

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, September 6, 1955.

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

DEATH OF MRS. W. MACGILLIVRAY.

The SPEAKER—I have to inform the House that in pursuance of the resolution carried last week I sent a letter to the member for Chaffey, who has replied as follows:—

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I desire to thank you for the letter in which you informed me of the motion of sympathy in our bereavement moved by the Minister of Lands (Honourable C. S. Hincks) and seconded by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. M. R. O'Halloran) and carried by the members of the House of Assembly. The kindly thought that inspired the motion and the action of suspending the sitting of the House in memory of our dear wife and mother has been of the greatest help to us at a time when we needed help most. Please convey our sincere thanks to the Ministers, members, and officers of the House of Assembly for their kindly sympathy, which has made our bereavement that much easier to bear.

QUESTIONS.

ABATTOIRS STRIKE.

Mr. WHITE—Since last Thursday I have been asked by numerous fat lamb breeders when the strike at the Metropolitan Abattoirs will end. The farmers that have spoken to me are typical of thousands of other breeders of fat lambs, and they are most concerned about a hold up in the slaughter of lambs at this time of the year. They have produced a harvest of lambs, and are now seeing the monetary value of that harvest gradually disappearing, for lambs for export must be of a certain weight and in a certain condition—usually referred to as “bloom”—if they are to command the best price offering. In the early districts unshorn lambs will soon become infested with grass seeds, and this also reduces their value as export lambs. Numerous conferences have been held between the strikers, the management of the Abattoirs, representatives of the producers and the Government, but it seems that they have failed. While the conferences are being held the export lamb position is becoming worse, and I venture the opinion—

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member may not venture an opinion.

Mr. WHITE—Already many thousands of pounds have been lost to the producers, and the present hold up must be detrimental to South Australia's chances of holding its overseas lamb markets in future seasons. Can the

Minister of Agriculture say what further developments have taken place in an effort to bring about a swift conclusion to the disastrous dispute?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—We are all well aware of the serious situation and, anticipating that some information would be desired, legitimately, by members today, I have prepared a brief summary of events up to the present and what is proposed. As will be remembered, after a number of abortive conferences between the Abattoirs Board and the Meat Industry Employees' Union and before the Industrial Court, the union finally took its wages claim to its own Industrial Wages Board. The decision of that board for no increases was given on August 26. At a meeting of union members on August 28, this decision was rejected and the men remained on strike. On Friday, September 2, the Abattoirs Board again met the Union Strike Committee and offered to have the dispute in respect to wage claims arbitrated upon in accordance with section 34 of the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Act. It was agreed between the parties that Commonwealth Conciliation Commissioner Kelly should be asked to act and both sides would abide by his decision. These fair and generous terms were recommended by the Strike Committee to the strikers' meeting held on Sunday last, but were rejected, I am bound to say, on the advice of extreme elements subversive of the men's own best interests.

A conference was held yesterday between the Abattoirs Board and the Government, and the board was assured of all possible support by the Government to have the abattoirs again placed in operation. A further conference was held with the three producers' organizations when the whole matter was fully discussed and the support of the three organizations to the Abattoirs Board was fully assured. In view of the rejection by the men of their own leader's recommendation the board has decided as a result of the conference yesterday that the only recourse left open to it is to lay complaints under section 35 of the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Act and prosecute the strikers under this section.

Mr. TRAVERS—Is it known whether the great majority of strikers who at the recent meeting decided to continue striking were men already engaged in employment elsewhere than at the Abattoirs?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I have no precise figures as to the numbers employed

elsewhere, but it is generally believed that the great majority, if not all, are employed with private employers.

Mr. HEASLIP—Does the Minister of Agriculture know how many, if any, of the employees of the Abattoirs now illegally on strike are occupying Abattoirs houses?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—There are about 30 employees in Abattoirs Board houses but the board is loath to take any action for their eviction because it is known that most of these men would be only too glad to return to work.

Mr. STOTT—In reply to a previous question the Minister of Agriculture referred to the possibility of prosecutions under a certain section of the Industrial Code. As a matter of high policy, will the Premier, representing the Government, intervene in this strike by having a compulsory conference called by the President of the Industrial Court seeking an instruction for these men to return to work, and if they refuse to obey that instruction, then use the penal clauses of the Industrial Code?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—A number of conferences have already been called between the President of the Industrial Court, union representatives and the Abattoirs Board. A further conference was held last week as a result of a statement by the Minister of Agriculture in this House. All the conferences over a period of five weeks have been abortive, and the Government does not think that a further conference could achieve any useful purpose.

Mr. HAWKER (on notice)—

1. How many strikes have taken place at the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs since and including 1950?

2. How many industrial disputes at the Abattoirs have occurred over the same period?

3. When did they occur and how long did they last?

4. What is the estimated loss in numbers of stock slaughtered during these periods?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The replies are:—

1. The present strike of employees at the abattoirs is the first since and including 1950. However, on November 14, 1951, the Board dismissed the slaughtermen and certain other employees in consequence of irritation tactics being carried out at the works by the Union in an endeavour to force claims for an increase in rates of pay and for three weeks' annual leave. Following negotiations between the Board and the Union, the men were re-employed on December 10, 1951.

2. 42.

3. In 1950, 4; 1951, 14 (including events leading up to dismissal of employees); 1952, 5; 1953, 6; 1954, 7; 1955, 6.

Excluding the period November 14 to December 9, 1951, inclusive, the period of time lost as a result of each dispute has varied from half-an-hour upwards but not exceeding a day.

4. Stock dropped as a result of disputes are made up over following days. As a result of the present strike, these estimated losses in the slaughter of stock by abattoirs employees are as follows:—

Local—8,000 cattle, 80,000 sheep and lambs, 4,200 pigs, 4,800 calves.

Export—75,000 lambs.

BURBANK SPUR RAILWAY LINE.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Yesterday's *News* stated:—

"The Government has definitely accepted the route for the spur line to Chrysler Ltd., at Tonsley, through part of Ascot Park district linking with the Marino line," the Railways Minister, Mr. Jude, said today. Can the Premier say whether this has been accepted as Government policy and, if not, whether prior to its being accepted as such the Premier or the Minister representing the Minister of Railways will indicate the Government's willingness to call a conference of interested bodies, particularly the Marion corporation, to discuss the matter?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The question has already been considered by Cabinet, and as a result I am in a position to make the following statement. With regard to the need to make certain acquisitions of land along the route to Tonsley, *via* Woodlands Park, an impression seems to have been gained that the Government is pushing ahead arbitrarily with its own idea as to where this new spur line should be constructed. This is incorrect. The Government referred the whole matter to the Public Works Committee, which took detailed evidence as to which route should be followed. The committee, a non-party one, suggested unanimously the one now in question. The cost of the present suggestion will be £179,000 for the total construction, purchase of land and so on, as against £381,000 on the alternative route. Should compulsory acquisition be necessary the affected person may dispose of the whole of his interest if he wishes to do so, and naturally the Commissioner will view the individual problems as reasonably as is possible. Regarding demolitions, only four homes were involved on this route as against 10 on the alternative one. One further permanent residence also exists, not requiring to be demolished, as

against seven on the alternative route. There are, however, eight emergency type houses required to be shifted on the Woodlands Park route. Vacant blocks involved are 14 *via* Woodlands Park as against 117 on the other route. The suggestion that people on the route should have been previously advised does not at first sight appear to be an unreasonable one. However, when the possibilities of speculative purchase, etc., are considered it will be appreciated that the principle adopted was the fairest to the taxpayers as a whole.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The Minister's reply appears to confirm the press statements that it is the Government's policy to acquire property to provide this spur line. Can the Minister of Works say whether the acquisition will be on values operating on Thursday, September 1, plus a severance allowance to the owners?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The Government's policy is always to do a fair thing, and that will be done in this instance.

SPEED LIMIT.

Mr. HAWKER—Can the Premier say whether any part of the road adjacent to the new town near Salisbury is subject to the 35 miles per hour speed limit or will be subject to that limit in future? Will the Minister take steps, if a limit is imposed, to erect notices to that effect there and at places such as Smithfield and Daveyston, where there has been some doubt in the public mind whether the limit applies?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The places to which the 35 miles per hour limit applies are set out in the Road Traffic Act and are all township or corporation areas, and it would not be practicable to erect notices in all townships. Where the metropolitan area extends towards the country a number of such notices have been placed at the intersections of main roads so that motorists arriving in these districts may know where the limits apply. At present there is no township declared at the site of the new town to be established and the 35 miles limit does not apply there. It applies, however, at all townships, so the motorist does not need to be informed in respect of townships.

TASTE OF POTATOES.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Recently my attention has been drawn by a number of my constituents to the quality of certain potatoes being sold. Although I do not know that there is anything harmful about them, they have an objectionable taste and children in particular find them uneatable. They look all right but

some sort of insecticide may have been used to give this taste; therefore I do not blame the retailers, but I draw the attention of the Minister of Agriculture to the matter in the interests of retailers and consumers. I have learnt that this is not confined to my district. Has the Minister's attention been drawn to the unpleasant taste of some potatoes, does he know the reason, and if not, will he try to find out with a view to preventing it?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I am personally aware of the poor quality of many potatoes during the past season, but I had not previously had any specific complaint of this nature. I will have the matter investigated to see if some remedial action can be taken.

MOONTA STREET LIGHTING.

Mr. McALEES—Recently the Moonta Council asked the Electricity Trust whether Moonta street lights could be turned off at midnight instead of 1 a.m., but the request was rejected. As the council's revenue is not so great that it can afford to spend money unnecessarily, will the Premier take up this matter with the Electricity Trust and let me have a reply?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes.

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING HOURS.

Mr. DAVIS—The *News* of Thursday last reported that Executive Council had granted permission to country shopkeepers to stay open on the evening of December 23. Can the Premier say whether the request for such hours came from shop assistants, from the residents of the various districts, or from shopkeepers who would receive some gain from a late shopping night?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I cannot give the information required concerning this year's decision as I am no longer Minister of Industry. Last year requests were received from a number of country towns and they were investigated by police officers, who interviewed citizens in the various areas to see whether the requests were widespread or came from persons interested in having an additional trading period. The police reports from all centres were favourable and indicated that the people concerned all wanted an extension, although I believe that at Port Pirie one of the unions, or one section of the community, did raise objection. In the main, the police reports were that no persons could be found who did not approve of the proposal. That was the position last year and I have no doubt the same conditions applied this year.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ROLLS.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Minister of Education a reply to the question I asked last week concerning the reprinting of Legislative Council rolls?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes. The Attorney-General has furnished me with the following reply:—

In normal circumstances the Legislative Council main roll is reprinted at June 30 in the year preceding the periodical elections and Ministerial approval is obtained in accordance with section 21 of the Electoral Act. This approval has not been sought this year because of the report of the Electoral Commission, which, if adopted, will materially alter these rolls and necessitate a complete reprint. Such approval will be requested immediately the Constitution Act Amendment Bill (No. 20) is either accepted or rejected by Parliament, and the main roll will then be reprinted. This will be followed by a supplemental roll made up to the issue of the writ for the periodical elections.

MOUNT GAMBIER RAIL SERVICE.

Mr. CORCORAN—For about two years a rail car service to replace the present train service to Mount Gambier has been talked about, and there have been delays over which the Government has had no control. Will the Minister of Works ascertain from the Minister of Railways when it is likely to be provided?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Yes.

GRASSHOPPER INFESTATION.

Mr. HEASLIP—Has the Minister of Agriculture any further information concerning the question I asked last week about grasshoppers that had already hatched?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The honourable member gave me some grasshoppers that had been collected in his district and I forwarded them to the Waite Institute for identification. Similar samples have come from various parts of the country and whenever I am in the country I collect samples and have them identified. I have also given instructions that eggs are to be regularly tested from now on as to their liability to hatch out. Following on the identification of grasshoppers that have come to hand, I have received the following report from Mr. Strickland, Chief of the Division of Plant Industry:—

No definite identification of hatching of the plague locusts has yet reached us. On investigating numerous reports, isolated hatchings of another species—the small Australian grasshopper—have been found, but these are not in plague numbers. The District Clerk of Melrose District Council reports that the latest reports just received from Yandiah, near Wirrabara, proved also to be of this small species. The

Agricultural advisers are keeping in touch with the District Councils to see that materials are procured and supplied to farmers, whilst in the Upper North, the District Adviser is visiting pastoral areas in the proximity of District Council areas that lie north and east. It is hoped that a clear position of the extent of dangerous egg beds and their treatment, will be obtained at a conference of officers to be held on Wednesday, September 14.

FATAL ACCIDENT AT IRON KNOB.

Mr. RICHES—Is the Premier now willing to lay on the table the report of the Inspector of Mines on the fatal accident that occurred at Iron Knob on August 13? On Thursday he said that there may be some difficulties, because when a paper is laid on the table it becomes the property of the House and may be here when required in the Crown Solicitor's Office, but I understand there are five copies of the report available. We consider this to be an important matter.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have a copy of the report, but have not read it. I have no doubt that it is proper that its contents should be made available. Whether it be more convenient to lay it on the table or to leave it in the keeping of the Clerk so that members can read and use it, is a matter on which I have some doubts. I will leave it in the keeping of the Clerk for at least the next 14 days so honourable members can examine it.

GRAIN DISTILLERY AT WALLAROO.

Mr. McALEES—The other day I noticed at the Wallaroo grain distillery a house of about four or five rooms that could be used as a dwelling house for an ordinary person, and also some offices. I noticed that men were painting the house. I did not go in to make inquiries but at Wallaroo I was told that the painting was being done under instructions from the Government. Can the Premier say if that is correct?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes. Under the terms of the lease the company is obliged to keep the property in first class condition, but prior to the company taking over there were some matters that required attention. Certain parts of the property had deteriorated badly and had to be brought up to a reasonable standard, and a certain amount of repair work was authorized by the Government.

EXHAUST FROM VEHICLES.

Mr. QUIRKE—My question relates to the exhaust from diesel-operated transports on our highways. I brought this matter up some time ago. There may be some technical reason why

the exhaust must be blown out on the offside of a vehicle, but that means that oncoming vehicles take the full brunt of the discharge, which is not so objectionable in winter but is highly objectionable in summer, when the windows of motor vehicles are normally open to keep them cool. The fumes are particularly objectionable when the diesel engines are pulling heavily on an upgrade and they leave a cloud of evil-smelling smoke behind them. I do not want to interfere with transport in any way, but if there are no technical difficulties it should be possible to deflect the fumes to the centre of the roadway from the middle of the vehicle instead of on to oncoming vehicles. Will the Minister of Works have the matter investigated?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Yes. It is an unique and interesting subject.

RENTAL OF MARKET STALLS.

Mr. TEUSNER—I have been consulted by a constituent regarding the New Market in Rundle Street. He is a vegetable grower and market gardener and has for some years been renting a stall from a stall holder in the market. Recently he was informed by the stall holder that the latter was prepared to transfer the stall to him. An application was made to the market authority, which I believe to be the owner of the Adelaide Fruit and Produce Exchange, for a transfer. The applicant was then informed that a transfer would be granted on condition that a rental of £100 per annum, payable quarterly in advance, was paid. I understand other stall holders whose activities are similar to those of my constituent are paying a rental well below £100. Can the Premier say if the rentals are fixed by Act of Parliament, and what is the position in connection with the matter?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—There are two companies operating markets at the east end of Adelaide and, as far as I know, they are both operating under private Acts of Parliament. They are very old Acts, and I believe there has been some confusion about the charges set out, as they now apply, but if the honourable member will give me the details I will take up the question with the companies concerned and ascertain the position. If there is any discrimination I shall find out why and see whether the charges are in accordance with the Act.

RECREATION GROUNDS (JOINT SCHEMES) ACT.

Mr. RICHES—Firstly, I thank the Minister of Education for the intimation I received

today about the subsidy for the establishment of a schools' oval in the Port Augusta parklands. It was envisaged that this oval would be established under the joint schemes legislation, and the Minister stated in the House last year that he supported that scheme and thought that more ovals could be established under it. In attempting to implement this scheme it was found that the ownership of the oval would have to be transferred completely to the Minister of Education, and the Port Augusta people agreed to that. Does that mean that the joint schemes legislation has completely broken down for the purpose of improving grounds, or does it apply only to the acquisition of grounds?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The legislation has not broken down, and I know of nothing that has made it more difficult for the department to co-operate with councils than has been the case in the past. On the contrary, since I have become Minister of Education, I have endeavoured to extend the scope of the Act as far as I am legally permitted, but I received advice from the Auditor-General that I am not permitted to subsidize ovals that are not vested in me. I think that, as a result of that advice, the Director of Education, when in the honourable member's district, discussed with him and other interested bodies a proposal to transfer the land to the Minister of Education so that he could grant a subsidy.

Mr. RICHES—You cannot subsidize a joint scheme?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—On the advice I have received, and which I regret, I cannot subsidize properties that I do not own, but that does not debar me from entering into an approved joint scheme.

LOCKLEYS SCHOOL.

Mr. FRED WALSH (on notice)—

1. How many pupils were enrolled at Lockleys school at July 31, 1955?

2. What is the largest number of pupils in any one class at this school?

3. What is the area of the Lockleys school grounds?

4. What is the number of portable or temporary class rooms in the school grounds?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The replies are:—

1. 802 children were on the roll at the Lockleys school at July 31, 1955; 33 of these were newly admitted between June 27 and July 1.

2. The largest number of pupils in any one class is 52.

3. The original school grounds contained 2 acres 30 perches. There is also a games area across the road of 4½ acres.

4. There are 13 wooden classrooms in the school grounds.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT: DEMOLITION OF HOUSES.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—I move:—

That the House at its rising do adjourn until one o'clock tomorrow.

The purpose of the motion is to discuss a matter of urgency, namely, the unrestricted demolition or conversion of habitable dwelling-houses for the purpose of erecting business and service station premises. This is a matter of great urgency, for by bringing it before the House it may be possible to prevent more homes from being demolished even this week. Further, it may be possible to prevent wastage of manpower in industry. When people are given notice to leave their homes they usually go to the Housing Trust and say that they have been given notice to quit; and as great hardship will fall on his family the breadwinner usually elects to lose time from his employment in an effort to secure other accommodation. We must also consider the question of manpower available to the building industry. Surely the Government should know as well as people outside of the acute shortage of tradesmen. Under the heading "Situations Vacant" the following advertisement appeared in yesterday's *News*:—

Architect-in-Chief's Department, Victoria Square. Tradesmen required for work on Government buildings in city and country areas—painters, plasterers, bricklayers, plumbers, carpenters and joiners, builders' labourers. Permanent employment for suitable men. Apply to Superintendent of Works.

The Government knows of the demand for competent labour in the building industry, yet nothing has been done by it for a long time to prevent the demolition of houses that had been tenanted or could have been tenanted.

Apart from manpower there is the question of the shortage of materials, which the Opposition has raised continually over the past few years. The construction of big industrial buildings and of the proposed buildings at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital will result in a big drain on materials, especially cement, and will further aggravate the shortage of materials for home construction. Although some people with connections in the trade are today able to get adequate supplies of cement, many home builders must go short because of the heavy

demand for cement for industrial buildings. The Government should establish a kiln to produce burnt red bricks for home building. Although scientific methods have been adopted in the manufacture of cement bricks and blocks, those products have their weaknesses and will never be as satisfactory as burnt red bricks for building.

The demolition of dwelling houses can only lengthen the already long waiting list of applicants for Housing Trust homes. For every applicant that is provided with a home another joins the waiting list. The trust has embarked on a building programme embracing pensioners' and business couples' flats, emergency houses, brick and timber-frame homes for letting, and various purchase homes, yet the waiting list is still too long. If the waiting time for a trust home were only half as long there might be some justification for lack of controls over building materials, but young people desiring accommodation should not be thrown to the wolves merely because they have not sufficient capital to invest in a home. Earlier this afternoon members were told that, in accordance with Government policy, further houses were to be demolished.

Mr. Shannon—Where are they?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Mr. Shannon, as chairman of the Public Works Committee, should know. They are situated near the Adelaide-Marino railway line.

Mr. Shannon—The Government does not propose to demolish them.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Is the honourable member as well-informed as the owners of the homes to which I refer?

Mr. Shannon—The honourable member is probably misleading the people in those homes.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I object to the statement that I am misleading the people.

Mr. Shannon—I think you have.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I object to that statement.

Mr. Shannon—You told them that their homes would be demolished.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—When the opportunity presents itself the honourable member may make the necessary correction and satisfy some of the people that I saw on Sunday afternoon.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I understand that this debate is proceeding on a motion under Standing Order 58, which states *inter alia*:—

Only the matter in respect of which such motion is made can be debated.

Mr. Walsh is now debating where the new railway line would be, and I ask whether that is in order.

The SPEAKER—The matter for debate on a motion of this kind must be strictly relevant to what is set out in the letter received by me. Mr. Walsh's letter refers to "demolition or conversion." As I interpret his remarks, I understand them to relate to houses likely to be demolished in respect of certain public works.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—On a further point of order, Mr. Speaker, I have examined the letter you read, which states:—

... namely, the unrestricted demolition or conversion of habitable dwellinghouses for the purpose of erecting business and service station premises.

The motion has nothing to do with railways.

The SPEAKER—That is so.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I have said nothing about the demolition of anything that is not referred to in the motion. With your permission, Sir, I indicated by way of passing reference that according to information I received this afternoon the Government's policy provided that other new homes would be demolished.

Mr. SHANNON—On a point of order, as this debate proceeds will passing references to matters not related to the motion before the Chair be permitted?

The SPEAKER—Certainly not. The honourable member for Onkaparinga raised this matter and drew attention to it: the honourable member for Goodwood did not.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—My motion refers to the unrestricted demolition or conversion of habitable homes for industry. In Adelaide, habitable homes are being demolished to make way for industrial buildings. If one reads the "Situations vacant" columns of the press one will realize that the labour available is not able to satisfy existing industries. Which is of greater importance to people generally—the unrestricted demolition or conversion of habitable homes for a new industry or the provision of labour for established industries that cannot obtain the necessary manpower? The answer is obvious. This Government has closed its eyes to the situation. In last Saturday's *News*, under the heading "Family To Be Evicted" the following appeared:—

A family of six, including two pensioners, will be evicted from their home in Halifax Street, City, in October.

There are six homes in the same locality that will be demolished. The Government has a responsibility to the people occupying those

homes. In the same paper, under the heading "... and they want to find a home," the following appeared:—

A good cry in bed—and Mrs. D. B. Elliott, of Pope Street, City, was back in the fight to find some place where her family can live together. She is living with her husband in one room of a friend's home. Her three children, two grown up, are scattered in the suburbs. The Elliott family's troubles began about three weeks ago when they were evicted from their cottage home in Hampstead Place, City. They had lived there for 22 years. The house is being demolished for business premises. The family's total weekly income was well below the £50 mentioned by Mr. Hincks, she said.

This case is only one of many. It was ventilated in Parliament and I take it Mrs. Elliott's reference to Mr. Hincks related to the time he was in charge of the House while the Premier was away.

The Hon. C. S. Hincks—I think the amount mentioned was between £40 and £50.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—We will not argue about that.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Forty-five pounds is well below £50.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The Minister just wouldn't know and I recommend that he—

The SPEAKER—Order! The question is whether these homes are being demolished for business premises.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—They are. If these things occur and people are evicted how does the Minister of Works hope to be able to maintain the labour force of the Architect-in-Chief's Department? It recently advertised in the press for tradesmen. That department undertakes much work for the Education Department, but if it cannot get the necessary labour how will it be able to complete the extensions to the Marion High School and provide accommodation for new enrolments next year, or complete the Queen Elizabeth Hospital? I sought information from the Attorney-General concerning eviction orders and received a reply from his office, dated March 10, relating to the period from December 1, 1954, to February 28, 1955. There were 17 orders for possession in December, 16 in January, but in February, after the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act had been relaxed, there were 27. This increase can be attributed to the Government's lack of foresight in not providing protection against the unrestricted demolition that has taken place. Section 14 of the Building Act states:—

Every person who intends to demolish or remove any building or any substantial part thereof shall give the council notice in writing

of such intention which shall be delivered or sent to the surveyor at his office, and shall afford the surveyor free access to such work for the purpose of inspection.

Section 15 lists the requirements to be complied with by persons demolishing or removing buildings. The Government has opened the way for the demolition of habitable homes. It should not be necessary for me to refer to the number of homes that have been demolished on Goodwood Road recently. Good homes of solid construction and standard type have been demolished to provide room for used car sites. Demolitions have been made on the Unley Road and on the Glen Osmond Road, but houses have not been pulled down so that new homes can be erected. The motion is introduced in the hope that the Government will introduce protective legislation in the interests of people who are being hounded from their homes. Whilst the Housing Trust has such a long list of applicants the Government should take this action so as to enable young people desiring to marry to get homes for themselves instead of having to share accommodation.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood)—It is impossible to be a member of a metropolitan district without being gravely concerned at the state of housing in South Australia, and at the fact that habitable houses are being either demolished or converted into business premises or service stations. One's concern grows when one knows personally of the extraordinarily bad situation that many of the people in the metropolitan area are in regarding housing. I have in my district many pitiable cases of people with no accommodation who are living in extremely difficult circumstances, or who are facing eviction orders without any hope of getting houses. Whilst all this is going on we see habitable homes being demolished and building materials that could be used for housing being diverted for the construction of unnecessary business premises and service stations. It is obvious that most of the new service stations are unnecessary. When speaking on the Motor Spirits Distribution Bill last year the Premier expressed great concern on this matter. He said:—

I do not believe it is necessary for additional petrol stations to be established at present. I have expressed concern about labour and materials being used for unnecessary stations. Regarding the large quantities of building materials being diverted from house building to the erection of petrol stations he said:—

I publicly expressed my concern in this House, and immediately the oil companies approached me and gave a written undertaking

that the number of retailers and resellers would not be increased in the metropolitan area for two years and that no premises not in operation at the time of the undertaking would be started in the metropolitan area for that period, unless other wholesalers who would not be bound by the undertaking entered the business.

Then there was a reference to the fact that if certain stations were closed down the oil companies could erect others in their place. There has been no new wholesaler coming in to disturb the position, and the undertaking was given on July 1. On the oil companies' own statement, 39 service stations have been completed since the undertaking was given, three are in course of construction, and contracts for another 32 have been let. That makes a total of 74 stations either completed or in course of construction since July 1. Last year the Premier expressed concern at the unnecessary transfer of materials from house building to the building of business premises and service stations, but it is still going on. In my electorate there is a glaring case at the corner of Marion Road and Glynde Road, Magill, where an old established place able to accommodate a family has been pulled down and a service station erected. Four shops and attached dwellings in O'Connell Street, North Adelaide, have been demolished for a service station, and at the corner of Glen Osmond Road and Eastwood Terrace, four shops and houses have been demolished. On Unley Road a house belonging to a member of this place, and an adjoining house, have been demolished for the building of a service station. At the corner of Fullarton Road and Invergowrie Avenue the greater portion of a house has been demolished. I cannot conceive why the oil companies are allowed to go on diverting building materials and demolishing habitable houses when the housing position is as it is.

The concern expressed by the Premier last September has not led him to take any action. I do not know whether the Government has brought the matter to the attention of the oil companies and asked for an explanation. If he has approached the companies members would be pleased to hear about it. They would applaud any action he took in the matter. The view expressed last September by the Premier is supported by members opposite and on this side. Members opposite were the first to raise the matter of the unnecessary demolition of houses and the diversion of materials to the building of service stations, and one must assume that their concern is maintained today. In view of all this we wonder why we have not heard of

Government action in the matter. How far have the oil companies honoured the undertaking they gave to the Premier that they would not bring new service stations into operation unless certain events occurred, either the closing down of certain outlets so that new ones could be opened or a new wholesaler come in? With the limited facilities available to me I can find that only 10 stations have been closed. The Premier may have another figure because his source of information is greater than mine. If there are more than 10 I will be glad to hear of it. The oil companies say that 32 new stations have been commenced since the undertaking was given. I cannot see how this is honouring the undertaking. The only way I can see that the companies can allege the undertaking is not being broken is by an independent station with several different bowsters changing over to one brand. Then several bowsters can be taken off, but although that is not closing down a petrol station it is closing down bowsters, and that must give the right to erect a new station with several bowsters elsewhere. That may be their reasoning, but I think every member will agree that if that is the way they seek to honour the undertaking they gave to the Government it is a very dishonourable procedure because, obviously, that was not what any person shown that undertaking would take it to mean. If that is the basis of the undertaking it is not worth one penny, because they could erect innumerable service stations as the result of the changeover to one-brand stations throughout the metropolitan area. People are most concerned at the housing position and the activities of the oil companies and other businesses which are demolishing habitable dwellings. We on this side of the House would like to hear what the Government is doing about this problem and how it is forcing the oil companies into meeting their obligations. What does the Government propose to see that building materials are not diverted to unnecessary businesses and that habitable houses are not demolished while the housing plight of many people is still grave?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—The member for Norwood wants to know the views of the Government, and one of its strong views is that it respects the right of private ownership.

Mr. O'Halloran—You did not always do so.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—At the moment we must confine ourselves to the motion before

the House, although tomorrow we may be able to debate the question more widely.

Mr. O'Halloran—You controlled building demolition not long ago.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government believes that when rights of private ownership are conferred upon people they have certain privileges and obligations subject to a general observance of decency, and we believe that that principle should be disturbed as little as possible. The Opposition raised this matter last year, at a time when building materials were in short supply. I wrote to the oil companies asking them what further petrol stations they proposed erecting and what their future policy would be. I received a full and frank letter from the Chamber of Commerce, which states:—

The oil companies at present marketing motor spirit in Adelaide are Ampol, Caltex, C.O.R., H. C. Sleight, Neptune, Shell, and Vacuum, and after prolonged discussions and consideration they unanimously agreed for a period of two years from July 1, 1954, with the exception of those outlets under construction at that date, no increase in the total number of re-selling outlets will be made within the metropolitan area. If an additional station is constructed anywhere, it will merely represent a transfer from another reselling point which will be made inoperative. In other words, we have voluntarily agreed upon a practicable limitation scheme for Adelaide.

The oil companies enumerated stated that they would not construct further stations except those that were in course of construction, and in addition they reserved the right, if they closed one down in one place, to set up one in another place. The member for Norwood has asked whether the Government has kept this matter under review, and I assure him that it has. I asked for a report on this matter, and the industry has forwarded me a full report, which I can show to members. It is not a secret report and has never been secret. It has always been available to any member.

Mr. O'Halloran—What is the date of it?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It was written on August 1, 1955.

Mr. O'Halloran—Then it has not been available long.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It was published in full in the daily press, and states:—

In view of the recent adverse oil industry publicity in the press and reference therein to an alleged "breaking down" of the arrangement entered into between members of the industry for the control of additional petrol reselling outlets in the metropolitan area of Adelaide, my committee felt that you would be interested

to know that the industry has had this matter under constant review and that the position at this date is as follows:—

Service stations under construction at July 1, 1954, as advised in my letter of August 25, 1954 42
Of above, number since completed and opened 39
Service stations additional to the above erected since July 1, 1954, including stations at present being built or for which building contracts have been let at this date 32
(These have been more than offset by the transfers and closures shown below.)

Petrol reselling outlets closed, including transfers to new locations 38
From the foregoing it will be clear that the industry to this date has honoured the undertaking given to you as set out in my letter of August 2, 1954. On the matter of service station development, it is interesting to note that, according to information received from the Motor Vehicles Department, over 25,000 new motor vehicles (excluding motor cycles) have been registered in the State during the last 12 months.

There was some additional information in the letter that was not released to the press, but I now have the authority to release it to members:—

There has been some criticism regarding the demolition of houses, and while the industry has no intention of entering into a public controversy on this matter, for your own information 15 houses or dwelling quarters attached to shops have been demolished by oil companies. Thirteen of these were old and sub-standard, and two not in this category suffered severely from earthquake damage. Against this, large blocks of land have been purchased by oil companies, the greater part of which has been released for subdivision. The result is that 13 building blocks have been made available for the erection of houses (two houses have already been erected) which more than offsets the number of dwellings or shops cum dwellings which have been demolished if those unfit for habitation are taken into account. Details of individual demolitions are attached hereto.

Of course, the question of demolitions was the topic on which the Opposition brought forward this motion of urgency. The details of demolitions that were given are as follows:—

West Terrace, Adelaide—Damp and sub-standard dwelling 80 to 90 years old in shocking condition.

Main North Road, Gepps Cross—Dilapidated and derelict dwelling, 80 to 90 years old, demolition of which was welcomed by the municipal authority concerned and supported by health inspector.

57-59 Unley Road, North Unley—Two 60 to 70-year-old stone and brick dwellings in poor condition due to age and earthquake damage—one unoccupied.

Goodwood Road, Wayville—Two brick dwellings 70 to 80 years old, in damp condition and considered sub-standard. Both unoccupied.

Grand Junction Road, Rosewater—One 80-year-old timber frame shop and dwelling. Demolished 1954.

Torrens Road, Kilkenny—Sixty-year-old property in a state of disrepair owing to ravages of white ants.

Mr. Stephens—What about the other two dwellings in Torrens Road alongside that property? Did they tell you about the modern house there?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I am quoting a list supplied to me, and if the honourable member has some additional information on this topic I shall be pleased to have it. I have not inspected these houses and I am giving this information so members will know the position as it has been represented to the Government. The list continues:—

O'Connell Street, North Adelaide—An 80-year old residence attached to shops, riddled with white ants and sub-standard. Demolition contractor advised it was the filthiest place he had ever had to demolish. People in residence were offered alternative accommodation. Municipal authorities confirmed that it was their policy to demolish vermin infested dwellings.
Corner Glyndc Road and Marion Road, Firlc—This house was a residence which suffered severely from earthquake damage and needed extensive repairs. A contractor's figure for repairs was £2,000.

Corner South Road and Avenue Road, Edwardstown—Small brick cottage demolished after being condemned by the district council.

Corner Glen Osmond Road and Main Avenue, Frewville—This property consisted of an undertaker's parlour with house at the rear. The buildings were declared as unsafe due to earthquake damage and had to be demolished. The district council gave every assistance and expressed their appreciation of the opening up of this corner which was at an acute angle to main road.

Corner Anzac Highway and Marion Road, Plympton—Property consisted of galvanized iron shop and store room with housing accommodation at the rear, and was acquired for the extension of present service station facilities. Advice was given by health inspector that house would be condemned if application made to council. This, however, not necessary but council subsequently expressed pleasure at the opening up of this blind corner.

Corner Osmond Terrace and Magill Road, Norwood—This substandard property consisted of a wood and iron secondhand dealer's shop with old home at the rear. The council acquiesced in its demolition which removed the hazards of a dangerous intersection.

Payneham Road, Evandale—Old and dilapidated dwelling—unoccupied and unsafe for occupation.

In addition to the foregoing, there have, of course, been a few instances of private dwellings forming part of service station premises being demolished by their owners in order to

expand their business or where the re-seller purchased property adjoining his premises for extension purposes.

Where the re-seller does that the companies are not the property-owners and are not responsible. To bring the matter up to date I asked my secretary only this morning to contact the oil companies to see if any further information could be obtained on events since the receipt of the letter, and I have now received the following further information:—

Since the letter of August 1, 1955, one company has demolished an old building at the corner of West Beach and South Roads. It was a very old cottage with no bath and had been unoccupied for 18 months. Another company is involved with two properties where the alterations are being made to the fronts of houses to incorporate a selling station at each, but both properties will remain residences. They are at Victoria Terrace, Mitcham, and Fullarton Road, Highgate.

That is the record of the petrol companies as it has been supplied to me. So far as I know it is the effective answer to the statement that the companies have not honoured their agreement into which they entered voluntarily. Indeed, the Government has no power to force them into an agreement; it does not desire to prevent any particular section from expanding, because it believes that a person who desires to enter an occupation or line of business should have the right to do so. The only question on which the Government was concerned—and on which it would be concerned today—was the possible extreme use of labour and building materials, but the position set out discloses no more expansion in this industry than in any other, and certainly not as much as the increase in the number of motor vehicles on our roads. Further, I do not know why the motor vehicle owner should not receive proper service, the same as the purchaser of any other service or commodity. The time when he should have to rely on the kerbside petrol station is past; the old system of selling petrol on the public highway is antiquated.

Mr. Frank Walsh—What about the demolition of the houses in Halifax Street?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The honourable member failed to make any case of urgency in this matter; in fact, I strongly doubt whether the debate on his motion should have been permitted to proceed, because the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act Amendment Bill now before the House governs the grounds upon which evictions may be carried out. That Bill is subject to amendment at any time by any member and if the honourable

member had a suitable amendment the House would accept it and something practicable would be done, whereas nothing practicable can result from this motion, because at 4 o'clock this debate will automatically conclude and nothing further will be done. I believe that this matter has been brought forward injudiciously by the Opposition and that the debate has only shown that there is no reason to criticize the Government's actions. Mr. Walsh said that the Government had approved of certain things, but I point out that these matters are governed by Acts passed by Parliament and in the cases mentioned no Government approval was needed.

Mr. Dunstan—Isn't the Government responsible for the laws?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Parliament is.

Mr. Dunstan—But you control it.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I had not noticed that. I must admit, however, that sometimes the Government sets a good example, which, I am sorry to say, is not followed by members opposite.

Mr. STEPHENS (Port Adelaide)—I listened with great interest to the debate on this important matter. Over the last five years I have brought to the attention of the House the action of certain people in demolishing houses to make room not only for petrol stations, but for all types of business premises. In reply to my question on June 7 regarding petrol resellers' licences for the years 1950 to 1954, the Premier said:—

The numbers of licences issued to petrol resellers in the metropolitan shopping district to sell motor spirit after the normal closing times for non-exempt shops, under the provisions of the Early Closing Act, 1926-1954, are as follows:—

Total number issued.	Number issued during year to new occupiers who have taken over premises from holders of current licences.	Net number of premises licensed.
193	28	165
203	25	178
270	60	210
334	56	278
392	41	351

How can the Premier reconcile those figures with those given by him this afternoon? On many occasions I have invited other members to accompany me on an inspection of certain petrol reselling premises. On one occasion I mentioned the existence on Torrens Road of three petrol stations within 100 yards of each other. In that case a dwelling house on one

corner of the Torrens-Islington Roads intersection was demolished to make way for a service station. I received letters from people unable to get homes, asking me to inspect the site. I did so and spoke about it in the House, inviting the Premier to inspect it, but nothing was done.

The large scale demolition of houses to make way for stores has been proceeding along the Port Road. For instance, the National Paper Bag Company at Southwark and Brookers jam factory at Croydon have expanded in this way. How many houses have been demolished at Woodville for the purpose of extending the premises of General Motors-Holdens? I often think that members opposite are not really aware of the serious shortage of houses. If they were they would support members on this side in their efforts to effect some improvement of the position. At present I have before the Housing Trust a case in which a returned soldier was told that he could not get a home. He has one child, discharged from the Children's Hospital only last Friday, two children being cared for by the Red Cross, and one child in a Salvation Army home, but, after being told by the Housing Trust that it could not give him a home, we approached his landlord, only to be told that he would have to get out and take all his furniture by 11 o'clock on Saturday. If this motion does nothing more I hope that it will open the eyes of members opposite and that the Government will do something to help people needing homes. I strongly support the motion and ask the Premier to compare the figures given by him this afternoon with those he gave to me on June 7.

The motion lapsed.

LOAN ESTIMATES.

In Committee.

(Continued from September 1. Page 723.)

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—Loan Estimates are of great importance and it is only natural that members desire to participate in the debate. Speakers so far have drawn attention to the disturbing aspects of the Loan Estimates and the Leader of the Opposition went to much trouble to reveal the seriousness of the position into which we are drifting and quoted figures which I will repeat to illustrate the grave situation that might develop if the brake is not put upon the ever-increasing borrowing from overseas. In 1950-51 our loan figure was £20,623,000; in 1951-52 it was

£31,205,000; there was a decline in 1952-53 to £25,402,000; a slight increase in 1953-54 to £25,513,000 and a further increase in 1954-55 to £30,895,000. This year they total £31,900,000. The State's public debt increased from £117,000,000 in 1947—the year when we settled down to something approximating normal conditions of trading and spending in Australia—to £242,000,000 in 1954. In 1948-49 our Loan Estimates were £11,500,000 and in 1949-50, £14,065,500. In 1949-50 a Labor Party under the leadership of Mr. Chifley governed the Commonwealth. After its dismissal a Liberal Government took charge and, aided and abetted by the South Australian Liberal Party, promised to put value back into the pound, but the Loan Estimates jumped from £14,065,500 in 1949-50 to £20,623,000 in the first year of the new Government's term of office. The following year there was a further increase of £10,582,000. The Loan Estimates of £31,900,000 today are £14,065,500 greater than when the present Federal Government took office, notwithstanding its promise to put value back in the pound. As a result all costs have increased.

At the end of 1949 the basic wage in South Australia was £6 6s., but because of the inability of the Liberal Government to keep its promises it has increased to £11 11s. If it had not been pegged it would have been much greater. I would like to trace the decline in the value of the pound. A study of the C series index figures is most revealing. In 1939 the index figure was 903 and for the purposes of comparison we can assume that the pound was worth 20s. then. In September, 1946, the index figure was 1,120. By the use of a simple formula it is apparent that the pound was then only worth 16s. In 1947 the figure was 1,168 and the pound was worth 15s. 6d. In 1948 the figure was 1,227 and the pound was worth 14s. In 1949, the last year of the Labor Government, the figure was 1,393 and the pound was worth 13s. Unfortunately for Australia the Labor Government, which had an economic policy and assured some stability, was dismissed, and as a result there was a rapid decline in the value of the pound notwithstanding the Liberal Government's promises. In 1950 the figure was 1,608 and the pound was worth 11s. 3d. In 1951 the figure was 1,910 and the pound was worth 9s. The figure increased to 2,170 in 1952 and the value of the pound declined to 8s. 4d. In 1953 it was 2,260 and the pound was worth 7s. 11d. In December, 1954, it was 2,631 and the pound

was worth 6s. 10d. and in June, 1955, the figure was 2,678 and the pound was only worth 6s. 9d.

All concerns, particularly State Government works, are finding difficulty in making progress, for although the Loan Estimates are astronomical in amount, there is not much value in them. The effect this has had upon our loan programme is evident from a reply I received from the Minister of Works early this year, when I asked questions concerning the estimated and actual costs of Government projects which had been completed. The Government Produce Department at Light Square was estimated to cost £38,720, but its cost on completion was £88,850. The railway workshops for maintaining diesel engines was estimated to cost £112,700, but actually cost £168,830. To counter any suggestion that I have only referred to big undertakings I need only mention that the Findon primary school—an imported structure and a desirable type of building—was estimated to cost £58,419, but actually cost £72,494. A glaring example is the Onkaparinga branch main from the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline. This was estimated to cost £150,000, but the completed cost was £209,872.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—What point are you trying to make?

Mr. HUTCHENS—That the decline in the value of money is adding very greatly to the cost of our public works.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Without wishing to be unkind, I point out that there has been a decline in the productive power of labour that accounts for a lot of this.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I have heard that story before. The other day I quoted similar remarks by Tories in the 1700's. It is a pity the Minister does not bring himself up-to-date in his arguments but he always blames the workers. The fault is that of the Federal Government, which went into power promising to put value back into the pound, but after it was elected forgot all about promises. It was aided and abetted in the election by the Liberal Party in South Australia, and the Government that had achieved more than any previous Government was dismissed. Now that the Minister has raised the point, let me remind him that the Federal Labor Government was in power in the war years, forced into taking the reins and prosecuting the war when the Menzies-Fadden Coalition Government, having no policy, threw up its arms and left it to Labor. The Curtin Government prosecuted the war and went

through the rehabilitation period afterwards, meeting an expenditure of over £2,000,000,000 and paying back over £100,000,000 of overseas deficits, at the same time reducing the interest bill by £7,000,000 a year. That Government did not borrow one penny overseas but carried out its programme by means of internal loan and use of national credit.

So that the people will not realize that the State Government aided and abetted the Federal Liberal Government, it now turns around and condemns the workers to cover its own shortcomings. The Leader of my Party warned what would happen to the people if some heed were not paid to the financial policy of the Party. He said that if the overseas interest rate were not changed we would find ourselves in the same position as in 1936. Nobody wants us to be in that position again, and it can be avoided. I appeal to people who have the means to subscribe to our loans so that we can keep this country in a buoyant condition. It is amazing that the Party that has condemned Labor policy in the past finds itself in agreement on financial policy. In the *Advertiser* of June 24 the following appeared:—

The South Australian Premier (Mr. Playford) said that the increase was inadequate, as South Australia needed an extra £3.8 million above the 1954-55 allocation for the State to carry out its obligations. He declared that South Australia was faced with having to budget for a deficit, pointing out that the State had ahead of it in the next financial year more inescapable heavy commitments than ever before. Included in the reimbursement is an additional £2 million for New South Wales to meet extra costs resulting from this year's disastrous floods.

Mr. Playford said that South Australia needed an extra £3.8 million for a satisfactory Budget result. This comprised a Budget deficit of £2 million and marginal pay rises of £1.8 million. "The extra amount we are seeking will enable South Australian to carry out its obligations and remain solvent," he added.

The Premier went on to say that it was not a crime for a State to have a surplus, but that can be a healthy state of affairs. He was condemning the Liberal Party and the Menzies-Fadden Coalition for its financial policy. I do not know what horse he is going to back in the next elections, because the one he backed last time has let down not only him but the people he is going to foster. Is he going to let us all down by backing the Federal Coalition Government? I am afraid he will. This grandstand playing is something that the people of this State must be apprised of and certainly should act on.

I shall now comment on a few lines in the Estimates. An amount of £200,000 is to be provided as a loan for producers. I congratulate the Hon. Mr. Story who, in his Address-in-Reply speech in the Legislative Council, raised this all-important matter with great ability and with a sincere plea to the Government to do something. Senator Toohy did a very good job in this matter in the Federal Senate, and I also give credit to Mr. Downer, who spoke in the House of Representatives. When introducing the Loan Estimates the Premier said:—

A sum of £261,000 was advanced to applicants under the Loans to Producers Act last year for construction of and additions to cool stores, extensions to fruit packing sheds, milk product factories, wineries, distilleries, and for assistance to fishermen.

The fact remains that the producers of dried fruit are in real difficulties due to the inability of the Federal Government to appreciate the importance of their industry, and they require assistance.

Mr. Quirke—That probably relates to sultanas.

Mr. HUTCHENS—That is so. About 80 per cent of our dried fruit production is exported, the main consumer being the United Kingdom, which takes about 60 per cent of the total exports. Preference is extended to Australian growers, but although on the surface that may appear to be of some value, particularly in the United Kingdom, other factors intrude and make it somewhat a mockery.

Mr. Quirke—Our fixed markets in Canada and New Zealand are quite good.

Mr. HUTCHENS—They are. Certain countries subsidize this very important industry and are doing their best to capture markets, so Australia must meet that competition.

Mr. Quirke—America does that.

Mr. HUTCHENS—It does, and the Turkish growers are subsidized to the extent of £28 10s. a ton. This matter was investigated by the Bureau of Agricultural Research in 1952, whose experts found that the cost of production was about £100 a ton. That cost is growing. The average returns in 1950 were £72 a ton; in 1951, which seems to have been the best year, £104 10s.; in 1952, £101; in 1953, £95; in 1954, approximately £80; and it is estimated they will be £70 in 1955. These people are looking for the Federal Government to do something to stabilize the industry, and it is necessary for the States to see what assistance can be given to maintain it.

Recently the Victorian Parliament appreciated the plight of the growers in that State and granted them substantial loans from the Rural Bank over a period of three years at the low rate of interest of 2 per cent. It is hoped that this will enable them to get out of their difficulties. People of all kinds of political thought have appealed to the South Australian Government yet there is no indication of financial assistance being granted to our deserving growers.

The sum of £200,000 is estimated as the expenditure on roads and bridges this year. For a long time there has been talk of another bridge across the River Murray but I join with the Leader of the Opposition in expressing regret that in these Estimates there is no mention of one. I have been told, and figures shown to me support the view, that market gardeners at Loveday lose about 40 per cent of their production because of the inadequate transport available to bring their goods to the metropolitan area. Mr. Jennings and I were in the district yesterday and were told that a former member likened the punts to the system of transport used by the aborigines before the white people came to Australia. I am sorry the Government has not taken more action in providing better transport facilities for this area.

I wonder what the Government intends to do, although I doubt whether anything will be done, to help residents in new Housing Trust areas. Because of the lack of a definite policy large numbers of houses are being erected in areas like Seaton Park and Kidman Park without proper roads being constructed. The councils have to find money to meet the cost of draining low-lying areas and have little to spare for the building of roads, so the Government must provide the necessary finance. The Housing Trust area in Seaton Park has been established for two or three years, yet following on recent rains from one end of a street to the other there were eight or nine inches of water. This shows a lack of proper planning on the part of the Government and the trust, and steps should be taken to improve the position.

Mr. Fred Walsh has asked several questions regarding the Henley Beach railway line and from remarks made by the Minister of Works we can assume that there is a possibility of a line being built on another site. In 1950 the Public Works Committee considered the matter and recommended:—

The removal of the existing single line of railway between the 7½ mile post, *via* Military

Road, to Henley Beach station, and the construction of a new line of railway from the 7½ mile post to the Henley Beach Road on the alignment shown on the plan.

The committee said that the present railway was unsafe. Recently when on an inspection of the line, representatives of the National Safety Council, Henley and Grange Council, Police Department and Royal Automobile Association agreed that danger existed at 23 points between the Henley Beach and Grange stations. People travelling east to west towards the beach and across the line have to contravene the provisions of the Road Traffic Act in order to see whether or not a train is approaching the crossing. They must go beyond the "stop" sign before learning whether or not a train is coming. Action by the Government is necessary in this matter.

The sum of £1,150,000 has been allocated for expenditure on school buildings. I was interested to learn that new technical schools for boys at Nailsworth, girls at Croydon, and Gawler are to be built, but only £50,000 is provided for them. I have no idea what will be the cost of the schools at Nailsworth and Gawler, but a report by the Public Works Committee shows that the new school for girls at Croydon will cost £94,500. In view of that, the sum of £50,000 will not go very far. For new high schools at Enfield, Findon, Marion and Unley Boys' the sum of £8,000 is provided. I understand that the Findon school will cost considerably more than the £94,500 for the girls' technical school at Croydon. This indicates that a much larger sum must be found for the building of schools. The Treasurer referred to the plan for the building of new schools, but the Leader of the Opposition said that it contained many difficulties. I do not criticize the present Minister of Education in any way, because the position is not of his making. One authority told me that in the next five years the State will be compelled to build as many schools as it has in the last 40 years in order to meet requirements. I hope the necessary money will be found. Opposition members will always be ready to assist in providing it.

The sum of £75,000 is allocated for police and court house buildings. Recently I asked the Treasurer a question about a new police building at Flinders Park. It was said that an officer would be installed there when a telephone was available. It will be a one-man station and the officer will have a large area to cover, but his only means of transport will be a bicycle. That is about 101 years behind

the times. I feel that our police force would be more efficient if we provided more motor cars and motor cycles equipped with radio. That would be far more economical than spending £5,000 or £6,000 on building one-man police stations. Recently an accident occurred in front of my home and I rang the police station, but it was 10 to 12 minutes before a police officer arrived. I am not complaining of that as it was not bad under the circumstances. If I had rung the Flinders Park station and the officer happened to be out I would have had to ring another station and the time might have been considerably longer. Two days later I witnessed an accident on the same road. I saw the police patrol arrive and make a call by radio, and the ambulance reached the scene in less than four minutes. I use that as an example of the advantage of police patrol vehicles equipped with radio.

I view with some concern the £500,000 to be provided for the Tramways Trust. It is perturbing to read press reports regarding the proposals of this body, over which Parliament seems to have no influence whatever, but for which we are frequently called upon to vote vast sums of money. From the point of view of economics and quick transportation I feel that its proposal to scrap all tram cars, with the exception of those on the Glenelg line, and replace them with buses is wrong. Recently a case prepared by the Council of the South Australian branch of the Australian Electric Traction Association came into the hands of members and a few extracts from this document should be of interest to members as well as the Tramways Board. I quote first from page one as follows:—

Whenever complete rehabilitation of a transport concern is undertaken and the question arises as to which vehicle is most admirably suited to the transportation of the public, it is desirable that the advantages and the disadvantages of each vehicle be compared to ascertain to which use they can most economically be put. In the case of the Municipal Tramways Trust plan, this is evidently what has not taken place, for there would have been an overwhelming number of reasons in favour of tramway operation or at the very least several reasons in favour of tramway retention in this city. Instead, complete abandonment of the electric system is advocated, and the several reasons advanced for doing so have been disputed and disproved time and time again.

From page 12 I take the following:—

A tramcar carries at least 50 per cent more people than a bus when the loading is heavy. This is a great advantage wherever crowds must be cleared in a short time, as at sporting fixtures, or where industrial establishments provide intensive peak loads of short duration.

A single lane of tramcars will carry as many passengers as two lanes of buses and nine lanes of automobiles. This means that peak crowds carried in tramcars occupy a smaller road area, an important factor in city and suburban streets where large crowds to be shifted require a greater number of vehicles, thus increasing congestion.

I protest against the wilful waste of money in scrapping good tramcars, which have been proved to have many years of life left in them, while we need money for other purposes.

In conclusion, I would urge that those who have the means to invest in our internal loans in order that we may maintain solvency, for I am confident that at the earliest opportunity the people of Australia will return to the Federal Treasury benches a Government that has some knowledge of the needs of the country, as they will return to the State Treasury benches the members of the Labor Party which has shown a desire to serve the people and which has a sound economic policy.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS (Stirling)—It appears to me that members of the Opposition have some diversity of opinion regarding the amount set down in the Loan Estimates. Mr. Hutchens said that it was a very large amount, but his Leader, on the other hand, said:—

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.

That appears to be contrary to the opinion expressed by Mr. Hutchens who said that the £1,500,000 for schools was a good deal short of what was required to meet requirements in his district, but the Leader of the Opposition said that too much was being applied to the metropolitan area. They cannot have it both ways.

We have heard a good deal from the Opposition in condemnation of the satellite town near Salisbury, about 15 miles from the metropolitan area.

Mr. Jennings—Do you call that decentralization?

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—It will spread the activities of the people and will relieve the transport facilities by providing homes for the workers near their places of employment, as I understand that most of the people will be engaged on the Commonwealth works in the vicinity. Recently members of all Parties visited Western Australia where we saw the town of Medina which is being built by the

Labor Government in order to house the employees of the Kwinana oil refinery. But that is only nine miles from Perth compared with the 17 miles here. In regard to sewerage the Leader of the Opposition said:—

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. He gave the impression that he thought it wrong that the new town should have these services and amenities when other towns 100 years old have not yet got them. I believe that in building a new city we must incorporate all modern amenities and services and I cannot understand any opposition to such a policy. The Leader of the Opposition also said a good deal about lack of a decentralization policy and talked about the Electricity Trust. Mr. Brookman referred to the extension of electricity services in the southern districts and I support all he said. This is another means of bringing about decentralization because without electricity we cannot develop our lands properly and cannot give the people engaged in primary production modern amenities. Electric power enables products to be processed near where they are produced, and that makes for decentralization. I am pleased to note on the Estimates the sum of £18,000 for raising the banks of the Strathalbyn reservoir and enlarging mains. That is a vital necessity to the town and will be much appreciated. A sum of £7,000 is provided for the Milang water supply, and I trust that it will be used for extending the scheme in order to help some of the farmers who have no fresh water supplies. The only water they can conserve is that caught in dams but supplies generally run out half way through the summer. Bores contain water that is too salt for stock. I hope that something beneficial to the people will eventuate from the survey being carried out by the Works Department.

An amount of £200,000 is allocated for roads and bridges. I hope that some of that money will be applied to the erection of a bridge over the Murray at Blanchetown, a very necessary project. I also trust that money will be available for the construction of a bridge between Goolwa and Strathalbyn at Double Bridges. The present structure is often 3ft. or 4ft. under water and this prevents children from getting to school. It will be appreciated if some of the money allocated for roads is utilised for bituminising portion of the road between Mount Compass

and Viotor Harbour. If the width of the bitumen could be extended by 2ft. on either side cars would have a better opportunity to pass and thus traffic congestion in the summer would be relieved. When the Blanchetown bridge is completed and other necessary work undertaken, I trust that money will be provided for the erection of a bridge over the Murray at Wellington. I have previously mentioned the condition of the road between Langhorne's Creek and Wellington. If this bridge were erected relief would be given to traffic on the Mount Barker Road and the overland route would be reduced by 20 miles.

The Leader of the Opposition said that too much money was being spent in the city. To some extent that is true. More schools should be erected in the country. I am pleased that the Minister of Education is giving first-hand attention to his job. He visits the schools in the various districts and studies their requirements. First things come first with him, and those in urgent need of attention receive it first. Bigger schools are being built to meet the convenience of students and teachers. I agree with this policy, but if we had sufficient money available I would advocate that greater attention be paid to the aesthetic design of these buildings. This work cannot be undertaken now while insufficient funds are available for more important works, but that is something for the future when we have caught up with our building programme.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood).—The honourable member gave me the impression that there was insufficient money in the Estimates for country projects, but if he studies the position he will see that more money is to be spent in the country than in the metropolitan area. An amount of £1,450,000 is provided for loans for new homes, purchase and additions to existing homes, and purchases under the Advances for Homes Act. At the moment the maximum amount lent by the bank on a house is £1,750. There is a long waiting list. If a person desires to build a home through the State Bank or wants an advance on a home already erected but not lived in, he has a reasonable chance of getting accommodation, but for a home which has been erected for a number of years, despite the fact that it is sound, he has little chance of getting an advance from the bank. This often imposes a hardship on those desiring to purchase a home nearer to the city than those available further out erected by the Housing Trust or some other building authority. In certain

instances the Savings Bank has been generous enough to extend the maximum loan beyond £2,000. It is obvious that the greater the advance permitted on individual homes, the fewer that can be built. That does not support what the Treasurer has advocated down the years. He tells us it is not practicable to advance more than £1,750 because it would reduce the number of people that could have loans, but the fact is that there is not sufficient money provided under the Loan Estimates to give people the opportunity of purchasing homes already erected. For instance, young people may desire to purchase houses belonging to deceased estates, but they cannot do so because the waiting list for loans is too long. The whole question of advances for homes must be reviewed if houses for sale are to be purchased by many people needing them. The Government must give these people much more generous consideration.

The member for Alexandra (Mr. Brookman) said that Opposition members did not know what to say in their criticism of public works, but let us consider the Goodwood-Marino railway line duplication. I strongly believe that when the Public Works Committee recommends the construction or erection of a project it should be completed when financed from Loan money. This year the Government proposes £75,000 for the Goodwood-Marino duplication, but already sums have been made available for it as follows:—

Year.	Amount.
	£
1948-49	20,000
1949-50	24,000
1950-51	20,000
1951-52	138,000
1952-53	20,000
1953-54	75,000
1954-55	45,000

With this year's amount of £75,000 the total expenditure will be £417,000, but the committee's recommendation in 1950 stated:—

The committee recommends that the proposed public work of duplicating the existing railway line between Goodwood and Marino, as set out in plans prepared by the Railways Commissioner, at an estimated cost of £146,192 be approved.

I want to know why the work has not been completed, and when it will be completed. If the committee recommended the work at a total cost of £146,000 why has it cost £417,000 so far? Further, this sum does not include the cost of the crossing at Emerson-South Road junction. The Public Works Committee considered the question of laying a

double track either above or below road level. This question was raised in evidence by the Acting Deputy Commissioner of Highways (Mr. F. D. Jackman), who said:—

The departmental view was that grade separation at the intersection was necessary.

Mr. Fargher, now Railways Commissioner, was asked to submit the cost of these works, and he said:—

A bridge would cost approximately £164,000, which amount would be increased by about £27,000 if the steel were obtained overseas. A rough estimate of the cost of a double track railway under the crossing was £174,000.

The committee then concluded that it could not recommend a grade separation, but it would not have cost half the amount already spent. Then this afternoon we were told of another railway proposal. I do not know whether the railways loan account of £27,626,504 implies that there will be any further interference with the Goodwood-Marino duplication, but I understand from information I received this afternoon that as a result of the Government's policy there will be. I am still waiting to see the Public Works Committee report on the projected spur line which, I understand, is to be constructed from the Adelaide-Marino line. The Government should make up its mind on its interference in the private rights of the owners of land through which the new line must run. By the kind permission of a land-owner who has received a certain letter from an officer of the Railways Department, I have in my possession a plan of the proposed line, but why have not members been informed officially about this project? Why must an officer of the Railways Department send a registered letter to the owners of property in the section from Weaver Street to Sweetmans Road, informing them that they must confer with the Property Officer of the Railways Department on the question of acquisition before I, a member of Parliament, can see a plan of the proposed line? Members of Parliament should have been told about the proposed route; they should not be expected to exhibit a plan that is the private property of a constituent. Surely it is the responsibility of the Government to give the fullest information on a matter involving the acquisition of citizens' property.

I understand that the Public Works Committee investigated two proposals relating to this project: firstly, a spur line from Sleeps Hill on the main south line, to Tonsley, and alternatively, a line from a point near Brighton, which would serve residents in the Darlington area. At no stage did the Minister or the

committee consult the Marion corporation for advice on the proposal, but I hope that a resolution carried by the corporation last night and reported in this morning's *Advertiser* will, even at this late hour, be seriously considered. If some courtesy had been extended to the corporation I am sure that it would have suggested a shorter alternative route. Under the proposed scheme what will be the position of people who have purchased War Service Commission homes that abut the route? They will receive no compensation because their land is not required, yet a railway will be running past their side fences. They knew nothing of the proposed line when they bought those homes. The following is an extract from a letter received from a person who built his home alongside an existing railway line but who came to realize the nuisance value of railway traffic:—

I am living within 25 yards of the main Adelaide-Melbourne line. So long as the South Australian Railways ran its goods trains with steam locomotives, the noise was bearable, particularly when most of the goods trains ran during the day and the nights were left available for sleeping. Over the last two or three years the diesel locomotive has arrived, yet it is infinitely more noisy than the older steam locomotive. The diesels are constructed with a number of windows on every side, and apparently in hot weather these are opened to help keep cool the engines. As a result anyone living within a quarter of a mile gets the full benefit of a harsh grinding roar mixed with a whining and squealing sound. No doubt, from the point of view of their designers they are the last word in size, but if a spur line is run among houses the noises will prevent people sleeping as they should at night. Of course, the vibration as large heavy trains go backwards and forwards will crack and ruin the local houses in a few years.

The Loan Estimates provide a further £75,000 as expenditure on the duplication of the Adelaide-Marino line and another sum is provided for general railway purposes. Although the duplication is not yet completed, there is talk of the construction of another railway line, which will pass through private properties. It is all very well for the Government to suggest that the fullest compensation will be paid to these people but there are limited areas in the Marion Corporation district wherein people can conduct industrial pursuits. In a number of cases these people will lose their means of livelihood because of the acquisition. There are many backyard industries in the area to be acquired. There is vacant land available across which this spur line could be constructed and the distance involved would be less than under the present

proposal. In some instances young people have put their all into their homes, but now they are to lose them. They have made the bricks, laid the foundations and watched their houses grow. They are the only homes they have known.

The Government suggests that this is the answer to the problem but I maintain it is a scheme which has been foisted upon the people without proper inquiry. It is not too late at this stage to conduct a proper inquiry to see whether an alternative route is available. The people whose land is to be acquired have received letters from the Railways Department which conclude with the following paragraph:—

You are therefore hereby requested to advise this office not later than September 24 whether or not you are prepared to negotiate with the property officer.

That time limit should definitely be extended. Why didn't the Government make full inquiries from the local council before it accepted this proposal? It would be interesting to know how much land the Housing Trust owns in that area that has not been built upon. I am compelled to protest on behalf of these people. No matter what they receive as compensation, it will not compensate them for what they lose. They built these homes in all sincerity and are greatly attached to them. Common justice dictates that the time they have to consider the matter should be extended. No-one denies the desirability of establishing a secondary industry at Tonsley, but there is complete opposition to the proposed route of the spur line. I realize that many of these blocks could have been purchased for about £40 ten years ago, but these people pioneered the district and the corporation has provided roads, footpaths and other amenities. If compensation were paid on the basis of valuations applying on September 1, it would still not be sufficient.

The Goodwood-Marino railway duplication was estimated to cost £146,192, at the time the Public Works Committee presented its report, but £417,000 has already been spent and the work is not yet completed. An amount of £500,000 is set aside for tramway purposes. I assure the House that when this matter was raised on the last occasion there was no funny business so far as this Party was concerned. The Opposition meant what it said on that

occasion. Some of this money will be used to pull up tram tracks. I have received a letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Australian Electric Traction Association, which reads as follows:—

I should like to comment on the reply which you received yesterday from the Minister of Works concerning tram-bus conversions. To say that the M.T.T. is running buses to the showgrounds because it has a shortage of trams is absolute rubbish. Last year, the trust did an excellent job with trams. It then had 182 trams in service. Today it has 178 trams in service. But as it has scrapped the Kingswood service (for better or worse) it has in reality more trams in store for special services such as the showgrounds service than it did last year. The real reason would seem to be that it has about 60 three door buses which it cannot use at present, and is trying to run them in, and bring them before the public eye. The fact that the Morphet-Franklin Streets and Victoria Square loop was especially built for show services in 1951, and is in excellent condition, seems to have no effect on the M.T.T. conscience.

In spite of this we are asked to subscribe a further £500,000 to the Tramways Trust to scrap the trams and replace them with buses. This is not a thickly populated city, such as London, where buses were used because of the bombing. In Victoria tram services were discontinued and buses used in their place, but now that State is going back to trams because buses cannot move the people as rapidly. There are no better trams than those constructed in this State, and many discarded would still be in operation and have years of valuable service if money had been spent on them. Why should they be scrapped to make way for something that will not give as much convenience to the public? Members will require further information about this amount.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

MOTOR VEHICLES REGISTRATION FEES (REFUNDS) BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.50 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, September 7, at 2 p.m.