HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, October 26, 1955.

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

HIGHWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, by message, recommended to the House the appropriation of such amounts of the general revenue of the State as were required for the purposes mentioned in the Highways Act Amendment Bill.

QUESTIONS.

RETARDED CHILDREN.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—A few days ago some gentlemen who are members of a committee interested in retarded children informed me that a Mr. Lumsden (I believe from the U.K.) some time ago inquired into the position of retarded children in South Australia. Can the Minister of Education say whether he submitted a report; if so, has the report been printed, or is it intended to print it?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—One of Her Majesty's inspectors of the Education Department of Great Britain visited South Australia and made a very concise and valuable report. To my knowledge it has not been printed, but I am prepared to have it made available and, if necessary, have it printed, for I am sure honourable members will be very interested in it, as I was.

GRASSHOPPER MENACE.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—I understand that army personnel are doing an excellent job with some 20 or more jeeps in various areas. In view of the further reports of extensive hatchings obviously beyond the capacity of landholders, and the limited number of jeeps available to control the pest before the flying stage is reached, can the Minister of Agriculture say whether further jeeps are to be made available by the army, and if it is the intention of the Government to engage aeroplanes to spray the larger areas infested before it is too late and the grasshoppers get on the wing with consequent disastrous results to southern districts?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—The Government, and of course my department which has to implement the Government's policy, has never lost sight of any effective means which could be taken in endeavouring to control, if not exterminate, this very serious menace, and aircraft have been kept in view all the time. We asked all the aircraft companies that operate spraying equipment to be ready at the shortest possible call should they be required to undertake aerial spraying. However, we have felt that the best line of attack was by means of ground operations. It must be realized that at the outset the hatchings were occurring in limited areas in various districts. We have never before faced a situation in which the State had been called on to undertake control measures of this pest and consequently a good deal of improvisation was necessary both in regard to organization and equipment. Notwithstanding that, I suggest that the department has been very quick off the mark in setting up the organization required. Every field officer of my department, whether he be an adviser, a soil conservator or a dairy adviser, has been mobilized in the organizational set-up throughout the State. Everyone of those officers is giving his full attention to, in the first instance, determining the extent of the infestation in any particular locality and, secondly, in mobilizing the equipment and the forces available to us. In that regard I pay a very sincere tribute to the wonderful co-operation we have had from the Army. From the very first day when I contacted General Wilson he has been most co-operative and, indeed, anxious to provide us with every facility at his command. The Army has provided to date, I think, 24 jeeps as they have become available, and has equipped them with the necessary personnel and attached to the vehicles the spraying equipment which we have had manufactured, mainly I think by the Engineer-in-Chief's Department. The army personnel operating the machines have done a magnificent job. I have been told of instances in which they have been out at 5 o'clock in the morning with spraying units and have worked until dark. I realize that despite all efforts and the use of departmental equipment, army equipment and the landholders' own facilities, there are still areas where grasshoppers are hatching that are as yet unknown to anyone. Considering the vastness of our pastoral areas in the far north, many of which total hundreds and some even thousands of square miles, it can be appreciated that every square yard cannot be patrolled to ascertain the extent of the hatchings. We have a scheme for going into action with aerial spraying immediately departmental officers, after an inspection of any area, recommend that as the only effective method left to us. Ground spraying will be continued where it

can still be undertaken. Where aerial spraying can effectively be carried out—and we cannot afford to waste materials wholesale—

Mr. O'Halloran—And it must be economic.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—That is so. The Government has agreed to stand the cost of aerial spraying where no other method can be effectively employed. In view of the tremendous extent of the outbreak with which we are plagued and because the whole of our organizational set-up has had to be devised this year, I do not think the criticism that has appeared in the press and elsewhere is justified.

Mr. SHANNON—From information given to me I understand that where there is sufficient food, grasshoppers remain in the area in which they are hatched, and they reproduce their kind in the same area. I understand that that is what has happened on this occasion and has resulted in the plague proportions that will descend upon us. I suggest that the Minister again examine the Victorian method of handling this problem by aeroplane, and that that be applied in the areas where grasshoppers may not move south this year, but will move south in later years if they are allowed to multiply in the back country. Aeroplanes could be used during the flying stage when the grasshopper is difficult to deal with on the ground. I believe that the use of aeroplanes could wipe out many grasshoppers which are breeding, and many more grasshoppers will breed if we leave them unmolested in the areas from which we generally expect to get infestations in plague proportions.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I do not think Victoria has any greater experience in this matter than we have. That State has had infestations occasionally from New South Wales, just as we have had them from the far north of South Australia. My officers, after examining the scheme operating in Victoria, do not think it is applicable on the same scale in this State because conditions are different. Nevertheless, we shall keep in mind the use of aeroplanes, even at the somewhat late stage when the hoppers take to the wing. We shall not lose sight of this method if grasshoppers can be effectively dealt with in that way, but I remind all members that whatever is done can only mitigate the menace. We have no hope of completely wiping out this plague, but were it not for the tremendous efforts which have been made this State could, once the grasshoppers were on the wing, be completely eaten out. One has only to see the billions of grasshoppers in the hatching areas to realize that, and we cannot possibly deal with all of them. They will come down eventually, but how far and what damage they will do we do not know. That will only be revealed when they get on the wing, but we have left no phase of possible control out of account. We will do everything possible to combat the plague.

Mr. RICHES—Last week I drew attention to the infestation of grasshoppers in many of the areas that are now causing concern, but the Minister thought that the statements made had been exaggerated. I commend the Minister and the department for the action that has been taken, as they have certainly done excellent work, but I am still not satisfied that they are alive to the real position in the north. Has the Minister received advice from any of his officers who have been in the area immediately north and north-west of Port Augusta that the time is not ripe for the use of aircraft?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—In the first place, I did not say that the honourable member's report was exaggerated; what I clearly said was that some reports had been exaggerated, notably one that was followed up by departmental inspectors to prove the truth of it, although I shall not specify the area. In the instance referred to by the honourable member, we are ready to commence aerial operations tomorrow.

IRON KNOB RAILWAY FATALITY.

Mr. RICHES—Yesterday I asked a question concerning a fatal accident at Iron Knob and the subsequent coronial inquiry. As a result of representations made to me I was given to understand that evidence was available to the inquiry but was not called and that the coroner was advised that it was not competent for the inquiry to incorporate any investigation into alleged negligence leading up to the accident. The Minister of Education, in his reply yesterday, said that at the conclusion of the evidence Sgt. Hann inquired if either party desired any further witnesses to be called but that neither Mr. Dunstan nor the solicitor for the company indicated any such desire and no request was made for any adjournment for such a purpose. As his name was mentioned in that reply, can the member for Norwood inform the House whether any request was made that other witnesses be called or that the inquiry be adjourned to enable further investigations to be made?

Mr. DUNSTAN—It so happens that I did appear at this coronial inquiry and am able

to answer the questions asked. The reply of the Minister yesterday was as the member related. At the conclusion—

The SPEAKER—I think the honourable member should avoid arguing the reply of the Minister.

Mr. DUNSTAN—I am not arguing, but only informing the House of the facts.

Mr. TRAVERS—On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, is it proper for a barrister to discuss in Parliament any case in which he has been concerned in court?

The SPEAKER—I think the honourable member will be in order in answering the question as it affects him.

Mr. Travers—May's *Parliamentary Practice* lays it down definitely that it is not.

Mr. DUNSTAN—I do not intend to discuss the propriety or otherwise of any action which took place in the court, and I would refuse to answer any question on that point, but I have been asked a question as to fact. The reply given yesterday included the following:—

At the conclusion of the evidence Sergt. Hann inquired if either party desired any further witnesses to be called. Neither Mr. Dunstan nor the solicitor for the company indicated any such desire and no request was made for any adjournment for such a purpose.

That reply is not correct. An application was made to call further evidence and the evidence was called, but then disallowed; and an application for an adjournment to call further evidence from the Traffic Superintendent of the Commonwealth Railways was made and that was disallowed. I have no further reply to make.

The SPEAKER—To clear up the point I was trying to make, I point out that there are some questions that are inadmissible, and it is provided that questions which refer to debates or answers to questions in the current session are out of order. The honourable member would probably have been acting more strictly in accordance with the Standing Orders had he dealt with the matter by way of personal explanation.

Mr. RICHES—I asked the question not in the interests of the member for Norwood, but of the people whom I represent in my district, because I am not convinced that all the facts were adduced at the coronial inquiry. In the reply given yesterday it was stated that under the amendment of the 1952 Act the coronial inquiry was limited to deciding who the deceased was, and how, when and where he came to his death. I have looked up the Act, which includes the following:—

The coroner shall have jurisdiction to inquire where the death has occurred and into the manner and cause of the death.

Will the Minister inquire from the Crown Solicitor whether that is not broad enough to include an investigation into negligence leading up to the cause of the death, and if it is not will he ask for a report from the Crown Solicitor on the advisability of having the law amended to give that right?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I will not ask the Crown Solicitor to do either of those things, but will refer both matters to my colleague to obtain his opinion, and will bring down a reply in due course.

JUVENILE COURTS JURISDICTION.

Mr. TRAVERS—Will the Government early consider the question of revising the jurisdiction of juvenile courts in order to enable bigger monetary penalties to be imposed, and thus save the necessity, which exists in many cases, of sending children to the reformatory? This is a matter I have raised before. Mr. Scales, special magistrate, is doing a first class job with child delinquency having regard to the three necessary attributes of punishment—reformative, punitive and the deterrent aspect, but the monetary penalties are so limited having regard to present day money values that he is being greatly restricted in doing the work he would like to do. He is faced in many cases with the alternative of imposing a totally inadequate monetary penalty, which is bringing the law into contempt, or sending a child to the reformatory when he would prefer not to do so.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I will be pleased to consult the Attorney-General and bring down a reply as soon as possible.

ALLOTMENT OF BLOCK.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Has the Minister of Irrigation obtained a reply to the question I asked yesterday regarding the allotment of a block at Cooltong to an applicant with no overseas service in preference to an applicant who had served overseas?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I regret that this morning I was not able to get the report required by the honourable member, but I will definitely have it tomorrow. I feel that perhaps some of the points raised by the honourable member are not correct, but if they are then the Land Board has made a mistake.

HOUSES FOR COUNTRY FIRM.

Mr. MICHAEL—Has the Minister of Lands a reply to the question I asked on October 6 about the delay in making available two additional houses for a firm at Kapunda?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I have received the following reply from the chairman of the Housing Trust:—

Mr. Rees of Hawke & Co., of Kapunda, was at the office of the S.A. Housing Trust on October 11, 1955, when the full position regarding rental houses at Kapunda was explained to him. I may mention that the trust proposes to build additional rental houses at Kapunda.

EIGHT MILE CREEK SOLDIER SETTLERS.

Mr. FLETCHER—When the Minister of Repatriation visits the South-East in the near future will he investigate the affairs of soldier settlers in the Eight Mile Creek area in particular?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The local settlers' association invited the Federal Deputy Director and myself to visit the area, and we are planning to make the trip on November 4, 5 and 6.

NEW UNLEY HIGH SCHOOL.

Mr. DUNNAGE—I was at the Unley Primary School last Thursday when the Mark Mitchell Shield was presented following on the school's football team winning the premiership. I found that the school committee was very concerned about the position there. The girls' technical school is also worried about the position at that school, and I was asked to inquire from the Minister of Education what progress is being made in regard to the new high school.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I am sorry that I have caused concern to the committees in which the honourable member is interested; I thought I had been extremely generous to them. This matter is in the hands of the Architect-in-Chief for detailed planning. I do not know the exact stage it has reached, but I will obtain that information and let the honourable member have it in due course.

DEMOLITION OF DWELLINGHOUSES CONTROL BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 19. Page 1156.)

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood)—I support this Bill. I shall devote my time to dealing with the extraordinary speech this House heard last week from the Premier. Occasionally, and unfortunately, we hear a certain amount of claptrap from honourable members in this House, but I have rarely had the misfortune to hear so much nonsense as was spoken on that occasion. I shall deal with the remarks of the Premier *seriatim*—it is difficult to deal with them seriously. The first point that he sought to make was:—

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.

I quite agree, and I think every member of the Opposition would agree, that it is natural and desirable that that should take place. Then the Premier sought to go further, and said:—

The only effective way to deal with the housing problem is to see that an adequate number of houses is erected each year.

Ultimately, of course, that is the only effective way to deal with it, but it is not being done by this Government. Who can possibly contend that an adequate number of houses is being erected each year? The Premier spent a lot of time trying to prove that the Government was erecting as many houses as it could, but I shall deal with that later. That, however, is entirely different from building an adequate number of houses to cope with the housing situation. How can it be suggested that we have sufficient houses for that purpose when more than 4,700 applications for emergency homes are outstanding and no more are being built? It may be said that we are building more homes per thousand of population than any other State, but that does not mean that our housing is adequate. It is the responsibility of members to see that every possible step is taken to house our people, and that may mean that some houses that would normally be pulled down if there were adequate houses should not be pulled down at this stage.

Let us assume that there are 10 people in the community who are housed under unsatisfactory conditions, and the community intends to erect another house. Will it pull down the old unsatisfactory house before it erects a new one? If it does so, those people will not have unsatisfactory housing: they will have no housing at all. Yet the Premier suggests, in effect, that that be done. The Bill provides that houses which do not need to be demolished (when you contrast the housing need with the value to the community of some other buildings in their place) shall not be demolished until the housing situation improves. If there are houses that are condemned by local councils or should be removed for some specific reason that can be justified to the Minister responsible, under this Bill they will be demolished; but

where it cannot be justified to the Minister, who is responsible to this House, they will not be demolished. Members should see that in the present drastic housing situation people are given every opportunity to have a roof over their heads.

I have people coming to me nightly who live under terrible conditions. Many of them applied months and even years ago for emergency houses, but they cannot be accommodated and in some cases will probably have to go on to the streets for there is no adequate housing for them. Despite this, I see in my district, and in other districts, adequate houses of solid construction, which are not substandard, held empty for months. In some cases it is known that it is intended to demolish such houses. In one place in my district an adequate house that would have housed some of my constituents at present living under deplorable conditions was pulled down and a service station was erected on the site. That was totally unnecessary for there were already three service stations within 200 yards of the spot. In those circumstances we must see that our housing facilities are not wasted.

In the same area an old-established garage was somewhat dilapidated because the proprietors had been unable to renovate it during the war, and a condemned house was demolished to make way for a new building necessary to the business and the service of the district. I heartily commend those people for that action, but it did not adversely affect the housing situation as the other example I mentioned did. All metropolitan members must know of habitable houses that have been demolished unnecessarily to make way for business, factory or service station premises. In the ordinary course of events that would be perfectly normal, but when so many people are living under such unsatisfactory housing conditions (many of them with two or three children in a small damp room which, according to the doctor, is adversely affecting their health), it is ridiculous to talk about adequate housing as the Premier does, and a move to stop unnecessary demolitions is not a negative, but a positive move.

The Premier argued that a building which was previously a dwellinghouse but 11 months' ago was altered and was no longer a dwellinghouse came within the scope of the Bill and could not be further altered or demolished without the Minister's consent. That may well be, but the Bill seeks to cope with the position where a number of houses in the metropolitan area have been kept empty for some time, and unless we prohibit their alteration or demolition, even though they have not been inhabited as dwellinghouses for some months past, then, although they are perfectly habitable dwellings, they could be demolished. The Bill prohibits that course unless the demolition can be justified to the Minister, but in every case such as that cited by the Premier surely the Minister would issue a permit under the Bill. The Premier's suggestion is too ridiculous, because obviously, where there was a case for alteration or demolition a permit would be granted. This provision is only included to prevent unnecessary alterations and demolitions.

Mr. Travers—How many unoccupied inhabitable houses are there in your district?

Mr. DUNSTAN—About 25, and if the honourable member would like to go out with me I would show him around, because I travel around in my district and, unlike some other members, know the places in it.

Mr. Shannon—I thank thee I am not like other men!

Mr. DUNSTAN—So do we. The Premier said:—

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.

Let us take the present position under the Building Act. A man goes to the local council and gets a permit to carry out certain specified work on his property. If a builder proceeds to carry out work without satisfying himself that the local council has given permission he is guilty of an offence, too. Obviously, a builder, before he commences to build a property, must satisfy himself that all the requirements as to the work have been carried out by the owner, and it would be very easy for him to obtain the conditions from the owner because he would have to ask the owner to produce his permit. Where is the harm in that? It is rarely that a builder transgresses the Building Act by not getting plans and specifications of the work to be done. I have known of one or two instances in my district where a builder has been prosecuted, and it is his duty to find out what the permit of the local council is. In the same way it would be his duty to see what permit was given in this particular

instance, and I cannot see the slightest hardship upon any builder in requiring him to do that.

And now we come to the most fantastic portion of the Premier's speech; it is extraordinary that any member could make this allegation, but let us go through the processes of the Premier's mind. He recited clause 4, which says:—

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.

The only alternative to that would be to have the Minister go into the witness box and state whether a certificate had been issued or not, and it is only *prima facie* evidence which could easily be rebutted if it were rebuttable. But the Premier took the most violent objection to this and said that there was *prima facie* evidence of the fact immediately it was put into the certificate. That is the most absolute nonsense. The court would still have to decide whether this was a dwellinghouse within the meaning of the Act.

Mr. Travers—Not if a certificate alleged that it was a dwellinghouse.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Most certainly yes, because under clause 4 the Minister has no power to tell the court whether the place is a dwellinghouse within the meaning of the Act or not.

Mr. Travers—If stated in the certificate the facts are *prima facie* too.

Mr. DUNSTAN—But he has no power to do it.

Mr. Travers—The clause says that is presumed.

Mr. DUNSTAN—No court would accept facts which the Minister has no power to give a certificate on as facts of which there is *prima facie* proof.

Mr. Travers—I know that because this Bill will not pass, but if it were passed the courts would have no alternative.

Mr. DUNSTAN—This is all that the Minister could say to the court—

(*a*) That at any date specified in the certificate a permit had or had not been issued.

(*b*) That the conditions upon which a permit had been issued were as set forth.

There would then be *prima facie* proof of only those matters. If the Minister were to give a certificate and add at the bottom of it that somebody had run a race at some place at such and such a date it would not be a matter that is admitted by this section because that is not something upon which the Minister has power to give a certificate. He could give a certificate only on what he is empowered to give it on, and if he gives it on something else it is inadmissable and is not *prima facie* proof of anything.

Mr. Macgillivray—That sounds logical.

Mr. DUNSTAN—It is, but unfortunately the honourable member for Torrens has not caught up with us yet. On occasions there is nothing like having to beat into people's heads the obvious facts before them because they seem to be a little thick-skulled in trying to understand them, so I repeat the provisions of clause 4, namely—

In any proceedings for which 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.

A certificate may be given as to certain facts and as to those facts—because that is all that may be in the certificate—it is *prima facie* evidence. There is no power under the clause to state any other facts, and if they were stated they would be inadmissible and any magistrate or judge would rule them out. This is the normal form that is used; this Bill was not prepared by an inexperienced person, but by the Assistant Parliamentary Draftsman about whom laudatory references are continually made. The Premier then said:—

Immediately the Minister issues a certificate containing the description "dwellinghouse" 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 Minister would have no power to issue any such certificate and if he did it would be inadmissible. But the certificate itself is not evidence of any offence; all that it proves is that, either a permit had been issued under certain conditions which must be specified, or that a permit had not been issued, and then the court has to decide upon evidence whether this was a dwellinghouse within the meaning of the Act and whether there had been alterations in contravention of the Act, or of the conditions of a permit that had been issued.

The last point made by the Premier was the only one which had any merit and on this I must confess that I have had a change of heart.

When the Bill reaches the Committee stage I shall be pleased to support the Premier in an amendment to increase penalties. I believe the Premier was quite right when he said that a penalty of £100 was not sufficient, and if he cares to make it £500 I shall be happy to support him.

Mr. Shannon—Would that be a deterrent to people who are prepared to pay three or four times the value of a particular site?

Mr. DUNSTAN—I think it probably would be, but if the honourable member wants to put it up to £1,000 I do not suppose it would do any harm. I admit that there are people prepared to pay £10,000 or £20,000 for buildings which have been described by the Premier as substandard, and I am prepared to discuss all these alternatives in Committee and accept the best proposal brought forward.

Mr. JENNINGS (Prospect)—I was waiting for a Government member to speak on this measure, but apparently we are to experience another of their sit-down strikes. No doubt they are prepared to silently vote against this Bill, but not to voice whatever unpopular arguments they can think up to support their opposition. The Leader of the Opposition made out a splendid case for this legislation and it has so far proven absolutely unanswerable despite the fact that the great dissembler himself, the Premier, spoke immediately afterwards in opposition to it. He advanced no valid argument. One of his quaint claims was that the Bill, by preventing demolition, would hold up progress. Many crimes are committed in the name of progress, but I have never before heard it seriously suggested that it was progress to deprive a family of a roof over its head and put it out on the street to face the elements like animals. That is happening in many instances today, but because we suggest some action to prevent that situation we are accused of holding up progress. That is a most remarkable argument and one that would not be used if there were valid objections to the measure.

We, as representatives of the people, should examine things as they affect people and as they could easily affect us. That is the way the Opposition regards matters of this nature and why we have introduced this remedial legislation to protect people from the encroachment on their rights by minority groups who are more interested in profits than in the rights of the great mass of the people. They are only a minority, but are apparently represented in this Chamber by members opposite who oppose this Bill, which should have been introduced by the Government. No self-respecting Government, concerned even slightly with considerations of humanity, confronted with an appalling housing shortage, would hesitate to take legislative action to prevent the demolition of homes, which inevitably accentuates that shortage. It has again been left to the Opposition to give a lead to the Government. However, unfortunately because our lead in this case conflicts with the interests the Government serves, it is not being followed and as a result the homeless people of the State will suffer. The Premier said the Bill was a barrier to progress, but what he really had at the back of his mind was that it was a barrier to the subordination of people's interests to the callous soullessness of the big business companies which today are buying good habitable homes for conversion into premises for the pursuit of profit.

What arguments can be advanced in favour of demolition of habitable homes during a housing shortage? The Premier said that the housing shortage in South Australia was extremely serious. I hope to prove that it is not only extremely bad, but is getting worse, and the Government is accentuating it. We admit that the problem will not be solved by this Bill, but we are so concerned about the terrible position in which many find themselves that we believe not one habitable house should be demolished to permit of the erection of a petrol station or other business premises. The Premier said that the only way to overcome the housing shortage was to build sufficient homes. That, I submit, is an argument of great profundity. Surely no-one but the Premier could have thought up such a deep argument.

Let us examine statistics to see how we are overcoming the problem of the shortage by this most unusual means of building sufficient homes. I became fed up with the Premier repeatedly saying in this Chamber that our housing programme was without peer in the Commonwealth. Therefore, I contacted the Government Statist and the answer to the Premier's claim is contained in a letter I have received from him, which shows the number of homes built per thousand of the population. For the period 1947-48 to 1953-54 South Australia has twice been sixth among the States, three times fourth, once third, and once second. The two years when South Australia was second and third, respectively, were the two years when there were tremendous importations of prefabricated homes to this State. Since then the figures have declined

considerably. The Premier did me the honour to say that I had referred to these statistics before, and added that I had picked out only the good points of the argument and that he was going to tell the whole story. Of course he didn't tell the whole story, and I think it was rather a strange accusation to come from the lips of the greatest exponent of half-truths.

Mr. SPEAKER—The honourable member cannot reflect on honourable members. Standing Orders do not permit it and he must withdraw.

Mr. JENNINGS—I withdraw. It was most strange that the Premier should accuse me of giving only half the story that these statistics portray; it is the whole story. The Premier has been giving the half-truth of the matter for a long time and endeavouring to mislead this House into believing that because the Government housing authority in South Australia builds a greater proportion of homes than the authority of any other State Government, we were building more homes. He has always worded his remarks extremely cunningly, but they have been seen through, and if they have deluded anyone, they will not delude them any longer. I do not think it matters much to a person badly in need of a home who builds it—whether it is the Housing Trust, a private contractor or anyone else.

The statistics I have read show conclusively that we do not hold a place of honour among the rest of the States in the field of house-building. In 1952 the number of homes built in South Australia was 8,473, and in 1953 it had deceased to 7,314, a drop of 1,159. In 1954 the total was 6,614, a decrease of 700 compared with 1953-54, which makes a total decrease from 1952 to 1954 of about 1,800. Year after year the number of houses built has been actually decreasing at a period when the population was rising. Our increased population from migration alone in 1952 was 13,962, in 1953 it was 5,910, and in 1954 it was 11,532. So, it will be seen that over those three years the number of homes built would not be nearly enough to accommodate even the migrants, leaving aside our own natural increase, and not considering the tremendous backlag which has existed in home building since before the war.

Let us consider the number of people married in those three years. In 1952 it was 6,241, in 1953 it was 6,149, and in 1954 it was 6,190. The number of migrants in the last year referred to was 11,532, and adding to this total the number of marriages that year, namely, 6,190, we have a total of 17,722 people to be accommodated in 6,614 homes built in that year. Perhaps it would be fairer if I reduced the number of migrants requiring homes, because each person would not want a separate home. If I halve the number, there will still be more than 11,972 couples in 1954 to be accommodated in 6,614 homes built during that year—despite the fact that we already had twice as many people with applications before the Housing Trust to fill all the homes built in 1954. There were 4,700 waiting for emergency homes, but no more emergency homes are being built. They must be urgent cases otherwise they would not be applying for emergency homes. These people are urgently waiting for homes which virtually do not exist. The only emergency homes becoming available are those from which the present occupants move, and that does not happen very frequently these days. There are 15,000 outstanding applications for rental homes before the Housing Trust. When a question was asked last session or the session before the number was only 11,400, so despite what we are told by the Premier about the great building activity in South Australia and which ever way we look at it the housing position is getting rapidly worse and worse, but what are we doing about it? We are not doing enough to overcome the problem, but that is beyond the scope of the Bill, the purpose of which is to prevent a bad housing position from becoming worse. There is an appalling housing shortage and we want to prevent the demolition of houses which must mean throwing out into the streets with no hope of alternative accommodation, people who are now adequately housed. In this period of a shocking housing shortage homes are being demolished, and it is a public scandal that should not be supported by Parliament. Despite the silence so far from the Government benches I hope some members there will, from humane considerations, support the Bill.

Mr. HAWKER (Burra)—I oppose the measure. Although Opposition speakers have confined their remarks to the metropolitan area, the Bill covers the whole State. In an earlier session Mr. Dunstan said that oil companies were buying up properties for the purpose of erecting stations to sell one brand of petrol. I pointed out at the time that along the road to the north there were a number of stations selling several brands of petrol, and they are still doing it. Therefore, I must take with some reserve Mr. Dunstan's statements and his

reference to the damage being done to the housing position by the erection of additional petrol stations. Whose houses are being demolished, who is selling them and who is buying them? A man owning a house will not sell it to be demolished for the building of a petrol station unless it pays him to do so. In the past builders of houses have been one of the political footballs that have been kicked around so much, yet they have done more to solve the housing problem than anyone else. In these days to own a house as an investment is not good, because there are so many restrictions. If a man can sell at a good profit and invest his money elsewhere, he is a fool not to do it. The restrictions on landlords have contributed to the present state of affairs. If a landlord has a good investment in a property he is not anxious to sell. A man with a house as his only accommodation would be silly to sell. A lessor cannot evict a tenant so that the house can be demolished for the building of a petrol station. Section 42 of the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act says that a lessor cannot give a lessee notice to quit except on certain specific grounds, and they are set out in detail. Paragraph (*n*) of subsection 6 of that section says that one of the prescribed grounds is that the premises are reasonably needed by the lessor for reconstruction or demolition. Therefore, if a lessor wants to sell a house to be demolished for the building of a petrol station he must satisfy the court that he has good reason for wanting to evict the tenant. Why include the power in this Bill, because it already exists? Members opposite want to establish a reason for giving the Minister the power, but I prefer the court, in which apparently members opposite have no faith. The impression they give is that people are being thrown out into the streets so that petrol stations can be built, but there is no foundation for it.

The Bill defines "dwellinghouse" 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. I stress the words "within 12 months before it is demolished." According to the measure, so long as a man wanting to build a petrol station pays a fine of £100 he can buy a house and demolish it. There are all sorts of buildings throughout the country that are used for a short period as places of habitation. People are only too pleased to live in a shed or garage for a few weeks while carrying out a contract such as dam sinking or rabbiting. Many of the sheds and garages are good buildings. If the owner wanted to alter or demolish such a building he would have to get permission from the Minister. We should try to get away from more controls, but under this Bill the Government would be faced with further expenditure and would have to set up another department. If a building had been used as a temporary habitation six or 12 months before it would be necessary to apply for permission to alter it, otherwise the owner would be liable to a fine of £100.

I submit that this matter is adequately covered by the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act. I do not place much reliance on what has been said by members opposite. If we pass the Bill we shall have to set up a new department, and would be covering many aspects that Parliament should not have to worry about. This legislation is quite unnecessary, therefore I oppose it.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—I support the second reading. The member for Burra (Mr. Hawker) referred to sheds or garages being temporarily used as residences. The Bill states that such a building shall not be demolished if it was habitable prior to an application seeking its demolition. Mr. Hawker was only drawing red herrings across the trail and repeating some of the Premier's stupid arguments. The Bill was introduced because the Opposition does not think it would be practicable to give effect to its purposes by amending the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act, though the Premier said, when answering questions about the demolition of houses since the Building Materials Act was repealed, that we could try that means. I am sure that would not achieve the Opposition's objective. We should retain all habitable dwellings until the housing shortage has been overcome.

Some weeks ago, when I moved the adjournment of the House to debate the demolition of houses, I said that a house in Halifax Street was being demolished, and that a factory would probably be established there. Subsequently, the inside walls were demolished and I have found that the building will be used for some industrial purpose. I doubt whether there was any necessity to demolish most of the house because it could have been used as housing accommodation as it was. I am very concerned about the number of houses being demolished in Halifax Street. In a row of five or six cottages I could not find any trace

of salt damp, but only one cottage remains, and it is still occupied. All the others have been demolished. I do not know where the former tenants have obtained other accommodation, but practically all tenants, when they get notice to quit, go to the Housing Trust in search of a home. In the first place the trust was permitted to build houses for letting only, but later it was authorized to build houses for both letting and sale. In addition, the trust now builds business flats for childless couples, old age pensioners' flats and flats for single aged persons. There is a long waiting list for every type of accommodation it provides, and it could not be satisfied in the next five years even if no further applications were lodged.

This Bill is not intended to restrict the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act. A Bill to amend that Act has been on the Notice Paper since early this session. In the dying hours of last session a conference was held on a Bill to amend the Act, and some members did not desire to retain any of the provisions of the Act. However, as there must be an election before next June, perhaps Government supporters will be prepared to carry on the legislation for a short period, although it will only be continued if the Government considers that there should be further increases in rents. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition asked the Minister of Lands why rents in Adelaide are rising, but if the Minister obtains the correct information he will find that the homes concerned are mainly those owned by the Housing Trust, which is building homes with the full consent of the Government and in doing so is carrying out the Government's policy, so the Government is responsible for rent increases. Further demolition will be a greater hardship on the community. Accommodation has to be found for people who are deprived of their homes, and who knows who will be the next to be evicted?

Not long ago a member of this Chamber desired to sell his house at a very high price and it took him a long time to obtain other accommodation although he had the money. This caused some hardship to his family, but he is one of those who will oppose this legislation. He had occupied his home for a number of years and although it was a good type of home it has since been demolished. He obtained temporary accommodation, and I believe he now has permanent accommodation.

A house at No. 51 Halifax Street, Adelaide, once occupied by the late member for Adelaide, was sold some time ago. I visited that house while it was occupied, and I consider that it was of a reasonable standard, but it has been demolished for so long that the weeds are now growing through the rubble. Was there any necessity to deprive the tenant of this home? This Government may desire to be progressive in its attitude towards industry, but let us examine the demand for labour indicated by daily advertisements by established industries that have plenty of modern factory accommodation. What is going on in some of the newly developed parts of the metropolitan area? People are rushing to erect rows of shops, such as delicatessens, grocers' shops, butchers' shops, and ladies' hairdressing saloons. On some roads these rows of shops are very close together, and this commercial building programme is not helping to solve the difficult housing problem. While the building materials legislation operated, no grave hardship was imposed on any industrial organization. In my district new factories have been and are being erected on vacant land and before they are completed the firms are advertising for labour, but there is a serious labour shortage.

Why is it necessary to demolish so many habitable homes within the city square mile? A hardship is imposed on tenants who are given notice to quit, and the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act does not protect them. If it did, this Bill would not be necessary and members would not be continually approached by people facing eviction. That legislation is not sufficiently wide in its scope, nor can it be amended to make it adequate while in another place there sit the militant representatives of property owners. A person who has received notice to quit usually applies to the Housing Trust for accommodation, but the trust cannot satisfy all applicants. The efficiency of industry is adversely affected because many workers are worried by the poor standard of their housing accommodation.

Mr. Riches—Is the position in the city getting any better?

Mr. FRANK WALSH—It is deteriorating, and all other metropolitan Labor members would confirm that.

Mr. Riches—And country members, too.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—I can only assume that in the honourable member's district, where important projects are being developed, there would be a housing shortage. While such a grave housing shortage exists the demolition of homes is wrong in principle. I disagree with the contention of the member for Burra (Mr. Hawker) and the Premier that the Landlord and Tenant legislation protects tenants.

Until the trust can satisfy the needs of all applicants, the Bill now before the House should operate as law. Under it the trust could advise the Minister on applications to demolish habitable homes, and if the tenants of such homes could be accommodated by the trust and the demolition would improve the efficiency of industry, the homes could be demolished and business premises erected. Under no circumstances, however, should we lengthen the waiting list of applicants for trust homes by failing to pass this Bill, which, if law, would stop the continual overcrowding of our people.

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—I support the Bill. Previous speakers on this side have given good reasons why it should be passed. Indeed, they were so good that Government members have found it difficult to speak against it, but no doubt they will vote against it because the Premier has given the word. Two circumstances gave rise to the Bill: the great number of dwellinghouses being demolished, and the failure of the Government to protect the tenants who were adversely affected. The Premier said that the Opposition, by introducing this Bill, was opposing progress, but there is no more progressive Party in Australia than the Australian Labor Party. It is a humane Party, which is the fundamental qualification that inspired the introduction of this legislation.

For years members have been told much about the wonderful job being done by the Housing Trust, and the Government takes much credit for its activities. I do not wish to discredit the trust—indeed, it deserves credit in many respects—but the figures produced by previous speakers on this side prove conclusively that it is unable to keep pace with the increase in our population and that, in fact, it cannot build sufficient homes even to accommodate all our immigrants. All members representing industrial districts are continually asked by people to apply on their behalf for trust homes. Let me relate some of the cases that have been brought to me from time to time and concerning which I have pleaded with the Housing Trust. The first is that of a young man who is so inflicted with deafness that he cannot speak. He is employed in an industry in the municipality of Hindmarsh and has not missed a day's work for many years. Ever since his marriage some five or six years ago he has been living in a caravan. He has several children and another is expected, but the trust regrets that it cannot provide him with housing accommodation because his application is not of sufficiently long duration. With respect to emergency homes the trust repeatedly tells us that it can only make allocations when vacancies occur and, apparently, because this young man and his family have the use of toilet conveniences in a house adjoining the trust considers that they are more satisfactorily accommodated than many others. That may be correct, but the Premier calls this type of living progress.

Only a few moments ago a letter was handed to me containing a plea to do something for the people concerned. A short paragraph from it is sufficient to show why this legislation is necessary. It says:—

> We are three spinsters aged 72, 71 and 68 and we have been living in the present house for approximately 40 years.

Because it is wanted for another purpose it will meet the fate that only this Bill can prevent. These poor ladies have been honest employees in various callings and are spinsters because they felt they had an obligation to their parents. Now they are to be forced into the street.

A young couple, who postponed their marriage for some considerable time hoping that they would be able to save sufficient to purchase a home, on eventually marrying made their application for a trust purchase home. Through an unfortunate happening in the family they were deprived of their savings and now, after having been married for years, while still applicants for a trust home, can find nowhere to live because people with whom they have been living have been evicted and the house is at this moment being demolished to make way for a factory. All this is going on while there are many broad acres within the metropolitan area on which factories could be built. Why do industries want to demolish these homes? Simply because it suits their economics. In the western suburbs, between the commercial centre and the shipping port, there are broad acres of unoccupied land most suitable for industry. I was taken to task for saying that there is a number of sub-standard homes in my electorate. They were sub-standard in 1936 and when I drew the attention of the House to a recommendation for the demolition of these houses it was hinted that I was having, as it were, a bob each way. The recommendation to which I referred was that the houses should be demolished and replaced by flats and other types of housing accommodation, not by factories. Our shortage of houses is driving aged people, widows and young couples with families into homes where

they have to live in over-crowded conditions. If that is a sign of progress I have yet to learn what progress means. I am glad that members on this side do not look upon misery, suffering and over-crowding as a mark of progress, and I regret that the Premier does. I urge the House to take a humane view of this matter and I am confident that it will support the Bill before it, as I do.

Mr. FLETCHER (Mount Gambier)—I support the Bill because of what I see happening in the metropolitan area and, to some extent, in country districts. Anyone who has travelled along the Goodwood Road and seen the demolitions that have taken place there must wonder whether there is any justice in our community. The homes between Park Terrace and the Glenelg tramline that have been destroyed had, I should say, another 20 years' life, and most of them have been replaced by secondhand car sales parks and petrol stations. Where have the people who were living in those good, solid, habitable homes gone? Have they been lucky enough to secure trust homes, or has the price they received been sufficient to enable them to buy a block of land and build a new modern home elsewhere? This is a very serious problem and one on which we should have more background information. I believe only one home remains in that section of the Goodwood Road that I mentioned, and in this case I understand that the owner refused point blank to sell at any price. This home is a fair sample of those that have been wrecked, and I would like to know whether the people were evicted on a court order.

Somewhat the same situation arises in country areas with the difference that no temporary homes are available. In the city every home that is standing is a blessing in so far as it affords an opportunity for some unfortunate who is pushed out of his own home to obtain some accommodation. The temporary homes also serve a very good purpose because they enable the trust to select those who are good tenants and allot them permanent homes. I do not blame the Treasurer for saying he is not in favour of more temporary homes for the simple reason that quite a number of people have refused to leave them when offered permanent accommodation because they prefer the low rent.

I am giving this Bill my wholehearted support and trust that it will be carried because, observing the conditions that exist in the city, I consider it is time that something was done.

Mr. TRAVERS (Torrens)—I oppose the Bill. Clause 3 (1) reads:—

> Any person who—
>
> (*a*) demolishes any dwellinghouse; or
>
> (*b*) demolishes any part of any dwellinghouse or makes any alteration to any dwellinghouse so as to render it uninhabitable as a dwellinghouse,
>
> shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a penalty not exceeding £100.

That is the only operative clause. The rest are incidental thereto in a variety of ways. It is perfectly clear that the Bill is designed—as it says in plain terms—to prevent an owner from using his own property as he chooses. I shall oppose this and any other Bill—whether it comes from the Opposition, the Government or elsewhere—that ignores the basic and fundamental rights of ownership of private property. This Bill does so ignore those rights, which should be respected wholesomely if the civilization that we know is to continue. These encroachments—be they big or small—upon principle are apt to establish a bad precedent. I recommend to members and to the public generally the need for giving full force to the recognized rights of private property.

My next point is that the Bill is one more of the all too many indications that we have had recently that the Opposition simply cannot resist the temptation of pushing people about. If it can see an opportunity of providing some interference or control in regard to one's personal property, it seems quite incapable of resisting the temptation of attempting to do so. There are some subjects into which legislation ought rightly to intrude, but there are other subjects into which it should be tardy about intruding. This question of interfering with the ownership and use of private property is a fundamental matter that should not be interfered with. Practically every Bill introduced by the Opposition recently sets aside the values that should appertain to matters of that kind.

The Bill completely ignores what should be fairly evident, namely, that a man who owns property attaches some value to it and accordingly does not usually demolish or alter it maliciously or mischievously. He usually turns it to some better purpose and improves its value. He does not simply destroy an existing home. In most instances I would imagine he purchased it with his own hard-earned cash and probably owned it through the war period when he was unable to do anything with it, although everyone else was able to do what they liked with it. Now that we have reached such a stage of progress that someone is prepared to offer him some

compensation for what he lost during that period of control, the Opposition suggests he should be prevented from accepting it. If that happens it will be a sorry day for any property owner.

The trend of the debate indicates a rather poor outlook in regard to the obligation of people to do something about providing themselves with homes. There was a time not long ago—and I have vivid recollections of it—when young men who wanted to get married had to do something about getting their own homes. It is not so terribly long since I was in the self-same position and had no means of obtaining a home except from savings from my wages of £5 a week. I had to do what many people nowadays are not prepared to do—give away the costly pastimes I enjoyed, namely, tennis, golf and racing.

Mr. Davis—In those days you did not need £5,000 to build a home.

Mr. TRAVERS—That is so, but in those days I was getting £5 a week compared with a basic wage of about £14 today. Let us not lose sight of the basic principle of this matter. It is the duty of the courts to keep in proper perspective the relationship between earnings and general values and if £5 a week in those days could provide sufficient money for one to pay the necessary deposit on a home I would imagine that three times that amount today would cope, in most instances, with the problem of providing a home. Taking it by and large, home building is normally not the job of Government. Circumstances arise, from time to time, when home building, to a certain extent, does become in part, at least, the job of Government. Those circumstances exist, to a degree, today because of the delay in the normal output of homes during the war and the quickening demand for homes as a result of immigration. It seems to me that the Government has done so much towards providing houses that it has made a rod for its own back.

Members opposite have lost sight of the fact that the normal practice should be for people who are earning a decent income to make some sacrifices to purchase homes without relying on Government aid. Many people today buy a car when they have no home and then say that they cannot afford to save towards a home. Why should we not try to reverse the situation? If they purchased a home, or paid the necessary deposit, and then came to the Government for aid in purchasing a car, how would they get on? I do not want to be misunderstood because no-one is more appreciative than I of the fact that large numbers of people simply cannot get satisfactory housing. At the same time, however, any member who examined this problem fairly and squarely could point to hundreds of people who are simply relying upon the Government for aid in housing when they are in a better position to do something for themselves than any member was at their age.

Mr. Davis—You could not have a large family and afford to buy a home.

Mr. TRAVERS—I did not have a large family when I contemplated getting married. If that was the honourable member's experience, it was not mine. What I am suggesting is that a large percentage of the people in this community have lost the urge to help themselves. They have found it more profitable to cash in on the very necessary scheme that was instituted for providing housing. They have not had the experience that people of my generation and older had of providing their own homes when a Government did not bestow largesse on all and sundry. I suggest that many people are not doing a fair thing by themselves or by their country in that they have completely disowned and jettisoned what should be their first duty—that of doing their best towards providing homes for themselves.

Mr. DAVIS secured the adjournment of the debate.

METROPOLITAN TAXI-CAB BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 12. Page 1160.)

Mr. JOHN CLARK (Gawler)—I support the Bill and I supported similar legislation last session, the difference being the controlling body suggested. I think a majority of the House at that time were of the same opinion as I was, and but for that difference it would probably have been passed. I must admit I was inclined to favour the Transport Control Board as the controlling authority, but on more mature consideration and after I had studied the legislation operating in the other States, particularly Western Australia, Queensland and New South Wales, I now strongly favour the Commissioner of Police as being the best authority for the licensing of taxicabs. I object to council control, not because I am opposed in any way to local government control, but because I think the allegations concerning the faults in city council control made last year were not disproved despite very wide publicity given to it in the press when the debate was taking place, and since.

I am sure every honourable member believes there should be more rigid control, and they differ only as to the controlling body. I shall briefly examine the speeches of Government speakers who have spoken against the Bill. The member for Burnside (Mr. Geoffrey Clarke) was the first to speak, and as chairman of the State Traffic Committee he should have had something of importance and interest to say, but his speech gave very little evidence of that. I say to his credit that he opposed the single authority last year and he did the same this year; at least he is consistent. However, I was rather amazed to hear the nonchalance with which he mentioned such peculiar bodies as the Chamber of Commerce or the Betting Control Board as being a desirable authority. Probably he was being facetious. I was expecting him at any minute to mention the Frothblowers, the Buffaloes, or even the Liberal and Country League. Such suggestions in a serious debate are not warranted. In his speech the honourable member said—

The licensing of taxicabs is the function of local governing bodies, who should understand the needs of their districts.

I cannot agree with that and cannot see why, because it has been the function of councils in the past—and has not been done very well—it should be a precedent to go on for ever and ever, and to continue in a state of "not being done very well." If a practice has proved to be a failure it is time something was done to better it. The honourable member's explanation advocating an advisory board and the remarks of the member for Mitcham (Mr. Millhouse) seemed to me to be cumbersome and unwieldy. Surely it is obvious that a single authority would be better equipped to do the job, and surely local governing bodies already have enough to do with too little revenue to do it, and I for one will not advocate giving them more work. I oppose the licensing under an advisory board as suggested by the honourable member for the very reason that the committee of inquiry under the estimable chairmanship of His Honor Judge Paine opposed it.

It is obviously impossible to get universal agreement from all the metropolitan councils. That has been proved over and over again, and is indeed an argument for the formation of a Greater Adelaide, which I and others on this side have advocated before in this Chamber. At least it might get rid of some of the multiplicity of authorities. Surely it should be plain to all that the recommendations of the advisory board would not be mandatory on councils. I cannot see how they could be. The Paine Committee recommended one single authority to control taxicabs and I maintain, as Mr. Jennings did when he introduced the Bill, that the most suitable single authority would be the Commissioner of Police. I shall quote what the member for Mitcham said early in his speech which, to put it mildly, was rather astonishing. He said:—

Rather than being weakened, local government should be strengthened.

I entirely agree. We do not want to give them more work. He continued:—

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.

Possibly that could be classed as one of the most outrageous and insulting remarks made in the Chamber for a long time. Members on this side have shown more interest in local government and still do in an active way than the honourable member is capable of realizing. In his own words, I say that his statement was most reprehensible and one with which I entirely disagree. I am not suggesting that the record of Government members is not also particularly good. I know it is with many of them. As the insinuation was made that we on this side hold local government in contempt, it might be of value if I give the record of members. I take it that in his reference to "members opposite" Mr. Millhouse was also including Independent members, which was even worse, because none of those gentlemen has yet had an opportunity to speak on the Bill, and the honourable member did not know what their attitude was. I take the liberty to give the following records of members on this side:—Mr. Tapping served six years with a council, Mr. Hutchens four years, myself four years, Mr. McAlees six years, and Mr. Corcoran 23 years as either clerk or overseer.

Mr. Dunstan—Almost as long as the member for Mitcham has been alive.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—There is something in that. Mr. Riches has served 28 years in local government, which is a much longer period than the member for Mitcham has been on this earth, and of that time he has been mayor for 19 years. Mr. Davis has served 30 years with a council, either as councillor, alderman or mayor, and I believe all his family has either served or is serving with a council. He has been mayor of Port Pirie for at least six years. That record surely gives some indication of their knowledge and interest in local government.

Let me also quote the records of the Independent members, who were also charged, like the rest of us on this side, with having contempt for local government. Mr. Stott has been five years with a council, Mr. Quirke eight years, and he is still serving, Mr. Fletcher four years, and Mr. Macgillivray five years, and part of that time as chairman of his council. If those years are added up it will be seen that members on this side have given 125 years of service in a purely honorary capacity, and that appears to me not to be evidence of their holding contempt for local government.

I am not denying that good service to local government has also been given by members opposite, because I know that it has, but the accusation was not made against them. I submit that the long period of service given by many members on this side is an indication of their selfless work for local government. If the member for Mitcham is in the Chamber long enough to see an amendment to the Local Government Act introduced, as I expect he will be, he will discover whether there is an interest by members on this side in local government. Such a Bill is regularly introduced every year, and I only hope another will come forward this session to further the education of the honourable member. He has not yet given service to local government, unless he considered that he was doing so when he spoke in the strain he did on the Bill. Personally, I do not think he was. Whether he has given service to local government or not matters very little, but before he makes rash statements he should make certain that he has some basis for his accusation. After all, his legal training should at least have taught him that. His uncorroborated statement may have appealed to those in the clear, pellucid waters of young Liberalism in which the honourable member previously sported himself before coming to this House. Unfortunately for him he is now attempting to swim in very different waters. They are darker and stormier, and there are unsuspected currents, whirlpools and snags to trap the unwary. It is time that the honourable member avoided snags by verifying statements before making them. I did not intend to say much on the Bill but I thought the remarks by Mr. Millhouse should be strongly refuted. I will not say any more about his speech because the rest of it is on a par with the remarks I have mentioned, and therefore not worthy of consideration. I cannot do better than close by quoting the apt words of Mr. Jennings, who last year endeavoured to prove the foolishness of appointing the wrong authority. For that reason he was happy to introduce this Bill. In concluding his second reading explanation on October 5 he said:—

If members are consistent they will support my Bill, because last year they agreed to the principle of uniform control over the licensing of taxicabs and disagreed—in my opinion quite rightly—with the principle that the Adelaide City Council should be the licensing authority. He knows that members opposite are not noted for their consistency, but I hope they will be consistent this time and support the measure, which I do.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—I, too, support the Bill. I will not introduce fresh matter into the debate. I spoke last session in support of uniform control, which the House endorsed, but since then Mr. Millhouse has become a member. In his first speech he said he had a lot to learn, and his speeches have proved it. We had an instance when he spoke on this Bill, and I hope that he will profit from my remarks and those just made by Mr. John Clark. Mr. Millhouse said:—

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.

The Police Commissioner is responsible for the issue and control of a number of licences. According to his report for 1954, the various licences issued were:—

Marine store collectors	648
Master hawkers	532
Servant hawkers	122
Pistol dealers	33
Pistol licences	5,730

There were also licences for the totalizator and for gold buying. If the Bill had covered the issue of the abovementioned licences no doubt Mr. Millhouse would have made exactly the same remarks. He also said:—

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.

The honourable member was not in the House last session, but apparently he read the *Hansard* report of my remarks. I quoted then from newspaper reports and a judgment by Mr. Wilson, S.M., and referred to minutes of Adelaide City Council meetings. Mr. Millhouse did not attempt to answer any of the accusations he charged me with making. I thought he would challenge them if he found them incorrect. He also said:—

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.

That confirms what I and other members said last session, but he claims that much has been done since to improve the position. I thought he would go on to say what had been done, but from his remarks apparently the only action has been the calling of a conference of representatives of metropolitan councils. Mr. Millhouse said that the Adelaide City Council had appointed its four representatives, but he did not say that one or more of them would readily admit that they knew little or nothing about taxicab control. Mr. Millhouse also said:—

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.

He then quoted section 669 of the Local Government Act which gives power to councils to make by-laws with regard to taxis within their areas. This Bill has been introduced to take away that power and place it in the hands of the Police Commissioner. The honourable member also said:—

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.

That may be justification for favouring the Adelaide City Council controlling taxicabs, but it has invited other councils to join it in appointing a committee to control them. Mr. Millhouse further said:—

Licences are issued by the council both for motor vehicles that can be used as taxis and for drivers to drive them.

I think he tried to justify the control of taxicabs being in the hands of local government bodies. Probably he would have said the same thing if he had been here when a Bill was debated many years ago providing for the Motor Vehicles Department registering vehicles and issuing licences to drivers. The honourable member says that he opposes the Bill because it weakens the power of councils, as it takes from them a power they already have. He still has a lot to learn. Parliament is called together every year to pass new or to amend existing legislation. Then the honourable member mentioned a conference that was held by metropolitan councils last January. He said:—

The conference 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.

Apparently some councils thought that if they did not meet and do something about the unsatisfactory position of the taxi industry Parliament would take action. I know the Adelaide City Council wants to retain control, and I shall show why later, but this conflicts with the honourable member's statements. When speaking about goodwill the honourable member said:—

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.

Last year I, and other members, referred to the transfer of licences. The honourable member took me to task about the accusations I made, but he did not attempt to answer them. One of my allegations was about the transfer of these licences, namely, about graft in the city council. The honourable member did not try to refute that allegation. I said that certain statements were made in the city council, where statements are not privileged, but they were not answered. I realize that goodwill has value in business, but I cannot understand why the honourable member did not attempt to explain why as much as £1,000 was paid for the transfer of a licence. Last year I said that one man met me in the corridor of this House and told me he had paid £1,600 for a car that was not worth £600, so that gives some indication of the price paid for the transfer. With some transfers the licence went to a company, which then hired it out at £8 a week. The honourable member did not try to refute that, though he said that the city council subsequently made an inquiry into these matters. However, he did not refer to the inquiry carried out by the Prices Commissioner into statements made in this House. Subsequently, the amount paid for licences was reduced. The findings of the Prices Commissioner were announced towards the end of the session last year, and I know that the fee was reduced to less than £8 a week. The honourable member quoted section 22 of the relevant city council by-law, which 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.

Despite the remarks of the member for Mitcham, I fail to see why the Police Commissioner could not handle licences and transfers as well as any council, committee of councils, or any other authority.

Mr. Dunstan—He could handle those matters much better because he would have the force of law, whereas the city council only has a host of by-laws.

Mr. LAWN—I agree. The member for Mitcham even admitted that the council had to refer certain matters to the Police Commissioner. He also said:—

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.

If he had followed up this matter he would have found that one councillor raised this matter in the city council last year. Arrangements were made for the transfer of a licence, the price was paid, but the transfer did not go through. The honourable member then said:—

This is one of the points that has been tightened up since this question was debated in the House last year.

That is only further justification for this Bill, because it shows that we should act in this matter. Furthermore, his statement proves that one of the allegations I made last year was correct. He then quoted section 10 of the city council's by-law. He said that the town clerk has to be satisfied that the applicant has the use, control and management of the motor vehicle at the time of the application. No-one can tell me that when a company applies for a licence that it has the use, control and management of the vehicle. Usually, it hires out licences to someone else later. The honourable member also said that the town clerk must be satisfied that the applicant is a fit and proper person for a licence, but would not the Commissioner of Police be able to satisfy himself on this point? He issues licences for marine store collectors, hawkers, gold buyers and others, so surely he should be able to control taxi licences. He also said:—

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.

I admit that last year Opposition members suggested that the Transport Control Board should be the controlling authority, but upon reflection I think that the Commissioner of Police should be the authority. He could police the control of taxis better than the board or any municipality. The honourable member said that the present administration was quite as efficient as one could expect in the circumstances, but in the case I referred to previously the magistrate said in no uncertain manner, in dismissing the case brought by the city council, what he thought of the city inspector's evidence. More city inspectors have been brought before the court this year for allegedly offering to accept bribes from motorists so that they could park their cars and flout the by-laws. How can the member for Mitcham call that efficient administration? Only recently in the city council it was stated that all is not right in the inspector's department. I think that statement was made on the same day that the city council's four representatives were appointed to the taxi advisory committee. The member for Mitcham said:—

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.

The honourable member said the city council has 23 inspectors to police taxicab control.

Mr. Millhouse—They have other duties, too.

Mr. LAWN—Yes, that was the point I made last year. If the Police Commissioner is the authority under this legislation there will be more than 23 policemen to police the operations of the Bill at any hour of the day or night. That will be a great advantage not only to the State but to people using taxis.

Mr. Millhouse—Why cannot the police do it even though the Police Commissioner is not the authority?

Mr. LAWN—The honourable member complained that the taxpayers would be billed with the cost of policing this matter, yet now he is suggesting that the revenue should go

to the councils and the taxpayers should bear the cost of policing the legislation. That is inconsistent with what he said last week. During his speech he also said:—

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.

We know that is a fact, but we are trying to effect a cure to make it unnecessary for the matters to be reported to the police so that there will not be any complaints made or prosecutions launched. The honourable member's very statement supports the Bill, because it is an admission that allegations are made and prosecutions taken against inspectors. He also referred to councils that had been invited to attend the committee set up by the Adelaide City Council, and said:—

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.

There is no guarantee that the Police Commissioner will sit on this committee and I think it is impertinence on the part of councils to make such an offer.

Mr. Macgillivray—It would be just a waste of time.

Mr. LAWN—Of course it would, because he would have no more voice than the other nine members of this hotch-potch committee set up by local government bodies to retain control in this matter. The honourable member for Mtcham said that if we leave the position as it is, councils will be responsible for the cost, whereas if the Bill is carried the taxpayers will be responsible. The Police Commissioner's report of 1954 shows that the revenue from licences and permits was £56,489. This would not be a burden on the taxpayer. I would like to repeat what I said last year, that the mayor, Sir Arthur Rymill, said that after discussion with the Premier he felt that the Adelaide City Council should be the licensing authority. He said it would be a revenue producing avenue for the city council—he did not think it would be a burden on the ratepayers. If this Bill is carried, control of taxicabs will not be any burden on the taxpayers.

Since last year I have had occasion to complain about two or three incidents involving taxicab drivers. On one occasion I challenged a driver about multiple hiring and although he said it was legal I told him I did not think it was. The next day I checked the position with the town clerk and found that it was not permitted, although the cab driver persisted that it was. He even followed me to the front door of my home. I knew that the town clerk was the appropriate person from whom to make inquiries, but how many citizens would know that? Most people believe that the police are the proper people from whom to inquire. This driver picked up other passengers, and to add insult to injury, charged me more than I am usually charged. When I challenged him about this he said that he had taken something off because of the multiple hiring.

Mr. Macgillivray—Did you report this to the authorities?

Mr. LAWN—Yes.

Mr. Macgillivray—What was the result?

Mr. LAWN—I heard nothing about it. Later I had a complaint about a taxicab that is not licensed by the Adelaide City Council. I did not know who was the controlling body in this matter and I had to ring the town clerk to find out. What more confused state of affairs could there be?

Mr. Jennings—You would not know who to go to to ask who you should go to.

Mr. LAWN—No, I would not. This matter should be placed in the hands of the Commissioner of Police because it would make inquiries so much simpler for the public. I cannot see why any member of this House should object to that being done.

Mr. Millhouse—Why could not the police give the information on where to go to make an inquiry?

Mr. LAWN—I do not think any further argument in support of the Bill other than the honourable member's suggestion is necessary. I do not know anything that could be said against the Bill that has not been said already. I hope that on this occasion the second reading will be carried, that there will be an opportunity to go through it clause by clause, and that the legislation will be gazetted and will become law.

Mr. FLETCHER (Mount Gambier)—I support the Bill. In speaking on a similar Bill last session I agreed that the Commissioner of Police should administer the licensing of metropolitan taxicabs. That would be beneficial

because every policeman would then be a potential inspector, which would have a steadying effect on most of our taxi drivers, some of whom exceed the speed limit and take unnecessary risks.

Mr. Tapping—That does not apply only to taxi drivers.

Mr. FLETCHER—No. We have some careful taxi drivers, but some are reckless. Today the police force is short of officers, particularly key men, and I am a little perturbed about whether it will be big enough to give adequate time and attention to this matter.

Mr. TAPPING secured the adjournment of the debate.

HIRE PURCHASE AGREEMENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 19. Page 1168.)

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—When speaking on this measure last week I said that organizations providing hire-purchase finance made a big profit by way of interest. Yesterday's *Advertiser* reported the amount of hire purchase money outstanding in South Australia at June 30 last was £18,397,000, compared with £13,450,000 at June 30, 1954. Hire purchase finance for the quarter ended June 30 last amounted to £4,179,000, of which £3,338,000 was owing on motor vehicles, tractors and mechanical equipment. I wonder how much is involved in the purchase of motor cars? That information would have assisted members in a debate on another measure earlier this afternoon, when it was said that some young married couples preferred to own a motor car rather than a home.

The figures quoted lead one to believe that a substantial profit is being made by the people providing hire-purchase finance. Yesterday's *News* contained the following report:—

New crime to cover up her first.—A woman, 20, had committed one crime to make restitution on another, the Criminal Court was told today.

The report states that a married woman with two children was remanded for sentence on two counts of forging and uttering Savings Bank withdrawal forms for a total of £65 10s. Counsel for the defendant said the woman had committed herself to numerous hire-purchase payments and had got in arrears. She had been afraid to tell her husband and had committed the offence. The husband had now cleared up all his wife's many accounts and would make restitution to the bank. New section 3a (1) provides that no hire-purchase agreement shall be enforceable unless such agreement sets out clearly the cash price of the goods and certain other details. Had the woman referred to in the report been presented with an agreement showing those details, she would have had a better opportunity to consider her total commitments and the advisability of her entering into further commitments.

The object of the Bill is to assist those people who must use hire-purchase finance to purchase goods. New section 3a (1) (*e*) provides that a hire-purchase agreement shall bear the signatures of both the hirer and the hirer's spouse, which ensures that husband and wife must agree on the commitment involved in the agreement. Had this provision been law, the woman referred to would have had to obtain her husband's consent before entering into agreements and probably would not have got into difficulties, yet the Treasurer said that this provision constituted an interference in the normal domestic relations between husband and wife that would disrupt the privacy of married life.

The Bill, however, merely seeks to prevent the circumstances mentioned in the press report. I have been asked whether it would be possible to persuade the Government to enact this very provision. A constituent wrote to me stating that his wife had entered into so many agreements that he did not know where it would end. Further, the children of the marriage who were working were paying their mother a sum for board and clothing, but, although they paid her enough to pay cash for any purchases she might make, she became so obsessed with hire-purchase that she used it to finance all her purchases. Her husband asked me whether the signing of agreements by both parties to the marriage could be made compulsory. After all, many young married couples have not reached that real understanding that should exist in the home, and each party should know the financial commitments entered into by the other. No particular problem would arise if a husband were earning a good wage, gave his wife an adequate house-keeping allowance and was able to meet his commitments on an agreement to purchase a car or a refrigerator. However, there is a serious problem in respect of persons who enter into more agreements than they are able to afford—as, for instance the 20-year old mother I referred to. She has been committed for sentence for an offence arising out of her inability to meet her commitments under hire-purchase and about which

her husband had no knowledge. She probably noticed that her friends and neighbours—who were, no doubt, in a better financial position than she—were enjoying amenities she did not possess, and in an effort to keep pace with them she entered into too many hire-purchase agreements.

I have not discussed the profits enjoyed by those who provide the necessary finance for hire-purchase. However, there are some persons who are not sufficiently honourable to inform those who are obtaning goods under hire-purchase of their commitments. The Bill provides that agreements shall state the cash price of a commodity, the amount of deposit, the insurance and accommodation charge. People will then know what they are doing. If one asked some young people who intended utilizing hire-purchase where they intended to make their purchases the reply would no doubt be, "At so-and-so's, because they do not require a deposit." They would not know the retail price of the commodity nor the interest they were being charged. In all probability the retail price at the store which offered the article with no deposit would be more than at any store which demanded some deposit. If young people knew the full facts about hire-purchase before they entered into it, the system would not be flourishing as it is today.

I was asked to prepare a broadcast for a commercial radio station on the question of hire purchase. In my article I instanced my own experience. When I was married I could not afford an ice-chest—an article regarded as a luxury in those days—and had to use a water cooler. I saved and in time was able to afford an ice-chest. Later, as a result of saving, I was able to afford a refrigerator. I commended the practice of saving to be able to pay cash for our requirements, but the manager of the station told me, to my surprise, that he could not broadcast that article because of the possible effect it would have on those who advertised over his station. He told me that if I modified the article so as not to offend his advertisers he could broadcast it.

The Premier suggested that we were trying to break away from the broad principles of married life and that it was not necessary for a husband or wife to get the consent of his or her spouse to enter into certain contracts. However, I submit that the case of the young woman waiting for sentence, clearly illustrates the need for such a provision. The Bill does afford some protection to young people. This afternoon we were told that people should make some sacrifice in order to save to purchase their own homes, but it takes a considerable amount of money these days to provide even a deposit for a home. Many people have sufficient for a deposit and would not require more than the maximum advance of £1,750 under the Advances for Homes Act, but although they have had their applications with the Housing Trust for more than 12 months they are still unable to get homes. Even if one has the wherewithal it is not easy to secure a home.

Yesterday I asked a question relating to a charge for a single cut roll. My purpose was to protect young children and the purpose of this measure is to protect young people from the difficulties they could experience through entering into hire purchase and I commend the Bill to members.

Mr. STEPHENS secured the adjournment of the debate.

THE Y.W.C.A. OF PORT PIRIE INCORPORATED (PORT PIRIE PARKLANDS) BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

(*Sitting suspended from* 6 *to* 7.30 *p.m.*)

WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILIZATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

LAND SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Minister of Lands)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It provides that the present members of the Land Settlement Committee shall be entitled to remain in office until the end of 1956, provided, of course, that they retain their seats in Parliament at the next election. The Government has given careful consideration to the period of this extension. It has been the practice to extend the term of the committee for periods of three years. At present, however, although land development and settlement is proceeding steadily, it does not appear that there will be much work for the committee in the near future. In view of the uncertainty of the position, the Government considers that it is desirable at this juncture to extend the committee's term for one year only. The position can then be reviewed next year. The proposed extension is provided for in clause 3.

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

HIGHWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its object is to provide for the transfer of certain money from the Highways Fund to Consolidated Revenue, and for re-imbursing the Highways Fund from the Loan Fund. The events which have led up to this Bill are the following:—In 1953 the sum of £620,000 was transferred from general revenue into the Highways Fund, pursuant to a special appropriation by Parliament. At that time the Government took the view, which it still holds, that this was a proper and reasonable provision to meet the costs of road construction and maintenance. When the money was voted there were prospects of a surplus in the Revenue Account, but the decision to vote the money was not based on the fact that revenue was buoyant, but on the needs of the Highways Department. Whatever the position of the Revenue Account may have been, the same amount would have been required. However, in assessing the grant for the year 1955-1956 the Commonwealth Grants Commission has made a "correction"—that is to say a reduction in the amount which would have been recommended of £620,000. The substantial reason for this reduction is that in the Commission's view the payment of £620,000 to the Highways Fund in 1953 was the disposal of a prospective surplus of revenue which would otherwise have been available to assist the State in meeting its commitments in a subsequent year. The Grants Commission rejected the State's submission that the transfer of money to the Highways Fund was a proper and reasonable appropriation for road purposes which would have had to be made whatever the state of the revenue was at the time.

The Government, of course, accepts the Commission's decision on this particular appropriation, and intends, accordingly, to transfer the sum of £620,000 back to revenue. It is, however, desirable that the Highways Fund should not be deprived of this amount, and the Government therefore proposes that, in order to reimburse the Highways Fund, authority should be given for the making of advances from the Loan Fund to the Highways Fund up to the sum of £620,000. The money so advanced will be repaid from the Highways Fund to the Loan Fund at convenient times to be decided in future by the Treasury. Clause 3 gives authority for these transactions. In addition to the loan moneys, the Government also proposes to pay from Consolidated Revenue a contribution to the Highways Fund of £250,000 to be applied towards the cost of developmental roads in country areas and the maintenance of country roads. This appropriation is being dealt with in the Budget. The Government believes that the Grants Commission will be prepared to consider these various appropriations on their merits and has no reason to think that they will lead to any disadvantage to the State.

Another alteration of the Highways Fund is made by clause 3. At present the Government, before transferring the motor revenue to the Highways Fund, is required to deduct from it and set aside a special sinking fund payment of 1¼ per cent of the balance of the Road Purposes Loan Account. This special sinking fund is in addition to the various contributions made by the State to the National Debt Sinking Fund. It was first inaugurated in 1926 before the National Debt Sinking Fund came into existence and has been carried on ever since. No doubt an argument in favour of maintaining the special sinking fund was that the life of a road was less than 53 years—the period in which loans are amortized by contributions to the National Debt Sinking Fund. However, in view of the new methods of road construction and maintenance this argument has lost much of its force. In addition, the Financial Agreement now contains provisions for special sinking fund contributions for loans used for wasting assets of relatively short life. These provisions, if necessary, can be applied to loans for road purposes. The Government, after reviewing the position, has come to the conclusion that the special sinking fund contributions are no longer necessary and should be abolished. It is therefore proposed by clause 3 to repeal the provisions in the Highways Act which provides for these contributions.

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

AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS BILL.

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is largely a machinery measure in that it re-enacts in somewhat different form the provisions of the Fertilisers Act and the Pest Destroyers Act. The only new matter is that which deals with the more recent developments of spray fertilizers, weedicides and hormone

sprays and the like which are not now covered by legislation. The object of the Bill is to regulate the sale of agricultural chemicals. At present the sale of fertilizers is regulated by the Fertilisers Act, and the sale of fungicides, insecticides and vermin destroyers by the Pest Destroyers Act. These Acts are no longer adequate for present day requirements.

First, the number of agricultural chemicals on the market multiplies almost daily and the present legislation does not apply to many of the new products. Thus, the present legislation does not apply to trace elements, plant hormones or weedkillers. In the interests of the public it is desirable that the sale of these substances should be regulated. Trace elements are used for the purpose of correcting soil deficiencies and their importance is well known. The plant hormones are used principally for the prevention of fruit drop and for the promotion of fruit setting and are of increasing importance. Weedkillers are becoming very widely used in agriculture. Crop spraying in particular is becoming a common practice. It is important for both farmers and the general public that these agricultural chemicals should be of proper quality and efficacious for the purposes for which it is claimed they can be used. For example, it is desirable that trace elements should be properly mixed with the substances with which they are to be spread. The Government's attention has been drawn to the fact that trace elements are, in instances, not properly compounded with the substance with which they are sold. Also it is doubtful whether the Fertilisers Act applies to foliar fertilizers. It is desirable that foliar fertilizers should be under the same control as other fertilizers, and that doubt about the matter should be removed.

Second, the present Acts do not make adequate provision to prevent the sale of substances under misleading names, or false, misleading or indefinite descriptions. The Fertilisers Act provides for the licensing of fertilizers, and the Pest Destroyers Act for the registration of pest destroyers. The procedure in both cases which, for convenience, I will refer to as registration, is automatic. On the making of an application in due form under the old Act registration cannot be refused. This means that an application may be made for the registration of a substance under a name which indicates that it contains specified ingredients, when, in fact, it does not contain them. Thus, substances which are not bordeaux powder are registered as "Bordo" and "Bordacide," and substances which are not copper carbonate are registered as "Copper Carbonate." A substance was also at one time registered as "Derridust," which did not, in fact, contain any derris. Similarly, if a false description of the composition of a substance is given on an application for registration, registration must still be granted. That again is under the old Act. It is true that a person who sold the substance could be prosecuted for giving a false description of the substance if he repeated the description on a label under which he sold the substance, but it is unsatisfactory that registration should be granted in the first place.

A further difficulty arises under the Pest Destroyers Act. Whereas under the Fertilisers Act particulars of the quantities of the chemicals specifically mentioned in the Act must be furnished, the Pest Destroyers Act merely requires percentage of the substances which are claimed to be active constituents to be set out. The manner in which the active constituents must be stated is not regulated. This means that there is no way of preventing indefinite descriptions which have no specific chemical meaning from being supplied and used. Thus the expressions "chlorinated benzene," "hydrocarbon oils" and "essential oils" are expressions in use which have no specific meaning. Descriptions may also be inadequate. Thus there is no necessity to disclose the isomer content of B.H.C. or D.D.T. The isomer content is relevant to the effectiveness of those chemicals.

Third, there is no method under the present Acts of preventing the marketing of substances which might be dangerous to public health if used indiscriminately for agricultural purposes, or substances which are not really effective for the uses to which it is claimed they can be put. The many new developments in agricultural chemicals make it necessary that measures should be taken for the protection of public health and to prevent substantially useless substances being passed off on the public.

Fourthly, there is no power under existing legislation to cancel the registration of any substance. The whole subject has been carefully investigated by a departmental committee which has recommended that the existing Acts be repealed and replaced by a single Act. This would have two advantages. Firstly, it would simplify the administration of the legislation, and secondly, it would avoid the necessity of registering a substance under more than one Act. There are a number of substances which serve more than one purpose and at present have to be registered under both Acts. The

Government has decided, after giving the matter full consideration, to adopt the recommendation of the committee that the existing legislation should be repealed and replaced by a single Act under which the sale of all types of agricultural chemicals would be controlled. The Government is accordingly introducing this Bill.

It provides for the registration of labels to be used on packages containing agricultural chemicals. The registration of labels is made the responsibility of the Minister of Agriculture, who is empowered to refuse registration on various grounds set out in the Bill, *e.g.*, that the substance intended to be sold under the label is substantially ineffective for any purposes for which it is claimed it can be used. Power is given to the Minister to cancel the registration of a label in certain circumstances. As a general rule, the label must state particulars of the substances which are claimed to be active constituents of the agricultural chemical. A detailed description of the composition is not required to be given on the label. However, a detailed description is required to be furnished with the application as "additional particulars." In certain cases, particulars of active constituents may be furnished as additional particulars. The Bill provides that where an applicant can establish that a secret process or formula might be disclosed if he were required to state any active constituents of a substance in a label, he may register the particulars of the active constituents as additional particulars.

The Bill makes it an offence to sell an agricultural chemical except in a package with a copy of a registered label affixed to it, and also makes it an offence to sell a substance in a package with a copy of a registered label affixed to it if the substance does not comply in every respect with the particulars stated in the copy and the registered additional particulars. Both the Fertilisers Act and the Pest Destroyers Act contain provisions affecting civil rights arising out of the sale of fertilisers and pest destroyers. Thus there are provisions creating warranties and enabling purchasers to refuse delivery. This Bill omits these provisions altogether. It is considered that it is better to leave these matters to be decided by the ordinary law of contract.

The details of the Bill are as follows:—Clause 2 provides for it to come into operation on a day to be fixed by proclamation. Clause 3 repeals the Fertilisers Act and the Pest Destroyers Act. Clause 4 is an interpretation clause. The only definitions which call for comment are those of "active constituent" and "agricultural chemical." The Bill defines agricultural chemical as a substance commonly used, or represented by the seller as capable of being used, for any of four purposes. These purposes are, for preventing, regulating or promoting the growth of any vegetation; for improving the fertility of soil in any way; for protecting vegetation or fruit or other products of any vegetation from attack by insects, animals, fungi, parasitic plants, bacteria or virus and for destroying vermin. The Bill also provides that the Governor may declare a substance to be an agricultural chemical by proclamation. This definition is wide enough to include all forms of fertilisers, plant hormones and weedkillers. Provision is made for substances to be excluded from the operation of the Act by proclamation. It is at present proposed to exempt certain natural products which have some value as fertilisers, *e.g.*, farmyard manure, crude night soil, crude offal and seaweed, and also substances which can be used both for agricultural purposes and for other purposes when they are sold for use for such other purposes, *e.g.*, copper sulphate, sulphur, lime and zinc oxide. This matter is left to be dealt with by proclamation because it is considered that to attempt to deal with it in the Bill would lead to too great rigidity. It is almost certain that the list of exemptions will from time to time require amendments and additions, and these can be made readily by proclamation. The Bill defines "active constituent" to mean a constituent substance which is effective for any of the purposes mentioned in the definition of "agricultural chemical" or which materially influences the effectiveness for any of those purposes of any constituent substance.

Clause 5 provides for the appointment of inspectors and analysts for the purposes of the legislation. Clause 6 provides, in effect, that a label attached to a package containing an agricultural chemical need not be a facsimile of the registered label, although it must contain particulars identical in all material respects with those stated in the registered label. It is unnecessary to insist on the use of exact copies of registered labels. Clause 7 sets out the circumstances under which a substance shall for the purposes of the Bill be deemed not to comply with the particulars shown in the label and the additional particulars. A substance will be deemed not to comply with such particulars only where the quantity of any claimed active constituent is greater or less than the quantity indicated

in the particulars by more than the prescribed tolerance, or where the constituent substances are not properly mixed or where the substance is deemed not to comply with the particulars by virtue of the regulations. It is desirable that the circumstances in which a substance will be regarded as not complying with particulars of composition should be limited, but that at the same time it is neither practical nor desirable to set out all the circumstances in the Bill. Hence it provides for the matter to be dealt with for the most part by regulation.

Clause 9 makes it an offence to sell, offer for sale, expose for sale, or have in possession for the purpose of sale a substance in a package with a registered label affixed to it unless the substance complies with the particulars shown in the label and the registered additional particulars. It is a defence to a charge under clause 9 if the defendant obtained the substance already packed and labelled and that the defendant believed on reasonable grounds that the substance complied with the particulars. Thus, a person who manufactures and packs an agricultural chemical will be placed under a strict liability for any deficiency in the product marketed by him, while a dealer who purchases an agricultural chemical manufactured and packed by another will not be responsible for any deficiency in the agricultural chemical so long as he can show that he had reasonable grounds to believe that the agricultural chemical complied with the particulars.

Clause 10 makes it an offence for a person who sells an agricultural chemical in the course of his business to make any false or misleading claim in respect of the agricultural chemical. This clause is principally designed to prevent false or misleading advertising, examples of which have come to the notice of the Government. It will also prevent the inclusion of false or misleading matter in a label other than a registered label attached to a package containing an agricultural chemical.

Clause 11 makes it an offence to sell, offer for sale, expose for sale or have in possession for the purpose of sale any agricultural chemical which does not comply with the prescribed standard. A defence to a charge of this offence somewhat similar to the defence created by clause 9 is provided. The Pest Destroyers Act provides for the fixing of standards. Only one standard has in fact been fixed, namely a standard for copper carbonate. This standard will be enforced by clause 11.

It is proposed that, if possible, other standards should be fixed in the future, as standards are regarded as a valuable means of regulating the sale of agricultural chemicals. However, there will be some delay before any further standards are fixed. Work recently done on the subject has revealed that the fixing of standards is a complex matter.

Clause 12 deals with applications for registration of labels and additional particulars. The clause sets out the particulars which are to be included in a label, and provides for the use of abbreviations and symbols. Particulars of the composition of a substance must be given in compliance with the regulations and any directions given by the Minister. This provision will ensure that the particulars given have a definite chemical meaning. The clause provides for the payment of a registration fee of 5s.

Clause 13 enables an application to be made for the registration of a label which does not disclose the active constituents of the substance intended to be sold under the label. The clause provides that on such an application particulars of the active constituents of the substance must be supplied as additional particulars. The clause provides that the Minister shall not deal with the application unless he is satisfied that the disclosure of the particulars might lead to the disclosure of a secret process or formula and that some person might thereby suffer loss. Provision is made elsewhere in the Bill to prevent as far as possible the disclosure of particulars supplied to the Minister under this clause.

Clause 14 sets out the grounds on which the Minister may refuse the registration of a label. They are as follows:—

(*a*) that the substance intended to be sold under the label is substantially ineffective for any purpose mentioned therein or in the additional particulars as a purpose for which the applicant claims or intends the substance may be used;

(*b*) that if the substance is used for any purpose, there may be a substantial risk of injury to the health of members of the public;

(*c*) that the distinctive name of the substance is misleading;

(*d*) that any statement in the application or in the label is false or misleading in a material particular;

(*e*) that in any respect the substance does not comply with the particulars stated

in the label or the additional particulars;

(*f*) that a standard having been prescribed which applies to the substance, the substance does not comply with that standard; or

(*g*) that a constituent substance which is not claimed as an active constituent of the substance ought to be so claimed.

The clause provides that the Minister must not register a label unless he is satisfied that the substance if sold under the label would not be sold in contravention of the Poison Regulations. An application for registration must otherwise be granted as of right unless the Minister is satisfied that a ground exists for the refusal of registration.

Clause 15 enables one label to be registered for a number of packages containing different quantities of the same substance. Clauses 16 to 22 enact various machinery provisions. Among other things they deal with such matters as the annual renewal of registration, the alteration of a registered label or registered additional particulars and the keeping of a register of labels and additional particulars. Clause 21 enables the Minister to refer any matter arising out of an application to the Central Board of Health for the report of the board.

Clause 23 provides for the cancellation of registration. Two grounds of cancellation are provided, namely, that the person who obtained the registration has sold, offered for sale, exposed for sale or had in his possession for the purpose of sale, any substance in a package with a copy of a registered label affixed to it and the substance has not complied with the particulars contained in the copy and the registered additional particulars or the person has been convicted of an offence against the Bill. The first of the grounds mentioned in this clause is included mainly in order to facilitate the enforcement of the provisions of the Bill against interstate manufacturers. Many agricultural chemicals are manufactured and packed in other States and it is expected that difficulty would be experienced in prosecuting such persons for offences against the Bill.

Clauses 24 to 28 provide for the taking of samples by inspectors and by private purchasers, for the analysis of such samples, for the publication of the result of an analysis, and other matters incidental to the taking of samples and the analysis of samples. Clause 29 enables a court, on convicting a person of an offence against the Act by means of evidence of an analysis to order the person to pay the costs of the analysis.

Clause 30 makes it an offence to obstruct the Minister or any inspector or analyst in the execution of his powers and duties under the Bill. The provisions of clauses 24 to 30 are substantially similar to provisions contained in the Fertilisers Act and the Pest Destroyers Act. Clause 31 requires the Minister to take all reasonable steps to ensure that information supplied to him under the Act concerning the composition of substances is not unnecessarily disclosed to the public.

Clause 32 provides for the making of regulations. The clause provides, in particular, for the making of regulations for the taking of grab samples. The purpose of this provision is to enable samples to be taken by which the proper mixing of an agricultural chemical can be determined. In order to obviate any injustice arising from the method of taking samples provision is made that different tolerances may be prescribed to apply where grab samples are taken. The clause also enables regulations to be made requiring packages containing agricultural chemicals to be labelled with a brand where ordinary labels are not suitable for use, such as on fertilizer sacks. Clauses 33, 34 and 35 deal with legal procedure.

Clause 34 enables a complaint for an offence against the Bill to be laid within 12 months of the matter of the complaint arising. Normally by virtue of the Justices Act, a complaint must be laid within six months. The object of the clause is to facilitate the prosecution of the person who originally packs and labels an agricultural chemical in contravention of the Bill, by giving more time for the offence to be discovered. Clause 36 is a transitional provision in effect providing for the continuance of a registration under the Fertilisers Act or the Pest Destroyers Act until the normal expiry date. The clause enables any substance not registered under either of those Acts to be packed in packages not labelled with a label registered under this Bill for three months after the commencement of the Bill.

Clause 37 amends the Stock Medicines Act. Its effect is to bring within the scope of that Act substances used for preventing insects or other pests from attacking stock. The sale of such substances is at present controlled by the Pest Destroyers Act. The clause also provides that the Stock Medicines Act shall not apply to any agricultural chemical within the

meaning of the Bill. The clause is designed to make a convenient division of work in the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. HUTCHENS secured the adjournment of the debate.

METROPOLITAN MILK SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 6. Page 1011.)

Mr. BROOKMAN (Alexandra)—This Bill deals with three aspects of the dairy industry: firstly, with the licensing of dairy premises; secondly, with the reconstitution of milk; and thirdly, with the zoning of the marketing system. I can see no harm in the licensing provisions of the measure; in fact, I think they are good amendments. Under the Act if the board refused a licence it was unable to withhold a temporary licence for three months. That period enabled a dairyman to put his premises in order, but there is no point in having that period of grace now. If anyone wants to build a new dairy now he has every opportunity to build one measuring up to the required standard. The licensing of dairies is undoubtedly of great advantage to dairymen within the metropolitan milk supply area. Even in my short time in Parliament there have been many problems over licensing. When I first came here there were many complaints about the Metropolitan Milk Board because it insisted on certain dairy standards, but there are now very few complaints. Some years ago building materials were scarce and the dairyman could not get them to improve his dairy, but now he can, though I think the main reason why there are few complaints about the Milk Board now is that it has administered the Act very fairly. I have inquired into a number of complaints and I found that the board has treated dairymen tolerantly. I believe it has the support of dairymen generally, largely because of the secretary's attitude. Because of the board's fair-mindedness it has obtained good results.

In the board's earlier reports one can see photographs of the old and new types of dairy, and they show the improvements that have been effected. Undoubtedly, milk is now being produced under hygienic conditions. The Bill also gives the Minister power to deal with the sale of reconstituted milk and its use in certain areas. It is necessary to use reconstituted milk in some outlying areas, such as Woomera. There is a fresh milk supply there, but there have been complaints about it because of the climate and the distance the milk has to be transported. Therefore, no-one can quarrel with the wisdom of using reconstituted milk in such localities. After all, it is almost indistinguishable from fresh milk and I believe its nutrient quality is just as good.

Mr. John Clark—It is the same thing as fresh milk.

Mr. BROOKMAN—Yes. Water is taken from fresh milk and it is the same thing when water is added later. The provisions about reconstituted milk should be welcomed, but I am a little worried that its sale could, under certain conditions, become a threat to fresh milk. I do not know why, but the dairy industry is not as solidly based as many of our other primary industries are. It is hardly possible to jeopardise the prospects of the wool industry, for instance, by legislative action here, but that does not apply to dairying. Therefore, it needs our careful attention and we should be particularly concerned about it.

Mr. Riches—How can reconstituted milk become a threat to fresh milk?

Mr. BROOKMAN—I do not think it is a serious threat at present, but it could be, and the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation had evidence to that effect.

Mr. O'Halloran—Isn't one of the main purposes of the Bill to obviate that threat?

Mr. BROOKMAN—That is why I welcome these provisions, which provide that in outlying areas, which are not easily supplied with fresh milk, reconstituted milk may be supplied. I would say that reconstituted milk could be a threat to fresh milk. The Subordinate Legislation Committee has had plenty of evidence to show that this product, if sold in large quantities in the metropolitan area, would affect the dairying industry. As long as it is sold in outback areas that cannot be supplied with adequate quantities of fresh milk, there can be no complaint, but the industry is not very happy about unlimited sales in areas around Adelaide. Because of this, and the threat of margarine, the dairying industry is not in as happy a position as other industries that sell their products overseas and are not so easily affected by local legislation.

I am at variance with the provisions of the Bill relating to the zoning of milk sales. Zoning was brought in during the war under National Security Regulations. Since those regulations ceased to operate it has been carried on, according to the Minister, in a voluntary way. I cannot see any point in the new legislation on block zoning, which will

provide for three vendors in a block in order to give the housewife a choice. I was rather impressed by the remarks of the honourable member for Onkaparinga, who supported the Bill, but said that he would rather see five or six vendors in a block. He asked, if there were three vendors and one or two were weeded out by competition, what the board would do. For that reason he suggested there should be perhaps five or six. I am inclined to think we should have no blocks and no zoning, but that vendors should have a free go.

Mr. O'Halloran—At the moment the wholesalers have a free go.

Mr. BROOKMAN—I take it the Leader is suggesting they will not supply any milk to some vendors.

Mr. O'Halloran—That is what happens under the present voluntary system of zoning.

Mr. BROOKMAN—I understand that the Milk Board has power to deal with that. If the board wants the vendor to get milk, the wholesalers cannot withhold it.

Mr. O'Halloran—I thought the honourable member believed in competition.

Mr. BROOKMAN—I do, and that is why I do not believe in zoning. I do not know whether the Leader believes in competition. If he does, he must believe in a very restrictive type, because he supported having three vendors in a block whereas I support unrestricted vendors and no blocks. I believe we should let them all have a go, and if they fail, it will not hurt anyone but themselves. This matter was discussed fully last night when we were dealing with a completely different Bill.

Mr. Macgillivray—What was the result of that Bill?

The SPEAKER—Order! It is not before the House.

Mr. BROOKMAN—The selling of milk, apart from the important matter of health, should not be controlled in any way by the Government, and I cannot see any justification for blocks, zones, or having three vendors to a zone. I urge the Government not to ask for zoning of milk sales. I will watch this Bill in Committee, when I will ask a few questions on zoning. In other respects I strongly support the measure, but I doubt whether the Government is wise in asking for the powers that it seeks on zoning.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood)—I must confess that, unlike some other members of this Chamber, I am not closely associated with dairying. Although in my early days I was closely associated with it, my experience in South Australia is purely on the receiving end. I was interested at the information honourable members supplied on clauses 1 to 4, and I perceived from their remarks that those clauses are desirable and necessary. I find myself at variance with the Government, and unfortunately with some other members, on clause 5. I think all members are agreed on what is desirable, but it is a question of how precisely it will be attained. Firstly, it is proposed that power will be conferred on the Governor to make regulations for certain things. I will come to the desirability of handing over a regulation-making power such as this in a moment, but to deal with the gravamen of the matter, the zoning, it seems to me that when there is competition between small businesses it is desirable for the community that it should be maintained. I have always been an exponent of competition on that basis, and I am desirous to see that competition of that kind is maintained. I am not satisfied that the zoning system as set out in the Bill will maintain competition, or that there is competition at the moment. I am concerned about getting competition and maintaining it. What is the position at the moment? As the Minister said, during the war a zoning system was introduced, and it has been informally continued since. The Leader of the Opposition outlined this unofficial zoning system quite effectively when he said:—

> Although it is called voluntary zoning, some people have very strong suspicions that it is not quite as simple as that. Indeed, some evidence has been furnished from time to time that vendors who desired to go into certain zones to encourage competition had great difficulty in securing supplies of milk from the wholesalers. However, I think on the general question zoning has something to commend it provided that the interests of the public are properly safeguarded.

I think it is obvious to anyone who has spoken to the smaller vendors in the metropolitan area that, if they wish to break fresh ground or to come in to serve new housing areas, it is difficult for them to get milk from the wholesalers. In fact, there is no competition at the moment; the thing is sewn up. There are, in effect, a number of wholesalers who also have retail runs, and they have a number of them. In other cases they have runs that they lease out. I do not think that is a satisfactory system by any means, but I do not think that the proposed system of zoning will cope with the situation either, because once there is a system of zoning in which three people are allotted to a zone by the Milk Board, the system will be tied up just as it is in other States,

but more effectively than it is now, because there will be a certain amount of "dummying up," and there will be no compulsion on the board under the section of the Act that gives the regulation-making powers to the Governor to maintain competition. Surely we should endeavour to see that the board is given a direction that in licensing wholesalers and retailers, it should see that restrictive practices are not allowed, and that anyone who is guilty of such practices should be liable to have his licence revoked. Under those circumstances we might have some chance of maintaining competition, but all I see under this provision is that we are going to exclude competition and the licences that will be granted under the zones will become valuable franchises, such as exist in other States.

Mr. Quirke—In other words, they could easily become tied houses.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Exactly.

Mr. Brookman—The Milk Board has power to prohibit those practices.

Mr. DUNSTAN—But it has not a duty to do so. It should be required to stop them, not merely be given the right to do so. I am interested to see that this Parliament legislates to stop restrictive practices.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—Would you agree that there should be more than three vendors in a zone?

Mr. DUNSTAN—I think there should be, and we should also provide that wholesalers should not undertake restrictive practices in supplying retailers because, no matter how many retailers there are in a zone, so long as restrictive practices by wholesalers are allowed, we will have this "dummying up" that now exists under the informal zoning. Many retailers want this zoning system because they realize it will convert their zones into very valuable rounds, and they have circularized members of their organization stating how wonderful it is in Melbourne where £50 or £60 a gallon can be obtained for a milk round. Today you cannot buy a milk round in Sydney at less than £60 a gallon, and these regulations will have that effect here. I do not think that will be satisfactory either to the milk industry or the consumer. I represent a few consumers, and after the electoral redistribution I shall represent a few more. I cannot see my way clear to support the clause, and if we can work out an amendment to get around the restrictive practices I foresee, well and good. I shall be happy to co-operate with other members who have expressed similar views about how to get at the gravamen of this problem, but I cannot support a zoning system without laying down a duty on the board.

My second objection to the proposal is that we are getting into an administrative tangle because the licensing is to be done, apparently, by the Metropolitan Milk Board, whereas the sale of milk is to be policed by the Metropolitan County Board; therefore, two sets of people will be chasing around about the same licences, but policing different provisions covering the same work.

Mr. Quirke—That is always the idea.

Mr. DUNSTAN—Possibly, but it seems to me administrative nonsense. This thing should be streamlined somehow. At present milk selling is controlled by the Metropolitan County Board, and that seems the logical board to do it for the time being. Admittedly, if we were to have overall control to end restrictive practices by wholesalers and retailers, there would have to be one controlling body and not two or even three.

My third objection is that we are handing over policy-making to the Government by regulation for the zoning regulations are to be made under the regulation-making power and policy is not to be laid down by this House. Although I know that in certain circumstances it is necessary that machinery parts of the legislation shall be carried out by regulation and that we cannot work our present administration in any other way, where it is possible to retain in this Parliament, which is directly responsible to the people, the policy-making power, we should retain it. Therefore, although supporting the second reading I hope that clause 5 will be considerably amended in Committee.

Mr. TAPPING (Semaphore)—Like the member for Norwood (Mr. Dunstan) I tackle this problem with a limited experience, not having been associated with the land or dairying. Consequently, I have inquired in my district and also used some commonsense. My concern has been to find out whether relations between vendor and consumer are working harmoniously, and after extensive inquiries I have found that they are most satisfactory.

No member desires to return to the war-time practice under which one vendor had a zone to himself and no competition. The consumer then had to put up with many injustices for some vendors—admittedly a minority—were unwilling to give a decent service to their customers. In those days I had complaints about milkmen who arrived

late with their deliveries, which was unfair, particularly to those people who had no refrigerator in which to store milk from the previous day. That sort of thing should not occur and competition is desirable so that it shall not. I have heard no complaint that the present voluntary system is not working satisfactorily. In fact, in the Semaphore, Glanville and Ethelton area, with which I am well acquainted, a gentlemen's agreement exists between seven vendors who have divided a large zone into smaller zones. Even in these circumstances, however, if a customer desires to change his vendor it can usually be arranged satisfactorily.

Clause 5 provides that there shall be at least three vendors in one zone, and I believe that under that set-up five vendors could serve in the one street. That is a retrograde step. If we are to revert to the days when eight or nine milkmen served the people in one street the cost of the service to the consumer will be increased, whereas under the present zoning system, which is working so well and is economically sound, the consumer is given his milk by the cheapest possible service. Therefore, I hope members will reject clause 5. I believe the other parts of the Bill are quite sound and contain certain improvements.

Although I have received no complaints in my district, members from other districts may have different ideas about this subject and be able to prove that the present set-up is not so good, but as I am satisfied that the consumer and the vendor are both happy about the present arrangement, I question the advisability of altering a system that is working so well. Having heard the viewpoint of one vendor I asked other vendors what they thought about the set-up, and they said it was satisfactory. I believe that if we disturb the present arrangement the cost of milk may increase by as much as a halfpenny a pint, which would make it hard for the consumer. Fears have been expressed that the wholesale milk suppliers may dominate the industry, but I have had no experience of that. Indeed, I have found in the zone I referred to earlier that at least two wholesalers are supplying milk to the seven vendors. If it could be proved, however, that only one wholesaler was supplying milk and dominating the situation, my viewpoint might be different, but I cannot concede that that is the case.

In his second reading explanation the Minister, referring to the war-time system, said that one vendor in a zone could deliver up to 65 gallons a day, and that at the same time his profit margin was reduced by 3½d. a gallon. That proves the point I made earlier: if you can economize in your delivery you will keep down the price of milk to a minimum, but if you permit four or five vendors to serve in the one street the cost to the consumer will be greater. After all, the employer must pay his milk carters at award rates, and if the delivery time is longer the cost of delivery will be increased accordingly.

Mr. Quirke—The economics of that may be a little doubtful.

Mr. TAPPING—It is only common-sense; if it takes longer to do a job it will cost more to do it, and the person who finds it is costing more must pass on the increased cost to the consumer.

Mr. Quirke—The man who cannot make it pay will have to go out of the business.

Mr. TAPPING—Possibly, but the present arrangement is so satisfactory that I oppose clause 5, although I support the rest of the Bill.

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—I have listened with interest to the remarks of previous speakers, particularly those of the member for Semaphore (Mr. Tapping). Most speakers commenced by stating their experience in the dairy industry, and, although I do not claim to have any great knowledge of it, I was born and brought up on a dairy farm, and during my school days I milked five or six cows morning and evening. Therefore, I know the hardships suffered by all those employed in the production of milk; indeed, there is no harder worked section of the community than the dairy farmers, and they should be protected at all costs and given the best possible conditions. I do not know, however, that the Bill will be to their advantage. I am not happy with the set-up operating in the metropolitan area under the so-called voluntary zoning system. Because of complaints I received from consumers and vendors I had occasion, last session, to ask the then Minister of Agriculture, Sir George Jenkins, whether the Government would take action to make it possible for a number of milk vendors to operate in each area. I have discovered that this so-called voluntary system is not voluntary. One vendor milked a number of cows in the metropolitan area and treated the milk to meet the requirements of the various boards. In one street in which he was operating another vendor who served people on the opposite side of the street was not providing a satisfactory service. The first-mentioned vendor commenced serving two of

those customers, but because he could not produce sufficient milk to meet all the requirements of his allocated round he approached a wholesaler for an additional supply but was told that if he continued to serve those two customers he would not receive a supply. That is the effect of voluntary zoning. Under this proposed legislation will vendors have any choice as regards the wholesalers from whom they secure milk supplies? In the metropolitan area 15 persons or companies own or lease 80 milk rounds. Amscol have six adjoining rounds, not leased; Devitts have about six rounds, not leased; Schofields have eight or more rounds in the Kensington area; Harrison Bros. have five rounds all leased in Port Adelaide and—

Mr. Riches—What do you mean by "leased"?

Mr. HUTCHENS—The rounds are leased to vendors.

Mr. Riches—Who own them?

Mr. HUTCHENS—The wholesale suppliers.

Mr. Riches—What actually do they own?

Mr. HUTCHENS—The goodwill of the rounds.

Mr. Riches—What is to prevent another vendor from operating on that round?

Mr. HUTCHENS—He would not be able to get supplies from the wholesalers.

Mr. Fletcher—He would have to have his own cows.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Yes, but it is difficult for a man to keep cows in the metropolitan area and produce sufficient milk for delivery purposes. I was interested to gain possession of a news letter issued by the Master Retail Milk Vendors Association Incorporated dated August, 1954. Some parts of it are worth quoting. The President of the Association wrote as follows:—

I have referred to the importance of careful planning. We have planned a campaign for better conditions in other directions as well as Sunday deliveries. For the achievement of our objectives we find it essential to work in co-operation with wholesalers and producers and with the Metropolitan Milk Board. As a preliminary to securing this co-operation it is necessary that dual control should be ended and that retail distribution of milk should be brought under the control of the Milk Board in the same manner as wholesale distribution. . . . Retail milk vendors are in the unhappy position of having two masters—one of whom, the Metropolitan Milk Board, controls the supply of the product they sell (its production and wholesale distribution) and also the prices at which they may purchase and sell it, and the other, the Metropolitan County Board, controls the conditions under which they operate. In other words, one authority fixes their wages and the other their conditions of service. If, as it sometimes appears, there is conflict between these two authorities, the unfortunate vendor is caught between two "stools." . . . In our last newsletter we gave some interesting information about the conditions under which vendors operated in Melbourne. Since then we have had a visit from Mr. K. S. Foenander, Secretary of the Amalgamated Milk Vendors' Association of New South Wales and obtained from him details of the Sydney set-up, as follows:—Control: Registration (*i.e.*, licensing) is in the hands of the Milk Board who also regulate working conditions (including zoning) and fix prices. Standards of quality are checked by inspectors of the Health Department and delivery measurements by the Weights and Measures Department. Milk runs, zoning, etc.: War-time zoning has been continued unofficially and was being maintained satisfactorily. The Milk Board insisted on some measure of freedom of choice for customers but the Association had been able to deal with this where it operated to the detriment of members. Average size of runs is 78 gallons (72 retail and six wholesale). Some considerably more. Under 65 gallons not considered economical and Milk Board would not register a vendor for less than that except in special circumstances. Leased runs not permitted except in special circumstances (*e.g.*, where vendor was too old to continue delivery himself). Runs sold at from £45 to £50 per gallon in most cases. None could be had under £40.

In respect of Adelaide the newsletter stated:—

In Adelaide at present only about 20 per cent of the total milk delivered daily is bottled and it's up to the vendors to increase this if they consider Sydney vendors' (and for that matter Melbourne vendors' also) example is worth following. And the Sydney vendors seem to have the game by the throat for their Secretary told the committee "there are no poor vendors in Sydney."

We do not want poor vendors here, but it seems to me that there is a real danger in the set-up in South Australia and I want an assurance that the vendors will be free to engage in competitive trade unhampered by wholesalers and will be assured of a supply and choice of wholesaler without in any way being penalized in their efforts to provide services. If I get that assurance I will support the measure.

Mr. QUIRKE secured the adjournment of the debate.

SEWERAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from June 21. Page 382.)

Mr. RICHES (Stuart)—This is a short Bill relating to charges which may be levied for sewerage services in country drainage areas. It arises as the result of legislation submitted to this Parliament last year which

sought to give the Minister the right to strike a sewerage rate at his own discretion. That was not entirely acceptable and the second reading of that Bill was adjourned on the understanding that the Government would have the whole question of country sewerage investigated. During the recess a committee was appointed but its terms of reference were circumscribed to the extent that it was permitted to inquire only into the question of sewerage charges in country centres. An investigation into country sewerage schemes in other States demonstrated the efficacy of the Minister's argument, not only in introducing this Bill but when similar legislation was introduced last year and, indeed, in 1946, to the effect that it would not be practicable to carry out sewerage schemes in the country districts of South Australia on the same basis as has been done in the eastern States. There the responsibility for country sewerage rests with the local municipalities, which design the schemes, and in most instances the Government comes to their aid in providing finance. However, in some of the States the larger towns receive no Government financial assistance, but if it is granted it is on a graduated scale according to population. As the population increases the point is reached where no Government assistance is granted. This House has previously accepted that that would not be possible in South Australia and that the whole problem of country sewerage must be looked at on the basis of a State instrumentality. Investigation has shown that the cost of sewerage in South Australia varies from place to place. For instance, it has been demonstrated that the cost of sewering Port Pirie would be much in excess per house of the cost in other places. It would be more than twice the *per capita* cost in the metropolitan area, and it would not be fair to expect Port Pirie to shoulder the whole of the financial burden. That would apply to a slightly lesser extent to Port Augusta and Whyalla and one or two other places which have been investigated.

Accepting the principle that in establishing sewerage schemes in the country the resources of the State should be pooled and those more favourably situated should contribute something to the less favoured areas, it is noticed that general provision has been made for a rating which would cover all country areas. In 1946 a Bill was introduced and the present rate fixed. The rate provided limits the department to a charge of 1s. 9d. in the pound on the assessed value of a property. That was inserted after much discussion. The rate in the metropolitan area is 1s. Members asked why, when the service was to be regarded as a State-wide instrumentality, there should be that difference between the city and country areas, and they thought the proposal then submitted of 2s. in the pound for country sewerage was excessive, and Parliament reduced the rate to 1s. 9d. On investigation by the committee, that figure has been shown to be unrealistic, as the value of money has changed considerably since 1946. The committee reached the unanimous decision that the Government should be permitted to rate up to 2s. 6d. in the pound. It was demonstrated that it would be impracticable to have country sewerage on present-day money values at a rate of less than 2s. 6d., and the committee was convinced that that rate was not unduly high. An examination of the schedule put forward by the Minister when he introduced the Bill will show that it is as cheap as any and cheaper than most.

The committee was charged in its terms of reference to consider a fair basis of charges for any country sewerage scheme. It was told it must confine the inquiry to that aspect and could not bring down any recommendation as to assessment. If the position warranted sewerage, a country district would have to face up to a rate of at least 2s. 6d., otherwise no scheme would be embarked upon. Anything under 2s. 6d. would be unrealistic and no sewerage scheme would be instigated at a figure lower than that. No-one could object to giving the department the right to charge a rate of 2s. 6d., especially after there has been an investigation of any of the schemes so far drawn up for country areas. The terms of reference were not in accordance with what I understood was the undertaking when the matter was before the House. The recommendations of the committee dealt with one subject only. The matter of country sewerage has been before Parliament since 1938. A motion was moved, and it was accepted, by the late Honourable J. McInnes in 1939. He had had experience as a Minister of Works and he knew something about the needs of the country and the difficulties experienced in the matter of country sewerage. Eight years passed before anything further was done. In 1946 a Bill was passed giving authority for the implementation of country sewerage schemes. Shortly after the motion was carried in 1939 war broke out and the Government could not give effect to the wishes of Parliament. The war ended in 1945 and in

1946 the Bill was passed following on keen debate. Members drew attention to the disparity between the rates of 1s. and 2s. in the pound, and eventually rates of 1s. and 1s. 9d. were agreed to. It was also the last session before an election and it was suggested that it was purely window dressing. We are now no closer to getting country sewerage schemes than we were in 1946.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Your remarks will not bring them any closer.

Mr. RICHES—I hope one day to be on the receiving end in this matter. Nobody has been more persistent than I have in seeking the implementation of the legislation at Whyalla and Port Augusta. The consideration of alternative measures has been most difficult because of the uncertainty associated with the matter.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—As a member of local government you know that in the other States sewerage schemes devolve on local government bodies. What have you done about it?

Mr. RICHES—I mentioned that earlier, and I thought I had done it adequately. Earlier the Minister admitted that it would be impracticable for a country municipality to embark on a sewerage scheme under its own steam. Following on the passage of the 1946 legislation no more than the planning stage was reached. In some instances surveys were made and schemes were drawn. When that was done country people thought something of a concrete nature would result in the reasonably near future to free their districts of the fearful business of dealing with sewage in the unhealthy manner it is dealt with in most country centres today. The pan system of disposal is becoming increasingly difficult and expensive. The need for action is more urgent than ever before. That is why large country towns are looking for concrete action by the Government. Towards the close of last session the Minister of Works introduced a Bill dealing with country sewerage rates. It sought to remove the limit of 1s. 9d. in the pound and leave it to the Minister to fix an adequate rate. The Bill was not accepted by the House.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—It was not put to a test.

Mr. RICHES—There was no vote, but the tone of the debate showed that the Bill would not be accepted. The Leader of the Opposition put forward a sound proposal during the debate. He suggested that a Parliamentary Select Committee should be appointed to investigate and report on problems of country sewerage, including group septic tank disposal of sewage, and to submit a scheme for financing country sewerage schemes that would be within the capacity of country centres. The Minister admitted that the proposal contained some merit, but it was pointed out that the session was rapidly drawing to a close and that a Select Committee would not have time to reach a decision. A committee to function between sessions was suggested, and the State would have benefited if that suggestion had been adopted. The counter proposal by the Minister seemed reasonable and we accepted it. It came as a shock to me to find, when I received notice of the committee's first meeting, that the investigation would be limited to the basis of charges. When replying to the Leader of the Opposition last year the Minister stated:—

> . . . that a committee of five and not a select committee be appointed to consider charges on country water schemes, the committee to consist of the Minister as chairman and two Government and two Opposition members.

I accept that report in *Hansard* as the Minister's undertaking, but I and others understood that the committee would have the responsibility of investigating country sewerage problems.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—I paid a compliment to the committee. I think we did what was intended by that compromise following on the proposal of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. RICHES—The committee was circumscribed in its inquiry because it could inquire only into the basis of charges, but a select committee, such as that proposed by the Leader of the Opposition, could have inquired into the whole question of sewerage in country areas, including group septic tank systems and the capacity of country districts to pay.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—The Bill that was introduced did not go into that.

Mr. RICHES—But that was the intention of the Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—It was not accepted.

Mr. O'Halloran—It was not rejected either.

Mr. RICHES—The committee was disappointed when it found it could only investigate whether 1s. 9d. was a fair and realistic rate. No-one could argue that 1s. 9d. was not unrealistic, or even that 2s. 6d. was too high. During its inquiry the question was raised of whether an increase in the assessment instead of in the rating would not overcome the problem. I said there was a relationship

between rating and assessment, and that rating means nothing unless it is considered in relation to assessment. Figures were produced indicating the increased charges to metropolitan householders as a result of the new assessments. Although the rating had remained at 1s. in the pound the householders' charges had increased substantially. It was shown that an alteration in the assessment without an alteration in the rating was not a practical solution, and the committee unanimously recommended that a Bill be introduced in the form in which we have it today.

This Bill fixes an upper limit of 2s. 6d. in the pound. In the course of the committee's investigations figures were produced in regard to a sewerage scheme for Port Augusta. When the department drew up a scheme and submitted it to the Port Augusta corporation in 1948 the total cost of the scheme and the annual losses that the Government expected on a rate of 1s. 9d. in the pound were shown and each ratepayer was informed of his annual liability. A public meeting was called and the scheme was overwhelmingly endorsed by the ratepayers. The annual fee for the Hotel Flinders was shown as £25, but the latest assessment was shown to the committee and, on a rate of 2s. 6d. in the pound, that hotel would be required to pay £250 a year. I am sure that Port Augusta could not afford sewerage under the present rates. However, that will not preclude me from agreeing to a scheme for other towns that can afford a rate of 2s. 6d., but the committee was not permitted to inquire into the capacity of a district to pay.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—We inquired to this extent, that we found how much it would cost the taxpayers to subsidize a scheme for Port Augusta even on a rate of 2s. 6d. in the pound.

Mr. RICHES—The increase in sewerage charges for the Hotel Flinders from £25 to £250 is not accounted for in the increase in the rating from 1s. 9d. to 2s. 6d.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—How much has the Port Augusta corporation's rating increased?

Mr. RICHES—I do not know.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—I think it would be proportionately.

Mr. RICHES—No.

Mr. O'Halloran—If all the people in Port Augusta came to Adelaide the Minister would provide sewerage for them without any punitive charges.

Mr. RICHES—My point is that the alteration in the rating that this Bill enables is infinitesimal compared with the increased charges that the householder would have to pay as a result of altered assessments.

Mr. O'Halloran—Compare householders' sewerage charges in Port Augusta with those in the metropolitan area.

Mr. RICHES—I am coming to that. It is very difficult to arrive at a valuation because different types of homes cost different amounts, but I think it can be generally accepted that Housing Trust homes in Port Augusta would be comparable with those in Adelaide, and should therefore be a fair measuring stick. I have been told that a trust home in Adelaide would incur a rate of £5 15s. a year, whereas a similar trust home in Port Pirie would be taxed £13 15s.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Did not the committee agree that that was a fair basis having regard to all the circumstances? You are apologizing now for the verdict.

Mr. RICHES—I am not. The committee's recommendation was that there should be an upper limit of 2s. 6d.

Mr. O'Halloran—Which you accepted and supported, but now the Minister wants you to support things into which the committee had no opportunity to inquire.

Mr. RICHES—Precisely. We were not permitted to make inquiries into the whole economics of country sewerage.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—There is a huge subsidy to Port Augusta, even on the basis of 2s. 6d.

Mr. RICHES—I admit that. Other members of the committee expressed the opinion that they wanted country sewerage, and they were of the opinion that some towns could afford to pay for it. If that is so, I do not want to stand in their way, but Port Augusta cannot afford it, nor can any other town in my district. The capital cost of the Port Augusta scheme was £295,000, which represents £196 for each of its 1,500 houses. I think the Port Pirie scheme would cost over £1,000,000. Having regard to those figures, nobody could quarrel over 2s. 6d. in the pound. However, the solution to the problem has not been found; Port Augusta cannot afford that. The Government should give consideration to the second part of the resolution submitted by the Leader of the Opposition last year, that some inquiry should be held into installing septic tanks. I know there is a lot to be said for and against septic tanks, but there has been a substantial improvement in their installation and operation in the last few years.

It was not possible a few years ago for such systems to dispose of sink water and other waste products, but the tanks now being installed everywhere where the Housing Trust is building homes in the country will do this, and they are operating reasonably satisfactorily. The Commonwealth Railways at Port Augusta has changed over completely to septic tanks. The area is right on the beach, and the septic tanks in many cases are built virtually in mud banks, but they are operating successfully. Murray Bridge has completely changed over to septic tanks, and although there are probably difficulties in that town, I do not think they cannot be overcome. I believe it is possible for towns to change over to septic tanks in measurable time, and that can be done without such heavy financial assistance from the Government. The Government should consider allowing country towns to install alternative sewerage; if they cannot afford the sewerage they should be assisted to make a complete change-over to septic tanks. That could be done at Port Augusta in 12 months if a small subsidy were granted to the householders. This could be used as a deposit for purchase of materials, and if an arrangement were made with the Commonwealth Bank to spread the balance over a number of years that would not cost the landholders more than the present system.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Where would you start and where would you end that subsidy? What happens if a man builds his own tank? Would he get any rebate?

Mr. O'Halloran—I thought you did not consider it.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—We discussed it for hours.

Mr. RICHES—The Minister and his officers should investigate the scheme I have put forward. I understand a report has been made that would indicate that, contrary to our experience, it would be dangerous for anyone to contemplate installing a septic tank.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Where do you begin the subsidy and where do you end it?

Mr. RICHES—The limitation on the system of subsidized septic tanks should be the same as the limitation on country sewerage. Where the department draws up a scheme for country sewers, those people should be offered the alternative of installing septic tanks. A plan was drawn for Port Augusta, Bordertown, Murray Bridge, Naracoorte, Port Pirie, Port Lincoln, Balaklava and Whyalla. As the plans have been drawn up, the houses have to be assessed, but every householder should be offered the alternative of installing septic tanks.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—But many already have septic tanks. Should they be given a rebate?

Mr. O'Halloran—You would not give them a rebate if you established sewerage.

Mr. RICHES—Under the sewerage scheme proposed for Port Augusta the Government was willing to incur a capital cost of £295,000 or £196 a house, whereas I suggest that it pay about £10 a house as a total payment for septic tanks. The Government was willing to budget for a loss of £10,000 a year to enable a sewerage system to operate, whereas no annual loss would be entailed under a septic tank system. Therefore, the advantages to the Government of septic tank installation in lieu of country sewerage in the case of Port Augusta are as follows:—A sewerage system for Port Augusta would entail a capital outlay of £295,000 and an annual loss (after the first year) of £9,150. During the first year approximately that amount would be required to subsidize the installation of septic tanks if such a system were implemented.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—What happens if the whole stratum becomes saturated and you want the Government then to install sewerage facilities?

Mr. RICHES—I will deal with that later. Let me, without interruption, state the advantages and disadvantages of a septic tank system. A saving of £275,000 would be effected in Port Augusta alone. Only £10,000 would be required in the first year for septic tanks, and these would entail no annual loss as would be the case with sewerage. The householder would be saved the entire cost of sewerage connections and £15 a year sewerage rates. The advantage to the municipality would be that the scheme could be implemented within 12 months, whereas nobody knows when country sewerage facilities will be installed. It may be 10 or 15 years before that work can be commenced. Business houses would be saved hundreds of pounds annually in sewerage rates. The Minister wanted to know what would happen if we had septic tanks everywhere and the water level throughout the municipality rose, but if that occurred the problem could be referred to a competent body for advice. Although there may be places where that might occur it would probably never occur in Port Augusta because the Commonwealth Railways Department has installed septic tanks at places at beach level and they are working satisfactorily.

In Committee I shall move to amend the Bill by including a new clause to enable the Minister to submit, together with country sewerage proposals, to local councils throughout the State a proposal for subsidizing the installation of septic tanks and allowing the local people to choose between the two. If there are some places where it is considered that the people can afford sewerage facilities, let them have them, but if some places cannot afford them and septic tanks would be a satisfactory alternative, let those people decide. When this committee was called together the Minister expressed the hope that money would be made available this year so that an early start could be made on this work, and I think he confidently expected there would be a line for it on the Estimates.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—The sum of £100,000 was provided on the Loan Estimates for country sewerage.

Mr. RICHES—The scheme for Port Augusta alone is to cost £295,000, so how much work could be done with only £100,000 after certain facilities are provided for the new town near Salisbury? As far as I know the Government has made no financial provision this year to commence the scheme at an early date.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—That is not correct.

Mr. RICHES—I have searched the Estimates, but cannot find anything to make me think otherwise. I am convinced that country sewerage facilities are still a long way off, and if the Government would seriously consider my proposal many of the problems regarding sanitation in the larger centres could be solved. The only real issue in the Bill is the increase in the maximum rating from 1s. 9d. to 2s. 6d. in the pound. I support the Bill and will move to amend it in Committee.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 9.51 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, October 27, at 2 p.m.