

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, August 30, 1955.

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

QUESTIONS.

COAL FOR LOCOMOTIVES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Railways, a reply to my recent question concerning the poor quality of coal from New South Wales being used in South Australia?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I have a report from the Railways Commissioner to the Minister of Railways which is unabbreviated and candid, and I ask that it be regarded as such. It states:—

The purchase of coal for use in these railways is in the hands of the Supply & Tender Board, and for many years now it has been necessary to accept coal of very poor quality from the Joint Coal Board. Many representations have been made from time to time to that board both by my predecessor and me and by the Government, in an endeavour to obtain coal of a quality approximating the standard of coal that was received before the war. At that time, the department, through the Supply & Tender Board, bought coal to specification both as to calorific value, ash content and sieve analysis, and it seems to me that we shall not be successful in obtaining good coal until we revert to the system of obtaining coal to specification under contract. I recently had a discussion with Mr. Davie, an officer of certain New South Wales collieries. He intimated to me that his group of companies would be prepared to tender for graded coal having an average thermal value of over 13,000 B.T.U.'s and a satisfactory ash content, at a price of approximately 1s. per ton in excess of what we are at present paying for the poor coal we are receiving. As Commissioner, I am not in a position to enter into such a contract and I have no doubt that there are certain difficulties which would have to be met before coal could be purchased again on a contractual basis, but any assistance that the honourable the Minister and the Government could give in bringing about a reversion to the purchase of coal by contract would be much appreciated by me.

I endorse every word of that. We will take up the matter with the Coal Board on the basis of that candid report.

ABATTOIRS STRIKE.

Mr. GOLDNEY—Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether there has been any further development concerning the strike at the Metropolitan Abattoirs?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—There has been none following on last Friday's decision

by the industrial tribunal not to increase the wages of the weekly paid staff at the works. A conference took place this morning between representatives of the Abattoirs Board, the Department of Industry and the Produce Department and me with a view to exploring the possibilities, but at this stage I am unable to make any statement regarding those possibilities. There will be a further conference tomorrow between the Abattoirs Board and the producer organizations that met the board a week or two ago. Following on that conference we may have some plans for the future.

Mr. QUIRKE—Can the Minister of Agriculture indicate the quantity of meat held in cold stores at the Abattoirs before the strike and at present, and how long it is expected that existing stocks will last?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I will obtain the information for the honourable member.

LOXTON DRAINAGE WORKS.

Mr. STOTT—Will the Minister of Repatriation say who is responsible for the drainage work in the Loxton soldier settlement scheme, whether it comes within the ambit of the Commonwealth allocation of finance, and, if so, whether the Commonwealth is responsible for the full financial commitments involved, and whether the Lands Department or the Engineering and Water Supply Department is responsible for the supervision of the work?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The work is done by the Engineering and Water Supply Department and paid for by the Commonwealth Government under the soldier settlement scheme. I know that the honourable member has been to the district and that there are some problems involved. To meet those problems I called a meeting at Loxton with the local drainage committee a few weeks ago and from the committee's recent reports I think they were happy about the conference and that some problems that existed prior to the meeting will now be overcome. For instance, tenders for drainage work will now be called for in other States, and we hope thereby more efficient men may be obtained to do the drainage work, thus overcoming some of the problems that I feel have arisen because the men doing the work were not efficient.

WHEAT PAYMENTS.

Mr. HEASLIP—Has the Minister of Agriculture a further reply to my recent question concerning the final payment from the No. 17

wheat pool and the disparity between the price for that wheat and the guaranteed price?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The position is very much as I thought it was in replying to the honourable member recently, namely, that from the guaranteed price would have to be deducted certain charges, notably the handling costs and also the deduction in respect of the stabilization fund. The latter was not mentioned the other day, but it is quite substantial—up to 1s. 6d. a bushel, depending on the realizations and overseas market for the wheat actually exported. That money is held until it has to be used to make up the price to the guaranteed amount, if that becomes necessary. If, in due course, that does not have to be done the amount is again distributed. The local superintendent of the Wheat Board, Mr. Watson, advises me as follows:—

You are aware of the export tax at the rate of 1s. 6d. per bushel which is collected and paid to the Stabilization Fund when the wheat export price exceeds the cost of production by this amount or more and by that proportion of 1s. 6d. per bushel by which the export price exceeds the cost of production when the excess is less than 1s. 6d. per bushel. Indications are that the average return from 17 Pool wheat sold for human consumption and export will be approximately 13s. 11d. per bushel. Adjustments in bagged wheat premium would bring this to 12s. 10d. per bushel on a bulk basis. Board costs are about 10d. per bushel, which reduces it to 12s. per bushel, less freight.

WOMEN ON JURIES.

Mr. TAPPING—I understand that there is legislation before the Western Australian Houses of Parliament to provide for the appointment of women on juries. If a woman who has been appointed does not desire to serve she can be excused by making a request to the sheriff. Will the Minister of Lands ask the Attorney-General whether he would be prepared to introduce legislation to provide for women jurors in South Australia?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I will confer with the Attorney-General.

RAIN DAMAGE TO COUNTRY ROADS.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—As a result of the recent heavy rains some roads in the Strathalbyn District Council district were submerged by 4ft. of water for several days and damage resulted. The following statement appeared in the *Southern Argus* of August 25:—

District Council Clerk, Mr. R. G. Montgomery, in an interview said, "Because of flood damage sustained throughout the district, it is feared that the revenue which the

council will receive will not cover the cost necessary to rehabilitate district roads."

Will the Minister of Works representing the Minister of Roads ascertain whether there is an emergency fund from which assistance can be granted to district councils in such circumstances or whether assistance can be provided from the Highways Department road funds? Secondly, will he request that the district engineer inspect the damage and furnish a report concerning it and possible assistance to the council?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—All I can undertake to do is to refer the question to the Minister of Local Government and bring back a reply as early as possible.

ROYAL SHOW ADMISSION PRICES.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Last week I asked the Premier a question concerning possible charges for admission to the Royal Show and was told that the Prices Department had made inquiries but had no intention of controlling the prices. Shortly afterwards the press reported that the admission charges were to be 4s. for adults and 1s. for children. I point out that for a man, his wife and two children it would cost 10s. for admission to the Show Grounds plus 6s. for transport to and from the city. It is rather significant, from searches I have made at the Parliamentary and Public Libraries, that the society which conducts the Royal Show has not published a balance-sheet since 1939. In February, 1935, the then Minister of Industry, the Hon. S. W.—now Sir Shirley—Jeffries, said:—

It will be seen that under the agreement the Show Society agrees to pay something in addition to its half net profits to the Government.

Apparently the Government has treated this society liberally over the years. In view of that and the fact that it is Parliament's obvious desire that the Royal Show should be an educational rather than revenue-raising project, will the Minister of Lands, who is in charge of the House today, take up with the Treasurer the possibility of having admission charges reduced to enable people in the metropolitan area—particularly working class families—to attend the Show?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Yes.

LUNG CANCER FROM SMOKING.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—Has the Minister of Lands any reply to the question I asked the Premier last week concerning the suggestion that excessive smoking has some relationship to lung cancer?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have a report from the Director-General of Public Health as follows:—

There has already been a great deal of publicity on this matter, both in the medical journals and in the lay press. In October, 1950, extensive data were published in the British Medical Journal, mainly based on the statistical inquiries of Professor Bradford Hill and Dr. Doll, of London. Statements such as that issued recently by Sir Macfarlane Burnet at the Science Congress are clear and definite: there is statistically adequate evidence of some casual association between heavy smoking of cigarettes and cancer of the lung. The increased incidence of cancer of the lung is certainly an alarming circumstance, and it appears practically a world-wide one. There is little new to be said on the subject. Consideration will be given to the point as to whether a commentary in *Good Health* on published work would be useful.

MURRAY RIVER LEVELS.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—There have been a number of reports concerning the high flood levels of the River Murray in New South Wales and Victoria. Can the Minister of Works say whether those high levels are likely to affect the river settlements in South Australia?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Having regard to the very beneficial rains that have taken place—and I think we must regard them that way rather than as floods—I took this question up with the Commissioner representing South Australia and so far as can be judged the river level is not such as to warrant alarm. Obviously there will be a high river but every step that can humanly be taken has been taken in anticipation of a high river. There are many circumstances we cannot control, as, for example, adverse high winds holding up the flow of the river, and further rains. They will have to be taken into consideration. There will be a high river but, subject to the reservations I have made, no substantial, if any, damage will occur.

DRIVING LICENCES.

Mr. RICHES—I have been approached by a number of people who have been closely associated with motor accidents with the request that the permissible age for the receipt of licences to ride motor cycles should be raised from 16 to 18 years. It has been pointed out that there have been a number of fatal accidents in the north in which motor cycles were concerned, but I do not suggest that they were necessarily to blame. There is a strong feeling that because of the powerful machines now available and on the roads the community would be well served if the age were raised. Will the chairman of the State Traffic Com-

mittee have the suggestion referred to his committee for investigation and report?

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—I am prepared to put the suggestion before the committee. Of course, I cannot anticipate what the answer will be, but I know that a good deal of discussion on the point has taken place in other States and the evidence will be available to the committee.

HOUSING TRUST HOMES.

Mr. STEPHENS—Has the Minister of Lands a report following on the question I asked on August 16 regarding housing accommodation for two old ladies?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The chairman of the Housing Trust states:—

The South Australian Housing Trust accepts applications for a cottage flat from two elderly sisters who can be expected to live amicably in a small house. However, the trust has had very many more applications for its cottage flats than it has had flats and so far the flats have been allotted to elderly married couples. The two ladies, who are stepsisters, were not successful in obtaining a cottage flat in the group at Birkenhead, all of which have been allotted. However, the trust will endeavour to help these ladies with a two-bedroom emergency dwelling as soon as the position allows.

GUARDS ON MOTOR WHEELS.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—For some time past I have received complaints about heavy transport vehicles not having guards over their wheels when speeding along wet country roads and thereby fouling the windcreens of approaching vehicles. I do not suggest that they are breaking the law through travelling at excessive speeds but when the roads are wet a spray is thrown up from the wheels and often the drivers of passing vehicles cannot see because of the water thrown on to their windcreens. It has been put to me that the provision of guards might be considered. Can the Minister of Lands say whether the matter has been considered with a view to amending the Road Traffic Act, or, alternatively, can the matter be referred to the State Traffic Committee?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I shall be happy to refer it to the committee. I have had similar experiences myself when passing heavy vehicles.

CORNSACKS.

Mr. HEASLIP—Has the Minister of Agriculture any information regarding prices and deliveries of cornsacks?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The State Superintendent of the Australian Wheat Board has advised that his board is awaiting a

direction from the Commonwealth Government regarding the price of cornsacks. It is expected that this direction will be received within the next few days and if this does occur the cornsacks will then be ready for release.

HENLEY BEACH RAILWAY LINE.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Following on the question I asked last week concerning the removal of the railway track from Military Road, Henley Beach, to a point further east, as recommended by the Public Works Committee in 1950, and in view of the strong objection put forward by residents in that district, particularly those contiguous to Military Road, will the Minister of Works take up with the Minister of Railways the question of replacing steam trains with railcars pending the removal of the rail tracks?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Yes.

SCHOOL IN NEW TOWN.

Mr. GOLDNEY—Can the Minister of Education say when school buildings will be available for use in the new town north of Salisbury?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The target date is February, 1956, but I cannot guarantee that the target will be achieved.

FINDON BUS SERVICE EXTENSION.

Mr. HUTCHENS—My question relates to the Findon bus service and its extension. On June 24 I wrote to the Tramways Trust and sent a petition signed by more than half the residents of Kidman Park, asking for an extension of the Findon service. This was the second communication I had addressed to the trust and I received a reply stating:—

The practicability of proceeding with this project at an early date will be governed by the length of time required to carry out the roadwork necessary by the council concerned and by the settlement of our present industrial difficulties with regard to manning of buses.

I contacted the council, which said that there was no need for any road work because the road was adequate and better, in fact, than that on which the buses used to travel, and that the extension was quite possible. There are 240 new homes in Kidman Park and the people there have to walk up to 1½ miles to the nearest bus terminus. I ask the Minister whether he will take up this question with the Municipal Tramways Trust to see whether an early installation of this service can be made. I am prepared to make available to him the papers I have.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I shall be glad to do that. There is one point that the honourable member did not deal with, and that is the industrial trouble over the manning of the buses. If he will give me some indication in that regard it might be helpful in getting a favourable reply.

LOCK No. 4 LEVEL.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The Minister of Works knows that Lock No. 4 has been a continual source of trouble in the irrigation areas for a number of years, and last session the Minister, in concurrence with the Engineer-in-Chief (who is South Australia's representative on the River Murray Commission) agreed that the work of raising the level should be proceeded with forthwith. In answer to my question last week the Minister said:—

Detailed plans have been prepared for the additional steel required, and orders will be placed for it.

Doesn't the Minister think there has been some delay in the ordering of the steel, seeing that the whole plan has been agreed to for practically 12 months? The Minister also said:—

The actual work on the site cannot commence until the steel has been delivered. It is essential to choose a time for this work that will involve a minimum of expenditure and inconvenience.

I point out that the inconvenience has been entirely on the part of the settlers. Those who make these decisions in the city of Adelaide, as far as I know, are not inconvenienced in any way. Will the Minister instruct the officers who are responsible for carrying out this work to proceed, pointing out that during last session, at any rate, the principle had been agreed upon that the level of this lock should be raised, and will he see that every effort is made to have the steel and other material obtained immediately to avoid a recurrence of the debacle that has occurred on every occasion when the river is flooded? Today the Minister pointed out that there was a possibility of the river flooding again. Further, on one occasion the ferry was out of commission for several months because there was not enough water to carry it. The settlers are getting tired of the administration from the city, and I ask the Minister whether he will take steps to see that trouble does not occur again?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—It is not within the province of the Minister in South Australia to dictate to the Commonwealth, New South Wales, and Victorian Governments.

Mr. Macgillivray—But they have already agreed. You know that.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I say with a great deal of deference that in South Australia—and this has been said by members on the other side of the House—we have the best engineering staff in Australia, and one of our best engineers is one of the River Murray commissioners. Every Government concerned has to appropriate its funds, and nothing can be done *ex parte* by South Australia towards the fulfilment of the desire that the honourable member has and I have until that is done. The honourable member is not helping by the questions he is asking. I have nothing further to add to what I have already said.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—In reply to a question by me last session I believe the Minister said that the money involved was not very great and that the River Murray Commission had agreed that South Australia could proceed with this work and that further money would be made available this year for it. If that is so the Minister's reply this afternoon has evaded the question because the Commonwealth has already agreed to this work.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I do not think I have anything further to add. Notwithstanding that there may be an agreement, the appropriation of funds still has to be made, and I think a great deal has been achieved in getting universal endorsement of the scheme. The next thing is to get official endorsement by Parliament, and the honourable member is one who sticks to form and, whenever an estimate comes through, asks for details of it. I take it that people in the other States have done the same. Therefore, notwithstanding that our engineers agree with me that it is desirable, we are not in a position to proceed until each State agrees.

HIGH LOADS ON PORT ROAD.

Mr. STEPHENS—Has the Minister of Lands a reply to the question I directed to the Premier some weeks ago about the Tram-

ways Trust's overhead wires on the Port Road being damaged by high loads?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have received the following reply from the Commissioner of Police:—

On June 30, 1955, a copper wine tank, 15ft. in diameter and 24ft. in length, was transported on a vehicle known as a "low loader" between premises in Sturt Street and Birkenhead. The movement was carried out under authority of a permit issued in accordance with section 142 (3) of the Road Traffic Act. The conditions in the permit specified that the load was not to exceed 15ft. in width, the movement was to be completed between the hours of 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., and a police escort was to accompany the vehicle. When approaching the railway bridge near the Police Barracks the "low loader" had to swing from the kerb to avoid a parked vehicle and, in doing so, the load fouled overhead wiring, causing an interruption to trolley bus services for approximately 15 minutes. After the mishap the "low loader" continued to its destination without further difficulty. In so far as vehicles travelling with the authority of a permit issued under section 142 (3) of the Act are concerned, arrangements have been made between my officers and the Registrar of Motor Vehicles to avoid an incident of this nature in future. I understand that the matter of vehicles carrying high loads has been listed for consideration at the next meeting of the State Traffic Committee.

POLICE FORCE.

Mr. HUTCHENS (on notice)—How many police officers were in the South Australian Police Force at June 30 in each of the years 1949, 1951, 1953, and 1955, in the following categories:—(a) superintendent; (b) senior inspector; (c) inspector, first grade; (d) inspector, second grade; (e) inspector, third grade; (f) sergeant, first grade; (g) sergeant, second grade; (h) sergeant, third grade; (i) senior constable; (j) first class constable; (k) constable?

The Hon. C. S. Hincks for the Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The following table sets out the position:—

	1949.	1951.	1953.	1955.
Superintendent	3	3	3	2
Senior inspector	—	—	—	—
Inspector, first class	8	11	13	16
Inspector, second class	4	4	9	6
Inspector, third class	8	10	4	4
Senior sergeant	—	1	6	8
Sergeant, first grade	26	35	32	28
Sergeant, second grade	6	24	23	17
Sergeant, third grade	40	19	70	65
*Senior constable	—	68	78	105
*First class constable	—	64	1-8	91
Constable	794	656	656	653

*Ranks of first class constable and senior constable were brought into operation as from December 12, 1950.

Appointments to the newly created rank of senior inspector were not made until after June 30, 1955.

DIESEL TRAINS, SEMAPHORE LINE.

Mr. TAPPING (on notice)—Have any plans been made for use of diesel trains on the Adelaide-Semaphore line?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Railways Commissioner reports:—

When sufficient new diesel suburban rail-cars are available to make one complete train unit of six vehicles, same will be placed in the working on the Adelaide, Semaphore and Outer Harbour lines.

ACTIONS FOR EVICTION.

Mr. LAWN (on notice)—

1. How many applications for possession of premises in accordance with the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act were heard by courts in the metropolitan area for each month since December, 1953?

2. How many of these applications were granted?

3. How many eviction orders were issued for each of the months mentioned above?

The Hon. C. S. Hincks for the Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The following table sets out the position:—

	1.	2.	3.
	No. of applications heard.	No. granted.	No. of warrants of possession ('eviction orders') issued.
1954.			
January	27	24	7
February	29	26	3
March	42	38	3
April	18	16	4
May	43	40	5
June	34	31	5
July	23	22	8
August	35	35	2
September	31	28	3
October	29	25	2
November	38	32	2
December	45	36	2
1955.			
January	20	16	6
February	36	33	7
March	46	41	10
April	21	17	7
May	56	49	3
June	28	28	8
July	32	30	8

TRAMWAYS TRUST MEMBERS.

Mr. LAWN (on notice)—Are any of the Government appointees to the Municipal Tramways Trust associated in any way with any firm concerned in the manufacture or distribution of bus chasses or complete buses?

The Hon. C. S. Hincks, for the Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No.

DENTURES FOR PENSIONERS.

Mr. LAWN (on notice)—What is the average cost to the Government of a full set of dentures as supplied by the Royal Adelaide Hospital to pensioners?

The Hon. C. S. Hincks, for the Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The actual cost of a full set of dentures, using porcelain teeth, amounts to £5 1s. This amount includes mechanic's time, does not include any charge for professional or clerical staff, overhead charges for equipment, buildings, etc.

STATE BANK REPORT.

The SPEAKER laid on the table the report and balance-sheet of the State Bank of South Australia for the year ended June 30, 1955.

Ordered that report be printed.

PHYSIOTHERAPISTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. C. S. Hincks, for the Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Physiotherapists Act, 1945-1949. Read a first time.

The Hon. C. S. Hincks, for the Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its object is to fill a number of deficiencies in the provisions of the principal Act relating to the hearing of charges against physiotherapists by the Physiotherapists Board. Recently a physiotherapist was charged with unprofessional conduct by the board, and the subsequent proceedings revealed a number of deficiencies in the principal Act. First, it appeared that the board should have power to impose lesser penalties than it can at present impose.

The physiotherapist in question was found by the board to have treated a child suffering from cancer while purporting to act as a physiotherapist and to have supplied various medicines for the child, including a drug called pentone which he was prohibited from supplying under the Food and Drugs Act. The board found that the circumstances amounted to unprofessional conduct and suspended the registration of the physiotherapist for 12 months. The physiotherapist appealed to the Supreme Court and the matter was finally disposed of by the Full Court. The Full Court held that although the physiotherapist had been guilty of unprofessional conduct, suspension was not an appropriate punishment. The court's view was that for the time being, while the standards of

conduct of physiotherapists are not fully settled, the board should "hasten slowly" in the matter of punishment.

This decision has placed the board in something of a dilemma. The board has at present no power to impose any penalty other than de-registration or suspension, so that if the board cannot suspend in a case as serious as this one was, it is powerless to do anything except administer a reprimand. Even this course might be considered doubtful, since there is no specific power to censure. The board thus has little or no power to deal with minor matters at all, and if the case mentioned is regarded as serious, as it no doubt would be by many people, the board has no power to deal with many serious cases also.

In these circumstances the board has asked the Government to enable the board to fine and censure persons charged before it. The Government has acceded to this request. The Government believes that a fine would be an appropriate penalty for the board's purposes. It is felt that less stigma would attach to the imposition of a fine than even the shortest suspension, and the amount of a fine would almost always be less than the amount of loss involved in a short suspension. There is precedent for giving a board of this kind a power to impose a fine. The Pharmacy Act and the Veterinary Surgeons Act both give the boards created under those Acts power to impose a fine of up to fifty pounds. Clause 4 accordingly re-enacts section 32 of the principal Act to provide that the board may impose a fine of an amount not exceeding £20 where a person has been guilty of unprofessional conduct after the passing of the Bill. Clause 4 also gives the board power to censure a person charged after the passing of the Bill with unprofessional conduct. Clause 4 at the same time extends the board's power of suspension. At present there are a number of grounds mentioned in section 32 of the principal Act on which the board may deregister, but may not suspend. In some cases the matters concerned would be appropriately dealt with by suspension, and the opportunity has been taken to enable these cases to be dealt with by suspension. Provision is also made for the board to censure in appropriate cases. Clause 4, by enactment of new section 32c, enables payment of a fine to be enforced by suspension of registration or by summary proceedings. Secondly, it was found that there was no power for the board to order payment of costs. The board has asked the Government that it should have

power to award costs, and the Government has agreed to this request. There is ample precedent for the giving of such a power, and for the board to have the power is in the interests of justice.

Clause 4, by enactment of new section 32b of the principal Act, enables the board to award costs to the successful party. Such costs are recoverable under the Bill in the same way as a fine imposed under the Bill. Thirdly, in the course of the proceedings against the physiotherapist mentioned, it was found that, on the institution of the appeal against the decision of the board, there was no power to suspend the operation of the order of the board pending the determination of the appeal. It is clearly desirable that both the board and the Supreme Court should be empowered to suspend the operation of an order made by the board pending the determination of an appeal. Clause 5 of the Bill provides accordingly.

The Bill makes several other alterations of a minor nature to the principal Act. Clause 4, by enactment of new section 32a of the principal Act, provides that a charge relating to any matter mentioned in section 32 of the principal Act shall be laid either by the person aggrieved or the registrar. At present the principal Act is silent as to the laying of charges, and it is considered desirable that the matter should be clarified in the manner provided. Clause 3 makes an amendment to the principal Act consequential upon the other provisions of the Bill, and requires the registrar of the board to note on the register that an appeal has been made against an order of the board and to note the result of the appeal. As the principal Act requires orders of the board to be noted on the register, it should also require appeals against such orders to be noted. It does not do so at present.

Mr. HUTCHENS secured the adjournment of the debate.

FRUIT FLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

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

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to provide for compensation for loss arising from measures to eradicate fruit fly and to amend the Fruit Fly Act, 1947-1953.

Motion carried. Resolution agreed to in Committee and adopted by the House.

METROPOLITAN MILK SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN (Minister of Agriculture), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Metropolitan Milk Supply Act, 1946-1950.

LOAN ESTIMATES.

In Committee.

(Continued from August 25. Page 641.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—Members will recall that when debating Loan Estimates in previous years I have occasionally complained about the paucity of information supplied by the Treasurer. That is another of the Opposition's complaints that have borne fruit, for, taking it by and large, no-one can complain of the lack of information supplied by the Treasurer in his speech on these Loan Estimates. However, despite the wealth of detail on a number of items, there are still some matters I feel constrained to query and some that I must criticize. I am concerned about Loan Expenditure generally. According to the estimates, the Loan expenditure for this year will be £31,900,000. This should remind us that when we agree to the Loan Estimates each year we make considerable additions to the State public debt. In the last five years Loan expenditure has been:—

	£
1950-51	20,623,000
1951-52	31,205,000
1952-53	25,402,000
1953-54	25,513,000
1954-55	26,998,000

These are astronomical figures. The overall position shows that the State public debt has grown from £117,000,000 in 1947, when we resumed normal spending after the war, to £242,000,000 in 1954. Some authorities have warned that we may be going too far too fast, but generally speaking the warnings are issued only when Labor Governments in other States suggest large Loan expenditure. I cannot recall an instance where there has been public criticism of the grand schemes put forward by the Treasurer of South Australia. This warning is particularly apt when it is remembered that a large proportion of the Loan expenditure each year is to gratify our Treasurer's love of mighty projects. More and more responsibility for financing these projects is being placed on the taxpayer as exchange, interest and sinking fund payments

grow. In the last four years these payments have been:—

	£
1950-51	6,101,000
1951-52	6,593,000
1952-53	7,051,000
1953-54	8,109,000

The figure for 1954-55 is not available but it will be probably not less than £9,000,000. Some years ago the Treasurer expressed concern about the ultimate position that would be reached in this respect. I express concern now, as I have done on other occasions. I do not say that the present Loan expenditure is too high but I question the results that come from it. Most of it is to provide services to an already overgrown city. Little of an effective nature is done to decentralize industry and population, which is essential to the future welfare of the State. The total Australian Loan expenditure for 1955-56 is to be £190,000,000 but the raising of that amount is by no means assured. Last year only £123,000,000 was raised by public loans in Australia. The balance, £57,000,000, was raised by overseas loans and Commonwealth contributions from revenue. If subscriptions to public loans are not better this year we must have recourse to overseas loans again. I question the wisdom of that, unless money is required for a special purpose and it cannot be found in Australia. Following on the great depression, when no overseas borrowing took place, the public debt was reduced. In those earlier days we looked to Threadneedle Street as the answer to our financial problems, but in recent years we have switched and now regard Wall Street as the rich uncle in another part of the world to provide us with easy finance. Overseas loans must be repaid and exchange, interest and sinking fund payments must be made.

Mr. Pearson—It is back to the wall finance.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes. We had it after the boom period following World War I. In the depression years we had no overseas credits, had an overdraft of £35,000,000 at Westminster Bank, and securities on Wall Street, which should have been worth 4 or 5 per cent, were sold at tremendous discounts. This placed us in serious difficulties. At one stage there was an imminent danger of cargoes of Australian produce sold to people overseas being garnisheed on reaching their destination in order to meet overseas commitments. We must proceed with caution in regard to overseas loans. The position of the local loan market,

especially in view of the negative approach of the Commonwealth Government to the problem of competitive avenues, is such that public works expenditure in the various States is likely to be on the basis of hand to mouth. I speak of the negative attitude of the Commonwealth Government because, although the Commonwealth Treasurer spoke of many difficulties when he introduced his Budget last week, he did not suggest ways of solving them. From remarks made by our Treasurer we understand the States will have to work on a hand to mouth basis. In January next the Commonwealth is to review the position in relation to supplementing State Loan funds. This is not the way to plan national works programmes, which should not move in fits and starts. We should not have to put a gang on a job for a certain period and later have to rush around to see whether we can find the money to pay them. The possible interruption of public works under these conditions undoubtedly will increase the cost of such works and deny the public of their use for some time.

For many years we on this side of the House have believed that the financing of public development in Australia could be done by using our national credit resources. During two world wars we did not hesitate to adopt this method. When our very freedom and lives were in danger there was no doubt about filling public loans. During the last war they were always filled, but no-one knows to what extent national credit was used to supplement public subscriptions. However, it was used quite successfully. If we adopted that practice now instead of borrowing from overseas and jacking up taxation to make more money available to the States we would ultimately be in a much sounder position than we are today. Further, we would be able to continue and complete our Loan works programmes once they had been started.

Some of the items in the Estimates are of staggering dimensions. For instance, the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline was originally estimated to cost about £4,000,000, but £8,000,000 has already been spent on it and before it is completed a further £2,000,000 will be required. Would it not have been better to develop the Moorlands brown coalfields which we are told have sufficient quantities to warrant development, thereby encouraging industries to migrate to sites along the river where ample water would be available rather than incur the enormous expense of pumping it over the hills in a 6ft. main to serve industries in the metropolitan area? Some day we shall be forced to

do that, and a little foresight could have avoided much of the cost of the Mannum-Adelaide main. I do not say that the main was not needed, for a supply from the Murray was necessary to provide a standby for the metropolitan system in drought times, but the cost of that main could have been reduced. The greater the diameter of the pipeline the greater its cost and the greater the expenditure on pumping. Last year, when great quantities of water had to be pumped from the Murray to save the metropolitan area from an acute water famine, the cost of pumping alone was the enormous sum of £470,000.

The Treasurer referred to drainage in the South-East. I visited that area recently and saw the conditions in this area, which has had its wettest winter for many years. We have a long way to go before we solve the question of drainage in the South-East, despite the huge expenditure incurred over many years. The Maria Creek drain is in the district of the member for Victoria, but we found large areas there under water. The drain was fully charged, but there was only a small quantity of surplus water meandering peacefully to the sea. I understand the local people have made proposals for improving the drain. I hope they are practicable and will be adopted so that conditions similar to those we saw on our recent visit will not be repeated in another wet winter. One wonders whether correct principles have been applied to South-Eastern drainage. I know that the new drain through the Clay Wells country has reduced materially the volume of flooding there, but there are still big areas under water, and whether that drain, when completed, will adequately drain the country remains to be seen. I believe we should not go too far with expenditure on the smaller service drains. By all means let us have the main drains to take surplus water to the sea, but I think the time may come when we shall be stopping some of the main drains to retain water on the land. I understand that 260,000 acres north of Millicent are to be drained at an estimated cost of £3,187,000. This represents more than £12 an acre, which is a considerable expenditure when we realize that after the land has been drained it will still be unimproved. It will have to be cultivated and treated with superphosphates and seeded. Dwellings and fencing will have to be provided, so it will become dear land by the time it is eventually occupied under closer settlement.

The Treasurer said that £36,000 was spent in 1954-55 on purchasing 5,236 acres (£7 an

acre) for forestry plantings. I have contended before that whereas it might have been proper to charge the whole of the cost of establishing forests to the Loan account when our forestry programme was started, now that we have practically reached stability and the annual cutting of timber has almost balanced plantings a continuity of return from the expenditure incurred is assured. Therefore, we should seriously consider converting our forestry system from Loan finance to that of a business undertaking. It should stand on its own feet like the railways, Electricity Trust, and the Housing Trust.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—I hope the results of the Forestry Department will be better.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The Premier spoke eulogistically about the Electricity Trust and the Housing Trust, and I am sure he would not like one of his Ministers criticizing those undertakings.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—I was only suggesting that I hope the Forestry Department will be more profitable than the railways.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I do not know whether the Minister is quite just in criticizing the administration of the railways.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—I was not criticizing the administration.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—After all, the railways were charged with building developmental lines through uninhabited scrub. Miles of track were laid on Eyre Peninsula, for instance, to assist development, and the railways are still carrying many commodities at a loss; so the Minister should not criticize the department.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—I was not criticizing it.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—We must admit that the railways have done a good job in assisting primary industries in country districts. The Treasurer said that the excess of recoveries over working expenses in the Forestry Department was £204,000, but does this give a true picture of the position? Have interest and depreciation been included in arriving at this figure? Alternatively, does that represent the surplus derived from the sale of timber after deducting working expenses? Those are some points on which we should have a little more information. The Treasurer asked for my opinion on whether the salaries of officers in the Woods and Forests Department should be published in the Loan Estimates. I do not think the present method of accounting for

this expenditure should be continued; it should be changed to place the accounts of that department on a commercial basis, which would render the publication of the list of salaries unnecessary. After all, there are other projects, such as the Electricity Trust and the Housing Trust, which are financed from Loan expenditure, and the salaries of officers of those trusts are not published. The Treasurer asked for an indication of my Party's attitude on this matter. I remember the circumstances that caused Parliament, in about 1925, to have these salaries included in the Loan Estimates. At that time there were good reasons for that step, but I think those reasons have ceased to exist. I will not, however, commit the Opposition on this question without consulting the members of my Party. I intend to consult them at the earliest opportunity and let the Treasurer have a considered reply to his question.

The sum of £200,000 is to be advanced to the State Bank. Each year this item figures in the Loan Estimates without explanation. The Treasurer said the State Bank had no capital and had to have these advances; but it must have acquired considerable capital in this way by now, because over the years similar, and sometimes greater, amounts have been provided and by now a considerable capital account with the State Bank must have been built up by these advances. No details of the Bank's activities have been supplied and I suggest that we be given more details.

The sum of £200,000 is provided for roads and bridges. This is unrelated to the vast sum paid into the Highways Fund each year and disbursed for various road purposes in the States. The reason given for the inclusion of this item in the Estimates is that revenue is insufficient and therefore some Loan expenditure is necessary. Provision is made for the financing of interest-free loans to local councils to enable them to purchase more machinery in order to step up their road-making programmes. It might be wise if all these matters were dealt with under one heading and interest-free loans provided from revenue and not from loan funds. The item "Roads and Bridges" would suggest that some of the money was to be spent on bridges, but what bridges are to be constructed with the aid of this vote?

Mr. Frank Walsh—The bridge over the Sturt Creek.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Possibly, but this amount certainly would not provide for the construction of a bridge over a stream of any size. At least one additional bridge is required

over the Murray and probably Blanchetown will be the site of the next bridge. This matter should be treated as urgent in order to avoid the traffic bottlenecks that continually occur at the punt crossings.

Mr. HUTCHENS—That matter should be considered in the immediate future.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, but there is no provision in these Estimates for expenditure on such a project. That is the type of item that could properly be charged to Loan Account because, once constructed, it would be there for all time and the loan could be amortized over the period of 53 years provided for the amortization of Loan funds. The sum of £80,000 is provided for the purchase of land, but we are not told what will happen to that land after it is purchased. Having regard to the high cost of land and the improvements thereto, the area under consideration must be very small indeed. The Minister of Agriculture recently said that not sufficient land was being made available for prospective farmers, and I agree that that is so under existing conditions; therefore, the Government should adopt a thorough-going land acquisition policy so that suitable men—both returned soldiers and others who were not old enough to go to the war but desire to become settlers—may be given holdings.

Last year £1,867,000 was provided in the Loan Estimates for the Railways Department, and this year that has been increased to £2,300,000. Members must realize that railway expenditure generally is beyond the real authority of Parliament. The Railways Commissioner under his Act has the right to spend money in any way he chooses once Parliament has appropriated it; the only control Parliament has over his actions is that the money must be first appropriated. The Public Works Committee has been inquiring into projects costing over £30,000 while the Railways Department has incurred huge expenditure on new rolling stock. Parliament has been merely told of that expenditure and has had no opportunity to inquire into the wisdom or otherwise of it. I do not charge the railways with inefficiency; every penny of this £2,300,000 may be wisely spent, but it is incongruous to ask the Public Works Committee to investigate the building of a school costing perhaps £50,000, the pattern of which follows closely that laid down for similar schools, and at the same time allow the Railways Commissioner to spend over £2,000,000 without any inquiry.

The Treasurer did not mention the adjustment of rolling stock, etc., for bulk handling.

We were told earlier this session, when we were rushing the Bulk Handling of Grain Bill through the House so that it would benefit some farmers during the coming season, that some expenditure would be necessary by the Railways Department to provide certain bulk handling facilities; but I can find nothing in the details of railway expenditure of any expenditure on the provision of new rolling stock in order to meet the contingencies of the bulk handling scheme. We are told that the duplication of the Goodwood-Marino line will be completed soon, but that work has been proceeding so long that I have almost forgotten its origin. I hope that the Treasurer's assurance regarding its early completion will be realized and that this is the last time the Loan Estimates will provide for expenditure on this work.

The sum of £900,000 is to be spent on our harbours. One work mentioned by the Treasurer was the improvement of the Kingscote Harbour and I believe that such improvement is necessary and will have a big bearing on the success of the land settlement scheme on Kangaroo Island where so many of our ex-servicemen are involved. Although this money is being provided to improve harbour installations there so that cargo may be handled expeditiously at both ends of the jetty, we are doing nothing about the shipping service between Port Adelaide and Kingscote. The charges levied on Kangaroo Island shippers are much higher than those levied on fortunate people on the mainland who are able to send their produce by rail over distances similar to that between Kingscote and Port Adelaide. One solution to the problems of people on Eyre Peninsula, Kangaroo Island, and the South-East is for the Government to negotiate an agreement with some of the coastal steamship companies to provide regular services to those areas at reasonable rates and to subsidize any loss the same as railway losses are subsidized from revenue. If it is proper to subsidize the Railways Commissioner to carry wheat and other primary products and run our railways on a non-paying basis for the benefit of country districts, then it is equally proper to subsidize shipping where it is the only means of transport available to primary producers to get their produce to market. That matter will have to be considered soon. Fishing havens have been discussed and we have heard some small reference to them again, but it is very small in comparison with the grandiose scheme of some years ago when we were told £250,000 was to be spent primarily on these havens. I know that the

member for Victoria will have something to say regarding the necessity for improved facilities for fishermen in his district, because they are expanding production. Fishing is, of course, a primary industry and it is not only expanding in Australia, but is also earning considerable dollars by the export of crayfish to America.

Although considerable reference has been made to sewerage the only concrete proposal is that, as Salisbury sewerage has been completed, the new town will be sewered this year. This new town has caused a great deal of speculation. All manner of names have been suggested for it, but nobody has been game enough to name it. Probably some of these illustrious people who refuse to have it named after them are afraid it will not be a success and do not wish their names to be associated with a not so successful venture. It seems that the use of the term "new town" is gradually being adopted, and we might find that it is ultimately adopted as the name for this area.

The Premier stated that water rates would not be increased, and most people interpreted that to mean that they would not have to pay more for water in the same sense as they would not pay more for electricity, but assessments have been increased in the metropolitan area and in townships, and people will actually be paying more for water service in those areas. If members care to look at the *Government Gazette* of August 11, 1955, pages 305 to 309, they will see the Minister's publication of the new rating for water and sewerage. They will remember that the recent amendment of the Act gave the Minister power to fix rates from year to year, and there is no appeal from this fixation. The Minister's statement was misleading. He said he could count the number of appeals on one hand. Country lands water charges are calculated on land tax assessments of land values at rates fixed by the Minister. There is no such thing as an appeal in the sense intended. What relation is there between the cost of the service and the revenue derived? There has not been any relation for many years, and although members on this side of the House pointed out that the financial position of the Engineering and Water Supply Department was gradually deteriorating, our remarks fell upon deaf ears. Now there are to be substantial increases in assessments in an attempt to recover the position, probably more substantial than would have been required had

the matter been tackled several years ago, as it should have been. Today even the metropolitan water schemes are making a loss, and one wonders whether, as a result of this new assessment, they will again be profitable. The Mannum-Adelaide pipeline and the South Para reservoir are an expression of the Premier's determination that the metropolitan population shall continue to increase at the expense of the country. The recent census disclosed that 60.66 per cent of the people live in the metropolitan area. However, there is one little ray of hope in that after many years of vigorous and consistent battling on my part the sum of £50,000 has been placed on the Estimates for the Jamestown-Peterborough water supply, for which I am duly thankful and for which I feel sure that the long-suffering people in the area will be grateful to the Government.

Generally speaking, the cost of hospital buildings is very great, and it is not merely a question of building; the cost of hospitalization after the building has been erected is also very great. Government hospital policy involves an unsatisfactory mixture of public, semi-public, assisted and private hospitals. This has been criticized by some very eminent medical men in South Australia recently. In the *News* of August 29 Dr. Jose criticized the Royal Adelaide Hospital as an over-loaded and over-crowded public and teaching hospital. Another doctor said that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would relieve the Adelaide Hospital when it was completed, but it would be only a temporary breather. Members will recall that for several sessions we on this side of the House have urged that hospitalization in the metropolitan area should be planned, that we should prevent the Royal Adelaide hospital from growing any larger, that we should concentrate on building the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to its originally proposed size and that we should establish at least two other hospitals at other strategic points in the metropolitan area to stop further congestion, particularly at the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

On these Estimates £1,150,000 has been provided for school buildings. The Premier said:—

There is possibly no more spectacular feature in Government social service activity than the huge increase in school enrolments which has characterized the last decade.

Total enrolments in 1945 were 71,000; they are now 125,000, and it is estimated that in 1959 they will be 158,000. The Government cannot claim any credit for increased enrolments. The

test is what the Government has done for the children who are enrolled and what it proposes to do in anticipation of larger enrolments. The Premier instanced nine primary schools in the metropolitan area whose aggregate enrolment in 1944 was 2,918 and is now 8,324. The average enrolment of these schools increased from 324 to 926. These figures were intended to indicate the magnitude of the problem facing the Government in providing school accommodation, but they actually show that the Government is following the wrong policy in this matter. No school enrolment should be allowed to grow to 1,300, which is the enrolment of one of the schools referred to. There should be more and smaller schools.

With these very large schools the educational value of a headmaster is completely lost. Although he possesses the educational knowledge and ability necessary for the headmaster of a school, he becomes an administrator, rushing from point to point, trying to gather together the threads of a large and complicated institution, and half the time the staff is chasing around trying to find him. We should remember these matters in our future educational policy. As an instance of the truth of this, when I was a member of the Public Works Committee that body investigated the provision of a number of new schools, among them, Kilburn and Forbes. These buildings were approved and ultimately completed, some of them only recently, and many of them had to have additional temporary classrooms erected within 12 months of their opening. In some of these the temporary accommodation is greater than the original. High schools particularly should be limited in size, but apparently no proper move has been made to co-ordinate the provision of this very essential feature of our educational system.

There is to be a total expenditure of £4,350,000 on housing. This is made up of £500,000 as provided by the Estimates, £3,600,000 under the Commonwealth State Agreement, and £250,000 to be raised by the Housing Trust. Finance through the Commonwealth State Agreement is only another way of expanding the loan programme. The taxpayers are responsible for the ultimate repayment if the returns from the Housing Trust fall short of the amount required for this purpose. The number of houses to be built in the country is to be increased, but the point is that more should have been built. When we look at the places where the increase is to take place we can regard it as today's funny story. According to the Premier's figures 1,047 houses

were completed during 1954-55 in 71 country towns, and this was supposed to indicate the Government's interest in decentralization. However, 866 of these were built in the following six towns:—

Salisbury	471
Pt. Augusta	121
Pt. Pirie	106
Mt. Gambier	94
Pt. Lincoln	34
"Newtown"	40

Salisbury, as members realize, has become a northern suburb of Adelaide and can no longer be called a country town. Those towns averaged 181 houses for the year but the other 65 only averaged about three. Houses under construction at June 30, 1955, in those towns were:—Salisbury, nil; Port Augusta, 94; Port Pirie, 77; Mt. Gambier, 94; Port Lincoln, 35 and the new town 631, a total of 931 or an average of 155 for each town. The other 65 towns averaged less than 1½ houses each. Those figures do not disclose much encouragement to decentralization.

I wholeheartedly agree with the provision of money for the building of cottage flats for aged people. The Opposition has advocated that for many years and three years ago I moved a substantial motion concerning such a proposal, but members opposite, to their shame, amended it so as to destroy its real purpose. The Housing Trust in 1954-55 sold 1,000 homes. This is encouraging home ownership. We know that the rate of interest on first mortgages is that determined by the various lending institutions to whom the purchasers go for accommodation under the Homes Act, but we have no information about the rate of interest charged by the trust on second mortgages. Another disturbing feature of the future housing position is the threat of the Commonwealth Government to increase the rate of interest under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. We have received that money at the rate of 3 per cent per annum but it has been suggested that it will be increased to 4½ per cent. If that happens a substantial additional burden will be imposed not only on those renting homes from the trust but on those who purchase homes. If the Premier carries out his intention of resisting this impost as expressed in a reply to a question I asked last week, he will have the wholehearted co-operation of the Opposition.

It has been alleged that our housing problem is being solved but applications for purchase homes are being received at the rate of 100 a week and there are about 30,000 on

the waiting list for rental homes, so obviously the problem is not nearly solved. A delegation of New South Wales Liberals commented favourably on our housing programme when they visited South Australia, but I suggest that was organized back-scratching. We have been told that the trust has had difficulty in securing materials and manpower, but so have private contractors and private home builders.

It has been suggested that the new town is a bold and imaginative undertaking, but it is only another means of swelling the metropolitan area. If the Premier intended to pursue a full-blooded policy of decentralization he should have utilized areas on the banks of the River Murray or at Port Augusta, where a power house is visualized and plenty of cheap land is available. The new town is being fitted with every modern convenience, whereas towns of long standing which have made great progress, not through the expenditure of public money or favourable conditions granted by a paternal Government, but by the enterprise, ability and hard work of the citizens, are still denied these amenities.

Considerable expenditure has been involved in the development of uranium. Points from which money has been drawn for the development of Radium Hill are:—State revenue, £764,171; United Kingdom, £1,294,332; U.S.A., £2,586,781; State loans £1,543,275 and Electricity Trust, £650,000; a total of £6,838,559. The Mines Department has expended £107,669 on prospecting and undertaking preliminary investigations at Crocker's Well and Mount Victoria Hut, but the Premier has indicated that a private company may take over that development. I assume it will receive the benefits of that expenditure as a gift.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—I do not think it will be made a present of it.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I venture to suggest that that is precisely what will happen. It will be interesting to see the nature of the proposal if legislation is introduced. At Radium Hill we already have the personnel and everything that is required for development, and I see no reason why Crocker's Well and Mount Victoria Hut could not be worked in association with Radium Hill. Total expenditure proposed for the Electricity Trust this year is £8,600,000 but there will be no Public Works Committee inquiry into that. The trust is to invade the loan market independently to the extent of £1,500,000. The Premier indicated that there would be considerable increases in charges to country consumers. It is extremely difficult to obtain

local supplies from the high voltage lines which have been stretched across the State, because of the expense involved. I encountered this problem when I suggested that the power line to Radium Hill commence from Waterloo and proceed in a northerly direction through Burra, Hallett, Mount Bryan and Terowie, and thence follow the Broken Hill railway line to Olary before going to Radium Hill. I visualized that some of the larger centres—particularly Burra, Hallett and Terowie—and possibly some of the smaller places could be supplied with electricity from that undertaking, but it was pointed out that there would be no advantage because of the high cost of reducing the current to a safe voltage for use in those areas. I was told that the capital cost of converter stations would be much greater than the cost of providing a separate power line for each area. The trust decided to build the line by the shortest possible route—from Morgan to Radium Hill, and on the facts I have to agree that that was the best course. As 10,582 new consumers were connected to country power lines in 1954-55 we may find that there will be a relatively smaller increase in numbers in future years. We know that many farmers and country people generally have provided their own electricity supplies, and while they are in working order at least they will not feel disposed to dump them in order to secure power from the Electricity Trust.

The next item is £500,000 for buses, etc., for the Municipal Tramways Trust. The M.T.T. has already ceased to be municipal and it will soon cease to be tramways, because apparently it has gone mad on buses. I do not pose as an expert on whether that is the right policy to adopt, but I have heard recently some rather vigorous complaints by people who have been forced to travel on the buses which have been substituted for trams on certain routes—people who sigh for a comfortable journey they got on the trams as against the rough and uncomfortable journey they are now getting on the modern buses.

Mr. Lawn—And the overcrowding.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes. I have yet to be lucky enough to get a seat on a bus, and I am not much of a success as a strap-hanger. Already we have provided £2,000,000 in three years and, as far as I know, the trust's accounts are still not balanced. It is regrettable that so little information has been provided by the Treasurer in connection with this huge and expensive undertaking. If the trust has any plans why conceal them? If it can show that

after a period of years the organization will become profitable by the expenditure of all this money and ultimately repay the State why are we not told? It has not produced one scintilla of evidence to warrant our voting these huge sums.

As I remarked in opening, the Treasurer gave us a great deal of detail when he introduced the Loan Estimates on Thursday last, and I was particularly impressed by the fact that every one of the things he stressed the most as bargains in the shop window to attract the customer who is going to have something to say in the matter about March or April next—the Housing Trust, the Electricity Trust, the development of uranium fields and the associated treatment plant, the forestry undertaking in the South-East—is purely and absolutely socialism: Members opposite, however, have the hide to criticize members on this side for being Socialists. I sometimes wonder whether our socialistic policy is right, judging by the way it is being adopted by other people.

Mr. Lawn—They have seen the light.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—It is not that. I think the catch is that they have seen that by using certain socialistic principles, not properly implemented, they can extend their grip on the people. That is what they are hoping for in March next, but I venture to predict that they will be disappointed; after that election there will be on the Treasury benches a Government that will continue this policy of socialism, but which truly believes in the principle and will properly administer it.

Mr. BROOKMAN (Alexandra)—The Loan programme this year amounts to nearly £32,000,000 provided investment by the public reaches the target fixed, and that apparently is not certain. I feel that there is not much more to be said of this system of financing. It has been thoroughly discussed in the last few years and I do not propose to go deeply into it at the moment. Most of the items of the Loan Estimates are not strange to us, and listening to the Leader of the Opposition made me feel that surely there is no easier task than to discuss the Government's Budget from the Opposition benches. However, I was left wondering just what he proposed because he seemed to change his ground on many occasions. He started by criticizing the Loan Estimates, and I was not quite sure whether he thought that they did not provide enough or too much. He said that Loan expenditure was so high that it would inordinately increase our public debt, and I asked him whether he thought it was too

much. Some time later I got the reply to my question when he said that the trouble with the Loan Estimates was that they did little to increase the State's productivity, and that there was nothing that would make for decentralization. He implied that the money was to be spent on unproductive work in the metropolitan area.

It seems to me that we could talk for days and put the emphasis one way or the other, but the Leader of the Opposition overlooks a lot of things when he makes a statement like that. His remarks about decentralization seemed to be the height of unfairness. This State has natural features which make for a strong tendency towards centralization, as compared with, say, Queensland with its harbours and ports all along the coast and a rich hinterland enjoying a high rainfall behind them. In South Australia we have a very different story and anything we do has to be done against the natural features of the land. Despite that the Government has done everything possible to encourage decentralization by the provision of power and water in country areas, by land settlement and by one-hundred-and-one other means. Much more will be done, such as the development of atomic energy in the years to come, which will make for decentralization.

Even a water supply for Adelaide is criticized by the Opposition after it is here; when it is not here it is badly wanted but when it is it is criticized. Even water for Adelaide goes a long way towards helping industry in South Australia and will in turn increase productivity considerably. Electric power extensions in the country have been numerous, and I wonder how one can go about the country without noticing these things. All through the south from Adelaide to Victor Harbour and eastwards towards the lakes there are hundreds of farms and groups of farms that have been supplied. These developments have taken place very recently and are undoubtedly spectacular. The drainage of South-Eastern areas is another work that is going ahead very rapidly, and again I cannot understand how the Leader of the Opposition can say that these Loan Estimates will not increase the productivity of the State. He talked about South-Eastern drainage at length. In the Address in Reply debate he criticized what he considered to be the slowness of water reticulation on Yorke Peninsula, but it just happens that it did not suit his argument on this occasion, so he attacked the Government

from the other side. On top of that he complained that the Goodwood-Marino railway duplication has been too slow. Anybody can see that it could have been finished years ago if more of our resources had been thrown into the work. The State has a multiplicity of works in hand. Does the Leader of the Opposition want that job done by the concentration of resources if they rob some other programme?

Mr. Shannon—Peterborough water supply, for instance.

Mr. BROOKMAN—He cannot have it both ways—or at least the only one who can is the Leader of the Opposition—and that is why I say his is the easiest speech to make from any part of the House. Furthermore, he wanted to see credit for private people introduced—whenever they need it I suppose—and I think he connected up his line of argument by saying “Why spend all this money on Loan Works?” “Why not let the people have more credit?” Looking at it in this way I doubt if this is really the Socialistic angle, for it does not sound quite like the story we usually hear. He wants to develop the Moorland coalfield. That has been under discussion for a long while and there are plenty of technical reports on it. It is easy to say that the field can be developed, but that claim should be substantiated by technical evidence. A former member for Murray was strongly in favour of this project, but its advocates never bother to say how much coal is there and how much overburden, and what the quality of the coal is. That information is available and on it the Government decided not to go on with the development—for the time being at any rate. If it is desired that the Government should do the work, all necessary supporting evidence should be produced. Mr. O’Halloran also said that there was not much land available to the Government for developmental purposes and that we should use our acquisition powers in order to get it. I remind him that the Government has large areas of virgin scrub land available. There is not enough land of course to satisfy everybody if “everybody” includes all people who want land but have not enough money to buy it. There is more to it than saying that land is required by someone. It is necessary for that person to have money available and to have his heart in developmental work. There is a large area of scrub land on Kangaroo Island but I do not know how many complete farms have been developed there. I know the area contains some partly developed farms and plenty of virgin scrub. In the upper South-East and other

parts of the State scrub land is available to the Government. Land in the upper South-East was not developed sooner by the Government because the Commonwealth would not accept it under the war service land settlement scheme. I think the Commonwealth was wrong, and that the State Government was slow to realize the potentialities of the land.

Mr. Tapping—The Government is guided by experts.

Mr. BROOKMAN—Yes, but not correctly. Now the Government is guided by successful private settlers. I know the Ninety Mile Desert country very well and until recently neither the Commonwealth Government nor the State Government was interested in its development, but through the efforts of private settlers dozens of farms were hacked out of the scrub. Now the experts tell the State Government that the land is suitable for development, but the Commonwealth does not hold that view. We have been told that the soil there would blow away, there would be much erosion, rainfall and water supplies were uncertain, and the sheep there would develop coast disease. However, private people took risks and made a success of their blocks, and now the Government says the land is good enough to be developed. The Minister for Works has been interested in a block there since the late 1930’s. A start was made to develop the land when little scientific knowledge was available on how it should be worked. A risk was taken and now the property is regarded as a show place in the district. It is an illustration of what private enterprise can do.

Mr. Fletcher—You cannot tell the Government experts that.

Mr. BROOKMAN—The only way to do it is by illustration. One day Commonwealth officials will visit the upper South-East and see what is going on. Not only there, but in the honourable member of Victoria’s district previously despised land is now thought to be good land. The sum of £200,000 is to be allotted for work on roads and bridges. According to the Treasurer it is to be spent to enable the Highways and Local Government Department to purchase suitable road-making machinery and plant, and to make advances to local authorities for similar purchases. It resolves itself into a question of whether the Government or private contractors should do the work. I favour private contractors. We are short of labour and money, so why make the position worse by going into the business ourselves? Let the private contractors employ the labour and buy

the machinery. Of course, the Government will have to pay for it, but the private contractors are better able to do the job than any Government. On the sides of country roads Government machinery can be seen lying idle, yet it is proposed to buy more machinery. There are 168 hours in a week, but for weeks and weeks few of the Government machines are even started. A private farmer may work his tractor 1,000 hours a year, or about 20 hours a week. I can scarcely imagine the number of hours worked each week by Government machines. It must be an appallingly low figure, because most of the machinery is in the wrong place. If private contractors did the work the Government would be saved the expense of getting the machinery.

Mr. Fletcher—It would have to be a big job to get a private contractor interested.

Mr. BROOKMAN—No. Private contractors are available to do small and large jobs, but it would be in their interests to have constant work. If they were doing Government work they could be dropped if found to be inefficient and helped if found to be good workers. If they had continuous work they would spend more money on machinery, which would be less expensive for the Government. At present Government machinery is not looked after properly because it is scattered all over the State. America has much more private contract work than we have. I have often read how the contractors work. In some instances, they undertake a national project by sharing the work. Six or seven different companies combine, each taking a share. Efficiency is greater when this is done. I do not know how the costs of Government works are estimated, but I do not think that capital cost of plant is always considered. If all these things were considered, there would be few occasions when it would not be possible to find a private contractor to do a job more quickly and cheaply than the Government. There are many places in the world where railways, harbours, power lines, telephones, etc., are put in by private contractors. I do not suggest that we should de-nationalize all these things, but we should not nationalize too many small jobs. I support the Loan Estimates.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—If I understand the position correctly, about £24,050,000 of new money will have to be found for this Loan expenditure. About £4,250,000 is money previously borrowed and spent, and referred to as estimated repayments. In addition £3,600,000 will be available under the Commonwealth-

State Housing Agreement. Under the heading "Architect-in-Chief—Hospital buildings," £2,500,000 is provided. It does not appear that the Government is doing all that it should in providing hospitals. My Party's policy is decentralization and the provision of more hospitals. When it has the opportunity to implement that policy, my Party will make a better job of it than the Government has done. During the current session I asked the Treasurer on five occasions questions concerning people in mental hospitals who could have been cared for more appropriately in their home by relatives or in an infirmary type of hospital. To the first question I received the reply "nil," and it was not until the fifth question that I obtained the information I had sought. The figures given showed that there had been a continual increase in the number of these patients since 1932.

Progress reported: Committee to sit again.

DANGEROUS DRUGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. C. S. Hincks for the Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I move:—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to give effect to recommendations made last year by the Central Board of Health for the alteration of the law relating to narcotic drugs. The most important of these recommendations was that it should be made possible to prohibit the possession of heroin in South Australia. The recommendations were made as a result of decisions of the Public Health Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council, which has recommended that the States enact uniform law relating to narcotic drugs, and at the same time give effect to proposals made by the World Health Organization. The committee suggested the adoption by the States of model legislation based on the South Australian Dangerous Drugs Act, 1934, but pointed out that a number of alterations to that Act would be necessary. The Government is anxious that South Australia should play its part in the suppression of narcotic drugs, and has decided to give effect to the recommendations of the Public Health Committee and the Central Board of Health. The Government is accordingly introducing this Bill.

For convenience, I will deal with the provisions of the Bill in the order in which they appear. Clause 3 of the Bill provides for the

application of the principal Act by proclamation to new narcotic drugs with such modifications as are stated in the proclamation. At present the principal Act can only be applied to new drugs without modification. The clause is primarily intended to enable a modified control to be exercised over a new drug called pholcodine. This drug is similar to codein and dionin, drugs over which a modified form of control is at present exercised under the principal Act. It is thought desirable that pholcodine should be similarly controlled.

Clause 4 modifies a defence at present available to a charge of unlawful possession of narcotic drugs. Section 5 of the principal Act provides that it shall be a defence to a charge of possession of dangerous drugs that the drugs were supplied for the defendant's use by a doctor. A number of cases have occurred where the defendant has obtained excessive supplies of dangerous drugs by consulting several doctors contemporaneously, but has been able to escape conviction by raising the defence. Clause 4 prevents the defence from being raised in such circumstances. It also deals with another matter. The principal Act at present prohibits the growing of the opium poppy except by the Governors of the Botanic Gardens. In accordance with decisions of the World Health Organization, it has been recommended that the growing of the plants from which Indian hemp and cocaine are produced should also be prohibited. The clause accordingly prohibits the growing of such plants except by the Governors of the Botanic Gardens.

Clause 5 enables the Governor to declare a drug by proclamation to be a prohibited drug, and makes it an offence among other things to manufacture, sell or be in possession of a prohibited drug except in compliance with the conditions, if any, mentioned in the proclamation. The principal Act at present only regulates the possession of narcotic drugs. There is no power to impose a general prohibition on the possession of a drug. Clause 5 supplies this omission. The main object of the clause is to enable the possession of heroin to be generally prohibited.

The Public Health Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council has recommended that the possession and use of heroin be prohibited throughout Australia. The Commonwealth has accordingly prohibited the

importation of heroin into Australia, and it now remains for the States to complete the prohibition.

It is hoped that all States will, in the near future, have passed legislation enabling the possession of heroin to be prohibited; and that it will be possible to bring the prohibition into effect on the same day throughout Australia. The first of October this year has been suggested as a possible date. New South Wales has already passed legislation prohibiting the possession of heroin after a date to be proclaimed. The Government feels that members will be glad to assist in the attempt to ban this drug from Australia. Heroin is the most habit-forming of all narcotic drugs, and is regarded, therefore, as the most dangerous. The drug is not required nowadays for medicinal purposes. At one time it was widely used for such purposes, but its use has been superseded by other less dangerous drugs. The Federal Council of the British Medical Association supports the recommendation of the Public Health Committee for the banning of heroin. Many nations, including the United States of America, have already banned heroin.

Clause 6 makes a minor amendment to the principal Act to enable the Minister to re-issue a licence or authority to be in possession of drugs after the licence or authority has been withdrawn. Doubts have been raised whether at present a licence or authority which has been withdrawn can be re-issued. Clause 7 makes it an offence to obtain a drug by false pretences from a doctor or veterinary surgeon. At present it is an offence under the principal Act, to obtain drugs by false pretences from a manufacturer of drugs or a chemist, but not from a doctor or veterinary surgeon. It is clearly desirable that the offence should be extended in the manner proposed. Clause 8 provides that a person authorized to enter premises under the principal Act, may, in addition to the powers which he can at present exercise, seize and carry away books, documents, drugs and samples of drugs. It is considered that such powers are necessary for the proper policing of the principal Act.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.58 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, August 31, at 2 p.m.