would recommend a study of the Gas Act and the original Adelaide Electric Supply Company Act. The Government control in those Acts was much more drastic and far-reaching. Sections 25 and 26 of the Gas Act provided that the regulation-making power rested with the Government. Because those concerns were complete monopolies—as will be this company—the Government was justified in requiring this measure of control. I ask the Committee to accept my amendments.

Mr. PEARSON—Whilst the Minister's comments clarified the position somewhat they appeared to undermine his own amendments. The Premier indicated that there was a grave doubt whether the Government directors would sit with the provisional directors and, if that is so, clause 7 in its original form would not apply. When the Government guarantee is involved then the Government will require its directors on the board, and clause 7 will apply. I think the Legislative Council's amendment is much too severe in its application and the Minister's amendment does limit, to a great extent, the effects of that amendment. I will support his amendment because it materially reduces the effects of the Legislative Council amendment. If, however, the Legislative Council's amendment is accepted, I will seriously consider voting against the clause.

The Hon. A. W. Christian's amendments to delete "the" first occurring and to insert "any", also to delete "the" second occurring and to insert "a"—Carried.

The CHAIRMAN—The further question is that the words "by the provisional directors" be inserted after "company."

Mr. STOTT—Can you, Mr. Chairman, indicate what the position is with regard to voting on these amendments and the clause as it now stands? I take it that we are proposing to insert certain words in the Council's amendment, but if they are inserted what will be the position? If the Committee wants to reject the Council amendment, which way will it then be asked to vote?

The CHAIRMAN—The question will be "That the amendment of the Legislative Council as amended be agreed to" and members can vote either for or against it.

Mr. STOTT—If the Committee votes against the amendment will it mean that that amendment as well as the Minister's amendment will be defeated?

The CHAIRMAN—Yes.

Mr. STOTT—And the Bill will remain as it was when it left this Chamber?

The CHAIRMAN—It will mean that the Committee disagrees with the Council's amendment.

Amendment to insert "by the provisional directors" after "company" carried.

The Committee divided on the question "That Legislative Council amendment No. 1 as amended be agreed to":—

Ayes (13).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian (teller), Geoffrey Clarke, Dunnage, Goldney, Hincks, Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. Jenkins, McIntosh, Pattinson, Playford, Shannon, and Travers.

Noes (17).—Messrs. John Clark, Corcoran, Dunstan, Fletcher, Heaslip (teller), Hutchens, Jennings, Lawn, O'Halloran, Pearson, Quirke, Stephens, Stott, Tapping, Frank Walsh, Fred Walsh, and White.

Pair.—Aye—Mr. Millhouse No—Mr. Macgillivray.

Majority of 4 for the Noes.

Amendment No. 1, as amended, thus disagreed to.

Amendments Nos. 2 and 3.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I move—

That amendments Nos. 2 and 3 be disagreed to.

These amendments deal with clause 9 where the qualifications of directors of the company are mentioned. The Council has added in a number of places the words "or other grain". With these words included the selection of directors of the company is made more restrictive than, in my opinion, it should be. For instance, there may be a wheatgrower who has a sideline business of selling oats or feed grain to particular clients, such as stud breeders, racehorse owners or trotting horse owners. When his supplies of this grain have run out he may replenish them by buying from a neighbour, and in this way a business of buying and selling grain other than wheat may be built up. That sort of person should not be prevented from being a director of the company.

Amendments disagreed to.

Amendments Nos. 4 to 9.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I move—

That amendments Nos. 4 to 9 inclusive be accepted.

No. 4 corrects a typographical error, and I do not think there can be any objection to it. No. 5 was inserted by the Legislative Council because some country mills have not sufficient storage room on their own premises to store the whole of their requirements, and some of them, with the consent of the Australian Wheat Board, have rented premises adjacent to their bins at railway sidings or places convenient to the mills where their requirements for gristing are stored. This amendment will assist the milling industry, which has requested it. The Government has considered the amendment and has no objection to it, and I do not think it will be in any way an infringement of the rights of the company. In other States where bulk handling is in operation it is a practice for country mills to act as receivers of bulk wheat on behalf of the Wheat Boards. Where they have bulk installations for taking their own requirements for gristing purposes they have the right to do so.

Amendment No. 6 relates to clause 14. Some members of this Committee took strong objection to the fact that the Public Works Committee was featured in this clause at all, and the Legislative Council amended the clause to bring it into line with the practice of the Government in regard to reports of that committee. The functions of the Public Works Committee are to report on undertakings, and the Government may or may not accept its recommendations, although in practice it does accept them; I know of no case to the contrary. There may be occasions when, owing to a lapse of time, modifications of the original plans are desirable and necessary, and these are of course substituted for the committee's plans. I do not think there should be any objection to this amendment.

Amendments Nos. 8 and 9 both deal with clause 33. The company has no right to handle bagged wheat—its sole right is to handle bulk wheat. It is envisaged that in due course, when the bulk installations are virtually complete, there will still be a few places of receival, such as outports, that will not have bulk handling installations because the quantity of wheat is too small to warrant them. When bulk installations eventually cater for the whole State the present licensed receivers of bagged wheat will go out of business. However, there will be a few places where wheat will always have to be handled in bags, and the company is given the right under clause 33 to handle such bagged wheat, although it is not to handle it in places where a licensed receiver is in business today. It would be manifestly unfair if the company were given a general right to handle bagged wheat and thus usurp the functions of the present licensed receivers, because they have a great deal of plant involved.

Mr. STOTT—I would like an assurance from the Minister particularly in regard to the clause dealing with bagged wheat. I interpret it to mean that where a licensed receiver is already established to receive bagged wheat the company will not be able to handle bagged wheat, but if the company picks out a siding where a licensed receiver is already established for receiving bagged wheat it would not be prevented from installing a bulk bin, but could not go ahead and operate it.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I think the whole Bill makes it clear that the company has the sole right to proceed with its job of installing bulk bins throughout the State. It can be required, even by the Minister, to install those bins at every place where 30,000 bushels or more are received.

Mr. SHANNON—As the Minister has rightly said, licensed receivers of wheat have a considerable investment in their plant for handling farmer's wheat. In some instances leases from the Railways Department have not expired, and they have erected substantial sheds at many places for the protection of farmers' wheat. If these people with valuable assets

are dispossessed they may not receive any compensation for their losses, for I cannot see anything on this matter in the Bill.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I appreciate the honourable member's point, but in every State where bulk handling has been inaugurated there has never been any suggestion that licensed receivers would go out of existence and be compensated for any losses. However, many of them have depreciated their assets over a long period and the farmers, to a great extent, have met the cost of the installations.

Legislative Council's amendments Nos. 4 to 9 agreed to.

Amendment No. 10.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I move—

To delete from the new subclause "in the public interest, or in the interests or"

New subclause (3) of clause 34 would then read:—

Where the Minister is of opinion that any regulations (being regulations on matters mentioned in subsections (1) and (2) of this section) ought to be made for the protection of any class of persons, he may submit a draft of such regulations to the company with a request that the company shall recommend the making of such regulations.

My amendment takes out words that could have wide application. The Government has no desire to intrude into the company's domestic matters, for it believes the company should have complete freedom to run its own business as it thinks fit, but we agree with the Legislative Council that the Minister should have the opportunity to submit regulations to the company for its consideration touching on matters of importance to other people.

Mr. Travers—What sort of matters do you envisage?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—In clause 34 there are many matters on which regulations may be made. For instance, paragraph (*f*) of subclause (2) states:—

The protection of charges, liens, or securities, over wheat offered or delivered to the company.

The interests of farmers should be protected by appropriate regulations. Paragraph (*j*) states:—

The settlement by referees of questions and disputes arising between the company and the holders of warrants or other persons, and the appointment, powers, and procedure of such referees.

It will be important to have completely fair regulations about referees. I do not expect the company to do anything not fair, but it will no doubt wish to stand by the actions of its servants, who will be the receiving agents. A particular agent may make a certain dockage on wheat delivered and if it is disputed and goes before a referee it is important that the appointment and functions of the referee should be controlled by regulations made by an outside body rather than by the company. The Gas Act and the Adelaide Electric Supply Co. Act contained provisions enabling the Government to make far-reaching regulations. Under sections 25 and 26 of the Gas Act the Government alone may proclaim regulations under the Act, and they effect the interests of many people. The Gas Company has no power to recommend regulations, nor did the Adelaide Electric Supply Company have any such power. For instance, the Government could proclaim regulations controlling the price to be charged for electricity. Members need have no fear that the Government will unduly intrude in the affairs of the bulk handling company.

Mr. STOTT—I am glad to hear the Minister say that the Government does not intend to control or unduly hamper the company in any way. Paragraph (*a*) of clause 34 (2) refers to the conduct of bulk handling by the company, and paragraph (*b*) refers to the method and procedure to be followed and observed by the company in the exercise of its powers and in the conduct of its business under the Act, and to the records to be kept by the company. They are two very important matters. Does the Minister's amendment mean that the Government will have no power to interfere in the matters referred to in paragraphs (*a*) and (*b*)? I agree with the Minister that it is necessary to have regulations regarding warrants, grades of wheat and so forth.

Mr. Quirke—Under this a harsh Government could cut your head off.

Mr. STOTT—I am not worried about the present Government because the Minister has given us a clear assurance, but this Government cannot commit future Governments. I should like to know, however, if the amendment means that the Minister could not make a regulation without the approval of the company regarding the general conduct of the company. If it means that I am quite happy, but if not, I would ask the Minister to alter the amendment so that what he wants to do shall not apply to (*a*) and (*b*). I think that would be acceptable to the company.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I cannot give any specific assurance of how this will actually work out, but the wording is perfectly clear. It is for the protection of any class of persons.

Mr. Travers—Does it include regulations for the protection of merchants?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—It could obviously include anybody whose interests might be affected by the operations of the company, I do not think the honourable member can imagine the Government making any stupid regulation that might affect any one class of person.

Mr. Travers—If a regulation is certified by the Crown Solicitor it is not challengeable.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—It is subject to disallowance by Parliament, as all regulations are. The fact that all regulations are tabled, and prior to that have to run the gauntlet of the Subordinate Legislation Committee, is an added safeguard.

Mr. HEASLIP—I was dubious about this as it came from the Legislative Council, but with the assurance given by the Minister and the deletion of words proposed to be struck out I am prepared to accept it.

Mr. QUIRKE—Notwithstanding that regulations must come before this House I still do not like it. This could be put into fewer words; it simply means that a Minister can hand a regulation to the company and say, "Endorse that. If you do not, it will come into force just the same," I think that is going too far. If I support that, what I opposed previously I did to no good purpose, because this, too, is an unwarranted intrusion into the company's affairs. As the Premier has said he has never had a case where an appeal has been made by the Government nominees on a board for his decision, there is no reason to believe that this company would be any different. This is an entirely extraneous thing and I intend to vote against it.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I intend to support the Legislative Council's amendment, for I think it is necessary that the Minister should have this power if full protection is to be given to all whose interests may be affected by this legislation. Naturally the company could not be expected to realize fully many of the implications of active administration taken under the very wide powers conferred upon it by this legislation, and the Minister would be approachable by those whose interests might be affected and he would be able to judge whether they were so insufficiently protected as to require some regulation. As to the type of regulation proposed to be made, I see no need for this Committee to worry about it. Any regulations made by the Minister are subject first to scrutiny by the Subordinate Legislation Committee and then to disallowance by either House of Parliament. Surely that is sufficient safeguard to the company against unwarranted interference by the Minister. I assure the members for Stanley and Ridley that the Minister of Agriculture in my Government after March next will administer this law most sympathetically as far as the farmers are concerned.

Amendment carried; Legislative Council's amendment as amended agreed to.

The following reason for disagreement with amendments 1 to 3 was adopted:—

Because the proposed amendments are unduly restrictive.

Later the Legislative Council intimated it had agreed not to insist on its amendments Nos. 1 to 3 and that it had agreed to the amendment made by the House of Assembly to its amendment No. 10, without any amendment.

PUBLIC WORKS STANDING COMMITTEE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH (Minister of Works)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The principal object of the Bill is to raise the limit of cost of the public works which are exempt from the Public Works Standing Committee Act. The present limit of £30,000 was fixed in 1927. Since then the cost of Government works has increased, on the average by about 250 per cent so that a work which would have cost £30,000 in 1927 would now cost over £100,000. Most of the increase has occurred since the war.

As regards the Public Works Committee, the result of this increase is that a number of relatively small works, which before the war would not have had to be referred to the committee, must now be so referred. The Government is well aware of the fact that the committee has made careful inquiries into all the matters submitted to it, but it is doubtful whether the advantage to be derived from its inquiries into the minor works, most of which are clearly necessary, compensate for the trouble and time taken by the committee as well as Government departments and outsiders. Another thing to be considered is that the time taken by the committee in making inquiries into minor works necessarily reduces the time which it can give to major works, and slows down the preparation of reports. It is in connection with major

works that the committee's inquiries are most valuable, and if the maximum amount of benefit is to be secured from its existence and work it will be secured by enabling it to concentrate on major works, particularly those involving new developments. For these reasons the Government proposes to extend the limit of the exemption from £30,000 to £100,000.

At the same time the opportunity has been taken to deal in this Bill with another problem which arises in connection with the works which have to be referred to the committee. Under the Act as it stands at present repairs of all public works except roads must be referred to the committee if such repairs are estimated to cost more than £30,000. This particular requirement has caused and continued to cause a certain amount of difficulty in connection with the relaying of railway track. Relaying is now the principal activity of the department of the Chief Engineer for Railways and is, of course, essential in the interests both of safety and efficiency. A great deal of relaying is done every year and the cost of it has increased in proportion to the cost of other works. Perhaps the proportion is a little higher because of the very substantial rise in the price of sleepers. In recent years the cost of a sleeper has risen from 7s. 6d. to 51s. 6d.

It is not practicable nor desirable that every proposal for relaying railway track should be referred to the committee. There is no need for it because there is no question as to whether the work should be done or not. In any case, as the law is at present, the necessity to refer the work can be avoided by arranging the relaying programme so that the individual projects are kept below £30,000. Such a practice, however, is not desirable. In the public interest the Railways Department should be free to proceed with relaying without the need for dividing it up into a number of separate jobs, each under the limit mentioned in the Act.

It is therefore proposed in the Bill to exclude from the definition of "public work" both the relaying of railway track where no alteration of gauge is involved, and also repairs and maintenance of public works generally. There is no question about the Government's obligation to keep its public works in a proper state of repair, and therefore repairs do not raise any question which justifies an inquiry by the Public Works Committee. If, however, in the course of repairs any reconstruction of a public work is involved, and the cost exceeds the amount mentioned in the Act, such reconstruction will still have to be referred to the committee. The Bill will not affect inquiries into any matters now before it. Even if a work is estimated to cost only £70,000, the Government may refer it to the Public Works Committee, but it must refer to it all works estimated to cost over £100,000.

Mr. Lawn—This Bill is a condemnation of the Liberal Party's policy on price control.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The limit of £30,000 was imposed by legislation introduced in 1927 when members' salaries were only £400 a year, and the proposed threefold increase in the limit is proportionately less than the increase in members' salaries since that time. The proposed limit is actually worth less than the £30,000 imposed in 1927.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

MOTOR VEHICLES REGISTRATION FEES (REFUNDS) BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from June 29. Page 510.)

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley)—Last year Parliament passed the Road Transport Administration (Barring of Claims) Bill which has a direct relation to the Bill now before the House. That legislation barred all claims that could have been made prior to its passing in consequence of the Privy Council's decision in the *Hughes and Vale* case. It is interesting to read the object of the Bill, as stated by the Premier in explaining it. It was to prevent claims being made against the Transport Control Board or any other governmental authority or officer for recovery of any licence fees or permit fees paid in connection with the administration of the Road and Railways Transport Act. The Premier said that when the decision of the Privy Council in the *Hughes and Vale* case was made known, it was recognized that carriers who had paid fees for interstate licences or permits might have a claim for repayment and that it was believed that such claims would probably be well founded at law. He continued:—

Another aspect of this question is that the persons who have paid the Transport Control Board's fees have almost certainly reimbursed themselves by allowing for them in prices or other charges, which are eventually borne by the general public. If they now received refunds it would be an additional and unexpected profit to them, at the expense of the taxpayer. For these reasons there is a strong justification for barring claims.

I am proud that I was one of three members who opposed the Barring of Claims Bill, and

our action has been justified by the introduction of the present measure. It would be just as easy today to pass a Bill barring the claims of those people who could apply in respect of moneys paid under the regulations of February last that were found invalid recently by the High Court. On occasions the minority in this House has proved to be right, and the voting on the Barring of Claims Bill was a notable instance. We said it was wrong to legislate away from people the protection of and the right to apply to the court. Apparently the question has been considered and no such attack is to be made on this occasion.

I would not object to all transports being required to pay just fees. The High Court's recent judgment declaring the regulations of February 1 invalid clearly indicates that the court's decision was not directed against the charges as such, but against interference with the freedom of transport between the States. That is always the attitude that some members, including me, have adopted in this place. Provided the amount of taxation collected from these people is not sufficient to prohibit their operating on the roads, as is sometimes the danger, and provided it is a fair and just tax, there can be no objection to it, and it should be possible, as the Premier said, to devise a scheme whereby interstate transport can pay just dues towards the maintenance of roads and at the same time operate between States without infringing section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. I applaud the Government for recognizing the necessity to hand back this money and for legislating in this direction, just as much as I deplored its barring the people from access to the courts on a previous occasion.

Mr. DUNNAGE secured the adjournment of the debate.

LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONTROL OF RENTS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from June 28. Page 470.)

Mr. STEPHENS (Port Adelaide)—This Bill is designed to extend the operation of the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act for a further 12 months. The Government apparently recognizes the necessity for such legislation, but clause 3 of the Bill provides exemption from the Act to landlords and tenants. The Act was designed to control rents but if this clause is passed the Act will be rendered useless. If a landlord and tenant enter into an agreement the property concerned is exempt from the Act. I realize that there are good and bad landlords the same as there are good and bad tenants, but this clause will apply to good and bad. The Premier apparently envisaged some danger in this clause because he said "It is not a provision which would be availed of by smart Alecs." I think it opens the door wide for smart Alecs. They will be able to force people, because of circumstances, to enter into agreements they normally would not accept. My remarks are not directed at the good landlords and while this may protect them it will assist the go-getters and smart Alecs.

Today, hundreds of people are seeking homes. This afternoon, in reply to a question by Mr. Tapping concerning temporary homes at Taperoo, the Premier said that because of the housing shortage they should remain. A few weeks ago the tenants of a landlord friend of mine vacated the home he was living in and he told me that as soon as people heard that the house was vacant he was bombarded with offers of three times the amount of rent he had charged his previous tenants. As soon as any house becomes vacant people will rush it and the unscrupulous landlord will lease it to the highest bidder. An owner will be able to say, "At present I am getting 30s. a week for it, but I want £3. If you don't sign an agreement to pay that, you cannot have it." Desperate people will sign any agreement to get a roof over their heads. The rent fixed in an agreement will not be what it should be but what the landlord demands. I hope this clause will not be passed, but I realize that if members opposite have made up their minds to accept it, nothing I say will move them. When members opposite decide on something that is the end of it. It should be provided that an agreement between the landlord and tenant should be submitted to the court for registration and that if the court regards it as unfair it should not be registered. If members opposite desire justice to be done they should agree to such a provision. I have been accused of not trusting the courts, but I have denied that. I now ask members opposite whether they trust the courts, which are competent to decide whether or not an agreement is fair. If there should be a smart Alec trying to get more rent the agreement should not be registered.

Mr. Tapping—A Fair Rents Court would be the answer.

Mr. STEPHENS—Yes, but now the Housing Trust handles the matter. Perhaps the agreement could be submitted to that authority. I do not care to whom it is submitted so long as justice is done. Reference has been made to the demolition of houses for the purpose of building factories, shops, etc. This practice has meant fewer houses being available. On the Port Road many houses have been demolished. At the corner of Torrens Road and Islington Road within a distance of 100 yards three service stations have been erected following the demolition of houses. I cannot say how many have been demolished to enable extensions to be made at Holdens. In this debate several remarks have been made to which I take exception. One member spoke about men in America working two lots of 40 hours in one week, but that is all tommy rot. Recently, when in New Zealand, I had a talk with a wealthy squatter from Queensland and a large employer from New York. The squatter said that Australia would be all right if it were not for the 40-hour week and the domination of trade unions. I was about to reply to him, but did not get the opportunity because the American replied in such a way that the Queenslander walked out of the room. The American said that men like the Queenslander did not know what they were talking about when they condemned the Australian workers. He suggested that perhaps the squatter had not done a day's work in his life, and that men like him would probably be starving if it were not for the workers. The American said that in his own company he employed 500 men and that another company of which he was a director had 15,000, and that they all worked a 36-hour week. He pointed out that if there were not a further reduction in the working week following the introduction of modern machinery there would be much unemployment, which would mean a crippling of home markets.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—But they are not short of commodities in America. On the other hand, we are short of them.

Mr. STEPHENS—Why? Because of the rotten laws under which our people work today and because of the poor Governments that are in office. The people are not encouraged to go into the country districts to produce more. The Government forces thousands of people to come into my district, which is already badly overcrowded. It says that we need many migrants to populate our country, but they are crowded into the metropolitan area. The member for Wallaroo (Mr. McAlees) frequently tells us what is happening in his district. My friend to whom I previously referred told me, "The workers are the people that make the bridge to carry us across the river, the clothes we wear, and the food we eat. If it were not for them we would starve. They build first-class carriages, but seldom ride in them." That man is not a trade union secretary or a member of the Labor Party, but a director of a big company. His name is McLeod, and I shall be pleased to introduce him to members opposite when he returns to Australia. I hope members realize that this Bill is not needed to protect people against the good landlord, but against go-getters who want to take advantage of the housing shortage and raise rents steeply. I hope the Bill will pass the second reading, but be amended in Committee.

Mr. FLETCHER (Mount Gambier)—I support the Bill, though it is not needed to protect people against the actions of the good landlord or good tenant. I cannot see how we can dispense with landlord and tenant regulations at present. We must protect people against the go-getter, whether he be a landlord or a tenant. I know many good landlords and tenants in my district, but there are others who do not try to keep a house in good repair. During the war many houses fell into disrepair because it was impossible to get tradesmen and materials to repair them. Now it would cost at least a year's rent for necessary repairs. This presents a problem to landlords, many of whom would like their tenants to purchase their houses. However, because of the cost of repairs and the deposit needed before a lending institution will advance a sufficient loan it is often impossible for the tenant to buy. Therefore, many apply to the Housing Trust for a rental or purchase home, but the trust has to cater for the most deserving cases first, so many tenants living in older homes have been forced to wait years to get a trust home. For a number of years I have been amazed at the number of homes that have been demolished to make room for garages and petrol stations both in the city and country districts. Much manpower and materials can be found for this work, whereas owners of small homes have often been unable to obtain men and materials to effect repairs and additions. Legislation could have been introduced to rectify this state of affairs which persists even today. Occasionally I have tried to secure the services of a tradesman to do small jobs but have found it impossible.

How many rental homes in the city and suburbs are being put into a decent state of repair today? How much does it cost to repair and paint a home? To paint a home that has been neglected since before the war would cost at least one year's rent. The Premier has said that no more temporary homes will be erected by the trust, but in some larger towns temporary homes would give much needed relief. In Mount Gambier there are shocking cases of overcrowding and if more homes were available I would not be pleading for more temporary homes. I know of one family who, merely because nothing else was offering, were living in a building in which I would be ashamed to stable animals. I support the Bill with reluctance and trust that it will be improved in Committee.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.9 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, August 16, at 2 p.m.