

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, October 4, 1955.

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

ASSENT TO ACTS.

His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor intimated by message his assent to the Public Purposes Loan and Supreme Court Act Amendment Acts.

QUESTIONS.**SCHOOL LEAVING AGE.**

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Can the Minister of Education say how many additional teachers would be required if the school leaving age were raised from 14 to 15 years?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I have not the actual figures, but a considerable number of additional teachers would be required. I will endeavour to obtain an estimate and let the honourable member have it as soon as possible.

GRASSHOPPER INFESTATION.

Mr. WM. JENKINS—Last week there were five hatchings of grasshoppers reported in the Hindmarsh Valley area that were effectively eradicated by spraying. However, since then there have been one or two further hatchings some miles away in the Inman Valley and another extensive hatching on the top of hills in the Hindmarsh Valley area, and this covers almost two square miles. These areas are inaccessible to wheeled vehicles and cannot be sprayed from the land. Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether spraying from the air has been tried and whether it is effective, and will the Government subsidize this form of spraying, for these latest hatchings will affect many more people than those in the locality?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I believe aerial spraying has been tried by one of the councils in the Lower North, and it was reported to have been very successful. There is no doubt about the effectiveness of that method, but I remind the honourable member and others that it is definitely the obligation of the landowner to destroy the grasshoppers on his own holding. That is specifically laid down in the Act and regulations, and where normal methods cannot be used the knapsack spray can be used. By this method the landowner can cover a lot of ground and get on to practically any type of country. I suggest that landowners try every method available to them, and there is nothing to stop them from

using aircraft, perhaps in conjunction with councils. They could meet the cost conjointly or the land owners themselves could meet the cost on a co-operative basis.

Mr. RICHES—Yesterday I was informed by a stockowner owning a station just outside district council areas in my district that grasshoppers were prevalent on his property in plague proportions and that he and his staff had been working two days almost without a let up, attempting to spray with knapsack sprays, but they had run out of spray and there was a shortage of manpower. He informed me that there was another outbreak over about a half square mile, where there was a seething mass of grasshoppers partly on his property and partly on a Government road, and he asked if some assistance could be granted to deal with them. Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether the department has been able to evolve a policy concerning areas outside district council areas and, if so, what measures are to be adopted?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—Government policy in this matter is laid down in the Noxious Insects Act and the regulations based thereon. It clearly provides, amongst other things, for the Government to supply the necessary poison free of cost to landowners, who have the obligation of spraying or laying. There are many ways available to the landholder to spray poison other than by knapsack spray. There is the boom type of spray on wheels mounted on tractors or trucks, or even on the ordinary motor vehicle. It is quite effective in country where it can be operated. Someone has evolved a spray method by which an appliance can be affixed to the exhaust pipe of a motor vehicle. It is a simple construction and I have an illustration of it with me. Anyone with a little mechanical knowledge can fit it to his motor vehicle and by using a 44-gall. drum can spread the poison on broad acres at a rapid rate indeed. If the person mentioned by the honourable member is acquainted with this method I am sure he could help himself effectively by spraying with other than a knapsack spray, which after all is a slow method when there is a large area to cover.

Mr. Riches—Is there a policy in regard to roads?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—Roads are the obligation of district councils. We will provide poison for roads, but if the road concerned in this case is adjacent to the man's

property surely it would not be too much to expect him to spray it for his own protection, as well as that of other people?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Today I had an urgent call from a part of the area of the district council of Berri where the landholders are perturbed about the number of grasshoppers, not in the local government area where they can be controlled I understand very effectively, but in the hinterland which stretches from the river to probably as far as Broken Hill. In answer to a previous question today the Minister said that the landowner is responsible for controlling grasshoppers. In this case it is likely that the holder of a lease would have to spend a large sum of money in controlling them, in view of the type of tenure he has, but apart from that it would be almost impossible to deal with the grasshoppers. After the last grasshopper plague in Victoria the Government of that State had aeroplanes spray a barrier of 20 miles back from the river and I understand it was effective. The district council concerned has been in close contact with the Department of Agriculture, and it has received every consideration but this is a little beyond the department's scope at present. If the grasshoppers get out of control will the Minister see that aeroplanes are used to lay down a barrier? I believe there are Dakota aircraft available for this type of work.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I have been advised that the agricultural adviser in the district was instructed yesterday to check the accuracy of the report for that area, though I do not doubt that grasshoppers are hatching there. Hatchings are taking place all over the State, and the Chief Agricultural Adviser left yesterday to visit Peterborough and adjacent areas to gauge the extent of the hatchings in the outside country with a view to formulating some policy for those areas. We realize that owing to their vastness and the sparseness of the population further steps may have to be taken to combat hatchings, but until I get a report from those officers I cannot say what measures may have to be undertaken. Regarding the use of aircraft for putting down barriers to impede the invasion of grasshoppers from the outside country, I cannot say at this stage whether or not that would be effective. I have discussed this point with some of our experts and they are rather of the opinion that unless we get the insect in the hopper stage and before it starts to move far afield this method would not be very effective because

obviously to be killed the insects must have direct contact with the spray or consume a poison. Once they get on the wing they are dispersed over wide areas and I doubt whether they can then be stopped by means of putting down a barrier from aircraft. However, we are not losing sight of any avenue that may be available to us in combating this menace.

HENLEY BEACH SOUTH SCHOOL.

Mr. FRED WALSH—A little over two years ago I approached the Education Department about the provision of a new woodwork classroom for the Henley Beach South school. I was told that the matter would be referred to the Architect in Chief's department, which advised me later that it was intended to erect a Nissen hut at the school, but because of the State's finances at the time it was not erected. However, I was told that a Nissen hut had been earmarked for the school. Nothing has been done in the meantime, and I have now been told that the department is not proceeding with the erection of the hut. As the present accommodation is totally inadequate and the room at present being used could be used for another classroom, will the Minister ascertain whether a new woodwork room will be provided at the school?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes.

UNDESIRABLE IMMIGRANTS.

Mr. TRAVERS—It was reported in the press yesterday (apparently from Munich) that Australia is likely to be favoured by the presence of a certain migrant, Ilse Koch, who became infamous under the description of the "Witch of Buchenwald concentration camp," and amongst whose repertoire of outrages is reported to be the making of lampshades from human skin. Having in mind that Australia can very well do without people of that ilk, I ask the Premier whether the State Government has the power to prevent such people from coming here; if so, will it exercise such power and if not, will it use its best endeavours with the Commonwealth Government in that behalf?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The State Government has no power to prevent anyone from coming into this State who is permitted to come into Australia by the Commonwealth authorities. That matter is governed by one of the main sections of the Commonwealth Constitution, which states that trade and intercourse between the States shall be free. The State Government has received no communication on this matter, but I entirely agree with

the honourable member's remarks and will certainly see that they are brought to the Prime Minister's notice, because I believe that the importation of such a person into this country would give offence—and rightly so—to many people.

CROSS ROADS RAIL STOP.

Mr. McALEES—Since the new Adelaide-Moonta rail service was inaugurated Cross Roads (a suburb of Moonta) has been made a provisional stop at which the train may or may not stop, whereas previously it was a compulsory stopping place. Because of this alteration the Postmaster General's Department will not release its Cross Roads mailbag there: it must go to Moonta and be brought back by a boy on a bicycle, which causes great inconvenience to the 90 residents of Cross Roads, many of whom are age pensioners who receive their pension from the local post office. Further, I understand that the Cross Roads post office is to close because of the failure to drop the mailbag there, and that this will not be done unless Cross Roads is made a compulsory stopping place. Will the Minister representing the Minister of Railways see whether Cross Roads can be made a compulsory stopping place so that the mailbag may be put off there?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The matter of train schedules and stopping places does not come within the prerogative of Parliament or the Minister, but I will gladly take up the question to see whether more convenience can be given to the people at Cross Roads. If a stopping place can reasonably be provided I am sure that the Railways Commissioner will be glad to provide it.

FLOOD DAMAGE.

Mr. TEUSNER—Has the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Roads, a reply to my recent question concerning flood damage to the roads in the Marne district council area?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Through my colleague I have received the following report from the Highways Commissioner:—

It is proposed to recommend a grant to the district council of Marne, sufficient to reinstate the main roads. In the meantime the council has maintenance funds in hand. With respect to the district roads, a thorough investigation has not yet been made by the district engineer, and consideration to the provision of a grant for the purpose of reconstructing these will be given after an inspection has been made.

SCHOOL BUS CONTRACTORS.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Recently I have been approached by several bus contractors who carry children to the Gawler High School and all expressed dissatisfaction at the rates allowed. At least two of them have said that unless their rates can be increased they will have to give up the service. Both those gentlemen are excellent contractors who understand and look after the children well, and one at least maintains that he is losing £100 a year at his present rate. Will the Minister of Education have the rates of school bus contractors investigated to see whether they are adequate under present conditions?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes, I am willing to do so. I point out, however, that I have had many interviews with bus contractors from time to time and have received some deputations on this matter. I have informed the deputationists, who were speaking as members of two or three organizations that I was willing to consider any inadequacy of remuneration to any of them, and that offer still stands.

ABATTOIRS REJECT RATE.

Mr. HEASLIP—Recently the Abattoirs Board slowed down its chain so that work finished at 4 p.m. instead of 3.30 p.m., and certain statements have been made that because of the slowing down there have been more rejects through faulty dressing than there were previously. Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether the number of such rejects has decreased or increased with the slowing of the chain?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I have some figures that have a definite bearing on this question. During the 1953 abattoirs season the percentage of carcasses damaged through poor dressing was 1.26 per cent of the total. Last year the position was somewhat worse, showing that a deterioration had occurred, as 1.5 per cent of the carcasses were damaged and rejected for export. During the recent week when the chain was slowed down by the board and work would have finished at 4 p.m. if the men had continued until then, the percentage of damaged carcasses had fallen to .77 per cent. That conclusively proves that the slowing down of the chain did effect a great improvement in the dressing.

COMPOSTING OF GARBAGE.

Mr. QUIRKE—On June 9, 1954, I asked a question concerning the composting of garbage and in reply the Minister of Works said that Mr. Hodgson, a world recognized

authority on the subject, was to go overseas and investigate this and other matters and report on them when he returned. The member for Unley (Mr. Dunnage) asked a similar question at that time. I understand Mr. Hodgson has returned. Can the Minister of Works indicate how soon we can expect his report on the composting of town waste, which is of great interest to many municipal bodies?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Prior to this question, the member for Unley also asked me about the report. Mr. Hodgson was asked to investigate this matter, among others, and his voluminous report does not bear out that such a practice would be an economic proposition at the present time. His report contains scores of pages and I have not had an opportunity of fully digesting it—if I may use that word in relation to compost—but I propose to send it to Cabinet at an early date to see whether it should be printed as a report or a digest made of it. Very few countries have adopted the practice of composting town waste and there are many reasons why it would be difficult to introduce such a proposal here. I assure the honourable member and Mr. Dunnage that this matter has not been overlooked and I am endeavouring to find a means of bringing the report before the public in a condensed form. It would be difficult and costly to print the whole report, which might not be much read. I will endeavour to bring down an epitome of it.

METROPOLITAN WATER PRESSURES.

Mr. TAPPING—In last Sunday's *Mail*, under the heading "Low Water Pressures Feared in Suburbs," reference was made to LeFevre Peninsula and it was suggested that trouble might be experienced with water pressures in the coming summer. Has the Minister of Works any comments to make concerning this suggestion?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Notwithstanding the fact that Adelaide has the hottest and driest climate of all Australian capitals, last year the water pressures were, generally speaking, good and few complaints were received. Last year, in order to overcome the difficulties a new trunk main from Hope Valley to Findon was constructed at a cost of about £1,100,000. Ample water is now available on LeFevre Peninsula. Few complaints were received last summer from that area and in most cases the individual household services were at fault. This year even those complaints should be

reduced in number. As the reservoirs are all full they can be used to greater advantage than before when supplies to the metropolitan area had to be regulated. The Engineer-in-Chief reports that he does not anticipate any real difficulty and he regards the outlook for the coming summer as entirely satisfactory. As development takes place it will, no doubt, be necessary from time to time to replace other mains. Every day we are laying scores of new mains but at times bottlenecks do occur. The construction of the main from Hope Valley will improve pressures in the western areas, including LeFevre Peninsula, Glenelg and Brighton. We do not anticipate any difficulty in maintaining a satisfactory supply.

RIVER MURRAY CROSSINGS.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Last week I drew the attention of the Minister of Works to a letter I had received from a constituent relating to the desirability of installing a larger punt at Waikerie and to the necessity of reconstructing the road to Taylorville—a distance of about eight miles—if that were done. The letter suggested that within a week the Kingston crossing would be out of action and that the larger punt there should be taken to Waikerie. When the river is in flood there are only two crossings available—at Lyrup and Waikerie. Has the Minister any information on this subject?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I preface my reply by saying that people on the northern side of the river would be well advised not to rely upon punts but to use the fine road that is being prepared in anticipation of the coming floods.

Mr. Macgillivray—That road is not quite finished.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—No, but it is a good road and is getting better every day. I would hate to think that people would not visit such lovely places as Barmera and Renmark simply because of the difficulties of punt crossings. There is a good alternative route north of the river. In relation to this matter I have received, through my colleague, the following reply from the Commissioner of Highways:—

It is proposed to install a large ferry at Lyrup. Experience has shown that during high rivers the most heavily trafficked crossing where a small ferry is operating is the Lyrup ferry. With respect to the Waikerie ferry it is expected that the approach road on the northern side will be inundated if the river rises to the same level as in 1952. For that reason it is not proposed to take steps to transfer a large ferry to Waikerie. In previous

years the Cadell ferry has remained open during high rivers after the Waikerie ferry has ceased operating, and it may be necessary if the traffic is diverted to the Cadell crossing, to transfer a large ferry there. Consideration is being given to the reconstruction of the road from Taylorville to Waikerie while the plant is in the area. In the meantime that section will be kept in good condition by the departmental gang. This work, however, is not connected with the high river.

I think there are one or two incidental points I have not covered and if the honourable member asks tomorrow questions arising from my answer today I will be glad to reply to them.

ADELAIDE FUNERAL DIRECTORS AGENCY.

Mr. WM. JENKINS—My question relates to a pensioner in my district who is wellknown and highly respected. He and his wife paid into what is known as an agency for Adelaide Funeral Directors, situated in Epworth Buildings, Pirie Street. About 1949 or 1950 they completed payments of £5 15s. each into a fund to provide for their funeral expenses. The balance of the £15 15s., the total cost, was to be found by the Social Service Department. Recently the man's wife died and she bequeathed her body to the University. The man went to the agency to collect the proportion of the funeral expenses that should have been returned to him, but he was told that as they had not handled the body he was not entitled to anything. When he persisted he was sworn at, and ordered out on pain of being thrown out. The Social Service Department informed him that it will not deal with this agency but only with the accountant of the undertaker actually arranging the funeral. Will the Minister of Lands have the case investigated and also the activities of the agency for the purpose of protecting people in similar circumstances?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—If the honourable member will give me the names of the people concerned I shall be able to take up the matter and bring down a report.

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Will the Minister of Lands ascertain whether the Treasurer will bring down an amendment of the Building Act to provide that when concrete foundations are poured for the erection of a home, or other substantial building, a certain period of time must elapse prior to the erection of the structure? I know of a building recently erected near where I live where the foundations were poured on the Monday and on the

Tuesday men were there to strip the boards and commence erection. I was informed by the local government authority that there is nothing in the Act controlling the time that should elapse between the pouring of the foundation and the construction of the building. Will the Government consider the matter in fairness to the people who may desire to purchase the home when finished? I can imagine that within a couple of years such a home would look as though damaged by earthquake.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I will place the matter before the Treasurer and bring down a reply.

ADULT EDUCATION.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Some time ago the Minister of Education told the House that he was submitting a report to Cabinet on the subject of adult education and hoped to have further information in the near future. Has he anything further to report?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—No. I informed the honourable member that I proposed to refer this question to Cabinet. It was then referred to the Treasurer and I have no doubt that he will make an announcement later.

GRANTS TO COUNCILS.

Mr. FRED WALSH (on notice)—What were the individual amounts allotted last financial year to the respective local government bodies in the metropolitan area pursuant to Part XVI of the Local Government Act?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The individual amounts allotted last financial year to the respective local governing bodies in the metropolitan area, pursuant to Part XVI of the Local Government Act were as follows:—

City of—	£
Adelaide	4,244
Burnside	891
Enfield	1,484
Kensington and Norwood	234
Marion	833
Mitcham	1,211
Port Adelaide	1,949
Prospect	453
Unley	1,017
West Torrens	919
Woodville	1,560
Corporation of—	£
Brighton	312
Campbelltown	319
Col. Light Gardens	77
Glenelg	454
Henley and Granga	217
Hindmarsh	514
Payneham	222
St. Peters	208
Thebarton	243
Walkerville	139

RAILWAY REFRESHMENT SERVICES.

Mr. FLETCHER (on notice)—

1. What is the annual cost of providing railway refreshment services at—(a) Murray Bridge; (b) Wolseley; (c) Naracoorte?

2. What profits, if any, have resulted from the operation of each of these refreshment services?

3. Is it the intention of the Railways Department to place a dining car on the day train to Mount Gambier?

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

1. (a) £26,510.

(b) £5,628.

(c) £4,025.

2. Excluding overheads, the returns at the three refreshment rooms for 1954-55 were as follows:—

	£
Murray Bridge	profit 565
Wolseley	loss 724
Naracoorte	loss 490

3. It is not the intention of the department to place a dining car on the day train to Mount Gambier, which it is expected shortly will be operated by railcar trains.

SEPTIC TANKS AT RAILWAY COTTAGES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (on notice):—

1. Has the Railways Commissioner a programme to install septic tanks at the 56 railway cottages on the Cockburn line where it is practicable to do so?

2. If so, when is the programme likely to be completed?

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

1 and 2. Yes. The programme is being actively prosecuted, the rate of progress being dependent upon the availability of skilled labour.

LOXTON SPUR RAILWAY LINE.

Mr. Tapping, for Mr. HUTCHENS (on notice):—

1. What is the total estimated cost of the proposed spur railway line at Loxton?

2. How much per yard does this represent?

3. What is the amount of the deposit that the persons who requested the spur line will be required to pay?

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

1. £5,045.

2. £10 after excluding the cost of one lead and one diamond crossing, estimated to cost £2,000 in total.

3. The company concerned has already paid the full amount of the estimated cost, viz., £5,045.

INTERSTATE DESTITUTE PERSONS RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

METROPOLITAN AND EXPORT ABATTOIRS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 29. Page.949.)

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley)—This Bill means very little, and any meaning it may have is conveyed in proposed new section 78b (2), which states:—

The Governor may by proclamation declare that a specified proportion of the carcasses or meat or both derived from stock slaughtered at any specified country abattoirs during any specified period may be brought into and sold within the metropolitan abattoirs area.

At present the only country abattoirs adjacent to the metropolitan area is the privately owned abattoirs at Noarlunga. There is also a Government abattoirs at Port Lincoln. What effect will the Bill have in times of stress such as we experienced during the recent strike at the metropolitan abattoirs? After all, the Bill is designed to overcome such conditions. On members' files, however, there is an amendment that alters the whole picture and simply negatives the original purpose of the Bill. What country abattoirs, existing today, will be able to send supplies of meat into the metropolitan area? None, simply because those country abattoirs may be excluded under the proposed amendments to clause 3. Frankly, I do not know the purpose of the Bill.

Mr. John Clark—It is not so good for members who have already spoken on the second reading.

Mr. QUIRKE—No. On Thursday, when I secured the adjournment, I was prepared to speak with a note of query as to where these country abattoirs were, what their value would be, and where it was proposed to set up additional abattoirs, and to inquire the purpose of the Bill; but, together with many other members, I can see no purpose now in speaking on the second reading. Indeed, members that have already spoken now find that they have wasted their time. This type of procedure is wrong. Once introduced, no Bill should be so radically altered without its being withdrawn and notice given of a fresh Bill.

Mr. Shannon—Members may deal with the amendment later.

Mr. QUIRKE—Possibly, but those who have already spoken in the second reading debate

did not know of the proposed amendment. The 1937 amending legislation contained a similar provision to that in this Bill, but only in relation to carcasses for export. Now somebody has awakened to certain things, and I wonder whether that awakening was consequent on a long meeting held in this House recently. No doubt somebody has realized that section 52a (2) contains the following proviso:— Provided that the Minister shall not refuse an application for such a licence if the premises for which the licence is required are to be erected at least 80 miles from all premises, existing at the date of such application, and established within the State for the purpose of slaughtering stock for export.

That provision applies today in respect of export carcasses. Any debate on this Bill in the second reading stage is useless, and members are wasting their time speaking on it.

Mr. Fred Walsh—It wouldn't be the first time.

Mr. QUIRKE—Certainly not, but how many times is it to occur?

The SPEAKER—Is the honourable member now linking up his remarks with the proposed amendment?

Mr. QUIRKE—Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER—There is a contingent notice of motion on the Notice Paper regarding it, so perhaps the honourable member might get back to the Bill.

Mr. QUIRKE—In view of that amendment the Bill is absolutely worthless.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member is anticipating a motion that must be put and carried before the amendment can be considered.

Mr. QUIRKE—It is a reasonable anticipation, Sir; it is useless to discuss the Bill unless the amendment can be considered. There is no point in any member expressing himself on this measure, and I voice my protest at the action taken which has misled so many members who have already spoken on the second reading.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—Despite the chiding of the member for Stanley (Mr. Quirke) about members wasting their time—

Mr. Quirke—You have wasted the time of the House on many occasions.

Mr. SHANNON—The member for Stanley wastes more time than I do. He has just admitted that the time spent by members on the second reading debate has been wasted, but I leave that matter to him for there is no better judge than he of time-wasting. There are aspects of this Bill that are worth thought and consideration. Some things have been said

in this debate that need not have been said, but on the other hand there are some other things that could be said.

Mr. Macgillivray—Is the Bill in accord with Liberal principles?

Mr. SHANNON—I do not know whether the honourable member is a good judge of Liberal principles because he has only one principle: Chaffey first, Chaffey second, and Chaffey last.

Mr. Quirke—That's not a bad principle, either.

Mr. SHANNON—Possibly not, but I do not know that the member for Chaffey is a good judge of Liberal principles. Members have referred to the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board. My own view of the board's activities is that it has been a little too long-suffering and too easy on vital matters in respect of which, after all, it should have taken a firm stand. It has permitted the employee's union to dictate a certain policy to it and in the end this has been responsible for steep increases in the costs of this institution, which have been passed on to the consumers. The local consumer has had to pay more for his weekend joint and additional costs have been placed on the meat we are exporting to competitive overseas markets. The recent dispute concerning the speed at which the chain should operate is indicative of what is happening at Gepps Cross. The union is thrusting its opinions on the board and that should not be permitted. I know it is pleasant to be able to finish work in the middle of the afternoon. The member for Adelaide suggested that employees at the abattoirs should finish at 3 o'clock. If men can kill their daily darg by 3 o'clock it is obvious that they should work a little later and kill a few more sheep and so reduce the costs of the abattoirs.

I favour the establishment of abattoirs outside the metropolitan area but we should not specify the distance they should be from the Metropolitan Abattoirs. Their location would depend upon a number of factors, including whether or not they could operate successfully. I have often thought that Tailem Bend would be an ideal site for a country abattoirs. It is the meeting place for a number of railway lines, including those which serve the South-East and the Murray lands, and also for roads from the same areas. I realize that it is on the other side of the Mount Lofty ranges and some people may regard that as a deterrent because the finished product would have to be carted over the ranges for shipment overseas. I point out, however, that all stock from the South-East and the Murray lands now has to

cross that same barrier to reach the Metropolitan Abattoirs and, what is more, the entire carcass is being brought to the city. With country abattoirs it would not be necessary to bring the offal and waste meat. That could be processed and returned to the persons who supplied the livestock for slaughter and could be used in building up the fertility of the land on which the stock is grazed.

I realize that there are problems associated with the establishment of country abattoirs. The greatest difficulty at Port Lincoln has been to maintain a volume of stock in order to regularize slaughtering and overcome labour difficulties. That problem will arise wherever abattoirs are established. For that reason I agree that the Minister should permit the entry of some meat from country abattoirs into the metropolitan area. That is necessary in view of the growth of the metropolitan area in the last decade. Taillem Bend, for instance, could also supply meat to Murray Bridge and some of the hills towns.

Mr. Fletcher—There is nothing wrong with the Noarlunga Meat Works.

Mr. SHANNON—I admit that that establishment is serving a useful purpose. As a matter of fact, at Bridgewater we are eating meat from Noarlunga. Another point in favour of country abattoirs is that they provide a means for effective meat inspections. It is almost physically impossible to carry out effective inspections when individual butchers scattered throughout the State slaughter their own meat. Local councils can, to some extent, make them keep their slaughter houses up to the mark but the problem from a health point of view is not so much concerned with inspecting slaughtering facilities as with inspecting the meat. Frequently defective meat is offered for sale, and that would be overcome if there were country abattoirs.

I do not think we should confine the opportunities for establishing abattoirs to private enterprise because some council may desire to start a meat works. One council in my electorate investigated such a possibility but the cost was too great. However, a group of councils may desire to get together and establish an abattoirs to serve a larger area and such a venture might be profitable. However, I believe the most efficient works will be those operated by private enterprise. After all, the profit motive—no matter how we may criticize it—is a good incentive to efficiency. If a firm has the chance to make a profit it has the incentive to do a better job and if it

can cut its costs it has a better opportunity for competing with other works.

In connection with the grasshopper infestation the Minister suggested that people should help themselves. I agree that in most instances self help is desirable. That principle might apply also to the establishment of country abattoirs. I understand an abattoirs was to be established near Kadina. That could be a suitable site and if sufficient encouragement were given that proposal might be proceeded with. It would require the means of regularly employing labour throughout the year and if some percentage of the beasts slaughtered could be sent to the metropolitan area it would provide the opportunity. We should not define areas for country abattoirs nor should we apply restrictions relating to the distances between such abattoirs. If there is sufficient meat in the South-East to warrant the establishment of abattoirs at Naracoorte and Taillem Bend we should not prevent their establishment. I hope the Minister will not be too parochial in his approach to this problem. Knowing him as I do, I realize he is well equipped to face it. He has had to serve an area where a local abattoirs—at Port Lincoln—has had to struggle to make ends meet. I do not think I can tell the Minister anything about the major difficulties that apply. I support any move to encourage the establishment of meat works outside the metropolitan area. The shorter the haul the better the finished article and there is no meat more susceptible to loss than the fat lamb. I was a member of a committee that took evidence from South-Eastern producers on the disabilities associated with the transport of stock and some favoured the establishment of killing works nearer the growing of the lambs. I support the Bill, but hope that in Committee matters I have mentioned will be considered.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (Chaffey)—There has been much speculation by previous speakers as to the purpose of the Bill and what inspired its introduction. To get at its genesis we must go back to something beyond the subject matter of the Bill—the persecution of the Noarlunga meatworks by a Government pledged to support private enterprise. I use the word “persecution” advisedly because I think there was a deliberate attempt by the Government to put this comparatively small undertaking out of action, probably because of its efficiency which showed up the Government monopoly at the metropolitan abattoirs. Ever since the persecution has

taken place not one Government supporter dared ask a question about it until Mr. Hawker returned from overseas and brought up the matter. I would have thought the member for the district would have raised a query about the Government attack on the meatworks, but for reasons best known to him he did not do so. I sought information, not because I am interested in the company as a company, but because it is upholding the principle of private enterprise.

Mr. Brookman—As a private member, I am opposed to the Government's action.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—It would have been helpful if the honourable member had raised the question publicly.

Mr. Brookman—I have not interfered in the legal side of the matter.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—It would have been helpful if the honourable member had done so. Following on the question by Mr. Hawker the Premier said that the Government was not worried about the Noarlunga meatworks, but about the implications if the decision were in favour of the works. This case would not have arisen if the Government had not refused a licence to the Noarlunga Company; therefore, if the Government loses the case, and I hope it does in the interests of private enterprise, it will be responsible for the position. In connection with the recent strike at the metropolitan abattoirs, I asked the Government a number of questions and I was told that the Minister of Agriculture had said the primary producers were not gravely affected. I suggested that the Government should bring the two parties together with a view to settling the strike, but it was not interested. The strike dragged on, until eventually it died of inanimation. Both sides were glad when the Government stepped in and settled the matter. When the Minister was giving his second reading explanation the member for Rocky River interjected "Producers will have to take much less for their lambs," and the Minister replied:—

Undoubtedly there will be a serious price decline because the lambs will get too heavy or lose their bloom. Moreover, lamb prices are substantially lower than they were last year. Some prices I have heard quoted are about 55 per cent of the prices that similar lambs were bringing last year, so the producer and the State generally are faced with a considerable reduction in income from this source, quite apart from the additional loss occurring as the result of the dispute at the abattoirs. That is the reason for the introduction of the Bill. The Government allowed the strike to

drag on and the income of the State and the producers to be reduced. Now it feels that it must save its face because there is an election in the offing. During the election campaign if asked "What did the Government do when the strike took place?" Government candidates will be able to say "The Government took action and then introduced legislation so that country meat could be brought into the city." It is not worth the paper on which it is written. The only time it will be used is when meat is in short supply in the metropolitan area and that will be only when there is a strike or some other hold-up at the abattoirs.

Mr. Davis—Do you think it is intended to be a strike-breaking Bill?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—No. The Government would not dare to interfere with strikers in the city, because the votes of the workers in the metropolitan area keep it in office. The position may be different in the country where the people vote for Government candidates, except in the four electorates where the voters have sufficient intelligence to return Independent members. In the future, when a strike occurs, meat supplies will come from outside the metropolitan area. My point is that the Bill has no value at all. The move is entirely in the interests of the metropolitan area. Nothing makes people more dissatisfied with a Government than an empty stomach. The position of the fat lamb producer is important. If we exclude the South-East from the State—

Mr. Fletcher—You don't suggest giving us to Victoria?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Yes. I think the South-East is independent of anything that can happen in the metropolitan area because there are good facilities available just over the border. If we leave the South-East out of this argument, within a distance of 100 miles of the metropolitan area all the fat lamb producing part of the State is covered. We find that the Bill defines a "country abattoirs" as "any abattoirs established outside the metropolitan abattoirs area." In theory at least, that means country abattoirs that are established within 100 miles of the metropolitan area, because, except for the South-East, all our fat lambs are grown in that area. In the past there have been numerous abattoirs in different parts of the State that functioned reasonably successfully. However, with the growth of the monopoly at Gepps Cross those private concerns went out of existence.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—I think you are drawing on your imagination now.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—It would not be my imagination but the imagination of an officer of a Government department from whom I obtained my information. I realize that the Minister knows most of the answers concerning abattoirs, but I was assured that some country abattoirs not far from the city went out of existence. Up to the present country abattoirs means any abattoirs established outside the metropolitan abattoirs area, such as the Noarlunga Meat Works. At present meat cannot be taken into the metropolitan area unless it has been killed under certain conditions, which have been laid down by the Central Board of Health. That is a very desirable state of affairs, and I would hate to see it altered. In my district we tried to get an abattoirs established to kill meat under supervision, but through some misadventure that project fell by the wayside. The Bill states:—

For the purpose of giving effect to any such proclamation the Minister of Agriculture may grant permits to such persons as he deems proper authorizing them to bring into the metropolitan abattoirs area carcasses or meat or both derived from country abattoirs.

“Country abattoirs” should read “country slaughterhouses,” for they are mainly slaughterhouses run by councils. It is the Minister who will grant permits, not the Central Board of Health. Further, the meat to be derived from country abattoirs must not exceed the quantity allowed pursuant to the proclamation. In other words, there will be just sufficient meat allowed into the metropolitan area to feed the people there. There will be no question of strike-breaking, although strike-breaking may be of benefit to the primary producer because he wants to get his lambs slaughtered. However, he is not interested in strike-breaking or the causes of a strike. The Minister will want to get sufficient meat to feed the people in the metropolitan area so that they will vote for the Liberal and Country Party, but what will happen to the fat lamb grower who has hundreds of lambs in his paddocks where the grass is rapidly turning to seed? He knows the primary producers will vote for his Party in any case. Then the Bill states:—

Any such permit may contain conditions as to all or any of the following matters, namely:—the inspection, counting and weighing of carcasses and meat to which the permit applies. Many members have been closely associated with local government, and they know something about the inspection of slaughter yards. The health inspector may visit a slaughterhouse and find offal containing parts of carcasses in

the yard, and he may issue an instruction that the yard must be cleaned up or the proprietor will be prosecuted, but usually the district clerk, who is the health officer under the Act, knows little about diseases in carcasses. The Minister interjected a little while ago that I was using my imagination, but I have found that we have an abattoirs at Whyalla which is under some trained control. The Mount Gambier abattoirs is also supervised efficiently. There they have an officer of the Commonwealth Government because that abattoirs exports considerable quantities, and he is engaged part-time in checking all carcasses killed for local consumption. Of course, Mt. Gambier is a long way from Adelaide, so it can be ruled out for supplying Adelaide with meat in times of shortage. The Port Lincoln abattoirs, too, is a long way from Adelaide, although the meat there is also killed under supervision. Therefore, there is only one country abattoirs under efficient supervision that may supply Adelaide, that is, the Noarlunga Meat Works.

Mr. Davis—Do you think the Port Pirie abattoirs is too far away?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The meat is not killed under trained control there. I do not know whether the Noarlunga Meat Works will grow so as to become a menace to the monopoly of the Metropolitan Abattoirs, but the Liberal Government would not like it to. The Liberal Country League gives lip service to private enterprise. It believes in competition in theory, but in practice there is no body more viciously opposed to it. I cannot see any great help to primary producers from this Bill. I believe it was brought down solely to delude the fat lamb producers into thinking that the Government is interested in their welfare. This Bill is only kidstrokes. It has been introduced entirely in the interests of the people in the metropolitan area. There is an amendment on the files which I am not allowed to discuss at length now, but any little virtue in the Bill will be entirely destroyed if this House is silly enough to support the amendment. I have said before that all our fat lambs are produced within 100 miles of the metropolitan area, except for the South-East, but fortunately the producers there are not dependent on this Government for facilities for slaughtering stock. They have a Government just across the border which is more interested in private enterprise, and if South Australia is not prepared to look after their interests they will look to another Government that will.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—It is necessary to support the second reading in order to enable certain amendments to be considered later. This afternoon the member for Rocky River (Mr. Heaslip) addressed a question to the Minister of Agriculture about the working conditions at the metropolitan abattoirs. It seems that the honourable member has been urged to add further fuel to the fire. However, the Minister's reply showed that the percentage of faulty dressings was 0.77 per cent during the period that the operations of the chain were slowed down by stipulating 4 p.m. closing instead of 3.30. It was not in good taste for the honourable member to pursue this matter. The people who were screaming loudest during the recent dispute at the abattoirs were those who were most generous in their acclamation of the men's achievements during the last few seasons.

Mr. Heaslip—I am always prepared to give credit where credit is due.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—It is a pity the honourable member did not give a little more credit to the men recently instead of trying to stir up more strife. A judgment was given towards the end of last year for certain marginal increases, and the abattoirs men had not received any such increases since 1950. The judgment to which I refer provided for a margin two and a half times that operating in 1937. After all, it must be remembered that the abattoirs employees are skilled because of their training, although some may not be qualified to carry out the whole of the process if they are taken off the chain system. Between January 1 and early June this year no fewer than 58 employees left the metropolitan abattoirs; they were able to obtain better conditions and wages from outside industry. In 1950 employees at Gepps Cross were receiving a substantial margin comparable with that in outside industry, and for that reason sufficient labour was available to man the chain; but with the falling off in the value of the margin and the awarding of higher margins in other industries where the period of training was not so long, a greater inducement was offered to these men to leave the abattoirs and work outside.

Although their award has been varied many find they are receiving much less than they would have received had they been given the normal increases granted in outside industry. It seemed that no good purpose could be served by negotiating with the board, so the union approached the

appropriate tribunal. The management created a position where some men found their services were no longer required, but had the board given full effect to the judgment providing the marginal increases there would have been no industrial dispute last month. Much has been said in this debate about the relative merits of 3.30 p.m. and 4 p.m. knocking-off at Gepps Cross, and I had hoped that this afternoon the Minister of Agriculture would have given certain information to the member for Rocky River (Mr. Heaslip). I understand that the 4 p.m. closing dispute was deliberately sought, and it has been stated that this closing time was introduced in an effort to reduce the amount of faulty dressing; but it must be remembered that these workers are engaged on a piece-work basis.

Mr. Heaslip—With a darg.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The members for Onkaparinga and Rocky River said the union secretary should not be a member of the abattoirs board, but I know of a no more competent member than the union secretary (Mr. Pirie). The tally has been fixed by agreement between the union and the board, and I ask Mr. Heaslip whether he has ever tried to keep up with the pace of the chain and whether he realizes the skill required by the workers at Gepps Cross? These men are engaged on a monotonous task, which would be varied if they were engaged on all the processes connected with the killing of meat. Most of them, however, are engaged only on a minor section of the operation, which permits of no variation, and the task becomes so monotonous that some thought must be given to the length of time the men are called on to do the work. Further, because the men must stand for the whole of the time their work is arduous. These factors have caused many of the men to leave the abattoirs and seek more congenial employment elsewhere.

In the light of the figures given this afternoon by the Minister of Agriculture, the men are doing their job well and carrying out the obligations implicit in the agreement. The men are doing a fair and reasonable amount of work, although admittedly in less time. Would it be preferable to have all the men knock off at 3.30 instead of 4 p.m. in order to allow part of the last half hour to be used by the men in preparing to leave the job? There seems to be a doubt in the minds of many country members about where additional abattoirs are to be established in the country, but unless a country abattoirs treats the meat

and processes the by-products the same as at Gepps Cross few country members will advocate its establishment. Other members on this side (including the member for Gawler, Mr. John Clark) have enunciated Labor's policy on the establishment of country abattoirs and there is no need for me to reiterate that policy. I have sufficient confidence in the workers at Gepps Cross and their union officials to believe that their intentions are honourable and that they are willing to carry out their obligation under the agreement. I believe that with a little patience on the part of those people who may have lost a little through the delay the difficulties could have been overcome. There was ample warning, and adequate representations were made long before the export killing season was likely to commence. I can accept no better authority than the Minister himself and I do not think that he would say that the statement was misleading in any way. I support the second reading.

THE Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN (Minister of Agriculture)—I would not have troubled the House with any further remarks on this Bill were it not for the unfortunate statement by the member for Prospect (Mr. Jennings) that the board had not come out of the recent dispute with any credit. No blame whatever was attachable to the board: on the whole it handled its administrative duties with great credit; but that sort of remark is probably intended to create the impression that all of the blame is attachable to the board.

Mr. Jennings—I think you might admit that I said there were faults on both sides.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—Yes, I think the honourable member said that too, but let me deal first with his other remark; let me put the position in its true perspective as otherwise people are likely to be misled by some of the remarks made during this debate. It is authenticated history that all the trouble originated from the fact that the union refused to employ the additional labour required for seasonal operations. Everybody who knows anything about the lamb export trade knows that killing operations cannot proceed without that additional labour. It involves from 100 to 200 extra men and without that extra personnel export killing operations cannot proceed.

Mr. Frank Walsh—They got their labour.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The union refused to provide it this year because the board would not concede the weekly

paid workers additional pay and said they must go to their wages board for that.

Mr. Jennings—Didn't they do that?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—No, they did not. That is just where the confusion arises in the minds of members and many others, and the position should be clearly understood. There are two classes of employee at the abattoirs, namely, the slaughtermen, who are on a piece work basis, and the weekly paid employees. The slaughterman's case was before a tribunal. It had given a certain determination which was appealed against, and the Industrial Court referred it back to the Wages Board and it was still in the process of being determined. There is no question about that. The rest of the employees, numbering some 700, made a demand on the board for increased wages, and the board said that they must go to their industrial tribunal. These men refused to do that and said that if the board did not meet their demands they would refuse to allow the normal seasonal workers to be engaged, and that precipitated the strike.

Eventually these men, as the result of various conferences, were prevailed upon to go to their wages board, but that tribunal decided against any increase. When we bear in mind that the minimum wage for the unskilled labourer at these works was already £14 12s. 9d., or £3 1s. 9d. above the basic wage in industry outside, it is not to be wondered at that their own wages tribunal refused to give them any increase.

Mr. Lawn—Does the Minister claim that the wages dispute originated the industrial stoppage?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—Of course it did.

Mr. Lawn—I understood it was the sacking of two union representatives.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—That was a very small incident in the whole procedure. The works might just as well have closed down, as far as the export business was concerned, without the employment of additional seasonal workers which the union refused to provide.

Mr. Lawn—You would not spend any time in answering these statements if they were not correct because there is little association with the Bill in your remarks. You have something to hide.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—There is nothing to hide. The whole case has been well ventilated at innumerable conferences,

before the wages board and before the Industrial Court. All the facts have been brought to light and the real cause of the stoppage is well known; so much so were the facts authenticated that the union itself finally agreed to go to its tribunal—which it had previously refused to do. When subsequently the union's own strike committee recommended a return to work what did the mass meeting of unionists do? They turned down the advice of their own committee. It was not until the Trades and Labour Council came into the matter—when the meat industry employees went back to the Trades and Labour Council and asked to be reaffiliated and handed over the dispute because they could not handle it—and then, because of the intervention of the Government, we finally reached a settlement.

May I also remind the honourable member, and others, that one of the terms of settlement was that the management should have control of the speed of the chain. Will the member for Adelaide deny that?

Mr. Lawn—Was not another term of settlement the reinstatement of the two men sacked?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—And they were reinstated.

Mr. Lawn—But why try to hide these things?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—That was one of the terms.

Mr. Lawn—But the Minister is not mentioning matters adverse to the board.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The board agreed, although this was an illegal strike, to reinstate all the men without loss of privileges—long service leave and so forth—which the men had lost by virtue of the illegal strike. Now I want to deal with the speed of the chain because of a more recent dispute which could have again closed down the works. Members may ask why the management should control the speed of the chain. It is one of the first principles of any industrial undertaking that the owner shall control operations.

Mr. Lawn—That is not modern thought.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—In this case the speed of the chain had been gradually taken out of the hands of the management, because the slaughtermen themselves increased it without any authority. The result of their action, of course, was an increase in the number of bad dressings. I think the total rejections for the 1954 season amounted to more than 10,000 carcasses, equivalent to 1.5 per cent of the total, whereas in the previous year the figure was lower. There is clear proof that the dressings had deteriorated, and the board felt it was time to reassert its authority and

control the speed of the chain as agreed upon by the union and the Trades and Labor Council, and did so, in order that the dressings should be improved. During that period, when the operation of the chain was extended to 4 o'clock, the dressings improved to quite an outstanding extent; so much so that the bad dressings fell from 1.5 per cent to .77 per cent.

Mr. Lawn—Why did the board alter the time back to 3.30 p.m. again if your figures are right?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—If the honourable member will curb his impatience and listen to a cogent argument he will find out.

Mr. O'Halloran—On how many days did the chain work until 4 o'clock?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—It worked last week until the compromise was effected about the middle of the week. I haven't the figures for the dressings since that time because a complete week has not elapsed. Last week the men, despite the union's acceptance of the term that the management should have charge of the chain, refused to work under that condition. It is sad to relate, but it is a simple fact that notwithstanding the Trades and Labor Council's acceptance of this condition, immediately the chain was regulated by the management the men refused to work it.

Mr. Lawn—If they refused, how can the figures show an improvement?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The honourable member cannot see far ahead. The time was determined by the management. The chain was to stop at 4 o'clock and the speed was regulated to that. The men decided, however, to knock off at 3.30 p.m., not completing their tallies, of course. The fact that the chain travelled at a slower pace did result in very much more careful and better dressing.

Mr. Lawn—The board changed back to 3.30.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—Under duress. The men did not complete their tally by 3.30 but the dressing was undoubtedly better because of the slower speed of the chain so, following on the conference, it was agreed between the Trades and Labor Council and the management that we would put them on trial for a period finishing at 3.30 and if the dressing was up to the required standard and did not fall below what they had been able to do on the slow chain we would continue with it. As was stated today, if the work becomes inferior the board has the right to reduce the speed, which is acknowledged by the Trades and Labor Council.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Has there been any change in the dressing since the change to 3.30?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—As the figures are taken out weekly I cannot provide them yet, although I hope to be able to do so towards the end of the week. I shall now refer to some of the Opposition's figures relating to the origin of the strike. The industrial board ultimately dealt with the union's wages claim and disallowed it. It is illuminating to read the remarks of the chairman of the industrial board, Mr. Ziesing, in respect of the claim of the slaughtermen. He said:—

On the figures before the board it would appear that during the off season these workers average a working week of the order of 29 hours a week, including smokos, and during the export season of 31 hours, including smokos. If I, as chairman, had the right or duty of logically applying these working hours in the fixation of the rate the result would drastically reduce the rate offered by the management representatives.

Instead of the management having come out of it with no credit, I think those remarks prove conclusively that it has given more to the employees from time to time by virtue of agreements than would have been given by any industrial tribunal. The basic rate for employees in this industry is £3 1s. 9d. above that applying to other occupations. Does the honourable member for Adelaide think that people working in other industries should be paid a similar amount, or what does he think? Here we have a limited number of employees, admittedly in an important industry, in which a margin is justified, but nevertheless they receive £3 1s. 9d. more than their fellow workers in other industries, so surely they are being treated generously by their employers, who have done these things by agreement.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Generally, the relationship between the board and the employees has been good.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—It was good until certain elements got to work. The honourable member for Gawler suggested that the Bill was largely eyewash, and the honourable member for Alexandra said he could not see what value it would be to anybody. This Bill is only an instrument. Like very many other measures we deal with, its effectiveness will depend on the use made of it. The country abattoirs that deal in exports will be able to flourish if they are given a reasonable quota of the amount consumed in the metropolitan area. The honourable mem-

ber for Chaffey (Mr. Macgillivray) suggested that the purpose of the Bill is to feed the metropolitan area at any time when our own works are closed down through some industrial dispute, but that is entirely fantastic. I am afraid he has not any conception of the requirements of the metropolitan area. Its annual consumption is about 94,000,000 lb.; what works could be established anywhere in the country to meet that demand at any time?

Mr. Macgillivray—Who kept the metropolitan area going when the metropolitan abattoirs was closed?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The master butchers, who slaughtered at the abattoirs works. That is the only place where there is the capacity to provide the meat needed in the city. There is no country meat works in existence large enough to supply the metropolitan area, nor can any be expected to grow to the considerable size necessary to do so.

Mr. Brookman—Are you afraid of competition from the country abattoirs?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—We are not afraid of competition.

Mr. Quirke—Will they get continuity of supply or will it be intermittent?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The purpose is to provide an annual quota they can bring in when they like. I imagine that during the export period they will be fully employed handling export lamb but during the off season they could bring the whole quota into the metropolitan area to keep their key personnel and their works occupied. I remind the House that the Port Lincoln works, when under such a quota, with export almost entirely to live on plus a small local market, showed a reasonable profit in good seasons.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins—In very few seasons.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—That may be so, but it did show a profit, and even last year it broke even. The year before that undertaking showed a profit of £9,000, although the year before that there was a loss of £25,000. However, this shows that with a reasonable volume of export the works can exist. It is proposed to give them a reasonable quota of metropolitan consumption, so with that added to their killings for local towns they should surely be able to carry on quite well in the export business. That is the intention behind this legislation. I remind the honourable member for Gawler (Mr. John Clark) who asked whether this Bill had any value and whether it was introduced purely as a strike-breaking

measure, that discussions began as far back as 1952 when a particular company was keen to establish a country abattoirs. Those negotiations have continued ever since. As a result of this measure, that company as well as others will be ensured a fixed quota each year and we hope that they will have sufficient encouragement for them to carry out the undertakings they have in mind. This measure has no relation to the recent industrial upheaval.

Mr. Lawn—It is rumoured that you are going to destroy its effectiveness in Committee.

The SPEAKER—Order! We cannot discuss that.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I hope that the Committee will agree to the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN moved—

That it be an instruction to the Committee of the whole House that it has power to consider a new clause for the granting of permits to sell certain meat within the metropolitan abattoirs area.

Motion carried.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—“Permits as to carcasses and meat from country abattoirs.”

The CHAIRMAN—The Minister has an amendment on file. I shall treat that as of a verbal nature so that it can be moved at any time during the progress of the Bill in Committee under Standing Order 311.

Mr. HAWKER—My amendment is very similar to the Minister's, so perhaps it should be heard first.

The CHAIRMAN—I shall accept the honourable member's amendment now.

Mr. HAWKER—I move—

In subsection (3) of new section 78b to leave out “country” and insert “private.”

If that is carried, I shall move subsequently to delete from subsection (1) the words “established outside the metropolitan abattoirs area” with a view to inserting “other than the abattoirs established by the board under this Act.” The present proposal limits the granting of quotas to be sold in the metropolitan area to abattoirs outside the metropolitan area. My object is not to limit it to abattoirs outside the metropolitan area, but to enable the Minister, if he thinks fit, to give to abattoirs other than the Metropolitan Abattoirs established within the Metropolitan Abattoirs area the right to sell a quota of meat in the metropolitan area the same as is proposed in respect of abattoirs outside the Metropoli-

tan Abattoirs area. Within the metropolitan area there is already an abattoirs which is used for slaughtering pigs, the owners of which desire to extend their works and to slaughter sheep and lamb for export. The works were originally planned for that purpose and the owners have the financial backing to enable them to make extensions. That abattoirs could assist greatly at a time of glut and that is the sole object of my amendment. It would seem sensible to permit a firm established in the export business to sell a quota, regulated by the Minister, within the metropolitan area so that it can maintain its works.

It is conceded by everyone that an abattoirs must be able to kill all the year round in order to retain at least its key staff. The leaders of Australia have been strongly stressing the necessity for increasing our exports and we should do everything possible to achieve that. It may be suggested that this amendment will afford an open go for competition with the Metropolitan Abattoirs, but that is not so. The number of stock any abattoirs can kill for export, even if the Privy Council upholds the High Court judgment, is definitely regulated by two things, firstly where it gets the stock and secondly where it can sell its rejects to keep the abattoirs functioning the entire year. The second point is definitely limited by the Minister's powers. It would be of great advantage to have at least one private killing works in the metropolitan area. There are about six in and around the Melbourne metropolitan area and there are a number of private abattoirs in Sydney. Many South Australian lambs are sent to Melbourne for slaughter because of the private killing works there. We could well follow Melbourne's example.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I hope the Committee will not agree to this amendment because the Government is not prepared to open the gate as wide as the amendment would permit. We believe there is an economic range within which any public utility can operate and we must not forget that an abattoirs is a public utility. If these utilities are multiplied *ad lib* without any control over where they shall operate and with whom they shall compete, we will ultimately have chaos. We have a long-established abattoirs which has a large capacity. There have been seasons when that capacity has not been fully employed. Last year it was fully employed, but we have not always slaughtered 700,000 lambs for export in one season. There are times when the numbers are not up to the capacity of that works, and if it had to meet

competition part of its capacity would be idle while its costs would still have to be met. Once we open the gate, we open it for everyone. There are several overseas concerns already established here with millions of pounds behind them. If this amendment is accepted it would not be long before they grew to such an extent that our own public utility would be swamped. We have to exercise some control over whom we admit to slaughtering for export within the metropolitan area. I am not prepared to legislate ahead of the Privy Council's decision in regard to the Noarlunga Meat Company because it might well affect this measure and the whole of our legislation in regard to the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs. I suggest we stick to the

Bill which has been carefully framed and which is designed to develop country abattoirs and to provide a legitimate field in which they may operate.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I suggest that as this amendment was only circulated a few minutes ago, members should have the right to examine it carefully before being called upon to cast a vote on it, particularly as it may have some impact on other amendments that have been foreshadowed, and that the Minister should report progress.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.40 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, October 5, at 2 p.m.