

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, October 13, 1955.

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

QUESTIONS.**GRASSHOPPER INFESTATION.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Section 13 of the Noxious Insects Act states:—

(1) The Minister may appoint a committee for the purposes of this Act. Not less than two members of the committee shall be persons actively engaged in any pastoral, agricultural, or horticultural pursuit.

(2) The committee shall advise the Minister on the making of regulations under this Act, and on any other matter arising out of the administration of this Act.

Can the Minister of Agriculture say whether such a committee has been appointed, whether it is functioning at present, and whether it has been used to advise the Minister on steps to combat the present grasshopper menace, particularly regarding the amending Bill now before the House?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—To the best of my knowledge no such committee has ever been appointed; certainly one is not functioning at present. All the measures we have taken have been taken by officers of my department with a full knowledge of what is required and of the equipment, manpower and material at our disposal. Concerning the Bill now before the House, I had some discussions with district councils about the administration of the Act, particularly about their responsibilities, and I soon learned that they were handicapped in the powers they could employ to enforce the action required of landowners to combat this pest. As a result of my own observations and investigations, and those discussions, I realized that we needed the powers provided in the Bill.

Mr. RICHES—From information available to me I believe that district councils generally are handling the grasshopper menace reasonably well, but that outside of district council areas not so much is being done. Can the Minister of Agriculture inform the House what organization, if any, has been called into being to deal with the menace outside district council areas?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The Act and the regulations thereunder provide specifically for the ascertaining of the extent of the infestation in outside areas. Under those regulations the Pastoral Board and the

Director of Lands have certain responsibilities in regard to reporting the extent of an infestation. Both authorities, under my colleague the Minister of Lands, have been very active in that regard. Likewise my own officers have made frequent patrols into the outside country to ascertain the extent of the hatchings, and they have a fairly comprehensive knowledge of what is taking place. They have taken spray outfits into those areas and demonstrated their use to the landowners, and generally speaking some effective work is being done. That is not the end of the matter. I have also consulted the army authorities with a view to having equipment and personnel from that source made available. That is being examined at the moment and I am expecting that something concrete will be done rapidly if we can muster the equipment and personnel. Certain lines of operation have already been determined and it is merely a matter now of marshalling these further resources and putting them into operation in those areas.

RECORDS OF FISHING CATCHES.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—Is it incumbent on buyers of fish in South Australia to make statistical returns to the Fisheries and Games Department? If not, will the Minister of Agriculture take steps to have this done in order that the number and species of fish caught in South Australian waters may be assessed?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—As far as I know buyers of fish are not required to render returns, nor are the fishermen themselves. I know that the Chief Inspector of Fisheries and Game has long suggested some such power because he is unable to get complete records of the catches of fish in this State. I am having the matter examined with a view to providing him with that machinery.

NATURALIZED SUBJECTS IN COURT ACTIONS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Would the Minister of Education be prepared to suggest to the Attorney-General that he recommend to the Law Society—if that be the proper authority—that where recently naturalized persons are involved in court actions it is unnecessary to investigate the full details of their country of origin, and so forth, as the fact that they have been permitted to become naturalized subjects should satisfy the court?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I shall be very pleased to refer the matter to my colleague, the Attorney-General.

DIESEL RAIL CAR SERVICES.

Mr. HAWKER—Can the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Railways, say when the northern line to Terowie will be provided with diesel trains thus supplying a service to Burra and north comparable with what they received prior to the war?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will take the matter up with my colleague. I think the honourable member realises that there has been considerable delay between the date of ordering and the delivery of the various units. As they are received they are placed on lines where the traffic density most justifies them. I think that is the only criterion the Railways Department considers. I will ascertain whether the area mentioned qualifies for an early delivery of one of these units.

Mr. FLETCHER—I understand that last Friday there was a trial run with a new rail car on the South-East line. Can the Minister of Works indicate the result of that trial run and say what the future time table for the South-East service will be?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The area to be served by this rail car service commences near Tailem Bend and extends almost to Frances and is mainly in the district of Albert and therefore I have a great interest in the final result. As a result of the trial run the Railways Commissioner has advised that it is expected that the new rail service to Mount Gambier will be introduced before the end of October. The time of the journey will be approximately 8½ hours compared with about 11 hours for the present steam train service.

Mr. TEUSNER—Bearing in mind the criterion mentioned by the Minister of Works that determines the priority for new diesel rail car services in various parts of the State, and the fact that the rail service to the Barossa district is one of the most profitable in the State, will he take up with the Minister of Railways the matter of new diesel rail cars being included in the service from Adelaide to Tanunda, Nuriootpa and Angaston?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will bring under the notice of the Minister of Railways the honourable member's representations. Fortunately for him and me, the rostering of trains and the timetable is, under Act of Parliament, outside the function of the Minister, but I will ask him to confer with the Commissioner of Railways.

Mr. McALEES—This afternoon several members have asked for diesel rail cars to be used in various parts of the State. I thank the Minister for putting them on the Adelaide-

Moonta line, but ask for an assurance that neither of the two cars now in use there will be taken off to go to Angaston, Mount Gambier, Burma or anywhere else.

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Fortunately for all of us, the rostering of trains and time tables is vested by law in the Railways Commissioner. I am proud to think that I had some hand in ordering the rail cars, and pleased to know they have been successful and that the people are delighted with them.

EX-POLICEMEN JUSTICES OF THE PEACE.

Mr. LAWN—Has the Minister in charge of the House a reply to the question I asked on September 20 concerning the appointment of some retired police officers as visiting justices of the peace to various gaols in South Australia?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have received the following reply from the Sheriff and Controller of Prisons:—

Two retired police officers are visiting justices of the peace in the Gaols and Prisons Department in this State. One is appointed for H.M. Gaol, Adelaide and one for the Yatala Labor Prison. Mr. David Henderson Miller, J.P., a retired Inspector of Police, was appointed visiting justice to H.M. Gaol, Adelaide, on January 3, 1946 and Mr. John Ernest Noblet, J.P., also a retired inspector of police, was appointed a visiting justice to the Yatala Labor Prison on February 21, 1946. Provision is made in the Prisons Act for the appointment of visiting justices of the peace. Mr. Miller and Mr. Noblet, prior to appointment held responsible positions in the Police Department. They had rendered very loyal and efficient service for many years. They both had considerable experience in dealing with the public, they were also thoroughly conversant with court procedure. In view of the experience and ability of a retired police inspector it was considered good practice in making such appointments. There are eight visiting justices who regularly visit our institutions, two of whom are retired police officers. It would not be wise to make new appointments every 12 months.

WEST COAST ROADS.

Mr. PEARSON—Earlier this year the Minister of Roads was good enough to give me an outline, which was then somewhat in the projected stage, as to the roadworks plan of this year on the road from Cummins to the Uley Basin and on the Lincoln Highway. Will the Minister of Works obtain from his colleague a report as to exactly what works are expected to be completed, particularly as to the sealing of the road already constructed between Cummins and the Uley Basin?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will be glad to do that.

MOUNT GAMBIER TO MILLICENT BROAD GAUGE RAILWAY.

Mr. CORCORAN—A considerable time ago I asked the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Railways, whether the Railways Department intended to celebrate the completion of that section of the broad gauge line between Mount Gambier and Millicent as was done on the section between Naracoorte and Mount Gambier. He promised to let me have a reply, and although I have sought information on one or two occasions, to date I have received nothing definite. I have been pressed by people concerned to know what are the Government's intentions. If it does not intend to commemorate the event in the way suggested, I should like to know. Can he say whether this important event in the history of this part of the State is to be commemorated in accordance with the desires of the people of Millicent and the surrounding districts?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to celebrate great events, and I have helped toward that end on frequent occasions, but I cannot say whether it is intended to celebrate this event. The last time I discussed the matter the line had not been completed to the extent to justify an all-out celebration, and a time table had not been finalized; but now that a time table has been worked out perhaps the matter can be reviewed in the light of present-day circumstances. I will take up the matter with my colleague to see what should be done.

PRICE OF POTATOES.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Can the Minister of Lands say whether the price of potatoes, particularly new potatoes, is subject to control in South Australia and, if so, what is the fixed price, particularly in country areas? Perhaps he will have the matter investigated and ask the Minister in charge of prices to bring down a reply on Tuesday next.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I shall be happy to comply with the honourable member's request and bring down a reply on Tuesday.

JERVOIS AND WELLINGTON IRRIGATION.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—Recently the Minister of Irrigation visited Jervois and Wellington and met the settlers on dairy properties with a view to working out a better method of irrigation and drainage in the area. Has he any information as to whether the new

machinery or pumping plant has come to hand, and when the work is likely to commence?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—A day or two ago the honourable member indicated he would ask a question of this nature, and if he is referring to drainage I can say that approval has been given for the work to proceed and the matter is in the hands of the Engineer-in-Chief. I am advised that specifications have been prepared and that action is now being taken to invite offers for the supply of the motors and other equipment. It is not possible at this stage to say when the installation will be made.

GRADING OF ROADS.

Mr. HAWKER—Last session I asked the Minister of Works a question regarding the dangerous practice of councils grading roads a good deal wider than the guide posts and culverts. He gave a reply to the question, but as it did not cover all the points I wanted answered he said he would get a further reply. Will he obtain it in the near future?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will get a reply more up to date than the one I gave previously, since which time almost a whole session has passed. I will bring the matter under the notice of my colleague, the Minister of Roads.

KENSINGTON SWIMMING POOL.

Mr. DUNSTAN—For some time the Kensington and Norwood Council has had under consideration a proposal to establish a caravan park and swimming pool in Phillip Street, Kensington. The proposed pool would serve not only the citizens of the district but also 11 Education Department schools and at least five private schools in the area, which at present have no facilities for learning to swim. It was announced in the press yesterday that the Tourist Bureau had informed the council that it was prepared to advance only £1,500 towards the cost of this project. Can the Minister of Lands, representing the Minister of Immigration, state the total cost of the project and whether the Government will consider granting an increased amount for this very necessary item of public expenditure?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have no idea of the cost of the project. The honourable member will agree that there has to be some limit even on subsidies for swimming pools, which are very necessary and desirable, both in the metropolitan area and in the country. I will refer the question to the Premier and bring down a reply.

CLARE-RIVERTON RAIL TRACK.

Mr. QUIRKE—Some time ago the Railways Department instituted a road bus service between Riverton and Jamestown to take the place of the obsolete rail car service that operated between Riverton and Spalding. The rail cars were taken off that line because it was unsafe for such traffic, being suitable only for goods trains. Although the road bus service has been very effective, particularly to the people of Jamestown, now that there is such keen competition for the new diesel services I do not see why Clare should be left out of the picture. Can the Minister of Works inform me when a completely new rail track will be built between Riverton and Clare?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I cannot inform the honourable member when it will be re-laid. I will take up that matter, and its order of precedence, with my colleague.

NOXIOUS INSECTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 11. Page 1032.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I might say at the outset that I am not very enamoured of the Bill, although I think that on balance, in view of the present emergency, it will be necessary to pass it. Let us see what has led up to the Bill's introduction, and fix at least some of the responsibility for the emergency that confronts us. For years I have been urging that some concerted effort be made to deal with grasshoppers, not only in South Australia but throughout the Commonwealth. If a proper, efficiently controlled and co-ordinated attempt were devised on a nation-wide basis it would be possible to eliminate this scourge, but my requests have either fallen on deaf or unresponsive ears. I have taken an active interest in the grasshopper menace because all my life I have been associated with land activities in the north of this State where, for as long as I can remember, we have had periodic infestations. They usually remain in the north, although occasionally they fly south and do considerable damage, but the previous big infestation resulted in considerable damage in both the northern and southern areas.

I stress that we had ample warnings in autumn of this year, when there was a considerable infestation, particularly in the north.

The officers of the Minister of Agriculture's department said they were fearful of what would result from hatchings under favourable climatic and other conditions in the spring. Despite all these warnings after infestations occurred over wide areas from Victor Harbour to the far north, and almost from the eastern to the western borders of the State, we now find all kinds of measures being hastily conceived and applied, and finally we have this Bill. I say without equivocation that the Government, owing to its neglect in this matter down the years, must accept a great deal of the responsibility for the magnitude of the present plague.

Mr. Shannon—That applies to all Governments.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—It applies to the South Australian Government.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins—It would also apply to New South Wales, the permanent hatching ground.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—It may. I raised this matter with the Premier on a number of occasions and asked that it should be listed for consideration at a Premiers' Conference.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—It has been listed for discussion at Agricultural Council meetings and definite action taken.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Then if this Bill is an example of the Government's action to combat what appears to be the worst infestation in the history of this State, I hope that any future action taken as a result of Agricultural Council discussions will be vastly different. When Canberra was first established and before proper hygienic facilities could be installed, blowflies were a serious menace there and a Commonwealth scientific organization investigated possible methods of combating them; but for the first two years at least, the work of officers of that organization seemed only to result in bigger blowflies, and ultimately they had to fall back on the time-honoured method of trapping and proper hygienic methods. Only this afternoon the Minister of Agriculture, in reply to my question, said that the Government had not exercised its powers under section 13 of the Act to appoint an advisory committee. That proves that the Government has been dilatory in this matter. If there was any virtue in the idea of an advisory committee when the 1934 legislation was passed, then the Government has been recreant to its trust in not taking proper steps to combat the grasshopper.

Realizing the danger of infestation in pastoral areas, I asked the Minister on a

number of occasions this session what steps the Government intended to take to deal with the pest and whether, for instance, free poison would be made available to landholders for spraying in outside areas the same as it was to those in the inside country. Indeed, only a week ago the Minister said poisons would be provided on application to the Department of Lands and the same assistance given to people outside district council areas as to those inside.

If we were to take concerted action more effective results would be obtained. In this respect I do not blame the South Australian Government any more than the Commonwealth Government or the Government of any other State where grasshoppers have done great damage over the years, but preventive measures have not been prosecuted with sufficient vigour. Steps should be taken to gradually eliminate hatchings in the more accessible areas and trace these pests back to their egg beds in the hinterland. For some years we were free from grasshopper plagues and no eggs were laid, but then almost overnight clouds of grasshoppers were on the wing from further north; therefore, there must be some point to which they can be traced back and at which effective steps may be taken toward their elimination. There must be a properly co-ordinated combat plan on a nation-wide basis.

There is something unique about the present plague. Usually grasshopper plagues have occurred in lean years when it was easy to trace their egg beds, but this year is probably the best that South Australia has ever known and certainly the best in the outside pastoral country. That makes it difficult to track down the pests. Recently I saw where the grasshoppers had hatched in the midst of feed over a foot high and as dense as it was possible to grow. The owners and managers of the big pastoral properties in my electorate have difficulty in properly inspecting the hundreds of square miles under their control and ascertaining whether there are hoppers there.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—They would need almost an army.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, it would be beyond the reach of any organization that could be created at a moment's notice and the cost would probably be beyond what the land could carry. That is a practical difficulty and inspectors will have to be employed permanently to inspect the outside country and properly delineate the egg beds when the eggs are being laid so that they may be flagged and

the landholders know where to look for possible infestations. I doubt whether all the grasshoppers now causing so much consternation have hatched as a result of the egg-laying last autumn. Some old timers in the north have long held the view, to which I subscribe to some extent and which should be investigated, that the eggs remain fertile in the soil for years until climatic and other conditions are favourable for their hatching.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins—You think there is something in the theory, "One year's laying and seven years' hatching"?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, and the honourable member, like myself, has had much experience, not only as the representative of a northern district, but also as one having interests in land in that area. I mention these points because, although they are not particularly applicable to deciding what measures we shall take at the moment, they should be considered in future in an effort to avoid a repetition of this occurrence.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—I think it has been looked into.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—We have had no compunction in providing Government money for dealing with another pest of a similar kind, namely, the fruit fly pest in the metropolitan area. This Parliament has voted, up to last year, £854,000 towards the eradication of this pest, and after compensation is paid under the Bill passed this year it will probably be more than £1,000,000. I realize the necessity of doing something practicable, and I think the steps taken generally regarding the fruit fly have been practical because of the potential danger to our wealth production, but I suggest that a grasshopper plague of the magnitude of what appears to be likely to take place this year could do infinitely more damage in one year than the cost of fruit fly eradication since that pest was first discovered. I am not suggesting that the State should accept the full responsibility, as it has done in relation to the fruit fly. The scheme of the original legislation putting the primary responsibility on the landholder is a sound one; indeed, the only practicable one, and it is something which can be implemented at no great cost to the State, and no great cost or inconvenience to the landholders provided effective action is taken at the right time—and the right time is when the grasshoppers are about the size of fleas when they first emerge from the ground. In order to get the proper co-operation of the landholders it will be necessary to retain their goodwill. In this connection I commend the

press, the officers of the department and the Minister himself for the publicity given to this question recently. It has, I think, awakened the public conscience to the dangers inherent in this pest. If we can go on from there and get all of the landholders to recognize the danger and accept their responsibility I feel that we will have done something really worth-while.

Now I turn to some of the provisions in the Bill. The Minister said that it followed the scheme of the Noxious Weeds and Vermin Acts, but, of course, the position is totally unrelated. Noxious weeds have not the habit of taking to the air and flying miles in a day, and vermin, of course, are much more permanent than is this particular pest. Therein lies the great difference between the implementation of the provisions of this law and the laws regarding the destruction of vermin and noxious weeds. This is where mistakes by administrators could do considerable harm in destroying goodwill created amongst landholders. Members should realize that extensive powers have been conferred on councils in the inside country, and on the Department of Lands in the outside country, for dealing with those who are not prepared to accept their legal obligations, and I do not disagree with that. The person who is prepared to sit back while the landholders around him are taking the most effective steps they can to destroy the grasshoppers should be made to realize his obligations, and the most effective way to do that, of course, is to give somebody the power to go on to his land and do the job for him and charge him for it. However, that is a very great power to give to any authority and a power which, particularly when the time arrives to seek to recover the costs, could cause great difficulties. We all know that effective steps can be taken against this pest only while it is in the hopping stage; once the hoppers get on the wing we may as well abandon all thought of doing anything effective to destroy them, yet according to the law a man who destroyed all the grasshoppers on his property might be subject to an infestation of insects that were hatched 100 miles away, and still be liable because he had not destroyed them on his property.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—He would hardly be served with a notice in those circumstances.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I do not think he would, but he could be, and that is why I am issuing the warning that the success of this scheme depends on its proper administra-

tion and the retention of the goodwill of the landholders concerned. I know from my own experience that some local governing bodies were not quite as impartial or competent as they might have been regarding the destruction of noxious weeds and vermin. Every member with experience in the country knows that if councils had done the right thing at the outset certain noxious weeds would never have spread as they have done. I heard Mr. Heaslip recently asking that something effective be done regarding the spread of wild onion weed. I remember the time, I think it was about 1938, just after I had returned to this place after a period of duties elsewhere, that I raised the question with the then Minister of Lands (the Hon. R. J. Rudall). At that time wild onion in the northern areas had not reached serious proportions, but nothing was done about it, and it has kept on spreading until now it has reached the alarming proportions mentioned by Mr. Heaslip. I remember one council, the chairman of which absolutely refused to allow Bathurst Burr to be destroyed within the area of his council because, he said, it was a good standby for sheep in drought time. I also remember in the old days when some councils only prosecuted the small landholders for not destroying vermin. Those who held enough land were immune. These things can happen again although I hope they will not. I trust the Minister will use any power he has—and he has complete power over outside country and possibly some over inside country—to see that this legislation is properly administered.

Of course, it represents a great transgression of the sacred rights of landholders and I wonder how we will get on if grasshoppers are found on the B.H.P. Company's leases at Whyalla. I can find nothing in the B.H.P. Company Indenture Act which makes the company responsible for the destruction of grasshoppers, and if we send men there with the right of ingress and egress such as is provided for by this Bill, we may be charged with repudiating a sacred contract. This is one of those cases that brings forcibly home to the minds of members that an emergency can render it necessary for Parliament to do many things it normally would not do. In this case I believe it is necessary to deal with the emergency and support the second reading.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS (Stirling)—I support the Bill which is designed to combat the grasshopper plague in areas where manpower is scarce and measures may have to be initiated for the control of the pest and the

cost debited to the landholders concerned. The Leader of the Opposition said it might alienate the goodwill of many landholders. I do not agree with that.

Mr. O'Halloran—I did not say that. I said bad administration might do it.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—I do not think there will be any maladministration of the Bill, which will only operate where landholders have failed to carry out their duties. No action can be too drastic in combating this pest, which looks like reaching proportions never before known in this State. I was on the West Coast in 1934-35 when grasshoppers infested the area and am fully aware of the menace they represent. During the early hatchings in the South-Coast area this year, people were inclined to discount the damage that could be done but subsequent hatchings have made them aware of the menace. I believe there are sufficient grasshoppers there at the present time to eat out the area apart from any possible migration from the north.

The Leader recommended that inspectors should be sent out from the Department of Agriculture to search for hatching beds so that they could be tabulated and dealt with before the hatching stage. That is a good idea but I do not think it is physically possible. There are many thousands of square miles in the north and north-west and some holdings are so large that even a fair number of inspectors could not conduct a successful search on even one of them. It is comparatively easy to find hatchings in closely populated areas and on small holdings where landholders themselves can keep a strict watch. I believe landholders and people are conscious of the menace and are combating it wherever possible, but I fear there may be sufficient grasshoppers left, apart from any migration from the north, to devastate the State. There is no doubt that there will be further hatchings that will escape eradication and they will be sufficient to clean up much of our country.

I wonder whether the Department of Agriculture has carefully examined other methods of destroying these pests after they have reached the flying stage. It may be that they can be eradicated by some form of poison bait, for I do not think spraying would be effective in all cases. However, I do not know whether that is practicable. I think one of the reasons for the infestation reaching plague proportions is the late hatchings of the pest. When hatchings occur early in the season many of the grasshoppers are killed by frosts and other climatic conditions. This

year because of the heavy rains and warmer weather with thunderstorms the hatchings have been later than normal, and conditions suitable to the pests, which are now hatching in countless millions. In my area the first hatchings appeared about three or four weeks ago. They were sprayed five days later and were killed. Subsequent hatchings have appeared in the same place and the same spray has killed them. I do not know whether there have been more hatchings this week and whether the same spray will still be effective. I believe this Bill will assist in controlling the pests, but the damage from the infestation will depend largely on the climatic conditions and their development. I support the measure because it does tighten the control of the pest.

Mr. HEASLIP (Rocky River)—I am not particularly enamoured of this Bill: in fact, I do not like it. I do not believe that such extreme measures as are proposed are necessary or will accomplish control of the grasshoppers, which are not like other vermin. Rabbits can be killed out and a landholder knows he is safe until they breed again in the area, but it is no trouble to a grasshopper to fly over 200 miles. Early this year my own property was infested with grasshoppers. I do not know where they came from nor can I find any trace of their hatching place. Although this has been one of the best seasons we have ever known in South Australia, today I am shorter of fodder than I have been in the last 10 years, entirely because of the early visitation of grasshoppers.

The local farmers around the middle and upper north are already doing their utmost to destroy the pest, but not without much effort and expense. In my area over the last three weeks practically every farmer has been out spraying every week. Unfortunately, one spraying does not suffice; the hoppers keep on hatching. Sometimes even three sprayings are not effective. I have dug up some of the hatching areas and despite three sprayings there are still millions of fertile eggs unhatched and with the right conditions the pest will emerge. Those in the closer settled areas who go to the expense of eliminating grasshoppers get some benefit, but the real benefit will be to those around Gawler and Clare, hundreds of miles away from some of the areas where the pest is being attacked. If all the grasshoppers are killed in the upper and middle north the people of Adelaide will not get them, but if they are left, without doubt we will have a visitation here. Because

those in the upper north have attempted to destroy grasshoppers those in the south will get the benefit.

People in the mid-north will still get them from the pastoral areas, which are perhaps 300 miles away, because I think it is physically impossible to eliminate the pest in the pastoral areas. The Minister of Agriculture mentioned that equipment was being made available, but even with the help of all the men in the army all the grasshoppers in the pastoral areas could not be destroyed. To expect the landholders in those areas to do it is even more impossible. Some of these holdings are hundreds of square miles in extent and it is utterly impossible to even know where the grasshoppers will be hatching, let alone destroy them. You cannot see them in the early stages by driving around in a motor car. The only effective way is to walk slowly, and even get down on your knees so that you are close to the ground. It is not possible for pastoralists to travel over hundreds of square miles on their properties. The Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Jenkins admitted the impossibility of this pest being controlled in those areas. If the grasshoppers are not killed in the wide open spaces then all those being killed lower down will not make much difference. Sufficient will hatch in the pastoral areas; and if they move south they will be out of control and all that is done further south will have been wasted effort. It is useless bringing in this Bill to eliminate the few which may be left in the council areas when there are millions further north which cannot be controlled. I do not think it is practicable to control them. Mr. O'Halloran said that by proper and concerted action it would be possible to get rid of them. Grasshoppers were a menace even in the biblical days and, as far as I can see unless some new method of destruction is evolved they will continue to be a menace. The aeroplane can be a useful weapon, and if there is any chance of control by this method it must be by the quick application of spray in a big way. It would be impossible to attack grasshoppers on the ground in the areas I have in mind by boom sprays and so on, or to operate with an aeroplane in the hilly and timbered country in the Flinders Ranges. Even if the manpower were available, millions will be hatched out there. They are already out of control. An aeroplane could not get down low enough in the Flinders Ranges to make an effective kill. I do not like the Bill because I believe it is placing compulsion on one section of the community.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—The defaulting section?

Mr. HEASLIP—No. It is impossible in the pastoral areas, with holdings up to 500 square miles, to combat the plague effectively. This legislation is to compel those in the settled areas to do something, and if they do not do it they will be liable to a fine; but others are not to be compelled. Therefore, it is definitely sectional legislation and I do not like it. If by its passing there were a chance of good being done, I would be prepared to support it, but I am afraid it cannot be effective. Perhaps because of the late season in the north the grasshoppers will remain there, but if they once start moving then this legislation cannot be effective.

Mr. PEARSON (Flinders)—I support the Bill. I listened with a good deal of interest to Mr. Heaslip, who knows much more about grasshoppers than I do, but I was somewhat disturbed by the rather hopeless tone of his speech. No doubt there is much in what he said, and because of the lush conditions applying in the wide open areas of the north I was wondering whether what he has just said may not happen and the grasshoppers, because of the plentiful supply of feed, may remain there, at least for the time being. If they do, I imagine they will lay a further batch of eggs, which will then be available for another threat later this year. If the grasshoppers remain in those areas and carry out their normal functions, as nature intended, we could have even a greater infestation at a later date than is promised at present. My attitude to the problem is that we must never say die. We will not overcome the problem by holding up our hands and saying it is useless to try anything. Even the small contribution provided by the Bill is worth making, even if it only compels the landholder, where it is possible, to do the job. I do not think any of us believe that one person should avoid his obligation to the prejudice and damage of his fellow man who is attempting to do the job. That is all this amendment seeks to do. Some people tend to sit back and enjoy the work of others, without doing anything themselves. Early this week I laid on the desk of the Minister a copy of the *Streaky Bay Sentinel* in which a letter said that in the district of the writer some of the landholders—I think he said there were two—openly stated that they did not intend to do anything about the grasshoppers. What can we do with people like that? The only thing to do is to use some measure of compulsion.

The Leader of the Opposition, who is always fair in these matters, commended the Minister and the press for arousing the public conscience in this matter. He pointed out that the co-operation of all landholders was essential, and we must agree with that. There need be no fear about the goodwill of landholders, at least in the inside country, for 98 per cent of them are behind the Minister. Public opinion has been aroused to such an extent that pressure is already being exerted on people who are unwilling to carry out their responsibilities. I do not think this Bill will offend one of them. In spite of the problem in front of us we should not sit idly by. We should provide the machinery for carrying on the war to the fullest practical extent, at least until it is useless to do anything further. The Leader of the Opposition said the Government should have done a good deal more over the years in eliminating the problem at its source. That is an interesting observation and it gives food for thought. He said we should have done more in the autumn. I asked him by way of interjection, which I do not think he heard, what we should have done in the autumn. I think he answered the query later by saying that once the grasshoppers are on the wing nothing can be done, and in the autumn they are on the wing. Mr. Heaslip said that the grasshoppers appeared from nowhere. They came as far south as my property on the West Coast.

Mr. O'Halloran—I understand they reached Kangaroo Island for the first time in history.

Mr. PEARSON—That is possible. I would be interested to hear the views of Mr. O'Halloran on what we could have done in the autumn. He has suggested a long-term policy to keep the pests down to their source of origin. When we have more time to devote to this matter, and there is not the same degree of urgency, perhaps more research could be done.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—We are now contributing money for that purpose.

Mr. PEARSON—It is to be hoped that some good will come out of this move because it is a problem when the grasshopper infestation gets to its present proportions. I have given a good deal of thought to aerial spraying, having had experience of it in other spheres. It seems, however, that it would not be worth while using aircraft for this purpose to any extent at present because the grasshoppers cannot be seen. They are below the lush feed and unless a close inspection is made it is impossible to see them. The other night the Premier told us that during a recent trip

they discovered large areas of grasshoppers in outback country and that they were only noticed because they could be seen on the wheels of the motor car as it passed through salt bush country. When they investigated they found that the land was covered with grasshoppers. It would be impossible to spray thousands of miles of country with a spray of sufficient concentration to have a satisfactory effect. Whether or not, when the grasshoppers have eaten out the feed nearly, aerial spraying will be possible, I do not know. That will be answered within a few weeks. An aeroplane cannot turn on a three-penny bit and it would be necessary for it to fly over areas where there are no grasshoppers to get at the places where there are some.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins—Are they not guided from the ground?

Mr. PEARSON—If the grasshoppers were plainly visible from the air it would be possible to do the spraying without any guidance from the ground. Aerial spraying can be wonderfully effective, and, although it is not a cheap job, perhaps it would be cheaper than any other methods that could be evolved in that country, but for reasons I have stated it seems impracticable at present. There is the possibility that crowds of flying grasshoppers might be sprayed from the air, but unless the concentration was dense it would be a difficult task and wasteful, and to some extent ineffective.

Mr. William Jenkins—They fly as high as 9,000ft.

Mr. PEARSON—Aeroplanes can go higher than that, but if dropped from such a high altitude the spray would disappear before reaching the grasshoppers lower down. This Bill seeks only to apply measures that are possible, and to apply them with vigour, and because of this we must be in sympathy with its objectives, and I support it.

Mr. HAWKER (Burra)—I support the Bill as it makes an attempt to cope with a serious pest. It is an age-old pest that is mentioned in the Bible. Verses 4 and 5 of chapter 10 of Exodus relate that Moses said to Pharaoh:—

Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast. And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth; and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field.

It is also mentioned in Revelation in the following way:—

And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

The grasshopper is a scourge we have had from time immemorial. The Leader of the Opposition said that this was not only a State problem, but more a national problem. I would go further than that and say that it is a world problem, because Africa, India and Asia have all been subjected to locust plagues from Biblical times. If the Minister has an opportunity I would like him to state whether his department has any knowledge of research into methods of controlling locusts in other parts of the world, where I believe they are considerably worse than in Australia.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—I know that there are controlling organizations in the Sudan, for instance.

Mr. HAWKER—Then I would like to know whether their methods are of any use in Australia. Locust plagues only come once every few years, when we get a big fright, but afterwards nothing is done. Will the Minister state whether the department will continue research into the control of these pests after the plague is over? This Bill seeks to carry compulsion to those who will not do anything. I agree with that only up to a point, because it is almost an impossibility to find out where grasshoppers are hatching, and even if we do there is not the manpower there to deal with them. I have always believed that scourges, whether grasshoppers, noxious weeds or bush fires, cannot be dealt with by Act of Parliament. The best means to combat them is genuine co-operation between all people concerned and the Government. In this case the people concerned are those in the areas where the grasshoppers hatch, and probably they do not know they have hatched until they are on the wing. The people who will be seriously affected by the pest are those whose land is away from where they are hatched, and the whole State will be a considerable loser because of the devastation. The co-operation of those people will have the best effect in dealing with the plague.

I do not think any landowner would object to paying money to destroy grasshoppers on another man's property, or that that particular landowner should always be charged with the full amount that the Government or the council has expended if he is unable to do the work himself, although he may genuinely try. I know that some people do not try because of a defeatist attitude. At a conference in

Burra recently one big landowner said, "We cannot do anything. We are only wasting our time. We have to accept the grasshoppers." That is not the right attitude. We may not be able to find the correct method to deal with them this time, but if we keep on trying we eventually will find it. I think the Government has adopted the right attitude in giving definite assistance by supplying poison for spraying the pests, but I hope if this Bill is passed it will not be used in such a way as to antagonize landowners and that landowners will not think that it is an attempt to make them do something that is impossible. Provided that it is approached in that spirit, I think that it will have some effect in combating the plague. When the infestation is over I hope that the Minister and his department will continue investigations into the prevention of outbreaks in the future.

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley)—I support this measure, although it is one of those things that normally I do not like. Under the circumstances it would be an extremely anti-social person who would deliberately refuse to undertake his duty towards the destruction of this pest. I do not think there will be many people against whom the legislation will have to be used. If a landowner has an infestation on his property, once they take to the wing he will be relieved of his burden, which will be transferred to other properties along the line of flight. This matter is one in which everyone has equal responsibility. The Government has the responsibility of looking after the welfare of the whole of the State and so have the people who have an infestation of grasshoppers but do nothing about it because the pests have come from distant fields.

If a report in today's *News* is correct, and I see no reason why it should not be, it appears that certain authorities are prepared to recognize that we will get a severe grasshopper plague, and even though we do our best to combat it, it will transcend any previous infestation. I remember that last year we were warned by the authorities that this year would bring a major plague of grasshoppers. It was wellknown where the eggs had been laid. I remember reading reports that stated in what areas the egg laying competition had taken place, but we did nothing about it. The egg beds are easily seen because the grasshoppers use hard ground for laying, and that is the time when action should be taken. If egg beds are found after this plague we should destroy them so as to avert another

infestation. It does not necessarily follow that if eggs are laid this year they will hatch next year. This insect takes advantage of seasonal conditions and they hatch when we least expect them, though we were warned last year of an infestation this year. The authorities who understand the locust said 12 months ago that a plague was coming, but as far as I know nothing was done about it.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—In the autumn every council was alerted to have egg beds spotted and identified.

Mr. QUIRKE—Did they do it?

The Hon. A. W. Christian—Many did.

Mr. QUIRKE—Was any action taken to destroy the egg beds?

The Hon. A. W. Christian—You cannot do much about the egg beds, except to plough them in.

Mr. QUIRKE—They can be tackled with the chisel plough most effectively. That would save much trouble in succeeding years.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—Yes, where you can use a plough.

Mr. QUIRKE—It is possible to drive the chisel plough through ground that is almost granite.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—What about the hillsides and cliffs?

Mr. QUIRKE—Grasshoppers do not lay their eggs there. It is possible to destroy almost all the egg beds. I doubt whether aeroplanes can be used efficiently to lay poison. If the grass is only 6in. high the grasshoppers are hardly visible, even if there are swarms of them. Liquid sprayed from the air would probably only cover the surface of the grass and not contact the grasshoppers, but it is only by contact with the spray that they can be killed. I have seen a plan of the exhaust sprayer, and I think it may be effective, but I have no doubt about the efficiency of the boom spray with a 20ft. or 30ft. boom, which forces the spray into the ground at a pressure of up to 300 lb. to the square inch. Grasshoppers cannot dodge that, and that is likely to be the most effective weapon to use against them. In the back country, outside district council areas, although the leaseholders are responsible for controlling an infestation, it is usually of such magnitude that it is impossible for the men available to control it. It is in those areas that the destruction of the egg beds is so important.

It has been forecast that we shall have a great agricultural season this year. We shall, if the plague does not assume the proportions

we have been told it may. A plague can clean off the face of the earth. In a grasshopper plague many years ago I had six acres of Sedan grass two feet high. One night the advance guard of the grasshoppers arrived, and there were swarms of them there in full force next morning. By nightfall those six acres had been eaten down until they looked like a fallowed paddock. If we get such an infestation this year all our ideas of a bountiful harvest will not materialize. We must disregard the cost of fighting this menace. It is even more necessary to disregard cost than it was to disregard the cost of eradicating fruit fly in the metropolitan area. If we tackle the job properly there is no reason why, with modern appliances and sprays, we cannot totally eliminate the grasshopper as a plague in Australia. We should not consider the cost for a moment because it could not possibly amount to the value of one harvest.

I do not think we shall find many anti-social types against whom this measure will have to be enforced, but if that is necessary I assume that the machinery provided will be used against them. I do not normally like to use compulsion in these matters, but in this case we must not consider those against whom compulsion may have to be used but those whose properties will be damaged by someone else allowing the insects to take wing. For those reasons I support the Bill.

Mr. GOLDNEY (Gouger)—I, too, support the Bill. Plagues of locusts have caused enormous damage throughout the ages. The member for Burra (Mr. Hawker) said locust plagues are mentioned in the Bible, and much damage has been done by this pest in Africa, India, and North and South America. The grasshoppers seem to come from nowhere and disappear suddenly, leaving a trail of destruction behind them. Although all parties, including landholders and Governments, should try to destroy the pest, I believe it will not be totally eliminated in the short period. What causes these infestations? Climatic and seasonal conditions play some part. In South Australia in 1917 a plague of mice caused tremendous damage to grain stacks. Indeed, it was the worst plague ever experienced in South Australia. The mice came suddenly, did their damage, and then disappeared suddenly, and I believe that is usually the case with grasshoppers.

In autumn there was an infestation of grasshoppers in parts of the Lower North and on the Adelaide Plains, and councils were asked to locate and destroy the egg beds before

the hoppers had a chance to hatch; but those egg beds must have been widespread because the present plague is extensive. Despite the action taken many hoppers will escape, but whether they will become as great a menace as has been forecast no-one can say. It may be, as has been suggested by previous speakers, that they will remain in the areas where they are hatching and later come south seeking fresh pastures, but the fact that they are in plague proportions this year does not necessarily indicate that they will constitute a menace next year, because experience has shown that they usually disappear suddenly. All possible steps to eliminate the pest should be taken and if there are some people who will not do their share in this respect the compulsion provided for in the Bill should be applied.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (Chaffey)—As this Bill has been thoroughly debated I do not intend to rehash what has already been said. I rise merely to draw the attention of the Minister of Agriculture to one aspect of the Bill that affects my district. In his second reading explanation the Minister of Agriculture used an example as a reason why members should support the Bill, but it was an unfortunate example. He said that the powers to be conferred by the Bill were those already contained in the Noxious Weeds Act. True, an officer of the Minister's department may go on to a property to destroy weeds, but although that power has been on the Statute Book for many years, noxious weeds are becoming a greater problem every year; yet we are now asked to give the Minister power so that his officers can deal with grasshoppers. It is no use giving the Government or Government departments a power if they do not intend to use it. The member for Rocky River (Mr. Heaslip) put his finger on the weakest point in the provision. There is no great problem involved in controlling an infestation of grasshoppers in district council areas; it is only in pastoral areas stretching for millions of acres outside our good rainfall areas that we face a major problem.

The grasshopper does not ask for a high standard of living, and the 8in. rainfall country is just as good as, if not better than, the inside country for its existence. It is futile for ratepayers, through their councils, to spend tens of thousands of pounds killing grasshoppers in the inside country, while at the same time leaving an infested area just beyond its borders. The Minister has often told us of the responsibility of the landowner to deal

with the grasshopper plague, but it would be a good thing sometimes if Ministers of the Crown used a little more practical knowledge in making statements rather than making abstract statements on general lines. Indeed, in many areas to control the grasshoppers would cost more than the value of the land itself, and that also applies in the destruction of noxious weeds. It would be better for the landowner to walk out and leave the land rather than try to eradicate the weeds or the grasshoppers. I do not know how much preventive measures will cost the pastoralists where only one sheep can be run to 10 or 12 acres and the land must be treated with an expensive spray. It does not make common sense. On the other hand, if that man cannot pay for the control of grasshoppers surely it is the responsibility of the Government to come in and save the work done on the inside country. It is futile for the man on land capable of carrying four sheep to the acre to kill all his grasshoppers if we allow those that come in from the light carrying country to reinfest his land. Mr. Quirke said he had grave doubts whether the aeroplane would be an effective method of dealing with the pest, and quite frankly I do not know whether it would or not. However, I feel that it is the only method that might be. I cannot visualise any other way of covering the vast expanse of land that would have to be dealt with. The Minister knows that about a week ago I asked questions on behalf of one of the district councils in my constituency on this very subject. The Berri council has spent a considerable sum in trying to control grasshoppers within its boundaries, yet just outside its area, extending as far as Broken Hill and beyond, there are millions of grasshoppers not being treated in any way and which, under the existing state of affairs, cannot be treated. Does that make sense? Are the Berri, Renmark and Barmera Councils to continue to spend the ratepayers' money in controlling grasshoppers within their areas while those millions of acres are left free and the grasshoppers have only to fly in and destroy all the vineyards and orchards in the irrigation areas? One council informed me that on the last occasion of a grasshopper plague the Victorian Department of Lands laid down a barrier 20 miles in depth and that it was effective in stopping the grasshoppers.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—Suppose they fly over it?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I think it would be more likely that the majority would land somewhere in that 20-mile strip.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—It is problematical.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—If that is so, lay down a barrier 50 miles wide, because the State will not be saved so long as there is this huge infestation just outside the settled areas—and after all, it is only 150 miles from Adelaide and it will not take the grasshoppers long to fly that distance. The Minister said he had discussed with his experts the question of using aeroplanes to lay down a barrier, not of contact spray as suggested by Mr. Quirke, but a poison spray.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—The sprays we are using are both contact and poison sprays.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I would like the Minister to inform the House when he closes this debate what he intends to do. I have pointed out that the power he asked for is now in the Noxious Weeds Act, and noxious weeds are getting worse than ever. Unless he does something very practical, giving him power does not mean a thing; and I would suggest, too, that he should not be too much impressed by his so-called experts. Government officers are not noted for their initiative; rather are they a safety-first organization.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—Who took the initiative in this campaign right from the beginning but my officers?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The Minister informed me that his officers were very doubtful whether aeroplanes would be the practical way of dealing with the plague in the outside country.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—Exactly.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Is there any other method?

The Hon. A. W. Christian—Yes.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I differ with the Minister. There is no other way of covering the millions of acres involved. It is impossible to cover the area with wheeled vehicles, and that is why I am saying that we want someone with initiative, someone prepared to take risks, because as a community we are spending very large sums of money. It is the weakest link of the chain that will snap.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—The honourable member's suggestion would probably cost hundreds of thousands of pounds. It would mean a barrier 50 miles wide from the western boundary of the State to the eastern boundary. Work out the cost of that.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—What is the department doing?

The Hon. A. W. Christian—Ground spraying.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Then the whole thing is futile. Ground spraying is all right where wheeled vehicles can be used, but it is impossible to cover the whole of the pastoral area with such vehicles. How could the area between Renmark and Broken Hill be treated in that way?

The Hon. A. W. Christian—It could not be done from the air unless the beds were first located.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The whole lot could be sprayed. I have been credibly informed that it has been done in Victoria, so how can the Minister say it cannot be done? I ask him to get a report on that, and he might even inform the House when he closes the debate whether my information is correct. If the aeroplane fails we cannot save the State from this infestation. I am not opposing the Bill because I do not think it will do either good or harm. It will do good only in so far as the Minister is prepared to help the fellow on the low rainfall country which can carry only a sheep to 12 acres, and who cannot be expected to control the pest merely to save the inside country. Therefore, it all depends on what the Minister is prepared to do for those who are prepared to help themselves.

Mr. WHITE (Murray)—I support this Bill, which is necessary because of the danger confronting us. It aims at enabling the Department of Agriculture or local councils to enter a neglectful farmer's property and undertake work the farmer is not prepared to do. After that work is performed the cost of it can be debited to the farmer. That is most desirable because one neglectful farmer could nullify all the work undertaken by other farmers. Valuable pastures and crops could be destroyed. The grasshopper infestation is creating much alarm throughout the State and it is our duty as Parliamentarians and citizens to do all we can to keep these pests in check. I doubt whether we will be able to annihilate them all, but if we destroy all the known hatching places we will considerably reduce their number. It would be a pity if our efforts were ruined by people not mindful of their duty to fellow farmers. The Bill will tighten the existing legislation and I support the second reading.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—It appears to me that some members have spoken with their tongues in their cheeks. Not only are we occasionally confronted with plagues of locusts, but we have experienced plagues of rabbits and mice and there has never been any scientific

explanation how they can multiply so rapidly and overnight descend upon our crops. It is doubtful whether an organized effort by the State and Commonwealth authorities could avert these periodical catastrophes. Some people suggest that they occur at regular intervals, but that is not my belief. There must be some feature of nature which causes this rapid multiplication of pests. Some members opposite have criticized the Government's actions in connection with this present infestation but I believe it has acted properly and energetically. Weeks ago the Minister of Agriculture issued a serious warning to property holders that from information gathered by officers of his department there was a serious grasshopper threat.

Mr. William Jenkins—Councils were circuiarized months ago.

Mr. SHANNON—The Minister has been unjustly and unfairly criticized. The member for Chaffey (Mr. Macgillivray) said he saw no virtue in the Bill but would support it. He then said the success or failure of the measure would depend on the assiduity of the Minister in applying the powers that will be vested in him. That is an obvious approach by an Independent member. He wants it both ways. He condemns the measure as valueless and if the steps we take are ineffective he can say, "I said it was no good," but, if they are effective he will be able to say, "I said they would be if the Minister applied his powers properly." In other words, he tosses a two-headed penny, as is frequently done by members with no strong affiliation with other members. He has made similar statements in respect of other legislation at various times.

I do not favour this type of coercive legislation any more than does any other member, but when a serious state of affairs is threatening not only our broad acre but intensive culture areas we must take every step possible to avert the danger. If the locust breaches our inner country he will make as big a mess of our orchards and vineyards as he will of our broad acre crops. I feel constrained to approve of a measure about which, if I did not have complete faith in the Minister, I would have some fear. He is being given great powers. His officers are permitted to enter a man's land and expend moneys without his consent and knowledge and then debit him with the cost. I do not believe that any other approach to this problem can be effective.

The Leader of the Opposition suggested that co-operation between the various authorities—

governmental and semi-governmental—and landholders might result in the eradication of this pest. He comes from an area where it would be difficult to pin-point all the various sites where these pests lay their eggs. In some instances they are easily discovered because they happen to be near lines of communication and can be seen by people passing, but frequently they are in most inaccessible places. The member for Stirling pointed out the difficulty in his area because of the type of country in which the eggs had been laid. If it is difficult in a closely settled area like Victor Harbour how much more difficult will it be in the north? I agree with Mr. White that all we can hope for is to mitigate the effect of the infestation. As to wiping it out, I assure Mr. Macgillivray that he will have the pleasure of saying, "I told you the Minister's efforts would be futile." However, whether we shall see the grasshoppers near Adelaide, I do not know. To try to stop all of them is like trying to push the sea back. We might, with energetic efforts—and I think the Minister has the necessary energy—mitigate the effect. I am hoping that if the grasshoppers get on the wing and reach our inner country suitable steps will be taken to provide landowners there with poisons for spraying on fruit trees. Whether birds which eat poisoned grasshoppers will be affected, I do not know. I do not think those who evolved the poisons are prepared to say that birds eating them will not be poisoned. I hope they will not be, as I would be fearful of the effect. If we did not have sufficient birds left we might have other pests to attack our orchards.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

TOWN PLANNING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 12. Page 1047.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—I support the second reading. Apart from the fact that the Town Planner is to be chairman of the proposed committee, we have no information who the members will be. Why is it that we are always being asked to support vital legislation and yet no provision is made for Parliament to say who shall constitute the committee to be appointed under it? It is further provided that the members appointed to the committee may be members of councils. Does that mean no other competent people are available to handle town planning matters? After

Parliament has considered this Bill it will be left to Executive Council to appoint the members of the committee. The Government should name in the Bill the people to be appointed. Some of the provisions in clause 6 are necessary for town planning. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of new section 12a states:—

... the plan provides for such reserves or easements as are necessary for the purpose of coping with drainage problems.

Whoever surveyed or planned St. Marys adopted the wrong drainage methods. Most of the area lends itself to easy drainage but in some parts easements through properties had to be obtained in order to permit flood water to run on to vacant land. St. Marys is not the only part of my district affected by improper drainage planning. It seems that the scheme for disposing of flood waters must be reviewed. The Marion Council will have to borrow money to complete the drainage of water from its newly developed areas, and there must be other parts of the metropolitan area similarly affected. Does the present provision of shopping areas meet the public need? We are getting too many small shops in groups that do not supply all the goods desired. There may be six shops in one small group and then a third of a mile away another small group of shops of a different type. Often this means that the residents travel to the city to get their requirements. We must consider what best suits the interests of the people.

There is a provision dealing with public reserves and gardens. At present there is a hardship upon councils in providing, say, 12 to 15 acres of land for an oval, and land may be needed also for tennis courts and bowling greens. The provision of these things must mean an additional burden on the ratepayers. There was a move in the Marion area to have a sound shell and a swimming pool within two miles of one of our main beaches. That sounded well, but we must remember that over 100 years elapsed before Adelaide got a sound shell and it is not used often. It will be a further burden on ratepayers. Although it would be very nice to have these reserves, money will have to be found for their maintenance, because they will not be very pleasing to the eye unless they are well cared for. I do not know whether members who have served on councils would advocate a special rate to provide for the upkeep of these reserves, but that might be a solution.

The Bill provides that if the Engineer-in-Chief does not certify that the land can be advantageously and economically sewered and

reticulated with water the committee shall not approve of the plan unless the Minister consents. An area on the Belair Road just above the Dogs' Home has been subdivided recently, but I wonder whether it lends itself to the reticulation of water and the provision of sewerage. Should this and similar areas be considered residential, in view of the cost of providing equipment to pump the water into reticulation tanks? An estate on Shepherds Hill Road was sold recently for £100 an acre as broad acres; it was then subdivided and sold at about £9 a foot, but I am still curious to know whether water will be provided there. From the point of view of economics it would have been better if this provision had been passed 100 years ago, but even if it had been introduced 25 years ago something on the lines mentioned by Mr. Fred Walsh could have been done. With his overseas experience, he has had great opportunities to note achievements in overseas countries.

Clause 9 provides for a developmental plan for the metropolitan area. I could not do better than subscribe to the views expressed by the member for Gawler, who said that it is time we had a greater Adelaide plan. In the metropolitan area the water from high land is drained on to lower lying areas. I wonder if this town planning authority would be big enough to make the necessary recommendations to overcome some of the expenditure that must be incurred by councils in low-lying areas for drainage? I hope it will be, but the Government has not mentioned who will be the members of that body.

Mr. FLETCHER (Mount Gambier)—For a number of years I have spoken on similar measures and last year I was one of those who advocated that we should have adopted similar legislation to that which has operated in Victoria for many years. I agree with quite a lot of what Mr. Frank Walsh said about subdivisions in unsuitable areas, particularly the high lands. As a member of the Public Works Committee, I know the headaches the Engineering and Water Supply Department has had in providing such areas with water and sewerage facilities. It has also been the experience of the committee that there are certain areas in the Port Adelaide district that have been difficult to sewer, and I do not know how authority was ever given for their subdivision. One objection to the Bill is that we do not know who the members of the committee will be. Yesterday the member for Thebarton (Mr. Fred Walsh) gave us a fine account of what the qualifications of a town planner

should be, but he would have to be a superman to measure up to that standard. It is all very fine for a town planner to be enthusiastic and a man of vision, but do we give him sufficient authority and what factors prevent him from carrying out his duties as he would like to? I shall quote a few extracts from a report that the town clerk of Mount Gambier gave to the Mount Gambier Corporation after he attended a meeting of the Town Planning Institute in Adelaide, where an address was given by Mr. G. J. Connor, of Melbourne, who is recognized as a noted economist and town planning authority. This man recently went into private practice, but for some time he was employed by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. He has travelled through Europe and America, and some of his comments were most interesting. We often hear members saying we should have more decentralization, but Mr. Connor said that in spite of all the proposals put forward the larger cities are becoming more crowded and decentralization is not being implemented. He stated:—

In Los Angeles there are two and a half million motor cars, which fact will give some idea of the immense traffic problem, but despite this huge volume of traffic it is easier to drive and park in that city than in many cities where car ownership figures are much less. The guiding principle in America is that every city must have a developmental plan. Melbourne is perhaps the only Australian city with a developmental plan, but even in Melbourne the co-ordination of the plan already prepared is something that will affect a score or more municipalities. In Adelaide there has been no effort to date to prepare any plan for co-ordinated development of the metropolitan area, and when such plan is prepared then some controlling authority will be essential to implement the plan.

That is the purpose of the Bill. Mr. Connor also said:—

In Victoria the Town and Country Planning Act gives country cities and towns power to prepare and to implement developmental plans and quite a number of Victorian towns have already made use of this legislation.

That is the policy I have been advocating for many years. The Bill does not go far enough because it does not apply to the only two

cities outside the metropolitan area and to our larger country towns, for before many years we shall have a remodelling of these towns. Mr. Connor also said:—

In some American cities the traffic problem has become so great that the "Down Town" shopping centres are only realizing about 30 per cent of the business potential of the population. The result of this is that big business interests are creating entirely new shopping centres in new areas, and are providing parking facilities for thousands of cars around such centres.

I believe that some of our main business and shopping centres in the city will eventually have to be moved. Modifications to our transport system will force big business to move to other centres. I hope the Bill will be amended to widen its scope. I have the report of the Town and Country Planning Board of Victoria for the year 1953-54. It states:—

Of the 202 municipalities in Victoria, no less than 95 are benefiting from the preparation of a planning scheme under the Town and Country Planning Act. Fifty-two of these municipalities are outside the metropolitan planning area, which embraces 43 municipalities. Twenty of the 43 metropolitan municipalities are preparing or have prepared planning schemes for the whole or portion of their municipal districts.

The Victorian Act has been in operation for only a short period, but it is evident that it has been most beneficial.

Mr. O'Halloran—How long has that Act been in operation?

Mr. FLETCHER—The report from which I just quoted was the ninth annual report of the board. The Act has been most helpful to Victorian country towns, such as Ballarat, Hamilton, Portland, and Warrnambool, which have benefited from the advice given by the board. I support the Bill, but I hope that it will be amended to provide for a scheme similar to that operating in Victoria.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Progress reported: Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.57 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, October 18, at 2 p.m.