

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, August 18, 1955.

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

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAY FREIGHTS AND FARES.

Mr. TRAVERS—It is reported that in New South Wales and Victoria there have been two somewhat surprising developments—first, that railway freight rates and fares are to be very substantially increased, and secondly, that freighters are to be charged one penny per ton mile for trucks carrying four tons or more. Can the Premier say whether these steps arise out of the recent interstate conference of transport Ministers and their chiefs, or whether they are in any way consonant with the policy of the South Australian Government?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—At the interstate conference at Brisbane no demands or decisions were made which in any way committed my Government as regards transport. Charges levied by the railways in the two States mentioned are a matter entirely under the control of the States concerned. I was much concerned this morning, when I heard there had been a sharp increase in railway freight rates in New South Wales, to see what immediate effect this would have on South Australian coal prices, but I was pleased to learn that coal for export will be exempt from these increases; so the increased charges will virtually have no effect on coal supplies for this State. On the general question of transport charges, carriers in South Australia have on numerous occasions expressed general satisfaction with the type of charge made in this State and oppose very strongly the introduction of a ton-mile charge which, they say, would be burdensome to them in a number of ways and I think would cause much administrative difficulty in calculating the amounts due. In this State we have tried to avoid ton-mile charges, believing it best to have a simple method of charging, something based on a computation easily arrived at. There was no decision in regard to transport matters and certainly none to increase freight rates. On the general question of transport control, the Government is influenced by the opinion of the transport companies, and we are investigating all alternatives to ton-mile charges, which are at present being adopted in other States. Sir Edgar Bean is making a report to the Government on the matter. We feel

that it is just and proper that interstate carriers using and damaging our roads should make some contribution towards their upkeep.

Mr. Shannon—I think the carriers themselves agree with that.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes.

Mr. Macgillivray—That is not correct. Only some of them agree. Others have said they do not agree.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The interstate carriers have said that they agree. I have heard some foolish people make contrary remarks at times but I have not heard one sensible person deny that a service should be paid for, especially if rendered in connection with a commercial transaction. I give the assurance that there is no proposal to increase railway charges in this State and that the Government is anxious to avoid charges that would be in any way burdensome on the transport industry.

COMMONWEALTH-STATE HOUSING AGREEMENT.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the attention of the Premier been drawn to an article in yesterday's *News* regarding proposals supposed to have been considered by the Federal Cabinet for a variation of the Federal-State Housing Agreement? The report referred to:—

1. An increase in interest on Commonwealth housing grants to States from 3 to 4½ per cent.
2. The initial diversion of 20 per cent of the Commonwealth housing grants away from State housing authorities to building societies to encourage more building for ownership instead of for letting.
3. The subsequent diversion of an increasing proportion of Commonwealth housing grants to building societies.

Can the Premier inform the House of the possible impact of these proposals on our State housing programme if they should be insisted upon by the Commonwealth Government?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—A number of proposals in connection with housing were discussed at the last Premiers' Conference. A number of conclusions were reached but some matters were left in abeyance because on them the Commonwealth had to determine policy before a conclusion could be reached. The first was that all State housing agreements terminated at different times. Some of them had only part of the year to run; others had all this financial year. The Commonwealth agreed with the States that it would be advisable to extend the present State agreements so that all would terminate at the same time. The agreement for this State was due to terminate in six months' time but under

that decision it will go to the end of this financial year. The proposal reported in the press yesterday will not affect this year's housing figures. The Commonwealth has made it clear on a number of occasions that it intends to increase interest charges for the money to be made available to the States. I think that is a retrograde step as it will increase substantially charges that must be levied for rental houses, and it will not aid people who have to purchase houses in providing for the repayment of interest and principal because it will again increase the payment charges that must be made in respect of these loans. On the second point, I have advocated that the money should be made available to the State, that the State should be responsible for repayment to the Commonwealth and that the State should have a very great discretion as to the type of housing—whether rental or ownership. South Australia has always given a very substantial preference to the home ownership provisions, and in the last few years we have probably had more houses sold under our Housing Trust legislation than any other State in the Commonwealth—certainly a bigger percentage than any other State. I believe it would be wrong on the Commonwealth's part to make money available and tie it up with something that might be suitable in some States but quite ineffective in others.

FIRE PRECAUTIONS IN SCHOOLS.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Recently a parent brought before my notice a problem of which I was unaware, although I have had 15 years' active association with schools. In most of our public schools there is only one exit from each room, and many upstairs rooms open on to a verandah from which the exits are limited. No thought appears to have been given to safety precautions in the event of a fire. Will the Minister of Education indicate what provisions have been taken to secure the greatest safety of scholars in public schools in case of fire by means of exits, fire extinguishers or any other methods?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The question is a very general one for me to be able to give a particular reply. However, I can inform the honourable member that both the Education Department and the Architect-in-Chief's Department have, over a period of years, considered the safety of children in all its aspects. As the matter has been raised, I shall investigate it thoroughly and bring down a considered report, giving details as requested by the honourable member.

ELECTRICITY ACCOUNTS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I have had two reports concerning people who have had their electricity supply discontinued. One person apparently received a final notice for payment of her account, and when the time expired she paid the amount on the last day to a bank in Glenelg. On the same day the Electricity Trust ordered that her supply be discontinued, which was done. She applied to the trust for the supply to be reconnected and was informed that the trust would check to see if she had paid the account. She had to buy candles to provide light and was then confronted with an obligation to pay an additional 5s. to the trust for a further supply, and this meant a special trip to Adelaide. Another person, who was in business, was not at home when the electricity officials called to read the meters, so the account had to be estimated. It seems that an overcharge was made, but because the consumer did not pay the account the trust discontinued the supply. I believe hardship was caused to the consumers in both cases, particularly in the former. If people fall on bad times and are not in a position to pay the account when it is due, will the trust still charge an extra 5s. for the supply to be reconnected, seeing that it has a monopoly in this field?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Obviously, the Electricity Trust cannot supply electricity to people who do not pay the appropriate amount for it. The trust does not have any revenue to meet the cost of maintaining its undertaking except from the payment of accounts. I assure members that every year I investigate all the trust's affairs to see that the charges to the public are kept at the lowest possible level. Every person who uses electricity must pay the appropriate amount for it, and that is the only way we can maintain fair charges for the service. If the honourable member will let me have the particulars of the two cases mentioned I will have them investigated and give him a further reply.

VICTOR HARBOUR SEWERAGE.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—Has the Public Works Committee finalized its report and recommended to Cabinet a sewerage scheme for Victor Harbour? If so, has Cabinet approved of a scheme, and will the Minister of Works, in view of the proposed increased costs for sewerage services, submit the approved scheme and conditions to the councils concerned before the work is commenced?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The question involves both policy and a matter of routine.

Firstly, a sewerage scheme for Victor Harbour estimated to cost £114,000 was referred to the Public Works Committee on December 16, 1949, but the committee has not yet furnished a report. Before any country sewerage scheme is undertaken it will be submitted for acceptance or otherwise by the ratepayers concerned. I point out that we have before the House at present a Bill increasing the maximum rate for sewerage schemes from 1s. 9d. to 2s. 6d. in the pound, and that is probably one of the reasons why some country sewerage schemes have not been reported upon, for obviously the economics of any scheme will be regulated largely by the acceptance or otherwise of this measure.

ADULT EDUCATION.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—I understand from a previous statement by the Minister of Education that an investigation is being made into adult education. Naturally, all organizations connected with education are vitally concerned. Has the investigation reached finality, or has the Minister anything to report?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Not at the moment. I am having a very thorough investigation made into the whole scope of adult education and I received some reports and recommendations only this week. I have also received a long communication from the Vice-Chancellor of the Adelaide University on the same subject, and very soon I hope to submit a report and recommendation to Cabinet.

SCHOOL TELEPHONE ACCOUNTS.

Mr. JENNINGS—On several occasions I have questioned the Minister of Education regarding the payment of school telephone accounts and would like to express my gratitude for the way he has sought to remedy what was obviously an anomaly. This morning I received from the Minister a letter stating that he had approved the following policy:—

Schools may claim a refund in respect of all local calls and trunk calls made on official school business and in respect of school committee business provided an itemized statement is rendered to this office half-yearly indicating the caller, the person called, the nature of the business and the amount of the call.

The letter further states that this arrangement will operate on trial until June 30, 1956, and that, if the records then show that the telephones are being used almost exclusively on official business, the policy will then be confirmed. Can the Minister say whether he is willing to consider now a recommendation that the department take full responsibility for all calls made, because the cost of the staff's checking on the calls would probably be more than the slight amount the department would save by such checking?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I am pleased that the honourable member shares my confident opinion that I will still be Minister of Education after the end of the present financial year. I am not prepared, however, to commit myself in advance, but I am prepared to sympathetically consider his request after the trial period because my view is that, eventually at any rate, headmasters should be able to accept the responsibility of policing the proper use of telephones. As well as representations from the honourable member, who has been very active in this matter, I have received representations from the Schools Committees Association, the High School Councils Association, and the Institute of Teachers, and I think that if we can afford to be generous in the matter of the use of telephones on official business it will be some slight appreciation of what the school committees, school councils and teachers are doing for the Government. My appreciation of their services is recorded in the last paragraph of my annual report for the year 1954, which states:—

School councils and school committees, mothers' clubs, and parents' and friends' associations have continued their good work in assisting the schools. In 1954 they raised the sum of £96,908 for the purchase of school equipment and amenities, and the schools themselves raised £25,406 for the same purpose, together with £11,403 for patriotic and philanthropic purposes, making a total for the year of no less than £133,717. The department greatly appreciates both the material assistance thus afforded and the interest and enthusiasm shown for the welfare of the schools.

Amongst other things, they spent a considerable amount of their own money on stationery, stamps and telephone calls, and the proposed concession—if it can be called a concession—is only a small outward form of my appreciation for what they have done in the past, what they are doing at present, and what I am confident they will do in the future.

GLENELG RIVER FISHING.

Mr. FLETCHER—I have received a letter from the Glenelg River Anglers Club asking whether the Minister of Agriculture will consider introducing legislation to control the size of fish that may be caught in the three miles stretch of the Glenelg River which is in South Australia. I understand that similar control exists with regard to the size of fish caught in several other rivers; for instance, Hindmarsh, Inman and Onkaparinga. Will the Minister accede to this request?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I think this matter would be dealt with by regulation rather than legislation, but I will be prepared

to examine the question to see whether the regulations should apply the same size limit to fishing in the Glenelg River as applies in the others mentioned.

ROBE SLIPWAY.

Mr. CORCORAN—Some years ago the Harbors Board constructed a slipway at Robe to give access to Lake Butler as a winter haven for boats and to enable boats to be slipped for repairs. I understand the Harbors Board considered this facility adequate and appropriate for all purposes and intended it to serve all boats along the South-East coast. I have been reliably informed, however, that it is entirely unsatisfactory both from a practical and from an administrative point of view. More often than not it is impossible to secure a boat in the cradle for slipping purposes owing to the rough seas, and considerable delays are therefore involved in actually getting boats on to the slip. Because of the type of cradle used, most of the larger boats are unavoidably damaged in the process of transfer to the slip. Emergencies and priorities also interfere with the smooth working of the system, and boats often have to be removed from the slip in order to give place to other boats or allow them to pass from the sea to the lake or from the lake to the sea. These disabilities involve owners in considerable expense besides loss of time. Generally speaking, the best conditions for slipping a boat are the best conditions for fishing and this is another reason why owners object to the scheme. Considerable delay may be involved in getting on to the slip for even minor repairs. The spur lines, which were intended to obviate the necessity of repeatedly taking boats on and off, are apparently unsuitable, at least for the larger boats. I also understand that the slipway cannot accommodate the largest boats engaged in the fishing industry in the South-East.

When the Harbors Board first proposed the provision of this slipping facility, the local people urged the construction of a channel from the sea to Lake Butler; and in view of their experience with the slipway, they are convinced that that is the only solution of their difficulties. A channel would greatly facilitate the transfer of boats from sea to lake and back again, to the satisfaction of all concerned. There is complete unanimity among the residents of Robe, Beachport and Kingston

in respect of this matter. There is no doubt that the present slipway is an impracticable scheme as it stands at the moment. I understand that the Harbors Board anticipates spending money in the construction of a breakwater. I suggest it forgets that.

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

Mr. CORCORAN—Is the Minister of Marine prepared to take up with the Harbors Board the question of providing a channel from the lake to the sea for the purposes mentioned?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Those interested have agreed that Robe is the proper centre for a boat haven. Therefore, to that extent, I am sure the Harbors Board and the Government will be helped in assessing what extra facilities should be provided. Hitherto there has been representation that Robe, Beachport and Kingston should have their own havens. That, of course, is not feasible if we are to do the job properly. Now that the local people have apparently concentrated on Robe as being the central site, I will take up the matter with the Harbors Board to see, within reasonable limits of economy, that it shall be made a really good haven for boats along that coast.

CLOTHING PRICE RECONTROL.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—On Tuesday I asked the Premier if he could give the reason for the recommendation to recontrol clothing prices, to which he gave an answer which related to the cost of living index and the pegging of wages. In the press this morning the President of the Chamber of Manufactures (Mr. Sewell) submitted figures which tended to discount the Premier's reply. Is he now in a position to give more information regarding the recontrol of clothing prices?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I saw the report referred to and rather expected it might create some interest. Therefore, I have obtained a report from the Prices Commissioner so that members may know the precise basis upon which the Government recontrolled clothing prices. It can be analysed by the Chamber of Manufactures or anyone else who might be particularly interested in this topic. The report contained the following:—

Mr. Sewell omitted to mention that from the figures which must have been placed before him the following are the current C series clothing component figures for the capital cities:—

	Sydney.	Melbourne.	Brisbane.	Adelaide.	Perth.	Hobart.
1946 (base year)	100	100	100	100	100	100
June, 1955	215.5	215.1	209.5	219.6	215.8	216.1
Increases	115.5	115.1	109.5	119.6	115.8	116.6

I can go on further from this and state the position as obtained from the Government Statist for a different period. The following figures in relation to clothing values are shown:—

	December Quarter, 1948.		June Quarter, 1955.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.
Sydney	41	0	74	0
Melbourne	41	0	73	0
Brisbane	41	0	71	0
Adelaide	41	0	74	0
Perth	41	0	73	0

Those figures amply confirm my statement in the House that the increase in South Australia was higher than in any other State except New South Wales, where it was the same. In both cases the increase was from 41s. to 74s., and in the other States the increases were lower, notably in Brisbane, where the figure was 71s. The report further continues:—

It is pointed out that the C series index is a measure of price change only of stated articles of clothing, and whatever use the Arbitration Court makes of it the index does not purport to measure relative costs of liv-

ing as between the four component groups—food, rent, clothing, and miscellaneous. In other words, all this table really means is that, for example, if 41s. was a correct expenditure on clothing by a basic wage earner in Adelaide in the December quarter, 1948, then 74s. is correct now.

Percentage increases for the C series aggregates for the clothing group read thus:—Sydney, 78; Melbourne, 79; Brisbane, 73; Adelaide, 80; and Perth, 76.

Had wages been automatically adjusted continuously over this period according to the C series, increases in clothing prices since the December quarter, 1948, up to the June quarter, 1955, would have added the following amounts to the basic wage:—Sydney, 33s.; Melbourne, 32s.; Brisbane, 30s.; Adelaide, 33s., and Perth, 32s.

Honourable members will see that my statement yesterday is completely confirmed by the Statistician's figures showing that there had been a heavier increase here than in every State except New South Wales. I shall now give a few examples supplied to me by the Prices Commissioner and which were available at the time when the decision was made to recontrol prices. They are as follows:—

	Price at previous date of decontrol.	Prices prior to recent recontrol.
Lystav dress material	8s. 2d. yd.	10s. 9d. yd.
Nursery squares	65s. doz.	74s. 3d. doz.
Marco Elasta Strap trousers	86s. 6d. pr.	102s. pr.
Bonds athletic singlets	7s. 4d. ea.	9s. 11d. ea.
Face towels (24in. x 48in.)	9s. 8d. ea.	11s. 9d. ea.
Boy's grey suit	£5 6s. 6d.	£6 19s. 6d.
Tea towel (22in. x 32in.)	4s. 4d.	6s. 11d.
Women's rayon frock	£7 15s.	£9 2s. 6d.
Women's twin set	£5 2s. 9d.	£7 15s.
Girl's cardigan	42s. 11d.	57s. 6d.
Table cloths (bungalow)	8s. 11d.	11s. 9d.
36in. cotton dress material	6s. 11d. yd.	8s. 11d. yd.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—That is for material of the same standard?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes, and under the agreement the same margins should have been maintained as before recontrol. I shall now give some further examples of lines which were advertised as special bargains. The report contains the following:—

	Retail margin when margin previously under time of control.		Retail margin at sale Increased margin.	
	%	%	%	%
Winter sports shirts	30	67	37	
All wool cardigans (men's)	27½	39	11½	
Poplin fashion shirts	30	44	14	
Knitted work socks	32½	48	15½	
Plain poplin shirts	30	40	10	
Girls' frocks	35	86	51	

In the last instance the increase was 51 per cent over the margin which was agreed upon as being fair and reasonable. The report further adds:—

In the cases of these items and many others the invoices were sighted by two experienced prices officers and the margins being applied to arrive at the so-called bargain sale prices were calculated from the invoices and concurred with by the departmental heads of the stores concerned.

That gives some idea of what caused the Prices Branch to take action in the matter.

PRISON FARM AT LOVEDAY.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Some time ago a statement appeared in the press that the Government intended to establish a prison farm in the Loveday irrigation area. This caused a great deal of interest among ex-A.I.F. men settled in the area because they feel that

the land is not suitable for intensive cultivation, especially as it had been turned down earlier for soldier settlement. If it is now regarded as suitable for closer settlement and development, I point out that amongst young men along the river there is a demand for land. I understand that recently the Government offered eight blocks for occupation and there were 80 applications for them, indicating that over 70 men are still looking for land. It has been said that the Government intends to refer the matter to the Public Works Committee for investigation. Can the Premier say whether the statement about the proposed establishment of a prison farm is correct, and, if so, will he have the whole scheme examined before anything further is done?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—For some time the Government has been most anxious to establish a farm to give prisoners, mainly those serving long sentences, a chance to rehabilitate themselves, and some hope that by good conduct and rehabilitation they can become good and honest citizens. I believe every member supports such a proposal. Because a man made one error he should not always be regarded as a worthless member of society. He should be given an opportunity to rehabilitate himself. After a close investigation the department has advanced the view that the best place for establishing the project, which would be partly self-supporting, is along the River Murray, and as far as I know the project has been referred to the Public Works Committee for investigation.

PETERBOROUGH WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—In a report presented by the Public Works Committee yesterday a water scheme for Peterborough was recommended. Can the Premier say whether the Government has been able to give further consideration to the matter and, if so, is the work to be proceeded with forthwith?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—As the honourable member has mentioned on a number of occasions, perhaps rather critically, the Government has a number of projects before it and it is not considered advisable to proceed with one if this will delay the completion of another. Subject to that reservation, the Government believes it will be possible this year to make a start on the Peterborough scheme. I do not want the honourable member to visualize that the work will be commenced forthwith. I believe the sum of £50,000 has been set aside on the provisional Estimates for the commence-

ment of the work. The Government appreciates the need to supply water to as many parts of the State as possible.

FLINDERS PARK POLICE STATION.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Can the Premier say whether an appointment has been made for the manning of the Flinders Park police station, which has been completed for some time, and, if so, when is the officer likely to take up his duties?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—On Tuesday the honourable member mentioned that he would ask this question and I was able to get the latest information. An officer has been appointed and the delay in his taking up the appointment is caused by the department not being able to get a telephone for the station. The Postmaster-General's Department has been short of equipment but it has promised to give this matter the highest priority and I expect that the officer and the telephone will be installed in the near future.

TRANSPORT FOR KLEMZIG AREA.

Mr. JENNINGS—Will the Minister of Works take up with the Tramways Trust the matter of providing proper transport in the Klemzig area? There is a rapidly growing population but no proper transport between the Main North-East Road and Payneham Road except a bus which runs infrequently down O.G. Road. It does not run at night or weekends.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will convey to the trust the representations made by the honourable member and bring down a reply as early as possible. The trust is generally very prompt in these matters and I hope to have a reply next week.

LOCK No. 4.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Last session the Minister of Works said that the level of Lock 4 near Berri would be raised in order to obviate some of the difficulties which occur during flood periods, and I understand money was made available for the work. Can the Minister say when it will be started?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I could not do so offhand, but it has been regarded as part of the activities of the River Murray Waters Commission, to the funds of which South Australia contributes only one-quarter. It would be necessary for the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia to provide the necessary funds. I will take up the matter and get a report. As far as South Australia is concerned there will be no delay.

BROADENING OF RAILWAY TO MILLICENT.

Mr. CORCORAN—Last session the Minister of Works told me that there was a possibility of an official opening being held when the work of broadening the gauge of the railway line from Mount Gambier to Millicent was completed, somewhat similar to the functions held at Naracoorte and Mount Gambier. Since that time I have heard nothing definite and inquiries have been received from Millicent about the matter. Will the Minister ascertain from the Minister of Railways when the opening is likely to take place?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Yes, I will do that.

BULK HANDLING OF GRAIN.

Mr. McALEES—I understand that all the plans have been drawn and the site selected for the bulk grain handling terminal at Wallaroo, but from what has been reported some farmers and other people do not agree that it is the right one. Although it was first selected over 20 years ago by the Public Works Committee, and again about six months ago, it does not appear to be acceptable to everyone.

Mr. Shannon—Your mayor approved of it then?

Mr. McALEES—He has changed his mind, as have some of the farmers. Can the Minister of Agriculture throw any light on the matter, because people are asking me when the work is to begin and I cannot tell them.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The Public Works Committee reported in respect of a bulk handling installation at Wallaroo and suggested what is known as the upper site near Kohler Park, but since then the company has submitted an alternative site and plan for a terminal bin. Under the terms of the Act recently passed any scheme has to be reported upon by the Public Works Committee before it can be approved by me, and the Government has accordingly referred to the committee the company's alternative proposition and is now awaiting its reply. The site is on the northern side of the approach to the jetty. Until the report is to hand no decision can be made, so that the matter at the moment is in abeyance.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—In view of the fact that, when the Bulk Handling of Grain Bill was before the House recently, we were urged to pass it with expedition so that the Wallaroo section could be equipped with bulk handling facilities for the coming harvest, I ask the Minister of Agriculture if the dif-

ference of opinion that has now arisen as to the site of the terminal bin at Wallaroo is likely to delay the installation in that area or whether it will be available to handle the coming harvest?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I believe that the company intends to proceed forthwith with the installation of three country bins in the Wallaroo zone—at Paskeville, Bute and Snowtown, with a capacity of from 1,000,000 to 1,250,000 bushels. As the Leader implied in his question, the construction of the Wallaroo terminal bin may be so delayed that it will not be available for the shipment of wheat during the coming harvest. It now hinges mainly on the report of the Public Works Committee to which I referred earlier. If that report can be made available very soon the company might be able to proceed with the installation at Wallaroo, although not at the outset, perhaps during the latter part of the season.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I noticed a reference in the press to the appointment of directors to the company who were to be sent overseas to examine projects in other parts of the world. Have the directors been appointed and, if so, have they proceeded overseas, or is it intended that they should go in the near future?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The two Government nominees for the board left by air last Monday for their overseas investigation, and should now have arrived in America. They have not yet been actually appointed to the board because that appointment cannot be made until the guarantee of the Government in respect of the company's finances is called upon by the Commonwealth Bank. The Act clearly provides for that contingency. As soon as the guarantee is called upon the Government has the right to appoint these men.

Mr. O'Halloran—If the guarantee is not called upon they may not be appointed?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—That is so, but I do not think the Leader need worry about the guarantee not being called upon.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I understood the Minister to say that arrangements were being made by the company to erect three bins at country sidings in the Wallaroo area. It seems to me that if we have no representation on the board we will not be adequately protected as far as the erection is concerned, unless, of course, the construction is deferred until the nominees get back from overseas and, following the requisition for the guarantee, are duly appointed to the board.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The Act provides some safeguards on the points raised by the Leader in that designs and specifications of the bins have to be approved by the Minister of Agriculture. They have been submitted to me and I have approved of the general design of the bins to be constructed in the three places I mentioned. The question of their cost is outside the scope of ministerial approval. I imagine, however, that before any substantial payments are made for the construction the guarantee will be called upon and then the Government nominees will be appointed. If this happens when the two men are abroad we have the right to appoint any two others to act in the interim. That is the intention in this matter, so we will not be unrepresented.

PORT PIRIE WEST PLAYGROUND.

Mr. DAVIS—Some years ago there was a playground on the east side of the Memorial Oval just across the road from the Port Pirie West school. The Education Department made an application for this land with a view to establishing an oval and playground for the school children. Nothing has yet been done, and the site has become an eyesore. Can the Minister of Education inform me whether it is the intention of the department to establish that playground?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—This obviously happened before my time, but I am very sorry to hear that any property of the Education Department has become an eyesore to any town, more particularly to Port Pirie. I shall hasten to give the matter my personal attention and let the honourable member know what it is proposed to do with this land.

DRAUGHT STALLIONS ACT REPEAL BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN (Minister of Agriculture)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to repeal the Draught Stallions Act, 1932-1934, and to make provision for matters incidental upon the repeal. The Act was enacted in 1932 for the purpose of encouraging the breeding of draught stock of improved quality and to protect South Australian breeders against the dumping in this State of unsound stallions rejected under similar legislation in other States. The Act provides for the compulsory registration of stallions over two years of age and for the issue of certificates of soundness and approval to owners of

stallions which have been examined by a veterinary officer and which comply with the requisite standards. It is provided by the Act that uncertificated stallions are not to be used for stud purposes.

The registration and other fees which are charged are paid into a Draught Stallions Fund which is to be applied by the Minister to improving the standard of draught stock and generally to encouraging the breeding of draught stock. At June 30, 1955, the amount standing to the credit of the fund was £2,465 10s. 11d. It is considered that, in this mechanical age, the time has passed when the Act serves any useful purpose. Whereas in 1940 there were 2,092 registered draught stallions, during 1954-1955 only 23 stallions were registered, most of which were over seven years old. It is therefore considered that the time has come to repeal the Act and clause 2 of the Bill provides accordingly.

Mr. Frederick Walsh—What was the object of the Bill in the first place.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—To improve the standard of draught stock by subsidizing the purchase of draught stallions. It is proposed by clause 3 that this repeal will, in effect, operate retrospectively as from July 1, 1955, and clause 3 provides that if any registration fees are paid in respect of the licensing period beginning on July 1, 1955, the Minister may refund those fees. It is also provided that the Minister will have power to dispose of the balance outstanding in the fund and it is proposed that the Minister may use this money for the purpose of providing a scholarship or scholarships in veterinary science or in improving the services provided by the Department of Agriculture for the animal industries of the State.

I have had some figures prepared about the numbers of horses now in Australia, particularly in South Australia, and the numbers 20 years ago. The decrease is astonishing. In 1954 South Australia had a total of 51,807 horses, compared with 196,789 in 1934. Of the horses this State now has, 17,854 are draught stock, 31,249 are light horses, and 2,704 are foals. In Australia there are now 823,000 horses, compared with 1,763,225 in 1934. Australia now has 239,000 draught stock, 539,000 light horses, and 45,000 foals. South Australia has the largest reduction of any State in the number of horses. I have not the figures for every State, but it seems that the reduction has been smallest in Queensland because that State employs many more hacks and light horses for droving purposes

than other States. It seems that droving and mustering are done largely by mechanical means in South Australia and some other States, so that the horse is disappearing even in that sphere. I cannot see any revival in the use of the horse for agricultural and allied industries.

The mechanization of farms commenced prior to the depression years, although after the depression there was some resurgence in the use of the horse. Subsequently, with the improvement of farm equipment and the introduction of tractors with pneumatic tyres and the crawler tractor, which have proved far superior to the early mechanical equipment, the horse practically faded out of farm work. It is interesting to recall the price that horses fetched some years ago compared to the price of mechanical equipment and parts. In 1935, when I sold my last team of horses, I realized just sufficient to pay for one tractor tyre and tube.

Mr. Hawker—Were your horses used for crayfish bait?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I am glad to say they were not. A farmer bought my horses and used them on his farm. I could not have sold them if they had been intended for crayfish bait, because I was very fond of them. However, present-day youth will not be bothered with animals and the changeover to mechanization of farms was inevitable.

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

DAIRY CATTLE IMPROVEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN (Minister of Agriculture)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Dairy Cattle Improvement Act, 1921-1940, provides for the registration of bulls. There is a licence fee of 10s. a year for a bull over six months of age on the first day of July in any year and a fee of 5s. for a bull under that age. The amending Act of 1940 provides that, in the case of bulls registered in a herd book for beef cattle approved by the Minister, registration is to be effected without payment of a fee. The licence fees received under the Act are paid into a fund called the Dairy Cattle Fund which is to be applied for the purpose of improving the standards for dairy cattle. The purpose of this Bill is to increase these annual licence fees to £1 for a bull over six months of

age and to 10s. for a bull under that age. The original fees of 10s. and 5s. were fixed in 1921 and have remained unaltered until the present. It is proposed by the Bill that the increase in fees will not take effect until the financial year commencing July 1, 1956. If the change were made in the middle of a financial year the result would be that some fees would be paid at the old rate and some at the new.

During the last financial year the revenue from licence fees was approximately £3,700. With the increases proposed by the Bill this revenue will be doubled. At the end of June, the amount in the Dairy Cattle Fund was approximately £7,000. As previously mentioned, licence fees are paid into the fund. In addition, the fund is subsidized by contributions from the Commonwealth and the State Governments. The moneys in the Fund are being applied to meet the expenses of herd testing and to pay bull subsidies.

Mr. JOHN CLARK secured the adjournment of the debate.

TOWN PLANNING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

With the exception of some drafting amendments and an alteration of the last provision in the Bill, this Bill is similar to the Bill as passed by the House of Assembly during last Session. It will be recalled that during the passage of the Bill through committee, a number of amendments were made on the suggestion of the Municipal Association. The present Bill incorporates these amendments. The Bill makes some far reaching amendments to the law relating to town planning. In the first place, it is proposed that there should in the general interests of the community, be further control over the subdivision of land into building allotments. In the second place, the Bill provides the legislation necessary to enable a plan for the proper development of the metropolitan area to be prepared and given effect.

The existing law relating to the control of subdivision is contained in the Town Planning Act, 1929, and the general scheme of that Act is as follows:—The Act applies to plans of subdivision of land, that is, where the plan, in addition to dividing land into allotments, shows any new or intended street, road or reserve.

Plans of re-subdivision are also controlled. These relate to cases where land is divided or subdivided into allotments but where new roads are not involved. The Act applies only to plans which subdivide land into allotments for sites as residences, shops, factories or other like premises and does not apply to agricultural land.

Section 101 of the Real Property Act provides that if land is subdivided for sale into allotments, a plan of subdivision must be deposited in the Lands Titles Office. Section 18 of the Town Planning Act carries the matter further and, in effect, provides that before an owner of land can use it in a manner which has the effect of subdividing it, a plan of subdivision must be deposited. Thus, the combined effect of the Real Property Act and Town Planning Act is that, before urban land is subdivided or re-subdivided, a plan of subdivision or re-subdivision must be deposited in the Lands Titles Office or, if the land is not under the Real Property Act, in the General Registry Office. The Town Planning Act provides that before it is deposited with the Registrar-General, a plan of subdivision or re-subdivision must be approved by the Town Planner and the council concerned. In the case of certain re-subdivisions it is provided that the consent of the Town Planner only is required. The grounds upon which approval to a plan may be withheld are laid down in regulations made under the Act and the Act provides that, in the event of the Town Planner or council refusing approval to a plan, the person concerned has a right of appeal to a board called the Town Planning Appeal Board.

One defect of the present Act is that a plan of subdivision, when submitted for approval to the Town Planner or the council, must, to a large degree, be considered alone, although it is obvious that what should be done with respect to one parcel of land may be considerably affected by what is done or is proposed with respect to other land. Whilst the Town Planner and, to a lesser degree, the council may have some knowledge of what is happening elsewhere that knowledge is by no means complete. It is therefore proposed by the Bill to set up a body to be called the Town Planning Committee which will have the duty of dealing with plans of subdivision and which will also be given highly important duties concerning the broad aspects of town planning for which the existing legislation makes no provision. This combination of duties will make the committee particularly well fitted to undertake the supervision of

subdivisions. The committee will consist of five members and the Town Planner will be its chairman. The other four members will be appointed by the Governor and their term of office will be four years. One member will be appointed as deputy chairman. A quorum will consist of three members of whom the chairman or deputy chairman is one so that either the chairman or the deputy chairman must be present at every meeting. Members will be paid such fees as are fixed by the Governor.

Under the Bill, all plans of subdivision will have to be approved by the committee and the council concerned. As has been previously mentioned, the grounds upon which approval to a plan may be refused are set out in the regulations and it is proposed that, as far as the council is concerned, this state of affairs will continue. As regards the committee, it is set out in clause 6 that approval to a plan of subdivision is not to be given unless the committee is satisfied that the plan of subdivision complies with the various requirements set out in the clause. In general, these are as follows:—

The land must not be liable to inundation by drainage waters or flood waters and all the land must be capable of being satisfactorily drained. The land must be suitable for the purpose for which it is being subdivided and sufficient provision must be made for shopping sites. Natural beauty spots must be preserved but if the committee is satisfied that the land in question has been offered to the Government or the council at a price deemed reasonable by the Land Board and the offer has been declined, approval to the plan is not to be withheld on this ground. The road pattern must be satisfactory and tie in with the road pattern of adjoining land. The plan should provide for reasonably adequate public reserves having regard to existing reserves. If a plan does not make such a provision, the subdivider may be required to pay to the council an amount of up to five per centum of the value of the land. Any such payment is to be applied by the council in the purchase of reserves which shall, as far as practicable, be in the same locality as the land to be subdivided.

Two other very important matters are provided for. It is provided that the subdivider must either form and pave all the proposed roadways in the subdivision or must make arrangements with the council for the carrying out of this work at his expense. The provision in question requires the subdivider to provide a roadway 24ft. in width paved with metal consolidated to a depth of 4in. and

sealed with bitumen, tar or asphalt. This is a roadway suitable for an ordinary suburban street. This provision makes an important change in the law and places upon a subdivider the duty of providing in his subdivision the roadways of any new street or road. This obligation will, of course, be additional to that imposed by sections 319 and 328 of the Local Government Act under which contribution to road and footpath costs can be required of owners of land abutting on a street or road. These provisions will, no doubt, be invoked by councils to defray some of the costs associated with constructing water tables, kerbs and footpaths in the new streets.

A further requirement as regards land in the metropolitan area is that a plan of subdivision is not to be approved unless the Engineer-in-Chief certifies that the land can be advantageously and economically sewered and reticulated with water. Instances have occurred in the past where land which either cannot be effectively sewered or can only be sewered at unduly high cost has been subdivided and sold. The purchasers have then either had to be left without sewers or the State has had to incur excessively high expenses to provide this essential service. It is considered that land in the metropolitan area which cannot be economically sewered or reticulated should not be subdivided unless very good reason exists to the contrary and to meet this remote contingency it is provided that, if the Minister consents, approval may be given to a subdivision of land which cannot be sewered.

As a matter of interest, in respect of quite a large subdivision in the metropolitan area the Engineer-in-Chief has informed his Minister that it would cost at least £400 to provide each block with deep drainage connections. Honourable members can see, therefore, what public expense may be involved in an unsuitable subdivision of that nature. We have warned the purchasers to ensure that their land can be economically subdivided and not to buy for building purposes any land that cannot be serviced.

Mr. O'Halloran—What was the price of the blocks to which you referred?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I can get that information for the honourable member. As regards plans of re-subdivision, no alteration to the present Act is proposed and the Town Planner and the council will continue to deal with these plans. Re-subdivisions are numerous but of no general importance. They occur in cases where, for example, an owner of an

allotment desires to transfer a strip of land to his neighbour or where the owner of, say, three allotments, wishes to sell the land in two parcels each consisting of one and a half allotments.

As has been mentioned, there is now a Town Planning Appeal Board to which appeals against refusals to approve plans can be made. It is proposed by the Bill to abolish this board. In future, appeals from a refusal of a council to approve a plan of subdivision or from a refusal of the Town Planner or the council to approve a plan of re-subdivision will be to the committee. If the committee refuses to approve a plan of subdivision, whether on appeal from the council or otherwise, it is provided that the applicant may require its reconsideration by the committee. If, upon reconsideration, the committee still refuses its approval, the committee must report its reasons to the Minister. This report is to be laid before Parliament and may be considered by a Joint Committee of both Houses which may approve the plan or uphold the decision of the committee. Thus, the ultimate appeal in this regard will be to a Parliamentary Joint Committee.

The other important topic dealt with by the Bill is contained in clause 9. There has been considerable public discussion on the necessity of a plan to regulate the development of the metropolitan area, and clause 9 contains provisions to enable such a plan to be prepared. The committee is required to make an examination of the metropolitan area and an assessment of its probable development. The committee is to have regard to various fundamental matters which should be considered with respect to the growth and development of an area such as the metropolitan area. Transport problems must be studied and consideration given to what provision should be made for principal highways. The provision of open spaces is another important matter for consideration. A metropolitan area must provide for its industries and there should be a proper balance of industrial and residential areas. The siting of areas for industrial development is therefore of importance.

The economical provision of public utilities should be considered and the growth of the metropolitan area should be directed to localities where the provision of these essential services is economical. All these and other general matters must be considered by the committee which, under the Bill, is required to produce, in due course, a plan setting out what should be done for the proper development of

the metropolitan area. With the plan the committee is to present a report. The plan and report are to be laid before Parliament and either House may, from time to time, refer the plan back to the committee for re-consideration and revision. After every revision of the plan by the committee the plan is to be submitted again to Parliament. Either House may disapprove the plan either in whole or in part.

If the plan is not disapproved or if part only is disapproved, the plan or part is to be deemed to be approved by Parliament and may then be submitted to the Governor for approval. If approved by the Governor the plan then will have the force of law and all subdivisions of land must conform with the plan. In addition, the Governor is given power to make any regulation for carrying the plan into effect. It is provided that any council by-laws which conflict with the plan or the regulations are to cease to have effect. Thus, the Bill requires the committee to prepare a plan for the development of the metropolitan area for the purpose of securing that development will proceed on the lines which are best in the public interest. That plan will be subject to Parliamentary scrutiny and approval and will, after being, in effect, indorsed by Parliament and the Governor, have the force of law and lay down the general manner in which the growth of the metropolitan area will be regulated. The task given to the committee will take some years to fulfil and some interim legislation to control subdivisions contrary to the public interests is considered necessary. It is therefore provided that the Governor, where satisfied that it is in the public interests so to do, may by proclamation declare that any land in the metropolitan area is not to be subdivided. No such proclamation is to be made after the development plan has the force of law and upon the plan having the force of law, any such proclamation is to cease to have effect.

In some respects this provision differs from the corresponding provision in the previous Bill. In the first place, it is provided that a proclamation under the clause may be made on the application of the owner of the land in question. There will, of course, be power to make a proclamation without such an application. In the second place, it is provided that if a proclamation is made any assessment of the land for the purposes of the Land Tax Act, the Waterworks Act, the Sewerage Act, or the Local Government Act is to be made according to the value the land has having regard to the use to which it is put at the

relevant time and no regard is to be had to its potential value as subdivided land. It would be grossly unfair for a person to have his land declared an area that could not be subdivided and then have his rates and taxes computed on the basis of subdivisional value, which could happen under the previous Bill.

The general effect of the Bill is that the committee constituted by the legislation will undertake the important task of preparing a developmental plan for the metropolitan area. At the same time, provision is made for adequate control of subdivisions so that the public interest may be conserved. The committee is given the duty of considering plans of subdivision and, with the knowledge that must come to it in the process of preparing the developmental plan, it must follow that the committee will be eminently suited for this task. Members will see that, with the exception of the provision for the remission of taxation on proclaimed land and one or two minor exceptions, the Bill is the same as that passed by this House last year.

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

MOTOR VEHICLES REGISTRATION FEES (REFUNDS) BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 17. Page 571).

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—This is a simple measure which was dealt with yesterday by the honourable member for Chaffey (Mr. Macgillivray). In fact, he dealt with many matters that had no connection with the Bill. Obviously we are doing what, under the circumstances, is the proper thing—refunding to road hauliers fees incorrectly collected from them. I support the measure, as would any person of any decency. It would be improper to do otherwise.

With your concurrence, Mr. Speaker, I shall refer to one or two matters outside the ambit of the Bill. Yesterday, when I walked into the Speaker's Gallery to speak to some interstate friends of mine who were interested in witnessing a sitting of this State Parliament, the member for Chaffey began to wave his arms and clamour, indicating that he appreciated the presence of my friends in the gallery, but the longer they listened the less they were impressed. It was not long before they said, "We've had enough of this. We will go out now, if you don't mind." The honourable member was obviously beating the air by declaiming, without justification, that

there was some form of vendatta against the road hauliers not only by this but all Governments of the Commonwealth. I point out that the road hauliers have never contended that there is any concerted move by even one Government to oust them from their rightful sphere in assisting to carry the produce of the country. In fact, rather the reverse applies. I have had much to do with road hauliers and have a high opinion of the services they render the community. In my discussions with people who speak on behalf of the road hauliers it has been agreed that they should pay something towards maintaining the highways over which they operate.

Mr. Travers—Does clause 3 mean that they are to have refunded to them the registration fees paid in South Australia, the registration fees they have paid in other States, or both?

Mr. SHANNON—I understand the only form of reimbursement to which this Bill entitles them is that portion of the fee levied and paid in South Australia.

Mr. Travers—Does clause 3 say that?

Mr. SHANNON—I do not suggest it does but that is my understanding of the Bill.

Mr. Travers—If the legislation says both fees, then we could be required to pay both South Australian and Victorian registration fees.

Mr. SHANNON—I do not know that we will refund other than the amount of about £9,000 that we have collected and which the Premier mentioned in his second reading explanation. I do not know whether we propose to go further.

Mr. Travers—We certainly should not.

Mr. SHANNON—The member for Torrens, with his legal ability, may interpret clause 3 as having a wider application than is intended. I suggest that the Premier's explanation of the measure tied the matter down. The member for Chaffey, in my opinion, may have misled some people—not members, but those who may read his statements in *Hansard*—into believing that the present Government has some antipathy to road hauliers and would like to victimize them. Nothing is further from the truth. There is no intention to load this section of the public with an unfair share in the maintenance and upkeep of our highways. The Premier made that perfectly clear to any member who can understand the King's English in his reply to a question this afternoon. I am convinced, from my association with road hauliers, that they trust the Government not to do anything unjust.

The member for Chaffey referred to the obsolescence of our railways but I point out they are far from obsolete and are becoming very up-to-date. The recent move to install diesel-electric locomotives represents a tremendous stride forward, not only in the hauling of larger tonnages per train but in speeding up the haul. Consequently, the services to all members of the community have been greatly improved. Electors from the honourable member's own district will have some diffidence in accepting his statements when they consider the improvements to the railways they use. Road hauliers would be the last to suggest that railways be dispensed with and that they transport all our primary and secondary produce. It would be physically impossible for them. We could not accommodate the necessary number of vehicles on our roads. I live in the hills and understand the present congestion that results from the large numbers of hauliers' vehicles on the roads. It is obvious to all thinking people that something must be done if we are to maintain our highways in a condition whereby not only can the hauliers profitably cart produce but other people may secure safe passages over them.

The Public Works Committee recently visited Upper Eyre Peninsula and had to traverse some very poor roads. The road from Poochera to Streaky Bay was almost impassable and we were told that the deterioration had been caused as a result of the Australian Wheat Board road hauling wheat from the seaboard at Streaky Bay to the rail head at Poochera for rail movement to Port Lincoln for shipment. What the road hauliers did to 30 miles of that road has to be seen to be believed. That we did not get stuck was more through good luck than good management. Had it not been for a really good up-to-date car designed for bad road conditions we would never have got through. The axle of the car actually dragged on the road. This shows what would happen to our roads if all our produce had to be carted on them. No-one, even the road hauliers, ever envisaged that being done. There is much traffic handled by the railways which the road hauliers never sought and never will seek. It is the heavy freight which carries low rates such as wheat and superphosphate. I draw attention to what has happened to the roads leading to the Ardrossan bulk handling plant. A tremendous bill of cost is facing the Government to put them into trafficable order.

Road hauliers are appreciative of the problem and are not unmindful of their responsibility to meet a fair share in providing means

to re-establish our roads. I felt it wise that Mr. Macgillivray should not be allowed to get away with what in my opinion was a lot of hot air in mentioning matters which had no bearing on the Bill. Actually, he did not speak for the road hauliers, who would be the first to deny many of the things he had to say about them. I have attended their meetings at various times and found that most of them are common-sense, level-headed businessmen. From the outset they believed that something would have to take the place of the present system of registration fees in South Australia. I am convinced that any Government will find them amenable to reason when this problem has to be dealt with. I have much pleasure in supporting a Bill which obviously does justice.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee; Committee's report adopted.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORTS.

The SPEAKER laid on the table the following reports of the Public Works Standing Committee:—Naracoorte sewerage system, Victor Harbour sewerage system, Gumeracha sewerage system, Port Lincoln harbour improvements and bulk handling system, and Seacliff primary school (together with minutes of evidence).

Ordered that reports be printed.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.53 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, August 23, at 2 p.m.