

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.**

Wednesday, October 19, 1955.

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

**QUESTIONS.****POTATO PRICES.**

**Mr. O'HALLORAN**—Has the Premier any information to give following on the question I asked the Minister of Lands last week whether the prices of potatoes, particularly new potatoes, are controlled in this State and, if so, what the controlled price is?

**The Hon. T. PLAYFORD**—Neither new nor old potatoes are controlled in South Australia. Effective control of prices broke down some years ago when New South Wales decontrolled potato prices. That meant that in a time of scarcity potatoes were automatically directed to that State, and other States were left short of supplies. Then other States were forced to decontrol potato prices in order to attract potatoes to their markets in times of shortage. The wholesale prices of potatoes in South Australia is fixed by the Potato Board, but in point of fact it must always be fixed on a par with the Victorian price; otherwise either this market is flooded with Victorian potatoes or our potatoes are drawn to Victoria to the detriment of consumers here. At present only a small quantity of new potatoes is coming on to the market and there is a substantial importation of Victorian old season potatoes. The wholesale price for them is £50 10s. a ton. The price of new potatoes has been fixed at £2 a bushel. The retail prices, which are not controlled and which are notified to the public from time to time are—for old potatoes 2s. 3d. for 4 lb., and for new potatoes 10d. to 1s. a lb. Prices in the country are slightly higher.

**UNIFORM TAXATION.**

**Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE**—Can the Premier say whether the Government has received any request from the Victorian Government to join with that State in efforts to recover the income taxing powers of the States and, if so, what action does the Government intend to take?

**The Hon. T. PLAYFORD**—This State has not received a request from Victoria to take action. I noticed from the press that Mr. Bolte, Premier of Victoria, went to New South Wales and interviewed Mr. Cahill. Subsequently I noticed a press report to the effect that Mr. Cahill did not propose to take any

action in the matter. This morning I received a letter from him enclosing a copy of a letter he had sent to the Prime Minister asking for a Premiers' Conference early next year to consider the matter of a more adequate share of uniform taxation revenue being given to the States. On the general question of whether this State proposes to intervene with Victoria in the application which I understand is being made by that State, my reply is that South Australia does not propose to intervene. It is not because we believe uniform taxation is a proper system or that it is desirable for it to continue. We believe uniform taxation is a bad system and that the States should have the opportunity to again enter the field by the Commonwealth relinquishing certain fields to make room for the States. Any approach to the court can only be on one or two matters. In the first place it is inconceivable that the High Court would hold that the Commonwealth has a limited taxing power, for the Constitution lays it down clearly that it has a complete taxing power, and I do not think the Victorian application could be successful on that ground. A second point is that the High Court may hold that the Commonwealth is acting unconstitutionally in collecting State taxation and repaying it to the States. I point out, however, that unless the Commonwealth relinquishes part of the field of taxation a position of that kind would be a dire calamity to the States, not a benefit.

**Mr. O'Halloran**—It would leave us without any money.

**The Hon. T. PLAYFORD**—We would lose everything if the High Court decided that the Commonwealth could not return the money. The third point concerns the priority of collection. Even a win on that matter would only be a small consolation to the States, unless the Commonwealth agreed to relinquish a portion of the taxing field to them. Under the circumstances I believe this can be effected only by an agreement with the States, because I believe any other action would make the States' position infinitely worse than it is at present.

**WATER RATES IN IRRIGATION AREAS.**

**Mr. MACGILLIVRAY**—From time to time I have asked the Minister of Irrigation whether irrigation water rates are payable in advance or not. In reply to a previous question on this subject he stated:—

The reply is that they are not paid in advance. The rates which are declared in April of each year, following completion of the

general irrigations, are due and payable on May 1. In reclaimed areas the rates are gazetted in June of each year for the following 12 months commencing July 1, and they are payable quarterly in advance.

Yesterday, in reply to a question I put on notice, he stated that the regulations referred to still applied. That means that the water rates are payable in advance in accordance with the regulations that have been gazetted. He continued:—

Out of consideration, however, for the fact that many settlers in the irrigation areas were unable to arrange for payment of their water rates until they had completed their harvest, payment of water rates is not being asked for in advance.

Is it not a fact that any arrangement between an individual settler and the Irrigation Department would be a matter of arrangement between the two parties, and is it still not correct that when settlers are in a position to pay their water rates and have paid them they have actually paid in advance, and that the position is not as stated by the Minister on August 23, that water rates were not payable until after the water had been delivered? If a person had paid his water rates, and if the Minister's previous answer was correct, he would have paid for water.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—It is a long and complicated question, but every consideration was given to the question on notice. It is correct that payments are due and payable on May 1, and that indicates that they are paid after delivery and not in advance, so I believe definitely that rates are not paid in advance.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Can the Minister say whether his statement, in reply to my question yesterday, that water rates are paid in advance, or his statement today, that they are not paid in advance, is correct?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I think that in my reply yesterday I said definitely that the payment of water rates is not being asked for in advance. If there is something at the back of the honourable member's mind that he has not mentioned, and if he would prefer payment in advance, I will bring the matter before Cabinet and bring down a reply.

#### NOARLUNGA MEAT COMPANY CASE.

Mr. BROOKMAN—Last week in the High Court the South Australian Government sought leave to appeal to the Privy Council on certain aspects of the Noarlunga Meat Company case, and during the hearing counsel for South Australia claimed that far-reaching constitu-

tional implications could follow from this case, but the Chief Justice denied this and said that nothing more could be read into the matter than the particular problem about the slaughtering of meat. Has the Premier any comment to make on the Chief Justice's statement? In reply to a question asked earlier this session he gave the opinion of the Crown Solicitor. Has his attention been drawn to the report of the proceedings last week?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I did not see a report of the statement which the honourable member attributes to the Chief Justice, but if he made such a statement I would not agree with it, nor would it be a view held by the other States, for every State Government has entered an appearance to the Privy Council in connection with the appeal being made by South Australia. Obviously, other State Governments would not be interested if it were a purely local matter or go to the expense of being represented at an appeal to the Privy Council. Therefore, if the Chief Justice holds the view the honourable member says he holds he has that opinion all to himself.

#### GRASSHOPPER PLAGUE.

Mr. RICHES—From information I have received it seems that several pastoralists occupying land adjacent to district council areas in the north have stated that attempts to deal with the grasshopper menace by knapsack, exhaust, and boom sprays have been unsuccessful and that the plague has reached such proportions that they feel they cannot do any more about it. Reports have reached me that in some areas the hatchings are alarming, some covering 20 square miles. The garden of one homestead has already been completely eaten out and the grasshoppers are getting inside the house. Some of the insects are already on the wing. Can the Minister of Agriculture say what organization, if any, is being formed to deal with the menace in areas outside council areas where landowners are not continuing to spray?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—Statements I have made from time to time have indicated the gravity of the situation that may arise, but without attempting to minimize the gravity I say definitely that many reports such as those the honourable member referred to have been highly exaggerated, for whenever we have investigated them by sending departmental officers to the locality it has always been found that the actual hatchings

have been on limited areas. Undoubtedly, these limited areas sometimes exist over vast distances, but the actual beds of newly hatched grasshoppers are usually of a limited extent. Therefore, the only method of combating the pest is not by aerial spraying, as has been suggested, but by ground spraying, which has been very effective. Where landholders and departmental officers have persistently attacked these areas by ground spraying the slaughter has been most satisfactory. Before any aerial spraying can be applied we have to go over the ground to pinpoint areas that require spraying. If we can do that from the ground, we have invariably found that we can then attack those beds by aerial spraying.

For outside areas we have a number of departmental teams comprising departmental officers with vehicles equipped with exhaust sprays, and they have been going into those areas, as well as to the inside country, spraying and demonstrating to the landholder how to equip his own vehicle to do the spraying himself. We have, under Mr. McAuliffe in the north, a complete organization, firstly to investigate on the spot, and secondly, to send vehicles into those areas to participate in local spraying. Further, we have secured an offer of help from the army, and 14 jeeps equipped by my department with the necessary equipment are on call. I think three, possibly four, of them have gone out to augment the departmental and local vehicles operating in the outside country, and strange as it may appear, although from some districts we received almost frantic calls for help, when the question of the army jeeps being available was publicized extensively through the press, over the air, and by circulars to all departmental officers, not one request for those vehicles was received from areas where it had been alleged they were so badly needed.

Mr. Riches—That was our concern. We want to know what the department is doing about it.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—It is doing all it can: it has its own vehicles operating, and last week-end it took up two army jeeps to augment its fleet. The others were held in reserve pending the requirements of landholders in outside areas becoming known. They had only to apply and those vehicles would have immediately gone up to augment their equipment.

Mr. Riches—At their cost?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—No; we bore the full cost of sending the vehicles to

the locality. All the landholder was asked to do was to house and feed the army personnel and to supply the necessary petrol and oil to run the vehicles; the Government would supply the whole of the poison required. Surely that is not asking too much of the landholders to deal with the menace in their own interests.

#### DEMOLITION OF DWELLINGHOUSES CONTROL BILL.

Second reading.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I move—

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

I introduce it for two main reasons. One is that the large-scale demolition of dwelling-houses that is going on not only in the city proper, but also in the suburbs, is not in the best interests of the community. The other reason is that the Government has apparently decided not to take the legislative action necessary to combat this evil.

This matter has been brought repeatedly before the House by members on this side. Over a period of years they have asked questions and stressed the seriousness of the position in other ways. They have been under some disadvantage in not being able to get at the facts in every case, but they have established beyond doubt that many quite good houses have been or are being demolished for the purpose of erecting business premises of some sort—frequently petrol stations—and even for the purpose of making space available for parking cars for sale. Some houses have been converted for business purposes, without actually being demolished.

It is not always easy to point to a particular house that is being demolished and say that it was habitable, but, on the other hand, one can see numerous instances in various localities of houses being demolished which at no stretch of the imagination would be regarded as being in the class of “condemned dwellings.”

If a house is condemned by the local health authorities in the normal exercise of their relevant powers, no-one can complain. To the extent that such a house is a menace to health and safety, no other consideration, such as the shortage of housing, ought to be allowed to influence the decision to demolish it. I might say, incidentally, that in such a case a special obligation devolves on the Government to provide alternative accommodation for the tenants.

The fact is, however, as the Premier has said, many houses which would normally have been condemned have not been condemned for the very reason that the housing position continues to be acute; and, this being so, there is even stronger justification for some legislation to prevent the demolition of houses that are fit for human habitation. Some of the houses that are being demolished have been acquired by business interests which by various and sometimes questionable means are able to secure the eviction of the tenants—sometimes, I believe, by offering them monetary inducement.

If, however, there were some legislation providing that a house was not to be demolished or converted for business purposes unless it was officially condemned, the number of habitable houses would not be diminished by the procedure I have referred to; and that is what the Bill aims to achieve. At the moment no legislation exists which prohibits the demolition of houses.

This brings me to my second reason for introducing this Bill. Early in the session the member for Adelaide (Mr. Lawn) asked the Premier if he would submit to Cabinet the question whether legislation should be introduced to prohibit the demolition of homes during the existing shortage, except under permit by the responsible Minister. The Premier's reply was typically Playfordian. First of all, he said that the matter would come up for consideration in the normal course of events when the Landlord and Tenant Act Amendment Bill was before the House. He then went on to say that the problem was not easy as many of the houses being demolished were sub-standard and occupying valuable land. However, he did promise that the matter would be investigated, although even at that stage he indicated what the Government's attitude would be by adding that "any rigid rule could have grave effects upon development not only in Adelaide but throughout the State." It was quite evident then that the development that the Premier had in mind would take precedence over the maintenance of housing; whereas if we can save one habitable house from demolition by legislating against demolition consistently with the power and authority of local boards of health, such legislation will be worthwhile.

Later in the session the member for Adelaide again referred to this matter. In the meantime the Landlord and Tenant Bill had been introduced and it contained nothing about demolitions. In reply to Mr. Lawn's question,

the Premier again stressed the difficulty of the problem, volunteering the information that many local authorities had refrained from condemning houses on compassionate grounds. But, as I have already said, this did not touch the subject. We were not concerned with sub-standard houses which were not being demolished. We were concerned with houses which were being demolished without being sub-standard.

I do not propose to deal with specific cases of houses which have been demolished regardless of the urgent need for housing. Other speakers will have examples enough to quote in support of the Bill in that respect; and, in any case, the House has already been well informed in this and past sessions.

The Bill provides that except under certain prescribed conditions any person who demolishes a dwellinghouse or so alters it as to render it uninhabitable as a dwellinghouse shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding £100. For the purpose of the proposed legislation a dwellinghouse is defined as a building constructed or adapted for use as a place of habitation and occupied at any time within 12 months of its demolition.

The conditions under which it is proposed that a dwellinghouse may be demolished—that is, under which it would not constitute an offence to demolish a dwellinghouse—are (1) the issue of a permit by the Minister and (2) the issue of an order by a local board of health pursuant to the Health Act or the Housing Improvement Act. As to the permit issued by the Minister, it is provided that the Minister shall not issue a permit unless he is satisfied that one should be issued after receiving a report from the Housing Trust. In this connection, it is also provided that the Minister may impose whatever conditions relating to the demolition as he thinks fit. These provisions are contained in clause 3 of the Bill. The other important clause in the Bill is clause 6, which provides that the legislation shall remain in force until December, 1960, by which time the position may have improved sufficiently to warrant its reconsideration. I submit, on the evidence I have presented today and that which has been furnished by many members from this side during this and past sessions since the Building Materials Act lapsed, and in view of the acute housing shortage which is being rendered worse as time passes because of the financial stringency of the times—particularly the financing of purchase homes—that it is desirable that this legislation be enacted.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—As there is to be a meeting of the Grants Commission in South Australia next week I shall be unable to reply to the Leader next Wednesday; so as I have examined the Bill I will give my views upon it—such as they are—forthwith. The Leader gave two reasons for introducing it; firstly, that there was large-scale demolition of houses and secondly, that the Government had taken no effective action to deal with the matter. The second reason is rather beside the point because immediately after the war the Government introduced legislation to control building materials and to prevent the demolition of dwellinghouses. That legislation remained in force until, if I remember aright, about 18 months ago. Did it satisfy the Opposition during the period of its operation? It did not. The member for Adelaide (Mr. Lawn) always maintained that the law was ineffective and suggested that it did not deal with the problem. If members care to refresh their memories and refer to the number of questions Mr. Lawn asked on notice and otherwise, they will realize that that law did not satisfy the Opposition. I think they all heaved a sigh of relief when it went out of operation, because they, and everybody else, realized that there are certain things that can be done by legislation and others that cannot. We cannot hold up the advance of time. It is natural and desirable that old, ineffective buildings occupying valuable sites should be pulled down and better and more adequate buildings erected in their stead. That is in accordance with practice everywhere. It is rather interesting that, despite my efforts, I can find no legislation similar to this in any State in which a Labor Government is in power. I asked the Parliamentary Draftsman, Sir Edgar Bean, if he would procure some information on legislation of this description in other States, but neither he nor I have been able to discover any.

Mr. Stephens—Would you support this if similar legislation were in other States?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No. What the Leader is trying to do is put back the hands of the clock and stop the advance of progress. I frequently hear members opposite make statements which could lead people to believe it a crime to erect a factory particularly if it necessitated the demolition of some second-rate sub-standard houses. There was a time, not so long ago, when members of Parliament decried the fact that we did not have useful employment for all our

citizens, and the time will come again when we will be glad to have our industrial enterprises to provide employment. I have had the task in previous years of issuing orders under building legislation and I know that frequently the orders were a benefit because the houses concerned were substandard. Mr. Lawn continually says that nothing is being done to prevent the demolition of houses. I have a report from Mr. Bowden, Government Statist, showing the steps taken in this State to provide houses. The only effective way to deal with the housing problem is to see that an adequate number of houses are erected each year.

Mr. O'Halloran—I agree with that entirely.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The housing problem in Australia became acute for two reasons. In the depression years no houses were constructed. From 1928 to 1933 Government housing programmes were completely abandoned. The number of houses built with Government assistance in this State between 1930 and 1933 can be counted on our fingers. During the war years manpower was confined to the war effort, and again housing programmes substantially stopped. With the greatest hostility from the Commonwealth Government, South Australia continued with its Housing Trust organization, but only in a moderate way. At the end of the war we had an enormous migration programme in front of us and we started behind scratch because we did not have enough houses for the people already here. The Bill will have no effect at all on the housing problem. I have some figures showing the evictions obtained for the purpose of demolishing houses, and they are insignificant so far as the housing problem is concerned. Mr. O'Halloran said the Bill will alleviate the position but that is incorrect. I have a report, from which I could pick out the good points in praise of Government activity; but, unlike Mr. Jennings, who likes to pick out the good sections to quote, I will give the bad as well as the good. In connection with the total number of houses completed per 1,000 of population since the war South Australia held sixth position, or in other words, last position, for the first two years. I will give the reason for that later. It occupied fourth position for the next three years, second for the next two, and third for the first nine months of 1954. The overall position has been that South Australia started off being the worst, but gradually improved until now it is amongst the best, notwithstanding the fact that our industrial activity has increased and that

for the first few years manpower was drawn for the establishment of Woomera. In connection with the total housing programme in the Commonwealth, South Australia was below the average for the six States for the first two years, was equal to the average for the third, and was well above the average for the last five years.

All housing is not under the complete control of Governments, but those controlled are permanent houses built by Government activities. In regard to such housing, South Australia was second in the first year, second last year, and first in the other five years. Does that justify the introduction of this Bill? The Leader of the Opposition gave two prime reasons for its introduction. His second ground, with which I am now dealing, was that this Government had done little to alleviate the housing shortage, but we have the best record of any State.

Mr. Pearson—We have taken positive action.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes, but members opposite do not understand that. Over the full period the South Australian Government authority has built, on an annual average, 3.19 houses per thousand of the population, which is more than twice the average (1.55) of the six States. When the Leader of the Opposition considers those figures how can he submit this Bill and say that the Government has taken no effective action? Our figure of 3.19 excludes emergency houses.

Mr. Dunstan—And the same applies to the emergency houses in other States?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes. From inquiries we have made, it seems that some other States threw open for occupation some army camps, but that was a negative approach.

Mr. O'Halloran—We did not suffer that here.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No, and that accommodation has been excluded from the figures I have given. Although it was necessary to provide emergency housing we hope eventually to provide citizens with proper houses. Not long ago the member for Adelaide, Mr. Lawn, spoke on housing, but his statements were not accurate. The 1954 Commonwealth census showed that South Australia had fewer persons per occupied dwelling than any other State, "which indicates that the housing position is more satisfactory here." They are the words of Mr. Bowden, the Government Statist, but I do not subscribe to them. I would say that the housing position in South Australia is not so unsatisfactory as in other States, which is a slightly different construc-

tion. Since the end of the war the number of persons per occupied dwelling in South Australia has fallen, yet the Leader of the Opposition said that nothing has been done to provide housing for the people.

Let us see why South Australia got away to a rather slow start after the war. This State has always favoured permanent houses of solid construction. Everyone knows that asbestos or timber-frame houses can be erected far more quickly than solid houses. Houses (excluding flats) that were completed in 1953-54 and were of solid construction were 69.48 per cent of the total number built, which is well over the 29.15 per cent average for the six States. That means that, on an average, 71 per cent of the houses erected in the six States were of timber-frame construction. In Queensland only 20 per cent of the houses built were of solid construction.

Mr. Riches—That has always been the case there.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—That is what I am saying. Members can see that the first reason given by the Leader of the Opposition for the introduction of the Bill cannot be substantiated. The action taken by the South Australian Government has produced better results than those of any other State Government. Last week when I attended a housing conference at Canberra I was amazed to hear remarks by various housing Ministers about the rents being charged by authorities in other States. Some Ministers pleaded for a continuation of the rent rebate system (which, incidentally, has never operated in this State), on the ground that unless it was continued the rent of houses that they would construct in the future would be £4 a week, yet they would be only small dwellings. I cannot quote the rent of future houses in South Australia, but we would be extremely disappointed if we had to charge £3.

I hope I have said enough to show that the Leader's grounds for the Bill cannot be sustained. Firstly, there has been no large-scale demolition, and secondly, the problem of housing in this State has been tackled realistically, not in a negative fashion. We do not believe it is desirable to pull down large numbers of houses and have always frowned on wide-scale demolition; but in the course of progress obsolete houses will have to be demolished to make way for more modern and better constructed buildings, possibly factories or flats. A few years ago my Government, with the support of the entire Opposition, introduced a Bill that provided for an

authority which would, in due course, have the right to pull down houses.

Mr. Riches—But those houses were to be replaced by other houses.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes, but I have already shown that they are being replaced by other houses. Indeed, the house building rate of this State Government is twice that of the average of the Australian States; in other words, we are out-building the Labor States by two to one. Mr. O'Halloran did not deal in great detail with the clauses of the Bill, but I want to point out one or two things, because I believe it goes further than he said it did. Clause 2 defines "dwellinghouse" and "Minister," and I do not quarrel with the latter. A dwellinghouse, however, is defined as:—

A building constructed or adapted for use as a place of habitation and includes any building which at any time within 12 months before it is demolished or altered is occupied by some person as a place of habitation.

There are two or three objections to that definition. Firstly, a building which, 11 months ago, was altered and is no longer a dwellinghouse comes within the scope of the Bill and cannot be altered or demolished without the consent of the Minister. I point out, however, that during the last 12 months many dwellinghouses have been converted into shops.

Mr. O'Halloran—You had better get legal advice on that interpretation.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I asked the Parliamentary Draftsman (Sir Edgar Bean) for a report on the Bill, and he states:—

The word "dwellinghouse" as defined in the Bill includes two classes of buildings:—

(a) Those which at the time of demolition or alteration are dwellinghouses;

(b) Those which at the time of demolition or alteration are not dwellinghouses, but which have at any time within the previous 12 months been dwellinghouses, in the sense that some person has used them as a place of habitation.

As a result of the second limb of the definition a number of buildings which are now or may hereafter be shops, offices, factories, stores, workshops or service stations will come within the definition of dwellinghouse. It is, of course, wellknown that at any given moment a certain number of houses are being converted into business or industrial premises. With the economic growth of the State this is inevitable.

Apparently Sir Edgar agrees with my statement about the effect of the definition of "dwellinghouse." For instance, if a caretaker occupies a portion of a factory it is automatically a dwellinghouse under the Bill.

Mr. Travers—Even without the caretaker it could still be a dwellinghouse in some circumstances.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Probably. I think the Leader's Bill goes much further than he intended it to go. The Leader has had a few blanket clauses drawn up, and, when they are put together, they may have some results not anticipated by him. If this definition of "dwellinghouse" is accepted the Bill will cover buildings not used as dwellinghouses for any immediately previous period up to 12 months, and to that extent at least, it is retrospective.

The second feature to which I draw attention is that under the Bill only two defences are permitted. Clause 3 (2) states:—

It shall be a defence to any proceedings for an offence against this section if sufficient proof is given that the dwellinghouse was demolished or altered—

(a) with the permit of the Minister in accordance with any conditions of that permit; or

(b) in compliance with an order or notice of a local board of health given pursuant to the Health Act, 1935-1954, or the Housing Improvement Act, 1940-1950.

This clause, too, may have undesirable legislative effect not intended by the Leader. Assuming Mr. Brown applies to the Minister for permission to alter a dwellinghouse, a permit may be issued on certain conditions, for instance, to alter only a certain portion. That condition is known only to the Minister and to the applicant. Mr. Brown, however, instructs a workman to do a totally different job, and the workman carries out the work in good faith, having been assured by Mr. Brown that a permit for it has been issued. Once the workman does the work, however, he has committed an offence and is liable to a fine not exceeding £100. The only grounds upon which he may defend himself against a charge are those laid down in the Bill, namely, that the work has been done in accordance with a permit, or an order of a local board of health. I do not think the Leader intended that a workman carrying out the terms of the property owner's instructions should be liable to a prosecution.

Mr. O'Halloran—I do not think he would be.

Mr. Pearson—I have to get a written authority before pulling down a house on a farm.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes, and if the honourable member has a motor garage on his property, which he wishes to convert for occupation by an employee for only a few weeks of the year, that building immediately comes within the scope of this Bill and the honourable member cannot alter it without securing the Minister's permission. I wish to

draw attention to the evidentiary provision in clause 4, which states:—

In any proceedings for an offence against this Act a certificate in writing, purporting to be signed by the Minister—

- (a) stating that at any date specified in the certificate a permit had or had not been issued under section 3; or
- (b) stating the conditions upon which any permit has been issued under section 3, shall be *prima facie* evidence of the facts stated in the certificate.

If I understand the Leader's intention, the Minister could issue a certificate to this effect—

"No permit has been issued to Mr. Brown to demolish the dwellinghouse on block 460."

That would be *prima facie* evidence of an offence. The Minister might issue a certificate of this nature—"A permit has been issued for Mr. Brown to alter his dwellinghouse in accordance with the following conditions, A", and the conditions would be stated. If the alterations did not comply with the permit the certificate would be *prima facie* evidence of an offence. Immediately the Minister issues a certificate containing the description "dwelling-house" it becomes obligatory upon the defendant to prove that the building was not occupied as a place of residence during the preceding 12 months. The evidentiary provision does not state that the Minister's certificate shall be *prima facie* evidence of the provisions of clause 3. The facts stated in the certificate—which are regarded as *prima facie* evidence—may be much wider than the provisions of clause 3. The evidentiary provision is much wider than the Leader would accept in a Government measure.

In my opinion clause 3 renders futile the Leader's purpose in introducing this Bill. It provides for a penalty of £100. I take it that this Bill is a second edition of the measure introduced last year to control the erection of petrol stations. If it is, of what use is a penalty of £100? If valuable premises are involved a penalty of £100 would be no deterrent to demolishing a home. It would merely be regarded as a licence fee. I hope I have made my attitude reasonably clear, but in case members have any doubts, I oppose the Bill.

Mr. DUNSTAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### NOXIOUS INSECTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council with the following amendments:—

No. 1.—In new section 6a (2) before the words "An occupier" to insert "For the

purposes of subsection (1) of this section."

No. 2.—In new section 6a (2) (a) to delete the word "forthwith" in the first line, and to insert the word "forthwith" in the second line after the word "commence."

Consideration in Committee.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—These amendments really amount to the dotting of a few i's and the crossing of a t. It is contended that the amendments make the provisions a little more explicit for the lay mind.

Amendments agreed to.

#### METROPOLITAN TAXICAB BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 12. Page 1063.)

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham)—I oppose the Bill because it takes away from local government bodies the power to control the taxicab industry and gives it to a central authority unconnected with local government—the Commissioner of Police. By saying that I am not disparaging the Commissioner or police officers generally, but I believe such a move would weaken local government. Rather than being weakened, local government should be strengthened, but apparently that is not the policy of members opposite. From their remarks it is obvious they care little or nothing for local government and hold in contempt those engaged in it. That is a most reprehensible attitude, and one with which I entirely disagree. For that reason the Bill should be opposed. There has been much loose talk and a number of accusations have been made of malpractices by those controlling the taxicab industry. Because they have been made I think they should be answered in some degree at least. They are exceedingly vague and because of that are more difficult to refute; and they cast doubt on the integrity of a greater number of people. I am surprised that members opposite should engage in such vague accusations. There has not been the slightest attempt, except by Mr. Dunstan when discussing the Yellow Cab Company, to do more than make accusations. Members opposite have been content to make them and then sit back rather smugly and say, "Disprove them if you can."

I have not had much experience in this House, but that sort of thing does not seem to be fair. On any subject in this place we should either go all the way and give all the details so that those accused can defend themselves, or not make accusations at all. Mr. Jennings and Mr. Lawn have on a



number of occasions made accusations concerning taxicab control and in his second reading explanation Mr. Jennings said they had not been answered. I remind members opposite of something they have apparently overlooked, that the accusations made by Mr. Jennings were, in fact, dealt with by the Adelaide City Council. I suggest that for his own sake, and for the sake of members opposite, the refutation of the accusations should be studied. Whilst the Opposition has been happy to say what it has said, both this year and last year, it appears that no member opposite has bothered to study the present position in relation to the control of taxis. If they had I do not think they would have said what they did, because since last year a good deal has been done to improve what was admittedly not a particularly satisfactory position. Without much trouble the present position can be understood, but not one member who has spoken this session has said anything about it. To answer some of the accusations made in this debate it is necessary to understand the position; therefore I suggest that I be permitted to say a word or two about it. Under section 669 of the Local Government Act municipal bodies have power to make by-laws with regard to taxis within their areas. The Adelaide City Council and about half of the other metropolitan councils have done so. Many of the councils that do not issue licences have issued permits to allow taxis from other areas to operate in their areas. It is obvious that the Adelaide City Council is the most important licensing authority.

A great proportion of all the journeys by taxis either begin or end in the city. It is the hub of the taxi industry. Therefore, it is important to inquire into the provision which the Adelaide City Council has made for the control of taxis within the city square mile. They are contained in by-law No. 25 of the Adelaide City Council. This document is readily available to all members free of charge and a study of it will certainly repay them. Within that by-law a scheme of control is worked out. Licences are issued by the council both for motor vehicles that can be used as taxis and for drivers to drive them. In other words, there are two separate classes of licence. Firstly, I will discuss only the licence dealing with motor vehicles. Here again the licence is divided into two classes. They are referred to generally as the B class and the C class licences. The B class licence is a full city licence. It allows the licensed motor vehicle to pick up or deliver in the city, and to use

a taxi stand allocated to it by the council. I understand that about 250 of these licences have been issued by the City Council.

The C class licence is rather restricted. It allows the licensed motor vehicle to pick up or deliver in the city but only by appointment. It does not give permission for the vehicle to use a taxi stand. I believe that until about 12 months ago the City Council was prepared under agreement with the metropolitan councils to issue C class licences in regard to any vehicles licensed by a municipal council. Such licences were granted on request. When last year's Bill on this subject was before the House it caused a stir in the taxi industry and resulted in 94 fresh applications being made for C class licences between June and December. In other words, there was a tremendous increase in the number of C class licences granted. Consequently, in January of this year the Adelaide City Council called a conference of all metropolitan local government bodies, and everyone accepted the invitation. It was a success not only because of what it achieved, but because it showed definitely that co-operation on the matter is possible between the Adelaide City Council and all metropolitan councils. The conference determined that a limit should be placed on the number of C class licences. Originally 400 was the number decided upon, but subsequently it was raised to 450. I am informed that up to the present not all the 450 have been taken up, only about 420. Before any type of licence is granted there must be an inspection of the vehicle. Section 4 of by-law No. 25 states:—

Every applicant for a licence for a motor vehicle and every licensee of a motor vehicle shall bring such motor vehicle or cause same to be brought for inspection to such place in the city as shall from time to time be ordered by the licensing officer.

Schedule F of the by-law contains stringent requirements. Each vehicle must pass the test before the licence is granted. That is the position in regard to the licence for every motor vehicle. I may be wrong, but I believe not even Mr. Lawn can complain legitimately about the position. Now we come to the point where there is controversy: the transferability or sale of licences. Goodwill, if we may call it that, comes into both the B class and C class licences. Much has been said about this matter in a disparaging way, as though the transfer of the licence were a bad thing. With that view I do not agree. If we peg the number of B class licences to 250 and C class licences to 450, we automatically restrict the

number that can be granted. When there is such a restriction those already granted must have some value.

Mr. Fred Walsh—The Bill says nothing about that.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I am only explaining how the licences can get a monetary value. Obviously, if the number is restricted their value will be increased. The City Council recognizes that position. Instead of closing its eye to what will happen if the number of licences is restricted, it has recognized that they have a monetary value. It has also recognized that it is more desirable, if licences are to be transferred, that it be done openly so that it will know what is going on. The question of goodwill has been examined by the City Council, and, after due consideration, it was decided that it was far better to allow licences to be transferred at a price than to suppress such transactions and thereby encourage all sorts of illicit practices.

Mr. William Jenkins—Such as black markets.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—Precisely. One solution of the problem would be not to bother about licences at all, but I have not heard one word from the Opposition in favour of that. It is far better for licences to be traded openly under strict control than under the lap. These licences can be transferred, just as hotel licences can be transferred. The current price for a licence is between £350 and £750. When the price rises the City Council knows that is an indication that it is time some more were issued because more taxis are required. Of course, before a person can operate he must do more than merely purchase a licence. Section 22 of the the relevant by-law—

Mr. Lawn—But a Bill is before the House, not a by-law.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I am explaining the by-law so that members will understand the Bill. Under section 22 of the by-law indiscriminate transfers are not allowed. A man may buy a licence for £500, but that of itself does not permit him to operate a taxi in the City of Adelaide because section 22 states:—

A licence issued in respect of a motor vehicle shall be transferable or transmittable only upon compliance with the following conditions:—

(1) Any licensee who desires to transfer his licence to another person shall make an application for transfer.

Then follow provisions allowing the City Council to refuse an application if it believes that the applicant is not a fit and proper person to have it. In other words, the applicant has to buy a licence in the open market

and then obtain the approval of the City Council. No-one with any sense will buy a licence unless he knows he will be approved by the council.

Mr. Frank Walsh—How long has that policy been carried out?

Mr. MILLHOUSE—This is one of the points that has been tightened up since this question was debated in the House last year. It is simply another indication that the City Council, far from ignoring the debates last year, is prepared to do something about the matter. Opposition members have assumed that nothing has been done about the taxi industry in the last 12 months, but they are wrong. We have discussed the licensing of motor vehicles, but who can obtain such licences? The provisions are set out in section 10, which states:—

Where any person applies for a licence in respect of a motor vehicle in the Form "B" or Form "C" in the schedule hereto the Town Clerk, upon the report of the Licensing Officer and after making such inquiries as he shall think fit, may, in his discretion, direct the Licensing Officer to refuse to issue such licence

- (1) where the Town Clerk is satisfied that the applicant has not the use, control and management of such motor vehicle at the time of such application; or
- (2) where the Town Clerk is satisfied that the applicant is not a fit and proper person to be so licensed notwithstanding that the applicant may comply in all other respects with the provisions of this by-law;

and the Licensing Officer shall act accordingly.

In other words, a person cannot get a licence for a motor vehicle unless he has the use, control and management of it. The member for Norwood (Mr. Dunstan) spoke at considerable length about Yellow Cabs Fleet Limited, but I emphasize that this company complies with the City Council's by-law. After last year's debate the City Council inquired into allegations made about this company, which was required to produce to the council the form of agreement it had with its drivers. That was submitted to the council's solicitors for opinion on whether or not it contravened the by-law, but the opinion was that it did not. I have a copy of the agreement which I will show to any member, and it shows that the company, to use the words of the by-law, has the use, control and management of the cabs. It is not, as was suggested by members opposite, breaking the by-law with the full knowledge of the council, which has not been prepared to take any action. The allegations that were made last year were investigated and found to be groundless. Members opposite alleged that the company had adopted improper

practices, but the City Council thoroughly investigated the position and found that it was not breaking the by-law. That answers much of what the member for Norwood said.

Since last year a ruling has been made by the City Council that no person shall be granted a licence for a motor vehicle unless the taxi industry is his sole occupation or, in the case of a company, the only business in which it is engaged. I have here the form of statutory declaration which has to be submitted by every applicant for the transfer of a taxi licence. Unless the applicant is engaged full-time in the taxi industry he cannot get a licence from the City Council, so that disposes of the allegations that some people are getting licences and then farming them out.

Mr. John Clark—Not much!

Mr. MILLHOUSE—If that is what the honourable member believes, let him give the facts to the House. I have given what I believe to be the facts. Furthermore, no person will be granted a licence by the City Council if he has disposed of a licence within the preceding two years. That provision is aimed at preventing what has been called, by members opposite, trafficking in licences. A person cannot now buy a licence on speculation, sell it, and later buy another within two years. That shows that a good deal has been done since last year to put the position in order. So far I have been discussing licences for motor vehicles, but besides that a person wishing to drive such a vehicle must himself be licensed. These licences are not transferable. It follows that because taxis are on the road 24 hours a day there are far more licences issued to drivers than licensed motor vehicles. The information to which I have referred is set out in section 13 of the by-laws. Every taxi in the city of Adelaide must be licensed and must be driven by a licensed driver. I believe that, if those provisions are all being complied with, that is a satisfactory state of affairs.

Regarding the enforcement of the regulations, the Adelaide City Council has an administration functioning, and I believe that that administration is quite as efficient as one could expect in the circumstances, although I do not say it is perfect. I read with interest the speeches on the Government's Bill last session; at that time Opposition members apparently thought the Transport Control Board was the only authority capable of dealing with this matter, but now they say the only possible authority is the Commissioner of Police.

Mr. Macgillivray—In the meantime they have learned the folly of their ways.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—I am pleased to hear that, but I do not agree that either of those authorities is appropriate. I do not disparage the Commissioner of Police, but if this matter is placed in his hands, who is to pay to administer a scheme that may cost tens of thousands of pounds? The taxpayers of South Australia would have to pay. At present the cost of administering taxi licensing is borne by Adelaide City Council ratepayers; it does not cost the Government anything. If this matter is placed in the hands of the Commissioner of Police, however, all taxpayers throughout the State must bear the cost of administration, and that is another reason why the Bill should be rejected.

The city council has 23 inspectors. Allegations have been made about some of them, and although I am not here either to praise or condemn the inspectors, I point out that in any organization, especially where the temptation is so great because of the nature of the duties involved, there will always be one or two who do not measure up to the required moral standard. Indeed, the same would apply if the Police Commissioner were in charge of licensing. Today, when an allegation is made against a city council inspector, the whole matter is immediately placed in the hands of the police and, if warranted, a prosecution is launched. The city council does not try to cover up what has been done. This procedure seems to be the most satisfactory way of dealing with any lapses in the administration.

The member for Norwood (Mr. Dunstan) attempted to make a strong point about pirating in the city. I understand that pirating means unlicensed vehicles coming into the city and picking up fares, and in this connection Mr. Dunstan made one rather startling assertion. When discussing the desirability of the Police Commissioner's administering taxicab licensing, he said:—

If he is the licensing authority he will be tracing and detecting the pirating that is going on at present and therefore tracing and detecting crime.

That is true, but surely there is no need for the Commissioner of Police to wait until he is the licensing authority before he can detect pirating. It is nonsense to say that the police can detect and prevent offences only when they happen to be administering the appropriate legislation. No matter who is the licensing authority, the police are still in a position to

detect and prevent pirating, and I suggest that Mr. Dunstan overlooked that point.

I think it is agreed by all members of this House, and by many members of the public, that the weakest part of the licensing administration is the co-ordination of the city council's activities with those of the various metropolitan councils. Again, however, the member for Prospect (Mr. Jennings), in explaining the Bill, overlooked the fact that since last year steps had been taken to improve that co-ordination. I have already referred to the conference that took place at the end of January. At present the City Council issues B class licences to those operators who operate full-time and enjoy every facility in the city; it grants C class licences to those who are licensed by suburban councils if their applications are supported by councils issuing the original licences. Suburban councils have now agreed to issue licences only to people living within their council districts. The City Council issues B class licences to the 250 applicants who are considered fit persons, and C class licences to those people licensed by suburban councils. Under the agreement entered into by all councils, except perhaps Port Adelaide, the C class operator is allowed to operate anywhere in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Dunstan poured much ridicule on the proposed advisory council, which even now is being set up. He called it "this fantastic proposal of an advisory board." What is this advisory council? It will consist of four representatives of metropolitan councils who will be appointed through the Municipal Association; indeed, those representatives have already been appointed and comprise representatives of Port Adelaide, Glenelg, Burnside and West Torrens councils. Four representatives of the City Council were appointed at last Monday's council meeting; they are those members who with the Lord Mayor, comprise the city council's special taxicab committee, therefore they are the members best qualified to sit on the advisory council. The ninth member of the new council is a representative of the Transport Workers' Union, and he has already been appointed. The Commissioner of Police has been invited to be the tenth member, but no reply has yet been received from him. It will be seen, therefore, that nine of the 10 representatives on the advisory council have already been appointed. The first meeting has been set down for October 27, and I am informed that the members already appointed will then decide what representation will be given to taxi operators.

Mr. Jennings—There will be no need for that, because this Bill will be law by then.

Mr. MILLHOUSE—The member for Prospect is a born optimist if he thinks that. The advisory council's function will be to advise the City Council on all aspects of taxicab control. Because of its experience at the conference last January the City Council believes that the new council, about which there is great measure of agreement, will do much to solve the problem. I do not know whether it will, but, bearing in mind that this matter is the function of local government and that we should not weaken local government if that can possibly be avoided, I believe this scheme should be given an opportunity to work, and it can only be given that opportunity if members reject this Bill. Further, the Adelaide City Council, which already has the administrative machinery necessary to police taxicab licensing, will continue to carry the costs involved. For these reasons Parliament should reject this Bill. That being so, I need say little about clause 21 which, in some respects, switches the onus of proof. I do not like that at all. If, by some mischance, this measure should reach Committee, I will certainly move to amend that. I do not support the Bill. That does not mean that I consider the present situation absolutely satisfactory or that it could not be improved. It simply means that I believe we should allow local government another try. If, in 12 months or two years, we find that the position is not satisfactory, we can reconsider it.

Mr. JOHN CLARK secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### EARLY CLOSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 5. Page 988.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—The measure has been debated at considerable length by many members. I do not intend to occupy much time in replying to the excuses offered by Government members in a futile attempt to justify their opposition to the Bill. The main excuse offered was that it was the thin edge of the wedge and that if we passed this Bill reducing the time at which shops are supposed to close from 12.30 to 11.30 on Saturdays the next move would be for complete closing of shops on Saturday mornings. I suggest that those who offer that excuse have very little confidence in themselves and that this excuse, being their main opposition to the Bill, is not worthy of consideration. I realize

the great value this reform will be in stabilizing conditions which have existed for a long period and which, as far as can be governed by industrial awards, have been approved by wages boards and industrial authorities. It will assist in overcoming the unjustifiable and unnecessary congestion of traffic which would occur if shops were again permitted to remain open until 12.30 when shopping crowds, those employed in shops and people going to sporting fixtures would all be seeking transport at the same time. I have confidence that the House will carry the second reading and ultimately adopt the provisions of the Bill.

The House divided on the second reading—

Ayes (15).—Messrs. John Clark, Corcoran, Davis, Dunstan, Hutchens, Jennings, Lawn, Macgillivray, McAlees, O'Halloran (teller), Quirke, Riches, Stephens, Frank Walsh, and Fred Walsh.

Noes (20).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunnage, Goldney, Hawker, Heaslip, Hincks, Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. Jenkins, McIntosh, Millhouse, Pattinson, Pearson, Playford (teller), Shannon, Stott, Teusner, Travers, and White.

Pair.—Aye—Mr. Tapping. No—Mr. Michael.

Majority of 5 for the Noes.

Second reading thus negatived.

## STEELWORKS FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. O'Halloran—

That in the opinion of this House, in view of the urgency of the need for the establishment of a steelworks at or near Whyalla in the interests of the people of South Australia, in view of the failure of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited to establish such steelworks within reasonable time in accordance with undertakings given in consideration of being granted leases of areas containing high grade iron ore on Eyre Peninsula, and in view of the necessity of developing the low grade ore deposits elsewhere on Eyre Peninsula in conjunction with the high grade ore contained in those areas for the economic operation of such steelworks and in order to ensure an adequate and continuous supply of ore thereto, the said leases should be terminated, the mining, transport and crushing plant operated by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited in association with such leases should be acquired by the State and a joint committee of both Houses, with equal representation of the Government and the Opposition, should be appointed to advise the Parliament on the future use and disposal of all iron ore on Eyre Peninsula so that all interests may be fully considered and fairly served in the distribution of same;

to which Mr. Quirke had moved the following amendments:—

To insert after "South Australia" the words "and the Commonwealth"; to leave out all the words from and including "in" occurring after "South Australia" down to and including "and" occurring after "State"; and to leave out "with equal representation of the Government and the Opposition."

(Continued from October 12. Page 1068.)

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY (Chaffey)—I believe that the main object of this motion is to establish a steelworks at or near Whyalla for the purpose of making more steel available to the Commonwealth and to use our ores in the most satisfactory way possible. I feel that every member of this House, from the Premier down, is entirely in accord with that objective. Members will no doubt remember some months ago, when replying to a question, the Premier, almost with tears in his eyes, explained that never in his long association with the Broken Hill Pty. Company had he been treated in such a cavalier manner as he had been by the company at that time. There is no doubt that he was deeply moved. Until that time he considered that his association with the men controlling the destinies of the company was such that he could go before them to explain the State's position and be received with the dignity his position as Premier warranted. It is quite obvious from what he said that the position has altered considerably in recent years and instead of being received as a Premier he was received more or less as a mendicant—someone who was seeking benefits which the company could give or withhold as it saw fit.

I do not intend to discuss the many points raised during this debate because it is quite obvious that opinions were trimmed—to put it mildly—to political views. That was true of members from both sides. I believe that at this stage we should ascertain whether as a Parliament we could get together, forgetting our political differences, in an endeavour to find a way out of the impasse. It must have been obvious to the Leader when he introduced this motion that he had no hope of having it accepted. Some of the matters contained in it are such that the Government, believing as it does, could not possibly support it. One would not need much intelligence to realize that, believing as I do, I could not support it, nor could my colleague, the member for Stanley (Mr. Quirke). That being so, it seems futile to press the motion as it stands because its many objectionable features would prevent

members from getting together. I take it that all members agree with the first part of the motion which says:—

That in the opinion of this House, in view of the urgency of the need for the establishment of a steelworks at or near Whyalla in the interests of the people of South Australia. Mr. Quirke proposes to add "and the Commonwealth." If we establish steelworks it must benefit the Commonwealth. The motion goes on:—

in view of the failure of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited to establish such steelworks within reasonable time in accordance with undertakings given in consideration of being granted leases of areas containing high grade iron ore on Eyre Peninsula, and in view of the necessity of developing the low grade ore deposits elsewhere on Eyre Peninsula in conjunction with the high grade ore contained in those areas for the economic operation of such steelworks and in order to ensure an adequate and continuous supply of ore thereto, the said leases should be terminated.

That is about the most involved piece of English I have ever read. Of course, we know it means the leases held by the company should be terminated because it has not fulfilled a promise. I have noticed that some Opposition members could not find anything that bound the company to do what the motion suggests it should have done. The Parliament and the Government of the day believed that certain things would be done following on the construction of the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline. It is obvious, after listening to members on both sides, that there is no reason to cancel the leases. If we did cancel them, the Whyalla plant would be closed down, and how would that benefit the Commonwealth, and would it make more steel available? If the leases are terminated the company need only take out its key men and the plant must close down, and it is strong enough to place them elsewhere. I do not think that part of the motion is a commonsense approach to an important question. The motion continues:—

the mining, transport and crushing plant operated by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited in association with such leases should be acquired by the State.

It seems that experience will never alter the ideas of members with socialistic tendencies. The man in the street knows that there is no one worse than the Government to run anything. We have an example in Tasmania where the Commonwealth Government handed over to the State Government the development of large aluminium works. That undertaking has cost the taxpayers more than any other similar undertaking. Despite that, our socialistic mem-

bers are still prepared to experiment with the future of the steel industry in this State. I will not labour the point because socialisation has been proved to be wrong on every occasion it has been tried. The Leader of the Opposition must have known when he moved the motion that he would not get the support of all members. I think it has more behind it than the making of steel.

Mr. Lawn—Tell us what it is.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—It is so obvious that the honourable member must know. Mr. Quirke's proposal goes a long way towards solving the impasse between the two Parties. The Independents hoped that both Parties would be able to agree on this important matter, but that has not happened. The motion concludes:—

... and a joint committee of both Houses, with equal representation of the Government and the Opposition, should be appointed to advise the Parliament on the future use and disposal of all iron ore on Eyre Peninsula so that all interests may be fully considered and fairly served in the distribution of same.

In this place yesterday we heard that once an egg is scrambled we cannot unscramble it. The motion suggests that we should take action and then appoint a joint committee to make inquiries. Mr. Quirke and I think it would be wiser to first appoint a committee, but it would not have much time to investigate the matter, so perhaps it would be better if a Royal Commission were appointed, and for that reason I move to delete "Joint Committee of both Houses, with equal representation of the Government and the Opposition," with a view to inserting "Royal Commission." We all know that a Joint Committee can act only in the session in which it is appointed.

Mr. O'Halloran—Who told you that?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—I know the position.

Mr. O'Halloran—What about the Public Works Committee and the Land Settlement Committee?

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—They are appointed in a different way. The Leader of the Opposition knows the position.

Mr. O'Halloran—You don't know.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Surely the honourable member does not think that I would not make inquiries before making such a statement. The Government could appoint a Royal Commission and get the use of the best brains available, not only in Australia but overseas. It might be a good thing to obtain people from the other side of the world so that we might have more information available before establishing works. The Treasurer has said that some

United Kingdom companies are prepared to come here, and what we do here in steel is only chickenfeed to what is done in other parts of the world. If we could not appoint any of these people to a Royal Commission they could at least be asked to present evidence. We should thank the Leader of the Opposition for giving us the opportunity to debate this important matter. He wants more steel produced and our ore deposits used wisely. We do not want to have the same position as New South Wales had when all the high-grade coal was used and it was not profitable to mine the low-grade coal. I know that the use of low grade ore will add to the cost of steel for the time being, but ultimately it has to be used, so it would be better to average it out. I agree with the intention of the motion except the method proposed, as that will ruin the whole of Australia's steel industry.

Mr. STOTT (Ridley)—The motion is of great importance to South Australia and I think is so important that the House should be fully informed, after having had a few years' experience of what has happened at Whyalla with the B.H.P., of the possibilities of further exploiting the iron ore there. I cannot support the method proposed in the motion but I support the amendment moved by the member for Chaffey for a Royal Commission to make an exhaustive inquiry, to collate information as only a Royal Commission can do, to inform this Parliament whether the company is the proper body to exploit all the ore and whether that company should establish a steelworks at Whyalla. A joint committee would not have the over-riding powers of a Royal Commission, and I think those powers are warranted.

There has been a difference of opinion between legal members on both sides of the House on whether the company has or has not broken its undertaking under the indenture agreed to by this House years ago, and I do not feel competent to judge whether the company has broken the agreement. I was a member of this Chamber then and I remember the very important debate that took place, but that is water under the bridge today. It is perfectly true that the company has not set up a steelworks at Whyalla so I am prepared to support an inquiry into whether it should establish such works and what rights it should be given to exploit the valuable deposits of iron ore on Eyre Peninsula. This State, and Parliament in particular, should be informed of the possibilities of both high and

low-grade ores and whether another company could exploit them economically and efficiently to the benefit of the State and the Commonwealth. If the company is unable or unwilling to establish steelworks, a Royal Commission could tell us whether another company could do so. At this stage I do not feel capable to judge whether the company has done this or that, but as this matter is so important for the development of the State in that we need a greater quantity of steel than ever before, the whole subject is wide open for a Royal Commission. I intend to support the amendment.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I thank members for the interest they have shown in this debate and for their contributions, even though I do not agree with some of the excuses offered by members in an attempt to justify their opposition to the motion. I feel that members generally are seized with the importance of this matter. As a matter of fact, there should be no doubt about it unless there has been a change of heart in this Parliament since 1953, because members will recall that in that year this Chamber unanimously carried a motion moved by Mr. Riches dealing with this subject. Certainly they agreed to it after amendments had been carried, but that motion, which was to the effect that the House believed it was desirable that steelworks should be established at or near Whyalla, was carried unanimously.

I think most members, if not all, still believe that is desirable, but apparently when it comes to taking positive action towards their establishment they become a little finicky and fear they may offend some mighty organization. I am not suggesting that the company should be attacked or that it has not done a good job for Australia generally, but I am suggesting, and I shall now proceed to show, that the arguments used against the carrying of my motion have no real merit. Probably the best speech in opposition was that delivered by the Premier, and for that reason, and because of the limited time at my disposal, I propose to deal only with his remarks. I hope other members will not be hurt if I do not mention them in despatches, but of course if they desire to be mentioned they have only to remind me of some cogent point and I shall be very happy to oblige them in my usual courteous and kindly way. In the course of his speech the Premier said:—

In the Address in Reply debate I pointed out that the company had assumed certain

legal obligations, that they were placed before Parliament, that they were the subject of a Bill which was examined by a Select Committee and that they were adopted by this House.

The real basis of the agreement and the corresponding obligation assumed by the company could not be expressly stated in the legislation because nobody then knew how or when water would be made available at Whyalla, and the company itself could not state a definite time when it could commence the erection of the steelworks. That is why these matters were not in the written agreement. Either the Premier of the day was very much mistaken as to the intentions of the company, and therefore gave a very inaccurate account of the matter to Parliament, or the establishment of a steelworks was an essential condition of the granting of monopolistic concessions to the company.

The Premier went on to say:—

If the Company had not carried out its legal obligations, the matter would have been brought before an impartial tribunal.

My reply to that is that Parliament is the ultimate authority and custodian of the rights and interests of the people. It undoubtedly has power to constitute itself judge and jury if it sees fit to do so. The Premier then said:—  
We are asked to say that because the company has not carried out the agreement, we will take away all its rights, and it would have no appeal from our decision.

My reply to that is that the motion does not imply taking away all the company's rights. All it proposes is that its rights shall be placed in proper perspective in relation to the interests of the people of this State, and, indeed, of the Commonwealth. The proposed committee would consider the terms and conditions under which the company would continue to receive sufficient iron ore for its purposes. Later the Premier said:—

If we brush aside this agreement, what will be the position with regard to all other rights that have been conferred by this Parliament from time to time?

My reply to that is that Parliament has the power to confer rights, and it has the power to take them away. The only test should be whether rights previously conferred are being abused, that is, not being used for the purpose for which they were conferred. This Parliament has for more than a hundred years denied the right of the majority of the people to have an effective voice in the government of the State. The Premier's quotation from a poem that he resurrected and which he said applied

to me can aptly be applied to him and his Party. He quoted:—

They should take who have the power, and they should keep who can.

Mr. Riches—And that is an apt philosophy for the company.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes. The Premier also said:—

The company said if we are to establish industries at Whyalla we must have security of tenure.

I emphasize that the company has not established the industries which both parties to the agreement had in mind. The Government of the day, and the company, undoubtedly had the establishment of a steelworks at Whyalla in mind when the Indenture Act was passed in 1937. Reference to the investment of "millions of pounds" at that time could not have been to anything but some very comprehensive undertaking, not only a blast furnace. The Premier also said:—

I wholeheartedly approve of a steelworks being established at Whyalla and agree that the steel supply in Australia is inadequate for the needs of the country and that there should be a great expansion of steel production.

What is the Government doing about this?

The company, which is the only organization likely to establish steel works at Whyalla, will not do so of its own volition as long as it can make large profits through expansion in New South Wales. The Premier also said:—

I agree that the company has been extremely tardy in its development at Whyalla.

If the company did not undertake to establish steelworks at Whyalla what is the meaning of the expression "tardy in its development at Whyalla"? The Premier then said:—

I have not hesitated to say to the company that I believe it has a moral obligation to undertake expansion in this State and give our citizens a fair share of the advantages of the industrialization which arises from a big industry being established here. . . .

I believe that a moral obligation is more fundamental and binding than a legal obligation. The Premier also stated:—

Mr. O'Halloran is deluding himself and the House when he says that the passing of the motion is the way to get a steel industry at Whyalla.

I believe the passing of the motion could well be the means of securing a steel industry at Whyalla because it would show that the Government was determined to do something about the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. But it could also be the means of securing this object even if it does not pass. I am sure that the motion has already served a very useful purpose. It has awakened people



all over the world to the fact that there is a problem in Australia of a shortage of steel, that South Australia has one of the finest deposits of iron ore in the world, that adjacent to those deposits there is a tremendous reserve of lower grade ore that will probably need some beneficiation in order to be converted into steel, and that something should be done about it. Therefore, we find that overseas companies of considerable magnitude are interested in this matter. The Premier also said:—

In the strongest terms I have expressed to the directors of the company that they have a duty to this State.

If all that we have heard during this debate about repudiation is not correct why should the Premier make such a statement? Why should he tell the company's directors in the strongest terms that they have a duty to South Australia? I believe he said that because he recognizes that the company undoubtedly has a moral obligation to this State. The company itself imposed that moral obligation by entering into negotiations with the Government prior to 1937 for the provision of an adequate water supply and to secure tenure of iron ore leases in anticipation of the establishment of a steel industry at Whyalla. I shall not repeat the arguments used by the Premier of 1937 and by Mr. Dickinson more recently in his illuminating and valuable reports. Mr. Dickinson is to be complimented on the strong stand he has taken in this matter and I deprecate the criticism to which he has been subjected during the debate. It has been said that it is the duty of Government officers to do what they are told, whether the instructions are right or wrong. If we ever get to that stage in Australia responsible Government will be on the verge of breaking down, if it has not already broken down. If there had been any doubts about the evidence before a Select Committee that has already been quoted extensively in this House they should have been dispelled by some of the remarks made by Mr. Essington Lewis when he delivered the Joseph Fisher Lecture at the Adelaide University on June 10, 1948. His remarks were heralded in banner headlines in the *Advertiser* of the following morning—"Steel Industry for Whyalla: Vast Expansion Plan Outlined." I have here the official report of his speech. It has been circulating since 1948 and has not been corrected in any way, so I assume it is a correct report. It states:—

The Broken Hill Proprietary Company is now planning a development of peculiar significance to South Australia, namely, the

establishment of a steelworks at Whyalla, thus further aiding the scheme of decentralization. When the Newcastle steelworks were established it took approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tons of ore and 3 tons of coal to make a ton of finished steel. Obviously, the economics were in the direction of taking the ore to the coal. In the intervening 30 years, tremendous strides have been made in the art of fuel conservation and nowadays an Australian steelworks takes about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tons of ore and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tons of coal to make a ton of finished steel. The economic situation has therefore changed and it becomes a practical proposition to carry the coal to the ore under some circumstances.

This Whyalla development will involve the erection of coke ovens, open-hearth facilities and rolling mills—in fact, a completely integrated steelworks. The nucleus already exists in the wharf facilities, blast furnaces, and machine shops and, with a large clear area of land available, there is the opportunity to lay out a fine modern plant. Before the works can be built it will be necessary to conduct negotiations with the South Australian Government for further supplies of fresh water. The planning of these works will take some years, and in any case, other more urgent work has to be undertaken at present. With the present dearth of men and materials it is impossible for any active erection to commence; indeed, at Whyalla today there are insufficient men to maintain the shipbuilding programme.

Now we come to a very important point. Mr. Essington Lewis continued:—

The South Australian Government is always most co-operative in industrial progress and tribute is paid to the part played by the Premier, the Honourable Thomas Playford. He has taken a great interest in Whyalla and has been most helpful in its development.

I appreciate the point made by Mr. Lewis that further developments in South Australia would take considerable planning, but in 1937 he was prepared to seek, and he confidently expected to get, the co-operation of the South Australian Government in providing additional water. Of course, it was only a question of varying the company's agreement so as to make a larger amount of water available to it than was previously provided for. In 1948, however, it looked as though the plans would begin to take shape in the near future for the establishment of a steel industry at Whyalla, and I believe that had Mr. Lewis remained in control of the affairs of the B.H.P. and had Mr. Darling not died those plans might have been much further advanced than they are today. Earlier in this debate the Premier referred to a statement he had received from the company. Its wording, which makes it sound like a communication from a powerful foreign state to an insignificant neighbour, was as follows:—

That the Premier of South Australia be informed—

1. That a careful review has been made by our officers of our forward construction programme and its relation to the likely Australian and New Zealand demand for steel products.

2. That the work at Port Kembla and the less amount of work at Newcastle must be given first priority both from the point of view of getting increased steel to the Australian market as expeditiously as possible and from the point of view of supplying it at a reasonable cost.

3. That our officers believe that the completion of the Port Kembla programme and the carrying out of some necessary works at Newcastle will not in themselves meet the forecasted Australian and New Zealand demand for steel, and that the deficiency in 1965 may be sufficient to justify the establishment of further steel-making units.

4. That so far as we can now see, it will be 1959 or 1960 before the programmed works at Port Kembla and Newcastle will be sufficiently advanced to permit any active steps being taken to erect additional facilities in readiness for this forecasted shortage in supply.

5. That the question of whether these increased facilities should then be erected will depend on the raw material position, the then condition of the steel market and other economic considerations, all of which will require a further close survey at or about the time the question is to be decided.

6. That a material factor in a decision to provide further steel-making units would be the iron ore position, and that on our present knowledge it appeared that ferruginous quartzites near Whyalla were one of the more likely sources of iron for Australia's future needs. Given reasonable co-operation by the South Australian Government, we were prepared to investigate fully the extent and treatment of these deposits.

7. That the directors confirm their continued interest and support for expansion in South Australia, but in order to avoid misunderstanding and premature commitment emphasize that the actual commencement of a further major venture in South Australia must be influenced by the work being carried out at Port Kembla and Newcastle and be subject to the economic conditions and the practicability of the project.

I draw the attention of the House to that significant passage: "The question of whether these increased facilities should then be erected will depend on the raw material position." That is precisely what is worrying me. In 1937, when Parliament passed the Indenture Bill, we fondly expected that plans for the establishment of a steelworks would begin to take shape within a reasonable time. The intervention of the war was justification for the postponement of the project, but the war has now been over for 10 years and yet the company now gladly tells us that it will not be in a position even

to begin thinking about anything at Whyalla until 1960—in another five years. The way those rich deposits of iron ore are being used to provide raw material for the steel industry in the eastern States creates in my mind the feeling that, by the time the company gets around to considering a steelworks here, the real significance of paragraph 5 of its statement to the Premier will be brought home to us, for there may not be enough iron ore available then to warrant the establishment of a steelworks at Whyalla and provide for the amortization of the huge capital cost over a period of years.

Mr. Riches—The company is less definite now than it was in 1937.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Much less definite. We have heard much in this debate about moral and legal rights, and it has been said that the Government has no right to interfere with an agreement made with anybody at any time. We have been told that the proposed action would be a repudiation of a solemn obligation, but I remind members that this Parliament has, for longer than I can remember, been passing legislation interfering with solemn obligations and rights. Legislation has been passed to enable the compulsory acquisition of land on which public works have been carried out, and in this connection Tonsley is the most recent example. Members may go to the South Para Valley and see where the ancestral home of the Gilberts, which was occupied by members of that family for more than 100 years, and surrounded by beautiful gardens and vineyards, has been compulsorily acquired to enable a reservoir to be built.

Mr. John Clark—There were seven such properties acquired there.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes; they were acquired in the interests of the community, to provide storage for water for the metropolitan area. On LeFevre Peninsula tracts of freehold land that were held by people intending to build seaside homes were acquired by the Government, which paid niggardly compensation. I could go on and give many such instances.

Mr. Riches—You would not have Woomera without compulsory acquisition.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—That is so; we have no compunction in dealing with the little man, but we are expected to keep our hands off the big monopoly. I do not suggest we should do an injustice to either the big monopoly, or the little man, but the same principle should apply in the case of both, and if it becomes necessary

to terminate the company's leases, as is proposed by the motion, in order to get the company to come to an agreement that will enable a steelworks to be established at Whyalla, that should be done. We should recognize however, that we have a fundamental obligation to provide the company with sufficient iron ore to maintain its industry in the eastern States. I am willing to accept that obligation. If we can come to an agreement to deal with the disposition of the known iron ore deposits and provide for the future development of the enormous quantities of low grade ore known to exist on Eyre Peninsula, the objective of the motion will have been achieved.

Two amendments have been moved, one by Mr. Quirke and another by Mr. Macgillivray. Both amendments however, take all the sting out of the motion. They are probably designed as a delaying action. Indeed, I can see no other purpose they can serve, because if Mr. Macgillivray's amendment is accepted, a Royal Commission appointed, and the Commission agrees with what my colleagues and I have been saying for years (that the Broken Hill Proprietary has a moral obligation to South Australia, which it has not discharged) what will be done about it? Obviously, the leases will have to be cancelled. Therefore, Mr. Macgillivray's amendment merely delays that process.

Mr. Macgillivray—Whatever was done would be done after inquiry and not before an inquiry as you suggest it should be.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—There has been sufficient inquiry since 1937, particularly since 1946. In 1953 this House decided something should be done. It has been said there is a difference between a Royal Commission and a Joint Committee. The Joint Committee that will be established if the motion is carried will have considerable powers conferred on it by Act of Parliament and will continue to exist so long as its contingent existence is necessary; therefore, it will be much more effective, efficient, and likely to do justice to this great issue than some Royal Commission composed of experts and other people from other parts.

Mr. Riches—There might even be a financial expert on it.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Yes, even from Alberta. There is merit in the motion, which has been moved with only one thought—to benefit South Australia by hastening the establishment of a steelworks here. For those reasons I confidently submit it to the House.

The SPEAKER—I have given consideration to the amendments, which I think are clear to

honourable members. The member for Stanley (Mr. Quirke) has moved first to insert after "South Australia" the words "and the Commonwealth." The question before the Chair is that the words "and the Commonwealth" proposed to be inserted be inserted.

Amendment negatived.

The SPEAKER—The member for Stanley has further moved to leave out all the words from and including the word "in" occurring after "South Australia" to and including the word "and" occurring after the word "State."

The House divided on the amendment:—

Ayes (22).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunnage, Goldney, Hawker, Heaslip, Hincks, the Hon. Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. Jenkins, Macgillivray, McIntosh, Millhouse, Pattinson, Pearson, Playford, Quirke (teller), Shannon, Stott, Teusner Travers and White.

Noes (13).—Messrs. John Clark, Corcoran, Davis, Hutchens, Jennings, Lawn, McAlees, O'Halloran (teller), Riches, Stephens, Tapping, Frank Walsh and Fred Walsh.

Pair.—Aye—Mr. Michael. No—Mr. Dunstan.

Majority of 9 for the Ayes.

Amendment thus carried.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member for Chaffey (Mr. Macgillivray) has moved to leave out the words "joint committee of both Houses, with equal representation of the Government and the Opposition" with a view to substituting the words "Royal Commission." The member for Stanley has also moved to leave out the words "with equal representation of the Government and the Opposition." I shall put the question in relation only to leaving out the words "joint committee of both Houses." The question before the Chair is that the words "joint committee of both Houses" proposed to be struck out stand as part of the motion.

Question resolved in the negative. Words proposed to be struck out, struck out.

The SPEAKER—The next question is that the words "Royal Commission" proposed to be inserted, be inserted.

The House divided on that question:—

Ayes (16).—Messrs. John Clark, Corcoran, Davis, Hutchens, Jennings, Lawn, Macgillivray (teller), McAlees, O'Halloran, Quirke, Riches, Stephens, Stott, Tapping, Frank Walsh and Fred Walsh.

Noes (19).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunnage, Goldney, Hawker, Heaslip, Hincks, the Hon. Sir George Jenkins,

Messrs. Jenkins, McIntosh, Millhouse, Pattinson, Pearson, Playford (teller), Shannon, Teusner, Travers and White.

Pair.—Aye—Mr. Dunstan. No—Mr. Michael.

Majority of 3 for the Noes.

Question thus resolved in the negative.

The SPEAKER—The motion now reads:—

That in the opinion of this House, in view of the urgency of the need for the establishment of a steelworks at or near Whyalla in the interests of the people of South Australia, with equal representation of the Government and the Opposition, should be appointed to advise the Parliament on the future use and disposal of all iron ore on Eyre Peninsula so that all interests may be fully considered and fairly served in the distribution of same.

Honourable members struck out "Joint Committee" but did not insert "Royal Commission," therefore I have before me a motion which is mutilated. It is customary to negative a mutilated motion. The question now is, "That the motion as amended be agreed to."

Motion as amended negatived.

#### HIRE-PURCHASE AGREEMENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 12. Page 1071.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—The most objectionable feature of the hire-purchase system, perhaps better known as the time-payment system, is the excessive profits made by those engaged in the business because of their exorbitant interest charges, which are calculated over the whole period of the contract. I believe that in most cases these firms borrow on overdraft at 5 per cent, but on top of that they make an exorbitant charge to the customer. I have in mind the sale of a used motor car, a four-cylinder job of the 1940 vintage. It was rather an expensive toy at the price of about £400, to which the salesman added about £83 for interest. I considered that exorbitant, particularly in view of the model of the car, and that is not an isolated case. The purchaser lived a few miles from his place of employment and if he worked four hours on a Saturday morning he received six hours' pay, and if he returned to work on the Sunday and worked for eight hours he received 16 hours' pay. After meeting the expenses associated with keeping his family of a wife and child and payments on the purchase of his home and car, not much was left from his wages. I consider the profits made by the time payment service

are too high, seeing that the firms are able to borrow on bank overdraft at daily balance at 5 per cent and they charge possibly 10 or 12½ per cent over the full period of payment, which may continue for two years or even longer. Those who set themselves up in the time-payment business make huge profits on interest alone. The object of the Opposition in introducing this legislation is not to condemn the service which is desired by some people. Many goods are bought on the non-deposit basis, but I believe there should be some reasonable standard of equity in the commodity purchased. I ask leave to continue.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

[*Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.*]

#### MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

#### GAS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

#### BUDGET DEBATE.

In Committee of Supply.

(Continued from October 18. Page 1137.)

Legislative Council, £10,246.

Mr. JENNINGS (Prospect)—The financial statement before us is probably the most mournful document that man has ever scanned. If anything surpassed its mournfulness it was the doleful way in which the Treasurer introduced it. We are told at least every second day that South Australia is the most prosperous State in Australia, and, of course, Australia is the most prosperous country in the world, yet this State has budgeted for a large deficit. Presumably it is another of the problems of prosperity. I cannot realize how poverty can be compatible with prosperity, yet we are asked to believe that it is. I assure members that if our problems are those of prosperity I, as an individual, cannot contribute much to the problems. I imagine that a large section of the people, which includes the old age and invalid pensioners, and basic wage earners who now get 13s. a week less than they should get because of cost of living rises whilst their wage adjustments are suspended, cannot be accused of contributing much to the economic problems of the country. The Commonwealth Government has introduced a programme designed to save Australia from bankruptcy. We are told that that Government has got the country in a bad way, and that is so. We are also told that our trade balances are suffering,

and so they are. Anyone with half an eye can see that our overseas funds are almost completely dissipated. These things are all true and we admit them, but the important point is that they have all happened whilst the present Commonwealth Government has been in office. When it assumed office our overseas reserves were at an all time high. Now we have to drastically restrict imports in order to balance things, and it is doubtful whether we will be able to do that.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the first action taken by the present Commonwealth Government was the abolition of import licences. I agree it was one of the first actions taken, but the Commonwealth Government took two actions simultaneously. They were the abolition of import licences and the abolition of credit control. These two things should not have been done simultaneously because both were designed to put the economy of the country in a topsy-turvy state, and that is what happened. During the regime of the Chifley Government imports were permitted under a licensing system. It was arranged that goods essential to the development of our economy could come in whilst those not contributing to the economy were kept out. Under that system our trade balances overseas rose to a record height. The Commonwealth Government abolished import licences and consequently anything at all could be brought in. Rubbish and trinkets of all kinds were imported. Our internal markets were completely flooded by the importation of useless goods. We had the amazing illustration of biscuits being sent from Australia to England, being put into different packets and then brought back again.

This sort of thing went on until the Federal Government belatedly woke up and realized that the huge surpluses overseas had almost gone. Then a strict closure was put on imports. Not only were non-essential goods kept out, but many of the goods really needed. It also had the effect of ruining a number of small businesses set up for the purpose of retailing imported goods. When the drastic restrictions were imposed on imports we earned the opprobrium of people overseas, particularly our British friends who suddenly found, without any notice at all, that their exports to us were drastically curtailed. After that we found that the credit control policy maintained during the war period by the Chifley Government had been abolished by the present Commonwealth Government. The

capital issues control of the Labor Government was designed to ensure that money available for investment was used advantageously. When the control was abolished all of a sudden we found money invested not in housing, or in industries that would produce essential goods, but in luxury lines which were not needed, but which offered a more attractive investment to those with money to spare. It was more attractive because there was no price control on luxury goods, whilst price control was retained, until fairly recently, on essential goods. These two simultaneous actions by the Commonwealth Government have caused the economic problems we have today, and they are not problems of prosperity.

Mr. O'Halloran—They are problems resulting from stupidity.

Mr. JENNINGS—Yes. They have resulted from stupid actions by the Commonwealth Government, aided and abetted by the Government of this State. I want to refer to the Premier's action in connection with the 1948 referendum on price control, which was defeated.

The CHAIRMAN—Honourable members must not converse aloud.

Mr. JENNINGS—In 1948 the Premier went all around this State with his friend the then Leader of the Federal Opposition, Mr. Menzies, asking the people to vote against giving power to the Federal Government to control prices. The people of this State knew that such an unholy alliance between the Premier and Mr. Menzies would not do anything to their benefit, so they wisely voted in favour of price control. Unfortunately, however, the Liberal leaders in other States were not so well and unfavourably known, and the referendum was defeated, with the result that since then we have had no decent price control. The results are reflected in this financial position I am now discussing. The Budget this year provides for a deficit of \$748,000, yet we are told this is the most prosperous State in Australia. If that is prosperity I think it is still around the corner.

Recently we have seen an attempt by the Federal Government to curtail hire-purchase. The Prime Minister asked executives of hire-purchase companies to insist on deposits, which must have the effect of curtailing these transactions. Indeed, Mr. Menzies admitted openly that that was the purpose. On the other hand, the Premier of this State opposed a legislative move made by the Opposition to restrict the exploitation of purchasers under hire-purchase agreements, though not to curtail

hire-purchase. The Premier, in opposing the Bill, completely diverged from the attitude of his friends in Canberra. One of the reasons he advanced was that it was likely to have a curtailing effect on hire-purchase, but that of course was only an excuse because the Bill, if enacted, could not have had that effect. The Prime Minister, who has no legislative authority over hire-purchase transactions and cannot take any restrictive action against them because of the Commonwealth Constitution, requested executives of finance companies in conference to take action to curtail their transactions.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—Did not Dr. Evatt say it was a wicked thing to curtail these transactions?

Mr. JENNINGS—I think he did, and I agree with him.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—Yet you want a Bill to do the same thing.

Mr. JENNINGS—Our Bill was—

The CHAIRMAN—The honourable member cannot refer to a Bill that is not before the House.

Mr. JENNINGS—I am not speaking about a Bill but about the actions taken by the Federal Government. The honourable member should know that the Leader of the Opposition said the Bill was not intended to curtail hire-purchase, yet the Premier used the fact that this action might have had that effect as one of his reasons for opposing the Bill. I realize that some things take a long time to sink in, so I suggest the honourable member refer to *Hansard* on this subject tomorrow.

The Premier spoke about tax reimbursements to the States, on which I believe he has very good grounds for complaint. Unfortunately, however, he has not been very persistent about it, and has suggested a remedy that is not a real remedy at all. He said that if we were now using our own taxing powers, instead of allowing the Commonwealth Government to collect taxes for us and then reimburse us, we would be much better off. I have not a gang of statisticians to help me as the Premier has, but I think that it is very questionable whether we would be better off. The honourable member for Burnside (Mr. Geoffrey Clarke), in his very learned dissertation, said that our taxing capacity has gone up of recent years and therefore we would be better off now if we collected our own taxation.

The Premier also said that since uniform taxation was initiated the productivity of South Australia has so much increased that instead of being a Cinderella among the States we are the leading State. However, the true position is that that great increase and the fact that we have over the last few years gone ahead in comparison with other States, are due solely to the benefits of uniform taxation. Because of it we have risen to the stage where we can say, "Thank you, now we will get out; we will bite the hand that fed us." That is the argument put forward by the Premier, aided by his able henchman, the honourable member for Burnside, but I do not believe it is a true story because I believe South Australia and every other State is better off under uniform taxation. Of course uniform taxation, like any other system, can be wisely or badly administered. The Premier, in his financial statement, admitted that over the last few years the States have found themselves in their present awful predicament because of the actions of the present Federal Government.

It is beyond doubt that several of the States, South Australia not the least of them, are suffering from the maladministration of this system of uniform taxation because of the inequitable reimbursements, but the answer to that is not to abolish the system but to put into office in Canberra a Government that will properly administer the system. I cannot see anything wrong with uniform taxation in principle. I cannot think of anything worse than that Australia should be financially and economically divided into seven separate parts. That is like having a Canberra army, a Victorian army and a South Australian army during war, all marching off separately.

Mr Geoffrey Clarke—The United States manages very effectively with 49 taxing authorities.

Mr. JENNINGS—If the honourable member wants to be technical, I point out that we have seven taxing authorities here, but, as the Premier said in reply to a question today, if the big bad wolf gets in first there is not much left for the rest. That is precisely the position in the United States today. The Federal taxing authority gets the cream and the States get the rest, as the States do here. Local government authorities are finding that out, and so are the people who pay petrol tax but find that the money is not being used on the roads. Instead of our seeking to revert to a system of State taxation with the States controlling their own finances, we should be

seeking to transfer greater and greater powers to the national Parliament so that eventually the one taxing authority would be the Parliament that has sovereign powers in our Constitutional set-up.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—In other words, you believe in the abolition of the States and in unification.

Mr. JENNINGS—I believe in the abolition of States as they are at the moment.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—And in unification?

Mr. JENNINGS—I do not believe in the present Federal system that gives sovereign power to State Parliaments and only delegated powers to the Federal Parliament. I believe the Federal Government should have the sovereign powers and that it should delegate powers to the States.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—That is unification.

Mr. JENNINGS—The honourable member can interpret my words as he wishes.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—You must accept responsibility for your policy of unification.

Mr. JENNINGS—We are quite unequivocal about it. As the honourable member has drawn attention to himself in his flamboyant way, let me say that one remark of his that I found attractive was that when the Budgets of former years were delivered people filled the galleries to hear the Premier and see whether or not they were going to have another 6d. a week taken out of their pay envelopes.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—The Leader of the Opposition was lamenting the lack of interest when your Party walked out during his speech.

Mr. JENNINGS—The honourable member said the galleries were filled when the Premier introduced his Budgets in the past. That certainly would be one reason why the Premier is opposed to uniform taxation, because knowing the Premier as we do we know that anything that would deprive him of a gallery would be unpopular with him. Now he only gets two or three persons listening to him delivering his Budget, whereas previously he had a big audience. The Budget has always been delivered immediately after question time, and who are the people in the gallery then? Are they the wage slaves from Holdens or the abattoirs?

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—The Budget was frequently given at night.

Mr. O'Halloran—No, and I have been here longer than the honourable member has.

Mr. JENNINGS—There are two authorities at variance on the issue, but I must reluctantly accept the opinion of the Leader of the Opposition in preference to that of the honourable member for Burnside. At any rate, the people listening to the Treasurer delivering his Budget were those who were concerned about whether their income tax would be higher, the business people.

Mr. McAlees—Big ones, too.

Mr. JENNINGS—Yes, the people who thrive on the labour of others. They were anxious to know what investments to get into quickly, or what to get out of quickly. They were here to get the news from the horse's mouth, so to speak. This State is in an awful mess, not as a result of uniform taxation, but of the financial policy of the present Federal Government that was helped into office by the Treasurer's own Party. Although the Treasurer, in his Budget speech, frequently criticised Mr. Menzies and cast all sorts of reflections on the economic actions of the present Federal Government, I wonder what will happen when the next Federal elections come around.

Mr. John Clark—You know what will happen.

Mr. JENNINGS—I have a pretty good idea, judging by what has happened in the past. The Treasurer described the Prime Minister as one of our worst administrators and one of the worst financiers we have ever had.

Mr. John Clark—And rightly so.

Mr. JENNINGS—Yes, but the Treasurer and the Prime Minister will be touring this State speaking on every platform together and slapping one another on the back. Mr. Playford will say, "Vote for my pal Bob," and when the State elections come around we shall probably have prominent Liberal figures in the Federal sphere, who will then be in Opposition, coming here to assist our Treasurer back into office, but their efforts will be futile because our Treasurer will not find himself in his present awkward position after next March. The Treasurer is in an awkward position because he has had to bring down an unpopular Budget, but it will be the last time he will have to do it. I have been told before that when we discuss all sorts of matters on the Budget it is a good thing to mention problems concerning one's own district because they will be investigated by departmental officers and

appropriate action will be taken. I used to believe that when I was a little more unsophisticated.

Mr. Stott—Before you came here.

Mr. JENNINGS—Yes. I was told that during the first session I was here, but I have been completely disillusioned since because I now know that nobody could care less about what is said regarding district matters. There is only one Minister who ever pays members the courtesy of reading their speeches in *Hansard*.

Mr. Stott—Courtesy or temerity?

Mr. JENNINGS—I said courtesy, but that was my third choice of a word. I refer to the Minister of Works.

Mr. Macgillivray—That will be a lesson to the two Ministers who are here.

Mr. JENNINGS—Yes, and they are slow to learn.

Mr. Macgillivray—What about the Minister of Lands?

Mr. JENNINGS—I have not had much need to trouble him because we have few irrigation problems in Prospect. We have many drainage problems, but I understand they are not the sort of problems in which he is interested. The Minister of Education is present and I shall refer to a matter I raised by question yesterday of a swimming pool for a school in my electorate. Perhaps I did not make my position quite clear. I believe I did not because the answer I received was not an answer to the question. The Minister referred to an article that had been printed in a Sunday newspaper a week or two ago. I assure him that if he did not know, and his Director did not know, anything about the proposal of the school committee to establish this pool, then the fault was not with the school committee, but with the Minister or his servants, because a plan of the school grounds showing the proposed pool was lodged with the department at least two years ago. In company with other people I discussed this proposal with a high official of the Education Department, so if the matter had not been placed before the Minister or his director I can only say that the fault was not with the school committee. I assure the Minister that no discourtesy was intended in having details of the plan published in the press.

The Hon. B. Pattinson—The plan certainly had not reached me and the sponsor got in

touch with me on the Monday after the article appeared in the newspaper. That was the first I had heard of it.

Mr. JENNINGS—I am certain that was not the fault of the sponsor of the plan.

The Hon. B. Pattinson—The sponsor admitted he did not get in touch with me about it.

Mr. JENNINGS—I do not doubt that. After all, the Minister is an important person and chairmen of school committees do not, as a rule, get in touch with him, but with their member of Parliament or departmental officers. All that was intended by publishing this article in the press was to arouse a little local interest so that money could be raised, and surely that is not undesirable. If we can raise a few thousand pounds to establish a swimming pool it is something that the Minister should encourage. He should not adopt the attitude that just because he himself did not see the plan before it was published it should dampen the result.

The Hon. B. Pattinson—I did not mean that; I was merely stating a fact.

Mr. JENNINGS—I do not doubt that the facts are right, but in the meantime something has gone wrong somewhere, but that was not the fault of the school committee. I sympathize with the Government for having to bring down a Budget such as this. It is in an awful predicament as a result of this Budget and its foolish actions in the past. I shall be more sympathetic to the Government if the Treasurer, at the next Federal elections, acts consistently with the statements he made that were derogatory to the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood)—I do not intend to speak at length on the first line, as I shall reserve most of my remarks about the unsuccessful Administration now occupying the Government benches until we get to the lines, but I hope my remarks about Government policy will be found brief and pungent. Recently the Treasurer has accused me of attributing the ills of this State to the present electoral system, and I accept his challenge. It certainly is my view that the major ills of the State are the result of that system, one which has been perpetuated by the Government's instructions to the commissioners who arranged the recent redistribution. Under the South Australian system we find the minority of people electing the Government, but perhaps



after next March the majority will at last have their voice because the redistribution is slightly better than the previous system. However, even under the redistribution about a third of the people elect about two-thirds of the members of this House. Since 1938 on only one occasion has the Liberal and Country League, which has occupied the Treasury benches in that period, had the support of the majority of South Australians. A system whereby a 56 per cent majority polled by Labor candidates at the last State election could return only 14 members as against the 21 members returned by only 42 per cent of the people who voted for the Liberal Party is a complete negation of democracy. The result is that in South Australia we have a Government that so far has not had any fear that it might be turned out by the people at the next elections. The Playford Government takes the attitude, "We don't have to regard the votes of the people because they don't matter. We are not here on votes but on wealth, land, and anything else that has nothing to do with democracy."

In reply to my contention the Treasurer recently said, in effect, "The honourable member for Norwood has said that this means much ill to South Australia, but under the present Liberal Government this State has gone from having the lowest production per head in Australia to the highest." That is true, but the Treasurer seeks to infer from that that South Australians are better off than people in any other State. He says that they have the highest productivity per head, the highest Savings Bank deposits per head, the highest number of motor cars per head, the highest number of wireless licences per head. He quotes chosen items of household expenditure that are priced higher in other States than they are here and implies that these things show the average South Australian is better off than the average man in any other State.

Mr. Jennings—South Australia hasn't built the most homes.

Mr. DUNSTAN—No, and I will deal with that in a moment. All the Treasurer's contentions are based on a carefully made selection of figures, but I am indebted for a knowledge of the real position to the Commonwealth Statistician, who publishes the *Monthly Review of Business Statistics*, because he shows that the real wages (not the nominal wages) in South Australia are lower than those in all other States except Western Australia. The real wage is the real criterion because

it shows the nominal wage against what can be bought with it. The Commonwealth Statistician equates the average nominal wage in South Australia with the average cost to the worker of the various items he must buy, and the figures show that for some period now, although this State has the highest productivity per capita, it has the second lowest level of real wages in the Commonwealth. Although our workers produce more, they share less in the products of their labour. What the Playford Government has meant to the workers of South Australia is that, although they have consistently produced more and although our unionists have given a fair day's work, they have not received as much pay for that work as has the average man in other States, who produces less per head. The Treasurer can quote all sorts of selected figures, but the overall picture is perfectly clear from the figures on page 24 of the *Monthly Review* of June, 1955.

Further, the Treasurer is fond of quoting statistics about housing, but he has the habit of failing to relate the housing figures to the real social need for housing in the community. After all, it is a question not of how many houses have been built, but how many houses are built as related to the social need. Any other figures are completely unreal. The Treasurer has related the figures for housing per head of population in this State to those, for instance, of Queensland. It must be remembered, however, that we, in South Australia, have a certain social pattern that requires for the average family some separate dwelling. Indeed, anybody who has anything to do with the legal side of matrimonial relations—and most lawyers in South Australia, unfortunately, are continually faced with problems of that nature—knows full well that, if a family has to live in cramped quarters, trouble often results. Mr. Playford, however, ignores the fact that in Queensland the attitude of a large section of the population towards housing is not the same as that of South Australians, as many Queenslanders are accustomed to living in much more confined circumstances and do not desire to change to the social setup of housing that we know in South Australia. Consequently, it is not a question of how many houses there are per head of population, but of how far we are meeting our social needs in that regard. All metropolitan members know of the cruel circumstances in which many families find themselves today.

Mr. Riches—Such circumstances are found in the country, too.

Mr. DUNSTAN—True, but I do not think any other member has brought to his notice any more pitiable cases requiring adequate accommodation than I have in my district, and I should like to cite a few examples. Recently, I had brought to my attention the case of a family that had applied to the Housing Trust 3½ years previously for a rental home. Of course, they could not expect to get such a home, because if an applicant is not an ex-serviceman the Housing Trust cannot satisfy his need unless he applied during or before 1949. Indeed, I know of people in the Norwood district who have been waiting since 1946 and 1947, but admittedly, their need is not as great as that of the family to which I now refer. For the average applicant the wait is a minimum of six years.

Mr. Hutchens—And the couple who bred a family and supplied soldiers have no chance whatever.

Mr. DUNSTAN—No, they are not considered. A family to which I refer had also applied for an emergency home some time ago, and had told the trust of their difficult housing position, warning it about a year ago that they would be unable to stay much longer in their present home because they were only boarders there and the tenants would be leaving the house. According to a doctor, the wife lost two children as a direct result of the family's unsatisfactory housing position over the years, and the couple were trying a third time. Eventually, the woman had to go on the street, pregnant. The trust could not help her and no emergency accommodation was available. That is not an isolated case. The trust had a certificate from her doctor about the dangers to the woman and her unborn child. It had ample warning, but because of the trust's inability to house them, the couple with all their furniture have had to take temporary shelter in a tiny room in Norwood, and where they are going to next we do not know.

I know of dozens of young families with two or three children living in one damp room—and there are many damp houses in Norwood. When I go to the trust on their behalf, however, I am told, quite frankly, that it is impossible to help people in those circumstances and that they are in no worse circumstances than hundreds of other couples awaiting emergency homes. Therefore, members on

this side who are continually faced with such cases are markedly unimpressed by the statistics the Treasurer is so fond of quoting about the number of houses being built in South Australia. It is the number of houses in relation to the social need that counts, and it cannot be denied that, if the Government had chosen to see that building materials were properly handled instead of being sown up by the brick combine and other such organizations in this State, we could have built more houses than we have and made better provision for the people who today find themselves in circumstances such as I have described. Despite these facts, however, the Treasurer refuses to change his policy and control building materials. It again becomes a question of the influence on this Government exercised by the people of this State. Why has the Treasurer so far seen fit to ignore the needs of the people living in the crowded metropolitan area? I do not refer, of course, to the people in the more snooty districts, and in the safe electorates of Mitcham and Burnside, where few of the conditions I have mentioned exist. I admit that Mr. Playford has not ignored the needs of the electors of Springfield, but he has ignored those of the people of Norwood, Stepney, Maylands, St. Peters, Adelaide, and the western districts. Why? Because he has been able to say to those people, "I don't care about your votes at the ballot box. I'm still here because I can exist on a minority vote as the Government of the people, but not for the people and not by the people." In South Australia we have government by Mr. Playford of the people for Mr. Playford's friends and supporters who are in the minority in this community.

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—I am disappointed that members are being pressed to complete the debate on the first line. The Treasurer introduced the Budget on October 11 and the Leader of the Opposition was called upon to reply without having an opportunity to study the Auditor-General's report which was tabled only a few minutes before he spoke yesterday. I have not been advised whether the Treasurer has changed his mind about pressing this debate. He, of course, is in the fortunate position of having a large and able staff to aid him, not only in the preparation of Budget figures, but of the speeches he makes. A private member must do his own preparing and the only real assistance he can hope for is from the Auditor-General's report—a document comprising 298 pages approximately

14in. by 8in. in size. In order to address himself properly to this important matter a member requires time, not only to read that large volume, but to study it thoroughly. The Budget is the most important debate in this House. It is one of the few occasions when Cabinet must give an account of its stewardship of public money.

Now that the pressure is being applied, it is interesting to reflect on what has happened in the past weeks and months. The House met for the fourth and final session of this Parliament on May 19. At that stage there were 65 possible sitting days excluding Show Week but up to the present time we have sat for 41 days—including today—and until September 22 on 20 occasions the House adjourned before 6 p.m. because of the Government's lack of desire to press on with business. We are now asked to deal with the Budget with undue haste and without an opportunity of studying the Auditor-General's report. It is interesting to note the silence of Government supporters during this debate. Only the Treasurer and two Government members have spoken.

Mr. Riches—Their silence is more eloquent than their speeches.

Mr. HUTCHENS—They may have realized that there is something in the old axiom that if you cannot say something good it is better to say nothing. That is possibly why they have refrained from speaking on this dull and gloomy Budget on the eve of an election. The citizens of this State might well ask why their representatives have been cheated and chiselled out of an opportunity of making a fair and full examination of the Budget. The *News*, when reporting the Treasurer's speech, headlined it "Playford Slates Menzies." Who has worked harder than the Treasurer of South Australia to put the Right Hon. R. G. Menzies and Sir Arthur Fadden and their Government where it is today? Who has been a stronger advocate for the Federal Liberal Country League Government than the Honourable Thomas Playford?

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—Dr. Evatt has done a bit towards it too.

Mr. HUTCHENS—If Dr. Evatt has done anything for the present Federal Government may the Lord have mercy on his soul. After having slated the Prime Minister—and, I must admit, with some justification—the Treasurer made his usual pre-election tongue-in-cheek speech about uniform taxation. In 1952 he also had much to say about this matter but has

said little since. I must admit that the member for Burnside (Mr. Geoffrey Clarke) put forward his best effort up to the present in supporting the Treasurer.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—The Labour Government intended handing the taxing powers back to the States after the war.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I wish Government members would make up their minds because today the Treasurer gave a long drawn out reply to a question on this matter and he said that the States had no powers. I do not know if the member for Burnside is aware of the fact that we are discussing this matter in Committee and that he will have an opportunity of making another speech if he so desires when we consider the various lines. When he spoke, members on this side refrained from interjecting but he has been a continuous and most annoying interjector—not because of the weight of his arguments but because of the foolishness of his interjections. Before the advent of uniform taxation the member for Burnside said that the galleries of this House were filled. If they had been filled with workers this place would have vibrated.

Mr. Riches—The galleries have not been filled for the last 22 years.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I am not prepared to accuse the member for Burnside of telling an untruth, but I must accept what my colleague says. I doubt whether Government members are genuine in their desire for a return to State taxation.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—Every Labor Premier in Australia has at one time or another urged the return of taxing powers to the States.

Mr. HUTCHENS—If I am allowed to continue, I was going to say that the people of this State suffered more under State taxation. I could quote many figures to prove that. Prior to uniform taxation, the tax on an income of £600—and I have taken that figure because it is approximately the amount received by a basic wage earner today—was £89 9s. in South Australia—the highest in the Commonwealth—as compared with £26 2s. under uniform taxation. In case the member for Burnside queries those figures I recommend that he goes to the Taxation Department for verification of them because I checked my figures. It is interesting to study the development of the States to ascertain what has happened under uniform taxation as compared with the position when the States had the right to tax. I have taken my figures

from the *Statesman's Pocket Year Book* which is supplied and approved by the State Government. In 1938-39 there were 2,067 factories in South Australia employing 43,371 persons. In 1949-50—after the introduction of uniform taxation—there were 3,046 factories employing 78,436 people. In 1953-54 there were 3,577 factories employing 85,503 people.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—It does not look as though the Menzies and Playford Governments have done a bad job at all.

Mr. HUTCHENS—If the honourable member wants me to compliment the Treasurer I am quite prepared to do so. The Treasurer is alert and cunning and is prepared to plan and wait until the opportune time to develop his powers to mesmerize and hypnotize before he springs upon his prey. I suggest that those qualities are possessed by the fox and also the snake.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, is the honourable member in order in likening the qualities of the Treasurer to those of the fox and the snake?

The CHAIRMAN—The honourable member is out of order and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I withdraw, but I would be grateful if the honourable member refrained from interjecting. The next thing is to study how the State has improved its position under uniform taxation. I will give the figures showing the value added to materials by treatment. In 1938-39 the amount was £13,678,930 and in 1953-54 it was £100,221,462, a very substantial increase of more than £80,000,000. I feel that some credit for this must be given to the operation of uniform taxation. As to the value per inhabitant, in 1938-39 it amounted to £22 19s. 9d. per head and in 1953-54 to £127 10s. The gross output of factories in 1938-39 amounted to £35,005,264, in 1949-50 to £141,572,319 and in 1953-54 to £265,311,023, an increase of £200,000,000 since the operation of uniform taxation. The output per head amounted to £58 16s. 5d. in 1938-39, to £266 16s. 4d. in 1949-50 and to £337 10s. 6d. in 1953-54, an increase of £278 14s. 1d. over that period. One should do quite a lot of thinking before advocating the return to the States of their income taxing power. In spite of this development under uniform taxation, we must not overlook the fact that South Australia in many respects is far behind the more highly developed eastern States. The most recent figures from the *Commonwealth Year Book* show the following facts:—New South Wales

has an average population per square mile of 11.6, Victoria 26.82, Tasmania 12.05, South Australia only 1.98, Queensland 1.86, and Western Australia 0.63. It is rather strange that we find the States complaining to a greater extent than ever before. On November 30, 1949, the late Hon. J. B. Chifley, when Prime Minister, had the following to say, and it appeared in the *Advertiser* of December 1 that year:—

Not one Premier in Australia, including Mr. Playford, can say they have not received a fair deal at the hands of the Federal Government.

Up to that time the taxes were collected under a Labor Government. Unfortunately, since then the Liberal-Country Party Government has had control and some rapid increases in the national debt have occurred. The *Pocket Year Book*, under the heading "State Public Debt," gives the following figures:—In 1949 the total was £127,501,000, or £187 14s. per head, but in 1954, under a Liberal-Country Party Government, the State debt had increased to £224,185,000, or £281 5s. per head, an increase of £95,686,000, or £93 11s. per head. The Treasurer in his Budget speech made the following remark, which left me thinking:—

This year will be a difficult one for the State finances, but that will, I trust, be a passing phase. The community at large must, in the interests of progress and development, adjust itself in certain ways, particularly so as to avoid overspending both externally and internally. It must face the fact that the prices for our exported produce are unlikely in the near future to recover towards the previous peak levels. However, with a very good season ahead, all reservoirs filled and a valuable stand-by in the Mannum pipeline, full employment, profitable manufacturing industries and flourishing commerce, there is no real threat to our standard of living.

I wondered what it all meant. Does it mean that the 85,503 people employed in factories who were denied the 13s. a week increase in wages owing to the cancellation of quarterly adjustments must give to industry in South Australia £55,575 per week, and the 28,000 State employees for the same reason must give to the State each week £18,200? It is proposed to spend under the Budget about £60,513,000. A total of £13,870,000 will be made available from tax reimbursements and £5,400,000 from the Grants Commission, a total of £19,270,000. The deficit is expected to be £748,000. To justify this the Treasurer told the House that the State expenditure had increased because of marginal wage increases. The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that this year there will be 27

pay days for most Government employees, whereas the number is usually 26. Taking into account the average wage paid to the 28,000 Government employees, the extra payment will amount to about £900,000, which is approximately £150,000 in excess of the expected deficit. I submit that perhaps a miscalculation resulted in that figure being arrived at.

When speaking yesterday at the opening of the Municipal Tramways Trust bus depot at Hackney the Treasurer is reported as having said:—

Public transport in every country in the world had run into difficulties of late.

I do not doubt that, but I am somewhat concerned about the amounts allocated by Parliament to the trust. In 1952, when the original proposal was placed before us, we were told that if £1,180,000 was granted between then and 1956-57, the trust would be able to carry on itself. The actual amounts made available have been far in excess of those mentioned earlier, and with the estimated amount of £570,000 for 1955-56 the total will be £2,570,000. The Treasurer has promised assistance to the trust without giving Parliament any say in the way the money should be spent. Members can go to the trust and show where there is a need for a service without getting any satisfaction, yet the trust can pour millions of pounds down the drain without Parliament being able to prevent it.

I protest against the delay by the trust in providing transport services for Kidman Park. Recently the Housing Trust built about 240 houses in the area, and in the main they are occupied. Nearby a similar number of other houses have been built, but no transport service is available within easy distance. Before the building of the Kidman Park houses I went with interested people to the trust and submitted a case for a service, but we were told that one could not be arranged. With the completion of the houses another approach by correspondence was made. Two letters were sent and the last reply said that when the industrial problem of manning one-man buses was overcome the trust might be able to consider a service. At the same time, however, the trust gave a service to Beaumont where there are considerably fewer houses, and almost all the householders have at least one motor car. The letter from the trust showed clearly that it does not care whether or not a service is necessary. It is only trying to

break down a principle for which the employees have been fighting for some time. Parliament should refrain from voting money to the trust until it has more say in how the money is spent.

The Leader of the Opposition made some timely remarks about the statement by the Treasurer that there would be no increases in water charges, and he pointed out that there were increases because of the additional revenue received. Let me give one instance of how the cost of water has increased. One man who produces food for the nation used to pay £224 in water rates, but under the new assessment he pays £309. Under the present system metropolitan residents and primary producers are seriously affected. If there is a need to get additional revenue the rates and not the assessments should be altered. On August 30 I asked the Premier a question about the strength of our police force. I was told that there were 35 first-class sergeants in 1951, 32 in 1953 and 28 in 1955. There were 24 second-class sergeants in 1951, 23 in 1953 and 17 in 1955. There were 19 third-class sergeants in 1951, 70 in 1953 and 65 in 1955. This indicates that third-class sergeants are being used to do all the work necessary because it is cheaper to use them than first- and second-class sergeants. The Government is concerned only with the welfare of big business, which it allows to ride on the backs of the workers and primary producers.

Mr. CORCORAN (Victoria)—I am rather concerned about the deficit of £748,000 which I assume is linked up with the position in the Federal sphere, because the attitude of the Federal Government must have some repercussions on this State. Despite all that is said about this State being the most prosperous in the Commonwealth, sufficient receipts are not forthcoming to meet the amount required by the various departments and institutions for which the Government is responsible. I have a recollection of what occurred prior to the last war and of the attitude adopted by the Federal Government then. I sincerely hope that there is nothing in the present situation that would indicate the possibility of a repetition of that state of affairs. A lot has been said about uniform taxation and many advantages have been claimed by Government members in a return to the States of their taxing powers, but I cannot see that it matters much who has the responsibility of levying taxation. It is just a matter of being satisfied that the most equitable basis is adopted. I venture the

opinion that the Premier would not enjoy his present popularity if he had the responsibility of taxing the people. That is what makes me believe he may not be so eager as he pretends to have the right to exploit the taxation field.

The honourable member for Burnside (Mr. Geoffrey Clarke) also spoke against uniform taxation, but what does it matter? We have only a certain source from which we can collect our revenue and the fewer the people who carry out the responsibility the less the expenditure involved. I am only concerned to see that the most equitable basis is adopted, and I am inclined to believe from the unfavourable comments by the Premier when introducing the Budget that the basis adopted by the present Federal Government is not the most equitable. The distribution of taxation by the Federal Labor Government was on a more equitable basis. I know that the world today is not in a good position, but thank God world affairs are in a more encouraging position than they were. The great thing that has been achieved is that the different countries have made approaches to each other and they are now having talks together.

I know that there has been a big falling off in some of the revenue-producing sources in this country, and this is naturally affecting our economy. I am speaking particularly about the decline in wool prices because wool is very important to us. As there has been a decline of 25 per cent in the price we can easily realize the enormous effect it will have on our economy. Coming events cast their shadows before them, so let us hope that the cautious attitude of the Federal Government is not an indication that we are approaching a period of recession.

The pegging of the basic wage has also been mentioned in this debate, and accepting the figures quoted by the Leader of the Opposition, the amount lost to each individual is 13s. a week. I remember when the Arbitration Court stopped quarterly adjustments, and argued that it would arrest the rising spiral of the cost of living. Unfortunately, it was the worker who was called upon to make a sacrifice that has not borne any fruit and has been nullified by lack of price control. Wage pegging was hopeless from the start because no steps were taken concomitantly to control prices. When Mr. Ben Chifley realized the futility of doing anything unless the Government had control of prices and appealed by way of a referendum to the people, the Premier of this State in his wisdom or otherwise opposed giving more power to the Federal

Government. In matters of this sort it has only to be whispered that the Federal Government has enough power and such a move will be defeated.

Mr. O'Halloran—The present Federal Government has too much power.

Mr. CORCORAN—It has, unfortunately. I do not wish to be unfair to the Premier, but I can remember his saying that it was not necessary for the Commonwealth to control prices because the States had sufficient power. We did not disagree with him, but we said it was essential to have uniformity amongst the various States to get results. However, he did not agree with us and said that the States could do the job. Does he now think that his prophecy has been realized, or that he has failed? Does he think we were justified in saying that price control was a matter for the national Parliament. I think the views of the Labor Party have been proved correct. The worker has had to make many sacrifices, but nothing has been achieved because we cannot control prices effectively, and the Treasurer must take his share of the responsibility for that.

I am concerned for the interests of the country, and I do not want it said that members on this side of the House are out to obstruct progress, but we were told that today when the Premier, in speaking on the Demolition of Dwellinghouses Control Bill, said that we were an obstruction on the road to progress because we wanted to retard the demolition of houses. We acknowledge that at some time in the future many houses will have to be demolished.

The CHAIRMAN—I ask the honourable member not to refer to that matter because there is a Bill on it before the House.

Mr. CORCORAN—I was only saying that the Labor Party stands for progress and equality of sacrifice. We do not want to see the worker penalized and called upon to make sacrifices that other people are not called upon to make. My Party has always advocated progress and has helped to foster it. When we hear the Treasurer budgeting for a deficit we wonder whether the Government has exploited all the State's resources. South Australia is principally a primary producing State, and I believe there is great scope for utilizing all the resources of primary production. Are we doing all we can in this direction and thereby helping to balance the Budget? The Labour Party is prepared to do all it can to this end. However, no matter what Bills we introduce they never get the support of members opposite. Surely, some of them have

some merit, and I often wonder when the Government will realize that. I am concerned for the future of this country and I hope that when I pass on I shall leave it a better place for the rising generation.

I am sure that if all Governments had faithfully followed the Labor Party's policy of decentralization we would be in a better economic position today. Ministers often speak of great water schemes, and I am happy that the people of Adelaide will have no worries in the future about their water supply, but if the Government had decentralized population and industries the taxpayers' burden would have been greatly lightened. The Mannum-Adelaide pipeline will eventually cost about £9,000,000, and £400,000 a year to keep it functioning, but if we had put more people on the banks of the Murray or in other country areas the expenditure on that main would not have been so great. However, we must not dwell on the past, but concentrate on the future. I hope the Government will adopt Labor's policy of decentralization, which would solve many of our problems. We know what has happened to other countries where people have flocked to the cities. Today 62 per cent of the people of South Australia live in the metropolitan area, which extends up to a radius of 20 miles from the Town Hall clock. We must ask ourselves seriously what steps should be taken to arrest the growth of the metropolitan area. A new town is being built north of Salisbury, but we could have built one in a remote part of the country. A wool washing industry could be established in the South-East where much of our wool is grown.

Mr. Davis—And in the north, too.

Mr. CORCORAN—Yes. That would greatly assist decentralization. The Treasurer is proud to boast of the State's prosperity, but at least some of the important country towns should have been provided with most of the essential amenities of life. One of those is deep drainage, yet important country centres, such as Mount Gambier, Naracoorte, and Port Pirie, are not sewered. Indeed, the only country centre that is sewered is Leigh Creek. Before the next election I will ask the people of the South-East what they have got from the Playford Government. Probably the Treasurer will promise them a water supply or a deep-sea port, but if I can warn them that those things may not be forthcoming, I shall leave no stone unturned to make them sit up and take notice. The Treasurer told me he would visit my district at an appropriate

time to investigate the proposal for a deep-sea port at Rivoli Bay, but I am wondering when that appropriate time will be. I hope that he will go to the district with honest intentions.

Mr. O'Halloran—He will probably go there with political intentions.

Mr. CORCORAN—He may do that. His Party won the district of Victoria on his promise of a deep-sea port, and the official opening of the broad-gauge railway line as far as Naracoorte a month before the 1950 election was mainly responsible for the Liberal Party's winning that seat on that occasion. I have asked the Government to arrange a similar function on the occasion of the opening of the broad gauge as far as Millicent, but I have not yet received a definite reply. I trust that the Minister of Works, on behalf of the Minister of Railways, will take notice of what I am saying this evening. I leave it to the people of the South-East to pass judgment on the Playford Government if it fails to do the right thing.

I have repeatedly asked the Government to repair the Kingston jetty and have pointed out that people in the district are anxious that this be done. That jetty has been used since the early days of this State, but now the Harbors Board has decided to demolish part of it. I have asked the Minister of Marine to instruct the Harbors Board to stay its hand until the people have had a chance of fully expressing their disapproval. I have received an assurance from the Minister, but I do not know what is going on, although I know what will go on in Kingston if the Government fails to repair the jetty. I make this final appeal to the Minister so that the jetty may be retained, not only to gratify the wishes of local residents, but to provide the necessary facilities for the coastal shipping that has served this part of the State for the last 100 years. I trust that the Minister, not the Harbors Board, has the ultimate power to decide this question. Although I do not wish to disparage the efforts of any Government department, because I have received the greatest courtesy from all departments, I sometimes wonder who rules the State. Has the Minister or the board the final voice on the repair of the Kingston jetty? I trust that the Minister will act in accordance with my representations.

The encroachment of the sea has damaged many of our foreshores and the repair of this damage is beyond the resources of many district councils. I have spoken to the Minister

about this matter, but I have heard nothing, and, although I do not wish to harass him, I would appreciate an early reply. I have sometimes accused the Minister of being evasive. He should not try to push me off one side, because I will only come up on the other side. Indeed, that is my duty as a member, and if I did not do that, it would be no use my coming into Parliament. When I came here I thought I might be able to do something about a water supply for Millicent, but Millicent still has no water supply. I have been told recently that the project is now before the Public Works Committee, and the Minister said that the people of Millicent should make up their minds on the matter; but the district council of Millicent, which is the voice of the people, advocates such a project and notice should be taken of its wishes. I am not selfish in expressing the hope that at the next election Labor will be victorious. We do not expect a Labor victory in the other House because that is an impossibility under the present set-up. I thank the House for listening to me and hope that my representations will not fall on deaf ears.

Mr. DAVIS (Port Pirie)—I am concerned about the deficit in the Budget, but would like to know what it would have been had the Government undertaken the work the people expected. This Government has neglected many things over the years. I represent the largest city outside the metropolitan area and must protest against the Government's neglect of that city. The member for Victoria referred to other towns where sewerage has been neglected, but at Port Pirie we have been seeking sewerage for about 30 years and have been promised all along that we would get it. The Public Works Committee has approved of a scheme for Port Pirie but in that town the council has been forced to declare areas for septic tanks and the people who are forced to go to the expense of installing septic tanks will have to pay the additional cost when this Government—if it remains in power—proceeds with the sewerage of the city. This Government has not carried out its promises or its responsibilities to the people.

I agree with everything the Treasurer said in connection with the Federal Government. The member for Burnside endeavoured to justify the actions of the Federal Government and said that the lack of interest in the State Budget is because the State has not its own taxing powers. I would hate the Federal Government to decide to give taxing powers back

to the States and shudder to think what it would cost the taxpayers of South Australia if this State were to receive the same amount from State tax as it receives at present from the Federal Government. I have no doubt that greater interest would be taken in this Parliament if we had the power to tax. There is no doubt that the galleries would be filled, but we would require an army of policemen outside to stop the riots that would take place. The Treasurer has condemned the Prime Minister for not granting sufficient money to the States. I agree with him, but prior to the next Federal election, unlike the Treasurer, I will not be trying to return the present Federal Government. I will be addressing meetings and doing all in my power to bring about a change in the Federal Government. I think the Treasurer would agree that the Hon. Ben Chifley was the greatest man to ever hold the office of Prime Minister. The Treasurer had no difficulty in dealing with him and he was not compelled to criticize him as he has the present Prime Minister.

Mr. Shannon—The late Mr. Chifley did not have splits in his Party like your present leader has.

Mr. DAVIS—I do not know of any splits. The member for Onkaparinga is indulging in wishful thinking. He hopes the people will believe what he says. I think he will get a shock at the next Federal election. It is the habit of Government members to blacken the reputation of any person who holds high office in my Party.

Mr. Shannon—I do not have to do any blackening—his own colleagues do that.

Mr. DAVIS—We are proud to have him as our leader and are loyal to him. I have no doubt that if he held the reins of Government today we would not be begging for assistance. The workers of this State would get a better deal than they are getting today. They would receive justice. No Liberal Government in this country is prepared to do the right thing for the workers. It stands aside and lets the wage earner—and I am not speaking of salaried men—be deprived of what he is justly entitled to under the cost of living figures, while other tribunals give increases to the white collared workers. I am not condemning the tribunals. Every man should be entitled to approach them if he considers he is entitled to an increase. Despite these increases to white collared workers the State Government and the Commonwealth Government will



not agree to the workers approaching the court for increased wages. Their wages have been pegged, and some even decreased.

It is time this Government took steps to have the quarterly adjustments restored. Whereas the workers are suffering a loss of 13s. a week because quarterly adjustments have not been made, those holding higher positions have been able to get their salaries increased by hundreds of pounds a year. The judges of the Arbitration Court themselves have had their salaries increased by thousands of pounds in some instances, yet these same gentlemen say that the workers are not entitled to any increase. They say it was to save the economy of Australia that wages were pegged, and yet since then the cost of living has risen by 13s. a week. Who are getting the profits? Although he has to pay more for the goods he requires, the worker is receiving less. Therefore, it is time the Government took action to make an adjustment. Someone has to be blamed, and it is the policy of the Liberal Union always to place the blame on the shoulders of those on the lower rungs of the ladder. I notice there has been an increase in the cost of living in every State except Western Australia, where there has been a decrease and where there is a Labor Government in power, and yet we hear talk about South Australia being the most prosperous State. Shareholders in companies have had their dividends increased, by 100 per cent in some instances. Those who are paying for such increases are the men who are suffering because of the action of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. The Government is not prepared to do justice to those who are the real producers.

I blame some of the Government departments for the losses in their operations. I have in mind the South Australian Railways. I feel sure that if they were prepared to provide decent trains the departmental deficit would be reduced. I have complained about the speed of the Port Pirie train, which I think is due to the lack of attention to the track. The coaches on that line are not able to travel at any speed because if they did they would fall to pieces. Every Tuesday Mr. Riches and I come down in this train and some of the carriages are not fit to carry horses or dogs and are a disgrace to the department. If a decent fast passenger train were provided for the north it would be crowded practically every morning. Many people are not prepared to travel in the Port Pirie train to Adelaide

because they find it impossible to keep any appointment that might have been made anywhere near 2 o'clock. The train is expected to arrive at 1.17 p.m., but often it is so late that Mr. Riches and I have to come straight to the sitting of the House without having lunch. I hope the Railways Commissioner will do something to rectify the position.

The Government has fallen down in its control of rents, both in respect of dwellings and business houses. I had brought under my notice on Sunday the position of a tailor in the metropolitan area who was paying £5 a week rent for his premises until it was recently increased to £8, and now the lease is about to run out he has been informed that if he wants to renew it it will cost him £16 a week. These increases are reflected in the cost of living, because a man must increase the price of his articles to recoup the additional costs. This applies to every prosperous country town, although there are not many of them because the Government does nothing to entice people to go to or stay in the country. It desires all new industries to be established in the metropolitan area with the result that the workers come to the city, whereas it should see that they are established in the country. The Treasurer said that the Commonwealth Government does not give sufficient money to the State to carry on its works programme, but our Government treats local government bodies in the same way. They are in financial difficulties and they expect increased grants. Recently motor registration fees were increased and some of the additional revenue should be handed out to country townships. My district must return a large amount of revenue from registration fees, yet only a little of it is spent there. In 1919 the Harbors Board took over from the Port Pirie Council a portion of the waterfront. The Government decided that not less than £1,500 per annum would be paid to the council in respect of that land. At the time the council rate was 6½d. in the pound, but the occupiers of the land paid practically all the rates with the result that the Government had to find only a few hundred pounds instead of £1,500. The council is entitled to more money from the Government and it should be on the basis of the present council rate of 2s. 5½d. in the pound. No doubt my remarks are falling on deaf ears, but the matter should be considered by the Government. After members of this House visit Port Pirie they complain about the bad condition of the roads, and they are bad because of the lack of funds.

Much has been said about the shortage of houses and I agree with all the remarks made by Opposition members on this subject. A large number of houses has been built but not enough to meet the demand. I was told recently that the trust did not like losing a tenant at Port Pirie, but every time I apply for a trust home I get a lengthy reply saying that hundreds are on the waiting list. I cannot understand the position. The trust does not like losing tenants at Port Pirie, yet it says it cannot find houses for people who are living in shacks. There are hundreds of people in Port Pirie who would be very happy if we could get good homes for them, but we are not able to turn them out of the shacks they are occupying because we have nowhere to put them. We have houses in the town that are not fit for any human being to live in but we are not in a position to condemn them for the reason I have mentioned. I sincerely hope the Government will take notice of what members on this side of the House have said on this matter during this debate.

Mr. TAPPING (Semaphore)—I express disappointment at the fact that very few Government members have expressed their opinions on such an important matter as this Budget, and I wonder whether that is because they have no confidence in their Leader.

The Hon. T. Playford—It is because they have every confidence.

Mr. TAPPING—Members on both sides should exercise their rights to speak every year on such an important matter. If we adopted the practice of not speaking on various Bills because that suited the Government, the people would be more dissatisfied with our system than they are today. Every member should express his opinions on behalf of the people he represents and of the State. It has been left to the Opposition to keep this debate going. It is true that the Budget could have been put through last night if members on this side had had nothing to say, but as it is such an important matter we have expressed ourselves as we have felt necessary.

I am bound to agree with the sentiments expressed by previous Opposition members on uniform taxation. I suppose six Opposition members as well as Government members have mentioned the subject. For the past couple of years, when the Premier has presented his Budget, he has painted a dismal picture and in so doing has blamed uniform taxation for the difficulties in which the State has found

itself. If we take our minds back to the days of State taxation we find that this State was not so progressive as it is today. South Australia has progressed industrially and otherwise under uniform taxation. The State that should complain about the present setup is Victoria. Before uniform taxation that State was the lowest taxed State in the Commonwealth and because of that industries from other parts of the world and other States of Australia centralized there. As a result, Victoria developed substantially. This State has gone ahead by leaps and bounds since the advent of uniform taxation. My Party has no desire to revert to the system of State taxation. Although the Premier may claim that because of his administration the State has gone ahead, I say that it has done so because of uniform taxation. Industries have been brought here from other parts of the world because they have sent agents to report on the situation in each State, and they have found that because of uniform taxation this State has great potentialities. Before uniform taxation Holdens, one of our biggest industries, thought of transferring the whole of its activities to Victoria.

The Hon. T. Playford—Does the honourable member know that prior to uniform taxation South Australia had exactly the same company tax as Victoria, and that Victoria and South Australia were the two lowest taxed States in the Commonwealth.

Mr. TAPPING—My information is only that Victoria was the lowest taxed State. Before the interruption I was saying that Holdens proposed to transfer to Victoria because the taxation rate in this State was too high. That was their threat, and although the Government thought they were bluffing, it decided to give concessions in wharf fees through the Harbors Board. Because of that, Holdens stayed here.

Mr. O'Halloran—Did we not export their bodies wharfage free?

The Hon. T. Playford—I thought the honourable member said it was uniform taxation that kept the company here. Now he says it was the Harbors Board. He cannot have it both ways.

Mr. TAPPING—I said that in the days when the States levied taxation a threat was made by Holdens that they would go to Victoria, but today with uniform taxation that company is quite happy to stay here. Although the Premier and his supporters have said that under his administration South Australia has made magnificent progress, that has been brought about by the co-operation between the workers.

of this State and the employers, which we all hope will continue. The Labor Party believes in true co-operation. If State taxation were resumed the Premier would find that this State would deteriorate and go back to the bad old days before uniform taxation. I have been convinced in the last two years that the Premier has no desire to revert to State taxation. He made an excuse that uniform tax is the reason for this year's deficit, as did the honourable member for Burnside, but that does not mean that the present system is not sound. I have had an opportunity to peruse the Auditor-General's report for this year. I have not been able to go through it thoroughly, but I am concerned about some of his remarks on page 107 about Radium Hill. We thought at one time that uranium would be the salvation of South Australia, but after reading the Auditor-General's remarks I am afraid it may be our undoing. So far this project has cost the State £2,000,000 and the expenditure of another £2,000,000 is contemplated. The reasons given for this are that there has been a heavy increase in the capital cost of the undertaking resulting in increased interest and amortization charges, and the grade of ore which has been mined so far has not reached the grade expected in 1952. Consequently, costs of production will be higher than estimated and the quantity of uranium oxide produced lower, and this will reduce the proceeds from sales. When uranium production in South Australia was first talked about and its virtues were extolled by the Premier I thought it would be the salvation of the State.

Mr. O'Halloran—That it would mean to us what gold meant to Western Australia.

Mr. TAPPING—Yes, but I am now almost convinced that it will be a liability to us.

Mr. O'Halloran—I hope not.

Mr. TAPPING—So do I, but we must be realists. It has already cost us £2,000,000.

Mr. Pearson—It will still be cheap.

Mr. TAPPING—I think I am one of the greatest optimists in this Chamber, but after reading the Auditor-General's startling figures I became apprehensive. I believe all members hope that our returns from uranium will be better than expected now. The Auditor-General states that the quality of the ore has not been up to what was expected. If it is not the Radium Hill project will be a costly one for the State. I suppose all members have been pleased with the fine work that the Tourist Bureau has been doing for many years in advancing the interests of

South Australia, but there are two or three places that should be given more publicity. The Outer Harbour has all the necessary virtues of a pleasure resort. It has an excellent oval and a fine reserve, and it would do members good if they saw the thousands of people who go there on a Sunday to watch the liners at the berths. The Tourist Bureau would do a good service to the State if it made the attractions of the Outer Harbour more widely known. Port Gawler and St. Kilda are two other places that should be given more publicity. Last Saturday afternoon I visited St. Kilda and was amazed to see hundreds of people there who were crabbing, fishing or picnicking.

Mr. O'Halloran—I think St. Kilda will lose its hotel.

Mr. TAPPING—I have no brief for that hotel, but it would be a pity if it lost its licence. St. Kilda needs boosting and it would be a retrograde step to take the licence away. Some people think that the only use of hotels is to provide beer, but they also provide accommodation to people needing it and when people are ill they can get brandy if they want it. An hotel is essential to a pleasure resort, and I hope the Tourist Bureau will publicise the attractions of St. Kilda and Port Gawler, which have excellent beaches and would attract many people.

I express my regret at the untimely passing of one of South Australia's best public servants, Mr. Frederic Andres. I often met him over the past few years because he has given much evidence before the Public Works Committee. He was a sincere and conscientious officer, and I believe he worked himself to death. He worked hard for the progress of South Australia and it will be hard to fill his position because he was a man of outstanding ability and devotion to duty.

I commend the Harbors Board for the progress it has made on its projects in my district, and I must also commend the Minister of Marine for the part he has played. Whenever I have made overtures to him on behalf of people of my district he has always given them kindly consideration. On a number of occasions I have raised the question of traffic delays at the Birkenhead Bridge. I believe that the placing of that bridge in its present position was a grave error. It has to be raised as frequently as 50 times a day, and if industry and commerce are held up as much as that the cost of goods increases. The frequency of opening the bridge is largely the result of the fact that tugs are berthed on

the northern side of the bridge, which means that it must be raised and lowered every time a tug leaves or returns to its berth. I am pleased that the Harbors Board plans to provide special berths at Darling's Wharf for the tugs. This wharf is on the south side of the bridge and this will make a big difference to the number of times the bridge has to be opened, because 40 per cent of the openings are the result of the activities of tugs. I urge the Government, and particularly the Harbors Board, to expedite this plan. The wharves are being constructed slowly but surely, and it may be said that they are at least equal to the best in the world. Although costly, they will last for many years. I have frequently asked questions about the Largs Bay jetty, but although I have been encouraged by the Minister, no definite information has yet been given me. It may be said that jetties have no commercial value, but because Largs Bay has made such outstanding progress over the last four or five years, LeFevre Peninsula has been developed,

and tourist traffic attracted to the district, the rehabilitation of the Largs Bay jetty is imperative. This work may cost a few thousand pounds, but that expenditure would be more than offset by the bus and train fares collected from visitors to the district. I ask the Minister of Marine to seriously consider the reconstruction of that jetty because it serves an important area. I support the first line.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

#### WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1932-1954. Read a first time.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 10.35 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, October 20, at 2 p.m.