

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, August 16, 1955.

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

BULK HANDLING OF GRAIN ACT.

His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor intimated by message his assent to the Act.

QUESTIONS.**IRON ORE DEPOSITS.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yesterday morning's *Advertiser* reported the Premier as having said that new finds of iron ore near Iron Knob had proved the geological concept of iron ore deposits in South Australia to be wrong and that the future of heavy industry here was no longer tied up by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company. Has he any information regarding these new finds, particularly regarding the tonnages of high grade ore available as a result of new finds both within and outside the Broken Hill Proprietary Company's leases? Further, what steps does the Government propose to take to have the new finds outside the company's influence developed, and what steps, if any, have been taken towards establishing a steel works at Whyalla?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I think that until quite recently the strong consensus of geological opinion was that the iron ore deposits in the Middleback Ranges were fairly well-known, of secondary enrichment, and all above ground—in fact in a conspicuous area. That idea, however, has now been disproved by two rather significant facts. Firstly, the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, in drilling on its own iron ore leases at Iron Knob, encountered lode material of iron ore at about 600ft. depth, which was much lower than anything previously found there, and a continuation of the bore found further iron ore deposits at about 1,000ft. That is very significant, as the conception of iron ore being merely surface deposits is wiped out by this very deep drilling. Secondly, the Government's investigation is fast confirming the existence of a substantial deposit of iron ore north of Iron Knob. The intersections in the lode matter are frequently 200ft. thick and up to the present it has not a large amount of overburden on it, though it is dipping to the northward and more alluvium is covering the lode matter as investigations proceed northwards. It is impossible to give tonnages at present because, until a large number of bore holes have been drilled, it is impossible to block out and give some reliable

estimate of the tonnages in any particular lode matter. I believe, however, that the amount of material that has been fairly definitely proved up to the present is from 10,000,000 to 20,000,000 tons of high grade material, but as the investigation proceeds the extent and quantity will be known better. The finds are significant and I believe will have a big bearing on the future development of the district.

Mr. RICHES—Have further negotiations taken place between the Government and the B.H.P. Company for the establishment of a steelworks? The Premier's press statement seemed to indicate that as further deposits of ore had been found on the company's leases it might bring into closer range the prospects of its establishing a steel industry in South Australia.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—In the Address in Reply debate I outlined fully what I believed to be the best methods of handling this matter. If my estimate of between 10,000,000 and 20,000,000 tons of ore is correct, it will not be sufficient to establish an industry without further deposits. To give members some idea of what is involved, from recent correspondence with a senior geologist in the United States of America I have been informed that to interest large overseas capital, deposits of between 70,000,000 and 100,000,000 tons would be required. On today's costs a steelworks to produce 1,000,000 tons a year would probably cost not less than £100,000,000, and when that is considered for a short life it becomes an impracticable proposition. No negotiations are now going on between the Government and the Broken Hill Proprietary Company. We are, as expeditiously as possible, proving what resources of iron ore are available to the Government for the purpose of considering the establishment of an industry.

NEW TOWN NEAR SALISBURY.

Mr. GOLDNEY—Can the Premier say whether any decision has been reached regarding the naming of the new town near Salisbury?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No decision has yet been reached. The Government has been considering and desires to further consider good suggestions for the name.

GAS AND ELECTRICITY CHARGES.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—A recent press statement suggested that the Government expected to be able to obtain coal at £6 a ton less than previously. Can the Premier indicate what effect this will have on the charges to the consumers of gas and electricity?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—My statement on the matter was that I expected the price of coal in South Australia to drop by 6s. 4d. a ton, not by £6. I do not think it will be possible to lower the price of electricity as a result of this reduction. That will be examined in due course, but since the last charge was fixed by the Electricity Trust it has had to bear the cost of additional margins to a considerable number of its employees and that has been done without increasing the charge to the consumer. As to the Gas Company, that matter will be examined in due course.

SLAUGHTERMEN'S RATES OF PAY.

Mr. WHITE—In this morning's *Advertiser* there appeared a report by the Abattoirs Industrial Board on piece-work slaughtermen's rates and indicating that they have been reduced. As I have met one person who seems to be confused about the whole

thing, will the Minister of Agriculture make a statement regarding the position?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The present report of the Industrial Board's new determination in respect of slaughtermen at the Abattoirs is technically correct, but the heading could be misleading because it says that the rates of pay were reduced. Actually the new determination is a considerable improvement on the rates operating prior to the case being opened by the Industrial Board as far back as March. Then a determination was made, and it has been operating since. It was made retrospective to December 20 last, but it was referred back to the board by the President of the Industrial Court with the result that the new determination is different from the one made in March. It still represents a considerable increase in the rates paid before March. The following is the position:—

	New rate. Per week. £ s. d.	Old rate. Per week. £ s. d.	Increase. £ s. d.
Mutton and lamb slaughterman	20 17 3	19 12 0	1 5 3
Calf slaughterman	20 17 3	19 2 6	1 14 9
Pig slaughterman	19 13 3	18 5 6	1 7 9

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Would the Minister of Agriculture say whether or not it is a fact that the figures given in this morning's *Advertiser* represent a reduction of £1 10s. 9d. a week for mutton and lamb slaughtermen, £2 1s. for calf slaughtermen and 3s. 10d. for pig slaughtermen? I think they represent a reduction in the rates awarded by the Abattoirs Industrial Board in March last and made retrospective to December last.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I thought my earlier reply made the position abundantly clear. The award made in March was in the nature of an interim award and subject to challenge. It was challenged and referred back by the Industrial Court to the Industrial Board, with the result now announced. Although the new determination represents a reduction on the interim award it represents a substantial increase on the rates applying prior to March.

COUNTRY ABATTOIRS FOR EXPORT MEAT.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I do not intend to discuss the merits of the strike at the Metropolitan Abattoirs or to suggest who is responsible for it, but I want to point out how the primary producer is being affected. I have no doubt that the Government has investigated certain aspects of the strike.

Has the Premier considered the advisability of lifting the embargo placed by his Government on the Noarlunga Meat Works and allow it and any other abattoirs that can measure up to Commonwealth Government requirements to take part in the export of stock from South Australia? I understand the Commonwealth Government has set a very high standard for the export of meat. I feel that the present monopoly in relation to killing is not in the best interests of the primary producers, and that decentralization would be to the benefit of the State as a whole and the primary producer in particular.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government is prepared to support the establishment of suitable abattoirs in country districts. On a number of occasions that has been stated as Government policy. I assure the honourable member that where it is economically feasible to establish abattoirs in a country area, with a proper zone to supply it, the Government is anxious to assist in the establishment and to break down what is virtually a monopoly of killing at the Metropolitan Abattoirs. At present there is no embargo on the Noarlunga Meat Works in relation to killing lambs for export. It is true that at the time it did not receive a licence from the Minister of Agriculture in this State, but the High Court ruled that our law was invalid as far as that was

concerned, and that the Commonwealth Government regulation overrode our law. The result is that at present the Noarlunga Meat Works can slaughter for export. However, the Noarlunga Meat Works is a relatively small undertaking and whether or not its works operated would not be worth an appeal overseas, as that is only an incidental matter; but the regulation of the Commonwealth cut completely across our conception of the Constitution and for that reason we appealed to the Privy Council, and the case will be heard in due course. The Government is prepared to support in a very tangible way the establishment of abattoirs in country areas, but we suggest that for economic reasons they should not be closer to each other than 80 miles, with which the honourable member will no doubt agree. At present we are considering amendments to the law in connection with the Port Lincoln abattoirs so as to enable it to compete in a general way in the metropolitan area.

HIRE OF MOTOR VEHICLES BY YOUTHS.

Mr. SHANNON—The son of a friend of mine, not yet 17, in employment and drawing a handsome salary, recently went into a motor house in Adelaide, hired a car on paying £25 deposit, took it out into the street and drove it 400 miles, without the knowledge or consent of his parents. Obviously the answer is that the boy was not under the proper control of his people, but more than that is involved in this case. The parents of the boy could have been landed with a high charge if he had got into trouble with the vehicle. He might have damaged it, or even worse things might have happened. It is a most unhappy state of affairs if young men without any responsibilities and getting too much money and not knowing how to handle it are allowed to run wild. It seems that we must therefore put some curb on the people who make vehicles available for hire.

The SPEAKER—I think the honourable member is arguing his question now.

Mr. SHANNON—I am not arguing it; I only want to explain the circumstances so that the Government can understand the problem. It seems that the consent of parents should have to be obtained before a minor can hire a vehicle.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—There are a number of aspects to this question. I assume that the person concerned had a driving licence and that his parents knew it.

Mr. Shannon—Yes.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Therefore, the fact that he was driving on the road evidently had the concurrence of his parents, and I suggest that in the main a case of this nature could be best dealt with by better parental control in the first place. Of course, the fact that this lad was a minor and was driving on the road would not absolve his parents from the responsibility of his action. I think an eminent Queen's Counsel sitting behind me would agree that the parents would be involved in any action in regard to their child. However, I will have an investigation made and advise the honourable member later.

DAMAGE TO SOUTH-EASTERN FORESHORES.

Mr. CORCORAN—Recently I visited the South-East in company with the Leader of the Opposition and at Kingston representations were made to both of us in regard to the Kingston jetty by representatives of the Lacepede district council, the Kingston Chamber of Commerce, and the Fishermen's Association. They were alarmed because the Harbors Board had erected a barricade across the jetty at a point opposite the first landing. The problem is that up to the first landing the seabed is covered with seaweed. The Harbors Board probably erected the barricade because it thought it might be unsafe for pedestrians to proceed further along the jetty, for the storms of the past week have greatly damaged the structure. The people who interviewed us want the jetty to be repaired from the barricade to the second landing, and if there is any necessity for a barricade, to have it placed at the second landing. This would largely meet the needs of the local fishermen. The people who saw me asked me to see whether the Minister of Marine would take immediate steps because this is a matter of urgency. Will he ask the Harbors Board to have repairs mentioned effected and the barricade removed and re-erected at the second landing?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Immediately it was seen that the recent storms had caused considerable damage I asked the Harbors Board to get its engineers to investigate the position all along the coast from Noarlunga to Beachport, and that was done. However, for two or three days it was impossible to ascertain the extent of the damage because the seas were so rough that the engineers could not even get on the jetties. As regards Kingston, the last report I received was that the first thousand feet had been repaired and it was considered that the

service portion of the jetty had remained intact, but from there on, on the non-service portions of the jetty which are used more as a promenade, considerable damage had occurred. The board's engineers are reporting to the board, and in due course the board will report to me. When the report is received I will let the honourable member know the results of the board's deliberations. I understand that no considerable damage occurred at Robe, that at Beachport both jetties and boats were undamaged, and that at Kingston the first 1,000ft. of jetty that had been repaired was still in good order, but that further repairs were not effected because of more urgent work having to be carried out elsewhere.

Mr. FLETCHER—I have received a telegram from the District Council of Port MacDonnell concerning damage to the foreshore. From what I can gather the Harbors Board apparently considers that this is a matter to be decided between the local council and the Government. As the high tides had washed away the foreshore the district council immediately realized the possible danger to the recently constructed foreshore road and set to work to protect it. Can the Minister of Works say whether consideration will be given to this district council's request for assistance in relation to the expenditure incurred along the foreshore and in protecting the road?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The question is associated with Government policy, and it has been raised in more than one direction. This morning I received a deputation introduced by the Hon. J. L. S. Bice and Mr. Brookman which asked for assistance in relation to storm damage at Port Noarlunga. Two years ago the Government spent a vast sum of money on foreshore reclamation work, and in most instances the work has stood up to the test, but in others damage has occurred. It is a matter of whether the Government should accept responsibility for all time following on expenditure of money under exceptional circumstances two years ago. I will take up the matter with Cabinet when I have received a report from the Harbors Board regarding Port MacDonnell. I am glad the honourable member realizes that there is some responsibility on the part of the local council, and that will help the Government in assessing the degree of assistance. The Noarlunga council has offered to meet a portion of the liability at Port Noarlunga, but I will not say anything further on the matter at this stage, except that it will be taken to Cabinet and each case considered.

Mr. CORCORAN—The following is an extract from a letter I have received from the District Council of Robe:—

My council has requested me to draw your attention to the damage caused to the foreshore of Robe by storms which occurred during the past week. The foreshore is deeply eroded in two portions near the existing tennis courts and bowling green, and the whole foreshore has moved back approximately 10ft. to 30ft. There is one narrow neck of land 25ft. in width, and if the sea reaches this portion, which it will undoubtedly do if another severe storm is experienced, the water would in the opinion of the council sweep into the main settled areas. Both the Leader of the Opposition and myself can verify that statement because we have inspected the locality. If another storm occurs this portion of the foreshore will be washed away and that part of the town will be flooded. The letter continues:—

When the allocation of grants for repairs to foreshores is being considered will you please urge that a grant be made sufficient to enable this council to sheet with red gum slabs (8ft. 2in. or 8ft. 3in. on end) similar to the portion of sheeting done by Mr. G. Lamb, a local resident, approximately 16 chains of the Robe foreshore.

Damage has also been done to the Beachport foreshore, but I have no particulars of it. Can the Minister of Works assure me that assistance will be forthcoming so that the position at both Robe and Beachport can be improved?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—As I told Mr. Fletcher and the deputation this morning, this matter involves policy, and although the damage up to the present has been relatively light, although the storm was severe, there is the question of who is responsible for the reclamation work. The matter will be considered by Cabinet.

Mr. Corcoran—It was considered last year.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Then we made a special grant because of special circumstances. Whether that should be continued under all circumstances remains to be seen. There will be no discrimination; what is done in one area will be done in another. The matter will be considered by Cabinet as soon as I have a report from the Harbors Board on the damage all along the coast.

CLERK-TYPISTES FOR SCHOOLS.

Mr. DUNNAGE—Can the Minister of Education say whether it is a fact that any recommendation of his for the appointment of a clerk-typiste at a school could be turned down by the Public Service Commissioner?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I do not think that position would arise because I do not think

the Minister of Education would make recommendations to the Public Service Commissioner. However, it may well be that a recommendation from the Director of Education could be turned down; in fact, applications for such positions are referred to the Public Service Commissioner for his recommendation.

LOXTON SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

Mr. STOTT—Some trouble is being experienced in the Loxton soldier settlement area where it is proposed to plant this year's citrus plantings in areas that are badly eroded. I am sure that the trees would be considerably damaged as the result of sand erosion and wind. Will the Minister of Repatriation see whether it is possible to plant these new citrus trees in another area where they would not be subject to wind and sand blast? Also, has the Minister received any communication from the local branch of the Australian Dried Fruits Association opposing the proposed planting of Gordos in the Loxton soldier settlement area? I do not know whether this matter comes under the agreement with the Commonwealth Government, but I understand the A.D.F.A. is very perturbed at the proposed additional plantings of Gordos on account of the difficulty in marketing dried fruits, lemons, etc.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The A.D.F.A. has been in contact with the Federal authorities in regard to the types of plantings, and that matter will be dealt with by the Commonwealth Government. I have already received a report from Loxton concerning the recent heavy wind which unfortunately damaged the hilltops in areas where it was expected that we would plant citrus. Earlier, the department had the areas graded and planted down to rye under favourable conditions. We had a good coverage, but owing to the prolonged wet weather, which was most acceptable to the country, the growth was slow and the terrific winds caused drift and created a problem. I have discussed with officers of my department the suggestion that the planting which would normally have been done this year in the damaged area be transferred to the area that we would automatically plant next year. If that can be done it will give us another chance to deal with the erosion of the last two or three weeks. Incidentally, this season so far is identical with our first season (1948) when we overcame these problems and had one of our most successful plantings. We can only hope that this year's plantings will be as successful.

DIESEL RAIL CARS.

Mr. MICHAEL—Today the Railways Department conducted a trial with the new diesel railcar on the Adelaide-Morgan line and I had the privilege of returning in it. I congratulate the Government on bringing out such a comfortable railcar. Will the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Railways, ascertain from his colleague whether the trial was successful from the point of view of the Railways Department, and if so, when it is likely that the new railcars will be running permanently on that line?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will obtain that information and bring down a report as early as possible.

Mr. McALEES—Two years ago travellers on the Moonta line were promised a diesel railcar. A trial run was made and, from what I gather, it was a success. Can the Minister say whether that was so?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—As I have said frequently, I do not know of any statement by either the Railways Commissioner or myself that the first priority in the use of these railcars was to be given to Moonta, although I understand that a trial run was held on that line. Speaking from memory, I believe that 20 of these cars are on order, and it will be at the Commissioner's discretion where they are used to the best advantage. I will, however, inquire where the Moonta service comes in the scheme.

STANDARDIZATION OF GAUGES.

Mr. FLETCHER—Can the Treasurer say whether the Commonwealth Government has provided the money necessary for this year's work on the standardization of railway gauges in this State?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Work on the standardization of gauges in the South-East is undertaken under an agreement between the State and the Commonwealth, whereby the State has agreed to accept certain liabilities and the Commonwealth to make certain moneys available. An agreement has been signed by the Commonwealth Government for all South-Eastern lines: Beachport-Millicent, Naracoorte-Kingston, and the Glencoe spur. We have had some communications from the Commonwealth this year, and it has agreed to make available £600,000 on condition that we cancel certain project orders, particularly that from Beachport to Millicent. This Government's reply has been that the money is necessary, but that we consider the two matters should be dealt with separately: one should not be contingent

on the other, because under the agreement the Commonwealth is obliged to make available the necessary finance. I anticipate that finance will be made available to enable the programme to continue, that this year some work will commence on the Naracoorte-Kingston line and that the Mt. Gambier-Millicent section will be substantially completed.

HOUSING TRUST HOMES.

Mr. TAPPING—It was announced recently that the Housing Trust would build one-person cottage flats at Edwardstown and Parkholme. In view of the big demand for this type of home can the Premier say whether the trust intends to build similar homes in the Semaphore district?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will find out for the honourable member.

Mr. QUIRKE—Some time ago, in reply to questions, the Premier said that the Housing Trust would be prepared to build rental homes in Clare. Homes have been built there but there have been repercussions elsewhere. A number of stock and machinery firms desire to house their representatives in country towns and they, in turn, employ local people. As a result there is a demand for rental homes and recently I received a request from Saddleworth which, upon investigation, revealed that there is justification for the erection of about six homes there. Will the Premier ascertain if it is the trust's policy to extend its rental homes programme in country areas and, in particular, at Saddleworth?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes.

Mr. STEPHENS—Recently two old ladies, both old age pensioners, were living in a house in my district, but the house was sold and they were told they had to leave. They endeavoured to get out, but I understand the owner of the house removed the iron from the roof with the result that their furniture was soaked by rain and some inches of water lay on the floor of their rooms. A nearby hotel-keeper allowed them to sleep in his hotel, but when they applied to the Housing Trust for one of the pensioners' flats they were told they could not get one, because they were for elderly married couples. Is it the policy of the trust or the Government to prevent old ladies from going into pensioners' flats?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If the honourable member will give me the names of the two ladies I will make inquiries.

MOUNT VICTORIA HUT URANIUM.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Recently I read in the press a statement by the Premier that the Government intended to negotiate with a pri-

vate company to develop a uranium mine in the Mt. Victoria Hut area. In view of the Premier's great enthusiasm to develop the uranium resources of this State as a State undertaking conducted by the Mines Department, and the magnificent work by Mines Department officials—commended by visiting experts of high rank—in developing the mine at Radium Hill, and the treatment plants both there and at Port Pirie, why has there been an apparent change in policy and why should a rich field be turned over to private enterprise?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The development of Radium Hill was undertaken as a result of an agreement entered into between the Government and the Combined Developmental Agency, an authority representing the U.S.A., the United Kingdom and Canada. Under that agreement the finance for the development of Radium Hill—nearly £4,000,000—was largely subscribed from overseas funds. That enabled the Government without impairing Loan works to carry on a development that will be of great importance to South Australia. There is no enthusiasm today by the Combined Developmental Agency for projects of that nature because in the meantime many other undertakings have come into being without their having to provide the capital, and capital from overseas is not freely available for that purpose. Therefore, if the Government is to develop this mine as a Government activity it will have to do so at the expense of other activities which normally absorb all our Loan money. We would have to cut down on our hospital, school or public works programmes. The Government considered it better to permit a mining company to develop the material to the concentrate stage, when the Government would purchase it. The treatment plant at Port Pirie should be capable of treating the product from Radium Hill as well as from the new area.

CLOTHING PRICES.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—Can the Premier indicate the circumstances that invoked the recontrol of clothing prices recently?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government received a request some time ago from the retail traders in clothing for a decontrol of prices. At that time clothing prices were controlled in all States. South Australia's action in decontrolling clothing prices led to decontrol in other States. The request for decontrol was accompanied by an assurance that so far as C series index clothing was concerned the existing margins would be maintained and there would be no increase and as a result of that assurance the Government acceded to the request. After some time it was discovered that the margins

had been increased in certain respects. This was brought to the notice of the industry and the margins were reduced. More recently a study of the C series index figures revealed that the margins in South Australia were higher than in any other State, with the possible exception of New South Wales. The Government believed that the margins granted for the C series index articles were ample. Members will realize that it is essential to take every possible care to see that margins do not increase when the basic wage is pegged, otherwise it could lead to industrial difficulty. Under those circumstances the Government considered it necessary to reimpose a control which I do not believe is in any way harmful to the industry.

TRAMWAYS TRUST SERVICES.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I have been informed that the existing tram route from Cross Roads, Hyde Park, to Adelaide is to be discontinued in favour of a diesel bus service and that it is intended to divert the buses via Angas Street and Hanson Street to Frome Road. Will the Minister of Works ascertain whether consideration has been given to the fact that this service is used extensively by people desiring to connect with rail services, particularly workmen at Islington? According to press statements a diesel bus service will be used to transport people to the Royal Show. There is already a tram track to the showgrounds and recently a new tram track was laid in Franklin Street for that purpose. Will the Minister ascertain from the trust its intentions concerning all alterations to the existing tram, trolley and diesel bus services?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will obtain the most up-to-date information on the matter, but I do not know whether the member refers to the whole of the services in South Australia or only to those he mentioned.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Those I mentioned will do for a start.

INCENTIVES IN INDUSTRY.

Mr. FRED WALSH—A statement appeared in the press last week regarding a remark by the Premier that he favoured incentives. It followed a deputation to him from the Trades and Labor Council, when certain proposals were submitted. One statement was that men over 65 years of age should be encouraged to continue in employment. As the word "incentive" is often used in connection with such things as bonus systems, payments by results, and piece-work, a certain amount of ambiguity has arisen in the minds of readers of the newspaper about the Premier favouring incentives. Will he say whether he used

the word to cover the encouragement of men over 65 to continue in employment?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No. The matters placed before me by the deputation did not deal with the employment of men over 65 years of age, but with a number of topics associated with Mr. Geoffrey Clarke's question today regarding margins, particularly for lower paid operatives and those on the basic wage, including some employed by the Government. It had no reference at all to people over 65 years of age continuing in employment.

BARMERA HOSPITAL CHARGES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Has the Premier obtained a report following on the question I asked on June 21 regarding increases in maternity fees at the Barmera public hospital? A letter I received showed that the cost in one instance had been £30 and it was regarded as a big increase.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have received the following report from the Director-General of Medical Services:—

Fees were first determined in terms of section 47 (1) (a) of the Hospitals Act, 1934-1952, for all maternity patients in country Government Hospitals, in March, 1954. The reason for this action was partly because of representations being made by representatives of boards of management of country Government subsidized hospitals, which hospitals charge full fees for all patients who are in a position to pay fees, and because there are no free beds available to maternity patients in the city and metropolitan area where all maternity patients are required to enter private hospitals and pay full fees, or the Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital or the Queen Elizabeth Maternity Hospital. Fees for maternity patients in country Government hospitals were increased from March 28, 1955, to conform to the fees being charged at the Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth Maternity Hospital. Where the circumstances of a patient are such that the payment of the hospital fees would create a hardship, application may be made for a reduction in the charge and, following inquiry into the financial position of the patient, the charge may be reduced or, if necessary, entirely remitted.

RENT CONDITIONS.

Mr. QUIRKE—It has been brought to my notice that cases of hardship occur to landlords under section 64 of the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act. That section provides that on the death of the lessee the people living with him at the time of his death can automatically get the same protection as he had. I have no objection to that being continued for the widow or widower, but in some cases it now applies to entirely different people. Will the Premier

look at the section with a view to whittling down its extremely wide application?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes.

ROAD GRANTS.

Mr. CORCORAN—During my recent visit to the South-East several district councils told me that their road grants for this year had been considerably reduced, which surprised them because they thought more money would be available as a result of increased motor taxation. Will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Roads the reason?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—It is true that the Minister of Roads has had further funds allocated to him, and the whole amount available has been allocated, so some district councils may have received increased grants or perhaps further responsibilities have been placed on the Highways Department for roads in various areas. If the honourable member will let me know the district councils to which he referred I will get some specific information for him, but speaking generally, district councils have had increased amounts allocated for roads in their areas.

MENTAL INSTITUTION PATIENTS.

Mr. LAWN (on notice)—How many patients, according to the Superintendent of Mental Institutions, who could have been cared for more appropriately in their homes by relatives, or in an infirmary type of hospital, were in mental institutions during each of the years from 1932 to 1953?

The Hon. M. McIntosh, for the Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Superintendent of Mental Institutions reports:—

In giving the following estimates at this date, for each specific year from 1932, a fairly wide margin must be allowed for error:—

1932	100
1933	100
1934	100
1935	100
1936	100
1937	150
1938	150
1939	150
1940	150
1941	150
1942	200
1943	200
1944	200
1945	200
1946	300
1947	300
1948	350
1949	350
1950	350
1951	350
1952	350
1953	350

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES.

The SPEAKER laid on the table the report of the Royal Commission on Electoral Boundaries, together with two maps.

Ordered that the report be printed.

REPORTS OF PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

The SPEAKER laid on the table report by the Public Works Standing Committee on the Croydon Girls Technical School, together with minutes of evidence, and its second progress report on water and sewerage schemes for the new town north of Salisbury.

Ordered that reports be printed.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 2).

His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, by message, recommended the House to make provision by Bill for defraying the salaries and other expenses of the several departments and public services of the Government of South Australia during the year ending June 30, 1956.

In Committee of Supply.

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

That towards defraying the expenses of the establishments and public services of the State for the year ending June 30, 1956, a sum of £7,000,000 be granted; provided that no payment for any establishment or service shall be made out of the said sum in excess of the rates voted for similar establishments or services on the Estimates for the financial year ended June 30, 1955, except increases of salaries or wages fixed or prescribed by any return made under any Act relating to the Public Service, or by any regulation, or by any award, order, or determination of any court or other body empowered to fix or prescribe wages or salaries.

Resolution agreed to, adopted in Committee of Ways and Means, and agreed to by the House.

Bill introduced by the Hon. T. Playford and read a first time.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It follows the usual form of Supply Bills, and provides for the issue of £7,000,000 to carry on the Public Service of the State pending the passing of the Appropriation Bill. The moneys supplied under the first Supply Bill will be exhausted by the end of the month and this further amount will be sufficient to the end of October. Clause 3 provides that no payments shall exceed similar lines on the Estimates for last year, except that increases in salaries or wages can be paid, and the Treasurer is authorized to pay the increases.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages without amendment.

Later the Bill was returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

**PUBLIC WORKS STANDING COMMITTEE
ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from June 30. Page 525.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—In supporting the Bill I indicate that I doubt the advisability of raising the limit of cost of public works which are exempt from the Public Works Standing Committee Act to an amount as great as £100,000. Although costs have risen considerably since the limit of £30,000 was first stipulated, I consider that £75,000 would be a more suitable limit at this stage. In his second reading explanation the Minister said that the proposed increase was about 250 per cent of the original amount and that this was reflected in the increases in costs since 1927 when that amount was fixed. I have every reason to believe that the committee has done and is doing a good job. At one time I was nominated for appointment as a member of the committee, but the Government in its wisdom would not accept the nomination. That was a personal reflection on me, and the Government's refusal to appoint me to the committee has never been explained. Although certain suggestions about why I was not appointed have been made to me privately, it would be gratifying to know the real reason for the refusal of my nomination.

Mr. Jennings—Perhaps the Government does not like you.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I cannot help that. I represented the Opposition on another committee and I believe that my work there over a number of years had value. In his second reading explanation the Minister said the cost of living had increased enormously since 1927, and I have taken the opportunity to investigate the factors that have given rise to this increase. In this connection the period covered by World War II and the immediate post-war period must be considered when assessing the relevant increases in costs. Further, I have taken the Federal basic wage as being identical with the State living wage, because this Government some years ago introduced legislation to equate both wages. From its 1939 level of £3 18s. the basic wage increased in 1944 to £4 13s., in 1946 to £4 14s. and in 1949 to £5 19s. Since 1949 it has increased to its present pegged level of £11 11s., which has denied to the

worker the 11s. which he would receive today if the basic wage were unpegged.

Mr. Lawn—The increase since 1949 is the result of the Liberal Party's lack of policy on price control.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Yes. I mentioned 1949 because it was in that year that the present Menzies-Fadden Government commenced its operations in the Federal sphere. Since 1949 price controls have been lifted and the basic wage pegged, and the Playford Government, which is of the same complexion as the Menzies-Fadden coalition, is reimposing certain price controls although it knows that the Liberal Government in Victoria will not take the same action. Whether the limit stipulated in the Act is increased to £75,000 or £100,000 the plain fact is that the increases in costs to which the proposed increase is attributed have been caused by the Government's action over the past few years. It is no good saying that the cost of Western Australian sleepers has increased or of referring to the cost of the red gum sleepers that were used years ago, before the natural supply of this timber ran out. The fact is that Liberal Governments, by the implementation of their policies, have allowed costs to rise enormously.

The Minister said that expenditure on the relaying of railway track would not in future have to be referred to the Public Works Committee. If any fault is to be found with the present procedure it is that, although the committee may inquire into and report on a project and although its recommendation is invariably accepted by the Government and the project included in the Loan Estimates, no report is made to Parliament on the progress of the work over the years. The raising of the limit in the Act, whether to £75,000, £100,000 or £200,000, will not solve that problem. Information on the progress of projects should be made available to this House. In this regard the duplication of the line between Goodwood and Marino serves as a good example. Seven years ago it was estimated that this work would cost about £100,000, but today it is far from finished, and what is the extra cost involved because of increases in costs over that period? Over the years questions have been asked about the establishment of a Public Accounts Committee, which could investigate such expenditure. If the Public Works Committee continues to make recommendations on certain projects and those projects are not completed within five years of the making of such

recommendations we will reach a stage where further investigations will be required. About three or four years ago the Public Works Committee inquired whether there should be an overhead railway bridge on the Brighton line at the South Road-Cross Road intersection at Emerson or whether the train should go underground, but the Railways Commissioner and Highways Commissioner could not agree and the committee could not make a favourable report. The representations made by local councils were ignored. They had taken a census of the traffic, which is only minor compared to what it will be when the Chrysler organization is established in that area. Neither the Railways Commissioner nor the Highways Commissioner were able to agree that the expenditure involved was warranted but either proposal would have provided safe travelling for road users. The Government has to find the money for these projects, not these officers. If a sensible approach had been adopted that project would have been completed.

I appreciate that the Education Department has many problems. In connection with the new Marion high school its first problem was to acquire land and the second to erect buildings. However, I wonder whether there was sufficient co-operation between the Education and the Architect-in-Chief's departments. Apparently there was some misunderstanding because the Architect-in-Chief did not have time to have the buildings fully equipped prior to the opening of the school. Over 130 children attended on the opening day but there were no proper provisions for lavatory accommodation.

In considering various projects the Public Works Committee holds inquiries, arrives at decisions and reports to the Government which on most, if not all, occasions accepts the recommendations and agrees to make money available. Parliament is seldom advised when works are commenced and never receives progress reports on them. Our only intimation is when an official opening of some new project is to be held. The Brighton-Marino line is a glaring example of work that was approved years ago not being completed. I believe we could find many similar projects. I would like to know a little more from the Government on this matter before I agree to increase the amount from £30,000 to £100,000; I believe it is too great an increase.

Mr. BROOKMAN (Alexandra)—I support the Bill. Its main purpose is to increase the amount to £100,000 for works that must be

reported on by the Public Works Committee. There does not seem to be any argument that the present figure of £30,000 should be substantially increased. The member for Goodwood agrees with that but he has expressed the opinion that the amount should be £75,000. I do not think it will matter greatly whether it is £75,000 or £100,000, although I would prefer the latter because projects costing between those amounts are definitely of the small type these days. I have examined some of the Public Works Committee reports and it appears that even small primary schools cost about £90,000 today. High schools and area schools cost well over £100,000. The committee's inquiries are by no means confined to schools but frequently are concerned with more costly enterprises as, for example, the bulk handling of wheat. The committee also investigates water supplies, harbour alterations and other works costing considerable sums.

Mr. John Clark—Do not forget sewerage.

Mr. BROOKMAN—That is another important project. It is better for the committee to devote its valuable time to investigating these expensive projects rather than to spend so much time investigating smaller projects which are straightforward. After all, a school costing only £70,000 does not warrant the expenditure of a great deal of this committee's time. Other authorities have already devoted time to planning the projects. When the committee has to investigate projects costing millions, as it must when considering new reservoirs, the time spent on small projects is disproportionately large. It is better to increase the amount to £100,000 to enable the committee to devote more time in investigating the more expensive projects. I have confidence in the ability of the Architect-in-Chief to spend lesser amounts without waste but I am worried about rushing investigations concerning projects costing far more than £100,000. If the amount is not increased the committee's position will be intolerable.

Mr. TAPPING (Semaphore)—I support the measure because it is a step in the right direction. The proposal to increase the limit to £100,000 is consistent with present values. As a member of the committee I have found that too much time has been spent on what I would term minor matters which could more profitably be devoted to major matters. I do not suggest that the committee is careless in its efforts but some of these minor works involve too much time and attention, particularly by officers of the various Government departments. It is

not fair to bring down departmental officers unnecessarily to give evidence to the committee. If the Bill is passed they will not have to come down so often on minor projects. Up to several months ago 40 references had been before the committee this year. Twenty-six of them dealt with projects costing more than £100,000. The other 14 were for smaller amounts.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—All of which would be automatically approved.

Mr. TAPPING—Yes. Many schools are moulded on the one pattern, but at present the Education Department officers must spend much time giving evidence to the committee regarding them, and they are finding it a burden. Without referring to outstanding men in the employ of the Government, I can say that the health of many is being undermined because of the heavy duties thrust upon them. I have implicit faith in our departmental officers. We should be proud of their ability, and in saying that they show great efficiency I make no exception. The statement covers officers from the Marine, Education, Architect-in-Chief and all other departments. The proposal to increase the limit to £100,000 is consistent with the increase in the value of money. I am pleased to be able to say that in considering the various projects the members of the committee completely divorce themselves from politics, which is a great safeguard to the State. I support the Bill.

Mr. DUNNAGE (Unley)—I am a junior member of the committee, having been on it for only the last 10 months, but it has given me an opportunity to see how it works. I agree with Mr. Tapping that the members do a great work, as well as the senior civil servants who prepare plans and submit evidence. If £30,000 was a reasonable figure in 1927 £100,000 is a reasonable figure now, bearing in mind the alteration in the value of money. On members' files there are now 10 reports, and eight of them have come from the Public Works Committee. Works costing less than £100,000 are of a minor nature, and they are usually the smaller schools. A decent-sized school costs more than £100,000. For instance, it is estimated that the new Unley Boys' High School will cost £238,000. The committee has many references before it. At its meeting this morning it adopted reports dealing with 10 projects, and other reports are to come forward in the near future. They deal with all sorts of subjects. Seven new schools are to be built in the satellite town. The pro-

posals for three of them have already been approved. Then there are the sewerage and water schemes for the new town. The committee has a considerable amount of work to do regarding this new town.

Mr. LAWN—Do you suggest that the satellite town be called Newtown?

Mr. DUNNAGE—I think that would be an ideal name. Recently members of the committee had their salaries increased. In 1927 the chairman was paid £400 and the members £250. It is proposed to increase the limit of £30,000 to £100,000, but the salary of each member has been increased from £250 to only £400. I do not know whether that is supposed to be a levelling up; to me it is more of a levelling down. In 1927 the committee had only three or four references before it. This year I think there have been 40 already. I left another Parliamentary Committee to join the Public Works Committee and it has enabled me to see the vast amount of work done. I am happy to be a member of a committee that is doing a fine work. I have just been with it on a country visit to Thevenard and I have no doubt, following on that trip, that the members thoroughly earn the remuneration they get. I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Mr. FRED WALSH (Thebarton)—The increase in the minimum from £30,000 to £100,000 is long overdue. It was fixed as far back as 1927. The volume of work done by Government departments has increased considerably since those days and a limit of £100,000 in these days is equivalent to the limit of £30,000 then, bearing in mind increases in costs. Mr. Brookman spoke about some of the references to the committee not justifying an inquiry. That may be so, but there is a need for an independent investigation, apart from the departmental inquiry. For instance, the Education Department may have ideas about the requirements of a school. They are then submitted to the Architect-in-Chief who has the necessary plans drawn up. The Public Works Committee has found on a number of occasions, following on an investigation, that they are not in the best interests, taking into account site and type of building proposed. It may be that a cement asbestos roof has been recommended for a school to be constructed in a locality where there are good homes with tiled roofs. Consideration must be given to the type of home in the locality concerned and often alterations are made to the plans. To the credit of the Architect-in-Chief he frequently accepts the views of the committee. Mr. Dunnage spoke about the salaries paid to the members of

the committee. From 1927 to July of this year there was no alteration in the remuneration, despite the fact that the value of payments has increased by $2\frac{1}{2}$ times. The salary fixed in 1927 would be all right today if the volume of work were the same as it was then, but it is now 30 or 40 times as great. The committee is more or less snowed under with its work, not because the members are not public-minded and ready to do what is expected of them, but because it has insufficient time available. It is only a part-time committee and does not sit every day. During the session it sits at least two days a week, and, during the recess, three times. I am surprised that the member who has just resumed his seat did not mention that the Public Works Committee frequently visits country districts in making its inquiries, but when members receive their travelling allowances they find they are considerably out of pocket. My main point is that because of the increased volume of work it has not been possible for members of the committee to find the necessary time to study fully and make proper inquiry into all the more important projects referred to them, for so many references are before the committee at the same time. The reports are drafted by officers of the committee, but they must be fully considered by the members before they are finally approved and sometimes alterations are made to them before they are presented to the House.

I agree with the proposal to raise the minimum amount to £100,000 before any project has to be submitted to the committee, and I also agree with the proposal in clause 3 (a) about the word "repair." I believe that purely maintenance works should not have to be referred to the committee, but should be carried out departmentally without inquiry. The House will be well advised to pass the Bill so that in future the committee will have more time to spend on the more important projects.

Mr. RICHES (Stuart)—Six years or more ago I asked the Government if it would be prepared to raise the minimum amount for referring projects to the Public Works Committee. I suggested that the minimum sum

be £60,000, but I understand that the then chairman of the committee was opposed to lifting the amount, although I do not know whether he was speaking for the committee as a whole. I am pleased that the committee now favours lifting the minimum sum and I hope that it will have the effect of speeding up its work. I do not suggest that the committee has not been co-operative on matters referred to it; indeed, it has gone out of its way on many occasions to assist the Education Department, for instance. It has done excellent work in its inquiries, but the fact that plans and estimates have to be submitted to it sometimes results in delays. I know that a few years ago separate plans were drawn up for different parts of a school under which both projects would cost less than £30,000 so that one portion could be carried out in one year and the other 12 months later, thereby obviating reference to the Public Works Committee. That was not desirable and that practice has ceased, I understand, by arrangement between the Government and the department concerned.

The Bill will relieve the committee of some of its present work and that, too, is desirable. I pay a tribute to the committee. I think it can be said that since the introduction of inquiries by the committee there has not been one major blunder in any departmental work. That leads me to say that it is a pity that some other major works are not subject to the same inquiry. When explaining the Bill the Minister said that road works are not subject to inquiry by the committee, but many people associated with local government wish they were, for some roads have been constructed three times in some parts of the State, whereas some councils controlling other areas are having difficulty in maintaining their roads. I welcome this Bill and I am happy to support it.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment; Committee's report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.26 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, August 17, at 2 p.m.